SERMONS ON 1; 2 CORINTHIANS AND GALATIANS

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CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST  
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A SERMON  
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*“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.” 1 Corinthians 1:6.*

IT is not always the most gifted church which is in the most healthy state. A church may have many rich, influential, or learned members— many that have the gift of utterance and understand all sciences—yet that church may be in an unhealthy condition. Such was the case with the church at Corinth. Paul, in the opening of his Epistle, tells them that he thanks God always on their behalf for the Grace of God given unto them by Christ Jesus, that in everything they were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they were behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Corinthians were what we would call, nowadays, judging them by the usual standard, a first-class church. They had many who understood much of the learning of the Greeks. They were men of classic taste and men of good understanding, men of profound knowledge and yet, in *spiritual* health, that church was one of the worst in all Greece and, perhaps, in the world! Among the whole of them, you could not find another church sunk so low as this one, although it was the most gifted.

What should this teach us? Should it not show us that gifts are nothing unless they are laid on the altar of God? That it is nothing to have the gift of oratory? That it is nothing to have the power of eloquence? That it is nothing to have learning, that it is nothing to have influence unless they all be dedicated to God and consecrated to His service? I said, “it is nothing”—I mean, it is nothing *good*. Alas, it is worse than nothing good—it is something evil, it is something dreadful, it is something terrible for a man to have these gifts and yet to misuse them, for they shall only furnish fuel for a fiercer flame than he would have endured had he not possessed such abilities! He who buries his ten talents may well expect to be given over to the tormentor.

This is the next lesson that is taught us—let us never judge men by their talents—but by the use which they make of their powers, by the end to which they devote their talents, by the interest which they bring to those pounds which their Master has entrusted to them. Paul, in the commencement of his Epistle, very gently hints at the right use of gifts and talents. And he tells us that they are sent to us that we may “confirm the testimony of Christ.” If we do not use them for this purpose, we misuse them! If we do not turn them to this account, we abuse them! We ought to use our endowments as the Corinthians did *not* use theirs, but as they ought to have done—in confirming the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians had more powers than any of us have. Many of them could work miracles—they could heal the sick, they could restore the lepers, they could work wonders by the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of them could talk several languages and, wherever they went, they were able to speak the language of the people among whom they abode. This was because they were not able to spend much time in learning languages and there needed something special to support the infant Church. It was then but a sapling—it required a stake in the ground by its side, that it might lean upon it, and might grow and be strong. It was a little plant that needed to be sustained and, therefore, God worked miracles. But now it is the stalwart oak and has its roots bent round the staunchest rocks in creation—now it needs not any support by miracle and, therefore, God has left us without extraordinary gifts. But whatever gifts we have, we are to use them for the purpose mentioned in the text— that is, for the confirmation of the testimony of Christ Jesus.

There are two points which we shall speak of as the Holy Spirit may enable us. First, *The testimony of Christ.* And, secondly, *What is meant by our confirming it?*

**I.**First, then, THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST. We are told, in the text, that there was a “testimony of Christ” which was “confirmed in you.” Our first enquiry is, What is meant by the “testimony of Christ”?

That this world is fallen is the first Truth of God in all theology. “We have gone astray like lost sheep,” and had there not been mercy in the mind of God, He might justly have left this world to perish without ever calling it to repentance. But He, in His wondrous long-suffering and His mighty patience was not pleased to do so. Being full of tender mercies and loving kindness, He determined on sending the Mediator into the world, whereby He might restore it to its pristine glory and might save for Himself a people whom “no man could number,” who are to be called the elect of God, loved with His everlasting love! In order that He might rescue the world and save those elect ones, the Lord of Hosts has constantly ordained and sent forth a perpetual priesthood of testifiers. What was Abel with his lamb, but the first martyred witness of the Truth of God? Did not Enoch wear his mantle when he walked with God and prophesied concerning the Second Advent of Christ? Was not Noah a preacher of righteousness among a gainsaying generation? The glorious succession never fails! Abraham comes from Ur of the Chaldees and from the hour of his call till the day when he slept in Machpelah, he was a faithful witness. Then we might mention Lot in Sodom, Melchisedec in Salem, Isaac and Jacob in their tents and Joseph in Egypt. Read the Scripture history and can you fail to observe a golden chain of united links, hanging over a sea of darkness, but yet uniting Abel with the last of the Patriarchs?

We are now arrived at a new era in the history of the Church, but it is not destitute of light. See there the son of Amram, the honored Moses. That man was a very sun of brightness, for he had been where darkness veiled the unutterable light of the skirts of Jehovah. He climbed the steep sides of Sinai. He went up where the lightning blazed and the thunders lifted up their awful voice. He stood upon the mountain-burning summit and there, in that secret chamber of the Most High, he learned, in forty days, the witness of forty years and was the constant enunciator of justice and righteousness. But he died, as the best men must. Sleep on in peace, O Moses, in your secret grave. Fear not for the Truth of God, for God will be with Joshua as He was with you!

The times of the judges and kings were sometimes densely darkened, but amid their civil wars, their idolatry, their persecutions and their visitations, the chosen people still had a remnant according to the Election of Grace. There were always some who walked through the earth, like the ancient Druids in the woods, wrapped in white garments of holiness and crowned with the glories of the Most High. The river of the Truth of God might run in a shallow stream, but it was never utterly dry. Next, come to the times of the Prophets and there, after traversing a dreary period when the world was only illumined here and there by such lamps as Nathan, Abijah, Gad, or Elijah, you find that you have come to the light of meridian day, or rather to a cloudless sky crowded with stars! There is the eloquent Isaiah, the lamenting Jeremiah, the soaring Ezekiel, the well-beloved Daniel and lo, behind these four high priests of prophecy, there follow twelve, clothed in the same garb, performing the same service! I might style Isaiah the pole star of prophecy. Jeremiah resembled the rainy Hyades of Horace. Ezekiel was the burning Sirius. And as for Daniel, he resembles a flaming comet, flashing on our vision but for a moment and then lost in obscurity.

I am not at a loss to find a constellation for the minor prophets. They are a sweet group, of intense brilliance, even though but small—they are the Pleiades of the Bible. Perhaps, at no former season, were the stars of God marshaled in greater numbers, but yet, amid all preceding and succeeding gloom, the sky of time was never in total darkness! There was always a watcher and a shining one there. God has never abandoned the world, He has never quenched its lamp of Testimony, He has never said, “Go, you vile thing,” and spurned it from His Presence. He might deluge it once with water. He might rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom. He might drown a nation in the sea. He might destroy a generation in the wilderness. He might devour kingdoms and root them up—but never, never would He extinguish the perpetual flame of the Testimony of His Truth!

I was thinking, just now, of a picture which I saw, a few days ago—a beautiful painting of a brook with steppingstones in the water, upon which the traveler crossed. And the idea has just flashed upon my mind—surely the stream of man’s wickedness and the stream of time may be crossed by those steppingstones of Testimony. There you have Noah, and he is a steppingstone, to step on to Abraham. And from him to Moses, and from Moses to Elijah and so on—from Elijah to Isaiah, from Isaiah to Daniel, and from Daniel down to the brave Maccabees. And what is the last steppingstone? It is Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth! Jesus was, in one sense, the last Testifier of the Truth of God. We are left to confirm it to others and we shall, just for a few moments, enlarge on what the testimony of Jesus Christ was.

First of all, in order to justify me in calling Jesus Christ a Testifier, I want to refer to one or two passages of Scripture where you will see that He came into the world to be a Testifier and Witness to the Truth. Turn to the 3rd chapter of John, and the 31st verse. John the Baptist says, “He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth: He that comes from Heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies, and no man receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set to His seal that God is true.” There we find John, who was the harbinger of our Savior, speaking of Christ as giving a testimony, speaking of Him as One who came into the world for the special purpose of testifying to the Truth of God.

Turn further on in the same Gospel and you will find, in the 8th chapter and 18th verse, our Savior says this of Himself, “I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me bears witness of Me.” I refer you, also, to the 18th chapter of John and the 37th verse where Pilate says to Jesus, “Are You a king then?” And He replies, “For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” There, again, you find our Savior speaking of Himself as a Witness. I might refer you to some passages in Isaiah where he speaks of Christ as a Witness, but I will only keep to the writings of our friend, John, so we will now turn to the Book of Revelation. In the first chapter, at the 5th verse, you find him saying, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness.” In the third chapter of the same Book, at the 14th verse, “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.” Now, then, I think I am not dishonoring my Master by calling Him a “Witness.” I have placed Him side by side with a glorious cloud of witnesses and I have said He is the last Witness. And I think I have not dishonored His blessed name when I find He calls Himself a “Witness.” Let us enlarge upon this head for a moment or two. Christ is the very King of witnesses! He is the greatest of all witnesses and superior to every other! He does not differ from any other in the things He testifies, for they all testify to the same Truth of God which this glorious Witness is superior to every other!

First, let me remark that *Christ witnesses directly from Himself* and that is one thing in which He is superior to all the Prophets and the other holy men who testified to the Truth. What did Isaiah say? What did Elijah say? Or Jeremiah? Or Daniel? They only said second-hand things— they spoke what God had revealed to them. But when Christ spoke, He always spoke directly from Himself. All the rest only spoke that which they had received from God. They had to tarry till the winged seraph brought the live coal. They had to gird on the ephod, the curious girdle and the Urim and Thummim—they must stand listening till the Voice said, “Son of man, I have a message for you.” They were but instruments blown by the breath of God and giving forth sounds only at His pleasure. But Christ was a Fountain of living water. He opened His mouth and the Truth of God gushed forth and it came directly from Himself. In this, as a faithful Witness, He was superior to every other. He could say, “What I have seen, and heard, that do I testify. I have been inside the veil. I have entered into the sanctum sanctorum. I have dived into the depths, I have soared into the heights—there is not a place where I have not been, there is not a Truth of God which I cannot call My own. I am no voice of another.” In this respect, He surpassed every other witness!

Secondly, Christ was superior to every other witness from the fact that *His testimony was uniform*. It was always the same testimony—we cannot say that of any other witness. Look at Noah. He was a very good testifier to the Truth of God, except once, when he was intoxicated—he was a sorry testifier to the Truth then. David was a testifier to the Truth, but he sinned against God and put Uriah to death. What shall we say of Elijah, that man in shaggy garments? He was a testifier to the Truth, but he was not so when he fled from Jezebel and God sent an angel to say to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Abraham was another witness, but he was not so when he said his wife was his sister. The same might be said of Isaac. And if you go through the whole list of holy men, you will find some fault in them and you will be obliged to say, “They were very good testifiers, certainly, but their testimony is not uniform. There is a plaguespot which sin has left upon them all. There was something to show that man is nothing but an earthen vessel, after all.”

But Christ’s testimony *was* uniform. There never was a time when He contradicted Himself. There never was an instance in which it could be said, “What You have said, You now contradict.” See Him everywhere, whether on the cold mountaintop at midnight in prayer, or in the midst of the city. Observe Him when He walked through the cornfields on the Sabbath, or when on the lake He bade the waves, “Be still.” Wherever He was, His testimony was uniform. This cannot be said of any other witness. The best men have their faults. They say that the sun has spots and so I suppose that the most glorious of men, whoever they are, who will shine most brightly in the firmament forever and ever, will have their spots while on earth. Christ’s testimony was like His own coat, woven from the top throughout—there was not any seam in it at all.

Yet, further, *Christ’s testimony was perfect in testifying to all the Truth of God.*Other men only gave testimony to parts of the Truth, but Christ manifested it all. Other men had the threads of Truth, but Christ took the threads and wove them into a glorious robe, put it on, and came forth clothed with every Truth of God. There was more of God revealed by Christ than in the works of Creation, or in all the Prophets. Christ was a Testifier to all God’s attributes and He left none of them unmentioned. Do you ask me whether Christ bore testimony to the Justice of God, I tell you, “Yes.” See Him hanging there, languishing on Calvary, His bones all dislocated. Did He bear testimony to God’s Mercy? Yes. See those poor creatures who were limping just now—the lame man is leaping like a hare, the poor blind man is beholding the sun and rejoicing! Did Jesus witness to the Power of God? I say, “Yes.” You see Him standing in the little boat and saying to the winds, “Be still!” and holding them in the hollow of His hand. Has He not borne testimony to everything in God? His testimony was perfect! Nothing was left out—everything was there.

We could not say that of any mere man. I believe we cannot say that of any modern preacher. Some people say that they can hear Mr. So-and-So because he preaches so much Doctrine. Another likes all experience and some want all practice. Very well, you do not expect that God has made one man to say everything, do you? Certainly not. One class of men defends one class of Truths and another, another. I bless God that there are so many denominations. If there were not men who differed a little in their creeds, we would never get so much Gospel as we do. One man loves high Doctrine and he thinks he is bound to defend it every Sabbath—so much the better! Some do not speak of it at all, so that he helps to make up for other people’s deficiencies. Some men are fond of fiery exhortations—they give them every Sabbath and they cannot preach a sermon without them. But, then, others do not give them at all, so that the lack of one is supplied by the superabundance of the other. God has sent different men to defend different kinds of Truth, but Christ defended and preached all! He took them, bound them in one bundle and said, “Here is myrrh, aloes, cassia and all precious spices altogether—here is the whole Truth of God.” Christ’s testimony was perfect.

Mark, once more, before I come to the confirmation of this testimony, *Christ’s testimony was final*. His was the last testimony, the last Revelation that will ever be given to man. After Christ, nothing. Christ comes last—He is the last steppingstone across the brook of time. All who come after Him are only confirmers of the testimony of Christ. Our Augustines, our Ambroses, our Chrysostoms, or any other of the mighty preachers of olden times, never pretended to say anything fresh. They only revived the Gospel—the same old-fashioned Gospel which Christ used to preach. And Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli, and Knox—they only came to confirm the Truth of God. Christ said “*finis”* to the canon of Revelation and it was closed forever! No one can add a single word to it and no one can take a word from it. We Dissenters are sometimes charged with inventing a new Gospel. We deny it. We say that our Owen, Howe, Henry, Charnock, Bunyan, Baxter, or Janeway and all that galaxy of stars of the pulpit did not pretend to say anything new—they only revived the things that Christ said, they only professed to be confirmers of the Witness. So has it been with the great men we have lost during the last century. Whitefield and his brother evangelists and men who stood in the same position as Gill, or Booth, or Rippon, or Carey, or Ryland or some of those who have just been taken away—they did not pretend to say anything new. They only said, “Brothers and Sisters, we come to tell you the same old story. We are not testifiers of new things—we are only confirmers of the Witness, Christ Jesus.”

**II.**Now we come to the second part of our subject and that is THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST IS TO BE CONFIRMED IN YOU. There are two points here. First, *the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in ourselves*. And, secondly, *it needs to be confirmed in others*.

First, then, to every Christian the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in his own heart. O Beloved, that is the best confirmation of Gospel Truth which every Christian carries about within him! I love *Butler’s Analogy—*it is a very powerful book. I love *Paley’s Evidences*, but I never need them myself, for my own use. I do not need any proof that the Bible is true. Why? Because it is confirmed in me! There is a Witness, which dwells in me, which makes me bid defiance to all infidelity, so that I can say—

***“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”***

I do not care to read books opposing the Truths of the Bible, I never need to wade through mud for the sake of washing myself afterwards. When I am asked to read an heretical book, I think of good John Newton. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, said to him, “Have you read my*Key to the Romans*?” “I have turned it over,” said the Doctor. “And is this the treatment a book must meet with which has cost me so many years hard study? You ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what is said on so serious a subject.” “Hold,” said Newton, “you have cut me out full employment for a life as long as Methuselah’s! My life is too short to be spent in reading contradictions of my religion. If the first page tells me the man is undermining the faith, it is enough for me. If I had the first mouthful of a roast tainted, I do not need to eat it through to be convinced—I ought to send it away.” Having the truth confirmed in us, we can laugh all arguments to scorn! We are placed in a sheet of mail when we have a witness to God’s Truth within us. All the men in this world cannot make us alter one single iota of what God has written within us! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, we need to have the Truth confirmed within us! Let me tell you a few things that will do this.

First, *the very fact of our conversion tends to confirm us in the Truth*. “Oh,” says the Christian, “do not tell me there is no power in religion, for I have felt it! I was thoughtless like others, laughed religion to scorn and those who attended to it. My language was, ‘Let us eat and drink, and enjoy the sunshine of life.’ But now, through Christ Jesus, I find the Bible a honeycomb which hardly needs to be pressed to let the drops of honey run out it is so sweet and precious to my taste that I wish I could sit down and feast on my Bible forever! What has made this alteration?” That is how the Christian reasons. He says, “There must be a power in Grace, otherwise I never should be so changed as I am. There must be the Truth of God in the Christian religion, otherwise this change would never have come over me.” Some men have ridiculed religion and its followers and yet Divine Grace has been so mighty that those very men have become converted and experienced the new birth! Such men cannot be argued out of the truth of religion. You may stand and talk to them from dewy morn to the setting of the sun, but you can never get them to believe that there is no Truth in God’s Word, for they have the Truth of God confirmed in them.

Then, again, another thing confirms the Christian in the Truth and that is, *when God answers his prayers*. I think that it is one of the strongest confirmations of the Truth of God when we find that God hears us. Now I speak to you, on this point, of things which I have tasted and handled. The wicked man will not believe this. He will say, “Ah, go and tell those who know no better!” But I say that I have proved the power of prayer a hundred times because I have gotten to God and asked Him for mercies and have received them. “Ah,” say some, “it is only just in the common course of Providence.” “*Common course of providence?”* It is a blessed course of Providence! If you had been in my position, you would not have said that. I have seen it just as clearly as if God had rent the heavens and put His hand out and said, “There, My child, is the mercy you asked for.” It has come so plainly out of the way that I could not call it a common course of Providence!

Sometimes I have been depressed and downcast—and even out of heart at coming to stand before this multitude—and I have said, “What shall I do?” I could fly anywhere rather than come here anymore. I have asked God to bless me and send me words to say, and then I have felt filled to the brim, so that I could come before this congregation or any other! Is that a common course of Providence? It is a *special* Providence— a special answer to prayer! And there are others here who can turn to the pages of their diary and see, there, God’s hand plainly interposing. So we can say to the infidel, “Begone! The truth of God is confirmed in us and so confirmed that nothing can drive us out of it!”

You have had the Truth confirmed in you, my dear Friends, *when you have found great support in times of affliction and tribulation*. Some of you have passed through deep trouble. Some of you have been sorely tried and have been brought very low, but can you not say with David, “I was brought low and the Lord helped me”? Can you not recall how well you bore that last trouble? When you lost that dear child, you thought you could not bear it so well as you did. But you said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” Many of you have loved ones under the sod—your mother, father, husband, or wife. You thought your heart would break when you lost your parents, but when your father and your mother were taken from you, then the Lord took you up. He told you, poor widow, that He would be a Father to your children—and have you not found it so? Can you not say, “Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord has promised”? That is the best confirmation of the Truth of God.

Sometimes, persons come to me, in my vestry, and they want me to confirm the Truth of God outside of them. I cannot do that, I want them to have the Truth confirmed *in* them. They say, “How do you know that the Bible is true?” “Oh,” I reply, “I never have to ask such a question as that, because it is confirmed in me. The Bishop has confirmed me!” I mean, “the Bishop of souls,” the Lord Jesus Christ, for I never was confirmed by any other! And He has so confirmed me in the Truth of God that no one can take it out of me. I say to these people, “Try religion yourself and you will see its power. You stop outside the house and you want me to prove what is inside the house—go in yourself—‘taste and see that the Lord is good,’ blessed are all they that trust in Him.” This is the best way of confirming the Truth to ourselves.

The second thought was that it was our business not only to have the Truth confirmed in our own souls, but *so to live that we might be the means of confirming the Truth in others*. Do you know what Bible the worldly man reads? He does not read this Bible at all—he reads the Christian! “There,” he says, “that man goes to church, or chapel, and he is a member. I will see how he lives, I will read him up and down.” And he watches him and reads his conduct. If he is bad, he says, “Religion is a farce!” But if he is a man who lives up to it, he says, “There is something in religion, after all.” Wicked men read professors—they watch them to see whether they live up to their profession. Christians have Argus, with a hundred eyes, staring at them! Worldlings look at every fault with a magnifying glass and they make the smallest molehill into a great mountain! And if there is a speck in our eye, they will make it a beam— and they will say the man is a hypocrite!

It is the duty of every child of God to so live that he may confirm the witness of Christ. We should labor to do it in all the common things of daily life. “Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Some men think that religion lies only in great things. It does not, for it also lies in little things. Take any one day of our lives—we eat, drink, rise in the morning, go to bed at night—there is nothing very particular about the day. Our life is made up of little things and if we are not careful of little things, we shall not be careful of great ones. If we do not mind the little things, the great ones will go wrong. Oh, may you have Grace to live that the world may find no fault in you! And if in little things they see exactness and precision, (and too much precision will be better than the looseness of the morals of some professors), then they will say, “There is something in religion. That man’s life has confirmed it in my mind because he lives up to it.”

Then, again, *if you can bear the taunts of wicked men without returning them*, that will be a good way of confirming religion. When I have entered into controversy with some men and have been betrayed into heat of temper, I could have bitten my fingers off that I should have done so! If you can keep your temper when men laugh at you and if, when they revile you, you do not return it, you will confirm the Truth of God. They will say, “There is something in that man’s religion, otherwise he could not so keep his temper.” You have read of James Haldane. Once, when unconverted, he threw a ship’s tumbler at the head of a person who had insulted him. But when he was regenerated, on another occasion of insult, simply said, “I would resent it, but I have learned to forgive injuries and overlook insults.” Men were obliged to say of him, “There is something in the religion which can bring such a lion as that down and make him such a lamb.” Thus you will confirm the witness of Christ if you quietly endure persecution. If you can patiently bear the laugh and jeer of wicked men, you will confirm the Truth of God.

The last confirmation you and I, my Friends, will ever be able to give to the witness of Christ is coming very soon. There is an hour when we shall no longer be able to confirm the Truth by living for it, for we must die, *and that is the best confirmation of a man’s principles—when he dies well.*One of the noblest confirmations of the Christian religion is the fact that a man dies a peaceable, a happy and even a triumphant death. Oh, if when you come to die, you are able to say, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” And if you can grasp the tyrant Death in your hands and hurl him to the ground and triumph in Him who said, “O death, I will be your plagues! O grave, I will be your destruction!” If you can die without fear, or repining, or remorse—knowing that you are forgiven. If you can die with the song of victory on your lips and with the smile of joy upon your countenance, then you will confirm the witness of Christ!

In conclusion, let me urge you, as followers of Christ Jesus, as those whom He has loved with an everlasting love, as heirs of immortality, as those who have been rescued from the pit of destruction, as professors of religion, as members of a Christian Church—let me beseech you to make it your first and last objective to confirm the witness of Christ! Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, say within yourself, “I must so live and die that I may confirm the witness of Christ. I must so walk among my friends and neighbors that they will see that there is a truth and a power in religion.” And let me warn you not to undertake this task in your own strength—you will need power from on high, from the Holy Spirit, a fresh supply of Grace from the Throne of the heavenly Grace. It is a good plan that some persons adopt—they walk home, after service, and when they get there, they have a few minutes in prayer with their God. It is a blessed way of clinching the nail and making a sermon count.

So, dear Friend, go home, and say, “I solemnly vow, yet not in my own strength, but I solemnly vow, by Your Grace, that from this moment, forward, it shall be my aim to live more as a confirmer of the Truth of God! I did not know my high calling before, but I now know that I am a confirmer of Your Truth. Lord, help me so to live that there may never be any flaw in my conduct, never any vile word proceed out of my lips—make me so to live that I may confirm Your Truth! Lord, help me to confirm the witness of Christ!” Go and register that vow, and that resolution, and seek God’s Grace that you may not let it be a vow not carried out, but may you be able to live to the Glory of God, and to the honor of His blessed name! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 84.***

A Psalm for the sons of Korah. You remember how Korah, Dathan and Abiram were destroyed because of their rebellion against the Lord and their revolt against His chosen servants, Moses and Aaron. And you, no doubt, recollect how it is recorded that “the children of Korah died not.” Why they were spared, we cannot tell, except that it was an act of Sovereign Grace and if so, I can understand why they were afterwards selected to be among the chief singers in the house of the Lord, for who can sing so sweetly to the God of Grace as the men who have been saved by His Sovereign, distinguishing Grace? This Psalm is “for (or, of) the sons of Korah.”—

***“Who can praise the blessed God,  
Like a sinner saved by Grace?  
Angels cannot sing so loud,  
Though they see Him face to face—  
Sinless angels can never know  
What a debt saved sinners owe.”***

**Verse 1.** *How amiable are Your tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts!* The outer portions and the inner parts as well—how lovely they all are! To be among Your people, to have sweet fellowship with them, how delightful it is, “O Lord of Hosts! “You dwell in Your tabernacles, O Jehovah of Hosts, like a king in the center of his army, and Your people encamp round about You!

**2.***My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD.*Those children of God who have been for even a little while exiled from the court of the Lord, prize them all the more when they get back to them.

**2.***My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God*. There gets to be so deep a longing to appear once more in the house of the Lord that even this clay-cold flesh of ours, which with difficulty becomes warm towards good things, at last melts and joins in the common cry of the Believer’s whole being—“My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

**3.***Yes, the sparrow has found a house.* She is such a bold bird that she comes and picks up a crumb or two even in the courts of God’s house! So, Lord, let me be one of Your sparrows today—“Yes, the sparrow has found a house,”—

**3.***And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.*God’s house is dear to us for the benefit that it is to ourselves, but it is still dearer to us for our children’s sake as a nest where we may lay our young. What a double mercy it is when young people love to come with their parents to the house of God!

**4.***Blessed are they that dwell in Your house: they will still be praising You. Selah.* The Psalmist felt that those who were always in the house of the Lord must always be full of music. I am afraid that it is not so in all cases, yet it should be.

**5.***Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; in whose heart are the ways of them.*The man who throws his whole heart and soul into his worship of the Lord and his service for the Lord, is the man who gets the greatest blessing out of the holy exercises in which he takes part. Halfhearted worshippers are an insult to God, but blessed is the man whose strength is in the Lord of Hosts and whose heart is in His ways.

**6.***Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools.* If they pass through valleys that are dreary and gloomy, they find them to be a benefit and a blessing, for they get refreshments on the road and also help to cheer other travelers.

**7, 8.***They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appears before God. O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.* David cannot go up with the multitude that keeps holy day so, feeling like Jacob when he was all alone at the brook Jabbok— like Jacob, he wrestles with God for a blessing. You can hear him crying out in the wilderness—“O Jehovah God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob,” and He who heard the prayer of lonely Jacob by the brook, hears the cry of David and the cries of all His children who cannot join the great assembly of worshippers of God.

**9.***Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.*Jesus is the “shield” of His people, and He is “anointed” for His people and there is, in Jesus, so much of all that is good that when the Father looks upon us in Him, He can see goodness even in us poor sinners, for the goodness of Christ overflows to us and is accounted ours!

**10.***For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.*Of course the Psalmist means that a day in God’s courts is better than a thousand spent anywhere else. See how he contrasts nearly three years with a single day, and he might have gone even further and said, “Better is one day with God than a thousand years without Him.” He gives us another contrast as he goes on to say—

**10-12.***I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give Grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You.* May all of us know that blessedness, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2580 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST  
NO. 2580

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 24, 1898.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 1883.~~***

***~~“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”  
1 Corinthians 1:9.~~***

PAUL is here arguing for the safety, the perseverance and the ultimate perfection of the saints to whom he is writing. He thanks God for what He has done for them and is assured that He will do yet more—that He will certainly confirm them unto the end—that they may be blameless in the day of Jesus Christ. The Apostle bases his argument upon this Truth of God—“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” And, Brothers and Sisters, this is good argument—to reason as to the future from the present and the past!

What God has done is a prophecy of what He will do, for God is unchangeable. He never takes up a purpose for a while and then drops it, but He carries it out to the end. He never speaks a word and then reverses it. “Has He said, and shall He not do it?” He never performs an action which is intended to produce a certain result without following it up until the result aimed at is fully accomplished. If you and I were dealing with a changeable God, it would indeed be bad for us, but He has said, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Thus, from the Immutability of God, we argue that if He has begun to bless us, He will continue to bless us—and if He has commenced a work of Grace in our souls, He will certainly carry it on till it is absolutely complete!

We argue thus, partly from our own experience, because everything that is gracious within us has been, up to now, God’s work. What have you and I done towards our own salvation? Put together all that we may even *think* we have done and what does it come to? “Without Me,” said Christ to His disciples, “you can do nothing.” And, truly, without Him we have done nothing. Therefore, all that has been done in us is to be ascribed to His working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. When the Lord has begun any work of Grace in us, do we not find that He has carried it on? Has He ever forsaken us? Has He, up to now, turned from His purpose? In the day of trouble, has He deserted us? When He has sent us upon a warfare, has He left us to fall through our own weakness? It has not been so, up to now, and we may sing, “His mercy endures forever.” He has been a faithful God until now and it is, therefore, right for us to conclude that He will always be the same—

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

If He had meant to put us to shame, He has had ten thousand opportunities of doing so, but, until now, we have found the promise good— “Whoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed.”

And, dear Friends, if you will think this matter over, the argument will seem to be still more clear. The Lord called us when we were quite undeserving of His Grace. I am sure that I can remember nothing, before my conversion, that could be used as a reason why I should have been called by the Grace of God any more than other lads of my own age. True, I did not go into any gross sin, but then I had so much light, and so much tenderness of conscience, and I lived in such a godly atmosphere in my home, that every sin I did commit was worse than the sins of those who never had such advantages. And I have often looked upon myself as having been, under certain aspects, the very chief of sinners. And every child of God, when he is in his right mind, will look upon himself in the same way—

***“What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
“Twas even so, Father,’ you must always sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”***

Let us think of His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins*,*and say*,*“If His love freely flowed to us when we were in *that* sad state, what is to hinder its continuing to flow to us? If the Lord loved us from no cause within ourselves, why should He not continue to love us?” And if it is said that we are now in an altered condition—and, blessed be God, it is so!—that very alteration is an argument that He will still love us. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” He that brought us out of our horrible state and condemned by nature, without any reason in us for doing it, but simply because of His own sweet love—how could He cast us away? We are, at our worst, but what we were then, even if it were possible for us to be still dead—and should not He that began the work still carry it on, since He began with us on the footing and ground of Grace alone?

And think yet further, dear Friends, at that time we were not simply undeserving, but we were also unwilling! There is, in the natural heart of man, an unwillingness to yield unconditionally to God and Christ. The ways of Free Grace are not palatable to human pride! Even when we were religiously inclined, our religion consisted of our own prayers, our own repentance, or our own faith. You know how long we ran from one way to another, but it was always the same kind of way—we were to *do* something by which we were to get right with God, or to *feel* something, or to *know* something—everything was of self and for self! But the Grace of God, at last, weaned us from this folly and took us off the breasts of selfrighteousness, which had always been empty. Then we were prepared to go to God and, as one whom his mother comforts, so did He comfort us. We found, in our Father God and in His well-beloved Son, all that we needed, even wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! Well, my Brothers and Sisters, if God brought us to Himself when we were stray sheep without any willingness to return, how much more will He continue to keep us, now that, at any rate, the will is present with us, though often how to perform that which is good we find not? He that loved the undeserving, He that loved the unwilling, will not forsake us now. “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Imagine for a moment—it is only another form of the same argument— imagine what could be the motive of God for bringing us where we are if He meant, after all, to leave us. What shameful cruelty it would be for some prince or millionaire to take a poor man from his poverty and change his dress, alter his mode of living, put him among the princes, make him have luxurious tastes and elevated desires—and then send him back to the slum from where he came from and bid him live just as he formerly did in all his dirt and misery! Would not that be cruelty of the most refined kind? Surely, such treatment would cause the iron to enter into the man’s soul, for he would say, “Why was I not left where I was? Why was I taught needs that I never had before? Why was I instructed in the use of luxuries which had never fallen to my lot before and which, therefore, I never missed? It would have been better for me never to have seen this pretended benefactor than that he should bring me back here and, after lifting me up so high, leave me to fall back to where I was before.”

It cannot be that my Lord has made me sick of this world and yet will not give me another! It cannot be that He has torn away the righteousness which was some sort of comfort to me, tore it off like filthy rags, and made me stand naked to my own shame, if He does not intend to clothe me with the righteousness of Christ! He cannot have taught me to trust in His name, made me to rejoice in Him and given me sips of sweetness that have made me understand something of what Heaven must be, if He does not intend to bring me, at the end, to see His face! I cannot—I will not—believe that He has done all that He has done and yet that He will not complete the work! No, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Because He has done that, He means to keep us there—He will preserve us even unto the end!

I fancy I hear someone say, “I do not quite see how that can be. To some extent our salvation must depend upon ourselves.” Well, my Friend, if you think so, I will not quarrel with you. If you can get any sweetness out of that thought, it is such a dry old bone that I will willingly leave you to it. As for me, I should never be happy again if I thought that my eternal salvation hung upon myself, for that poor nail would soon come out of the wall! But I can hang my soul for time and for eternity on this Truth of God—“I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” I will not quarrel with you about this matter, for that which pleases you does not please me, so you may have your bone all to yourself, and much good may it do you! I am prepared to hang all my hopes upon the finished work of Jesus Christ my Lord!

“But,” asks one, “may you then do as you like?” My Friend, I wish I *might* do as I like, for if I could live as I liked, I would live entirely free from sin! I would live like Christ Himself! “Well,” says one, “I do not understand it.” The Lord teach you, then! I cannot. But if He ever brings you right away from all the bondage of the Law and the slavery of dependence upon yourself—to rest entirely upon His fixed, unchanging Grace—it will be a new era in your life! You will rise from being a slave to be a son! And from being under the lash of the bond slave, you will come to look up into your Father’s face with unutterable joy, blessing and praising and magnifying His name as long as you live.

But that is not the subject upon which I especially wish to speak at this time. I want to talk about the great blessing which is the basis of our argument. What is it that God has done for His people? “By whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Why did not the Apostle simply say, “called into the fellowship of His Son,” or, at most, “of His Son Jesus”? We would have known who was meant, would we not? Ah, but this enhances the glory of it—to make us see how great He is unto whose fellowship we have come and, consequently, how grand an exaltation it is which God has given to us, even us—the Apostle says that we have been called by God “into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Among many things which the text teaches us—and I do not pretend to exhaust its meaning, but merely to give a hint or two concerning it—it means, first, that Believers are *called by God into the society of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* And, secondly, *called into partnership with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**I.**First then, Beloved, all who truly believe are CALLED INTO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.  
We enjoy that society *when we draw near to God in prayer*and, indeed, whenever we draw near to God at all! We dare not come to God without Jesus Christ—that dear name should begin and end all our prayers. He is the one Mediator between God and men. He is our Great High Priest and Intercessor. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” “I am the door”—the way of access to God. He is the Mercy Seat, the Propitiatory where God meets with us and hears our prayers—so that we always pray in the society of Christ. There is no true praying without it.  
And, next, *we always praise God in the society of Jesus Christ.*There is no hymn, or Psalm, or spiritual song that could be accepted of God unless our Lord Jesus Christ was with us when it was sung. Prayers and praises, alike, must ascend to God through the merit of His atoning Sacrifice.  
More than this, we have been called into the society of Christ in this high sense—that we are always regarded by God as being with Christ and in Christ. *We stand before God in Christ.* I—I alone, dare not stand before God. No, my Brothers and Sisters, a sinner cannot stand there— he would be swept away! But Christ stands before God and we stand there in Christ, and so we are “accepted in the Beloved.” That is a beautiful picture which the poet puts into words when he prays that God will look through Christ’s wounds, as through a window—  
***“Him, and then the sinner see—  
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.”***  
We are accepted before God, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ! In Christ’s life made to live—in Christ’s righteousness beautified—in Christ’s blood cleansed—in Christ’s perfection made perfect, for, “you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power.” Is it not beautiful that we should thus be so associated with Christ that God always thinks of us in connection with His Son? God does not simply look at you and me, but at Christ covering you, me and all His people, and so His chosen ones are thought of as being in Him, their Covenant and Federal Head. They are so completely in Him that He, as it were, robes them before God. This is being brought into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, standing before God in Christ.  
But there is more than that in this expression. We are brought, Beloved, not only to have Christ with us in our approaches to God and to stand before God in Christ, but also to be *in Christ by virtue of a living union with Him.* The Spirit of God quickens our spirit and gives us life, but, more than that, Christ says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” The life of the Believer is not in himself, but in his Lord. “He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.” “I live,” says the Apostle Paul, “yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” And, writing to the Colossians, he says, “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Just as this finger of mine lives because of its union with the head, and with the heart, and with the rest of my being where life is to be found, so do you and I live because we have been joined unto Christ! If there were no life in the stem, there would be no life in the branch. If the branch is severed from the vine, it has no life in itself and you and I, dear Friends, are living branches because Christ lives and we live in Him and His life flows into us. Is not this a very wonderful thing?  
Do you see that man who once was in the habit of going in and out of the tavern? His speech, in those evil days, was foul, filthy, abominable. His poor wife was bruised and battered by his cruelty. His children were starved and shoeless. He is now with us in this House of Prayer and he is a member of Christ’s mystical body! If I were to ask him to stand up and tell us about the great change that has been worked in him, we would all rejoice to hear him testify that the Lord has forgiven him, washed him, cleansed him and renewed his heart! Did that man, in his unregenerate state, ever think that the life of Christ would be in him quickening his mortal body and changing his whole nature? Such a thought never occurred to him! Is he not a wonder of Grace? Why*,*I do verily believe that if the devil were to be converted and become a holy angel, again, it would not be more amazing than the conversion of some who are now present! The Lord has done strange things, marvelous things for them, and our hearts are glad as we think of what He has done. With His mighty arm, He reaches even to the ends of the earth those who have gone far in sin— and He brings them to His heart, to His House, to His Throne and into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, the wonders of God’s Grace! Let us bless and praise Him now and forever!  
Then, dear Friends, there is also this wonderful fact, that we are so called into the society of Christ that if we live as we ought to live, *the Lord Jesus Christ is the most familiar acquaintance we have in all the world.* The most loving husband often has to go out to business during the day and he can only get back to his spouse in the evening. But the Bridegroom of our souls is with us all day long! Whether we are at home or out in the world, He is still with us. You have a dear friend, somewhere, and you love to be in his company. But you cannot always be with him, so you sometimes have the sorrow of parting with him. But your best Friend is never far away from you, day or night. “When I wake,” says David, “I am still with You.” Perhaps, one of these days, we may have to go out to the utmost ends of the earth, but our Friend will be with us in the vessel as we cross the sea. He will be with us when we land on the distant shore. He will be with us everywhere and at all times. He is the “Friend that sticks closer than a brother,” whose company need never be lost. He never gets tired of His beloved ones! His delights are with the sons of men. If we would but walk by faith and carefully observe His Laws, we would find Him abiding with us and we would be abiding with Him. Spoke I not truly when I said that to His people, He is the most familiar Friend that they have? He dwells in them and they dwell in Him. “I in them, and You in Me,” said Christ to His Father—a wonderful union! And our union with Christ ought to be, in its enjoyment, as perpetual as Christ’s union with the Father, for He speaks of it in the same terms! “I in them, and You in Me.” Yes*,*Beloved, we are, indeed, brought into fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord, seeing that we are permitted to have Him for our constant Companion and Friend!  
And now, we are so called into the society of Christ that if we are living as we ought to live, where we go, Christ goes. *We are to represent Christ among men.* Most of them do not know much about Christ, but what they do know of Him, they will very largely learn from us. I am grieved to say that Christ has sometimes had a bad name because of the conduct of those who have professed to be His friends. “Ah,” men say, “so this is your Christianity, is it?” But the man who really is in the society of Christ lives in such a way that men take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus and has learned of Him. We are Christ’s representatives in the world and He trusts His honor and His cause in our hands. We are so much in His society that we compromise His dignity if we do wrong— but we adorn His Doctrine in all things if, by His Grace, we are enabled to do what is right. May you and I know to the fullest what it is to be in the society of Christ and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called!  
**II.**Now I want to turn to my second point, which is this—WE ARE CALLED INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.  
I do not know when I have felt so utterly unable to speak my thoughts as now that I have reached this part of my subject. If I could only make you enjoy a hundredth part of what I have enjoyed in looking into this subject, I would be perfectly satisfied! But I am afraid that I cannot. However, I will tell you as well as I can how thoroughly and how perfectly every true Christian is brought into partnership with Christ.  
For, first, *the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has given to every true Believer all that He possesses.* That is a splendid partnership when He, who is Lord of All, unto whom the Father has committed all power in Heaven and on earth, has been pleased to give over to His poor partners full right and title to all that He has! If we are heirs of God, we are jointheirs with Jesus Christ—Christ is heir to nothing to which His people are not also heirs.  
He has given us His life. That is a wonderful partnership of which He says, “Because I live, you shall also live.” He actually laid down His life for us! “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” His very Self, His life, He brought into the partnership—it was the biggest asset in the whole concern, the costliest thing that could be contributed to this wonderful joint-stock company—Christ & Co. We without Christ would be poor worthless things, but Christ is ours, and Christ is All, so we have all. Oh, what a wonderful partnership is this in which He gave us His life!  
He has also given us His Father. Hear His message to His disciples after His resurrection—“I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God.” Christ has not a Father if I have not one! Christ has not a God if I have not one, for He says, “My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God.” Oh, but what a wonderful Father Christ has! The Only-Begotten, who has always perfectly kept His Father’s Commandments, who is eternally and essentially One with Him—what a Father He has! That Father is the Father of all the saints. What a God Christ has! Who can imagine the wealth of the Godhead? But all that Godhead’s fullness and Glory belong to every soul that is in Christ! God has given Himself to Christ, that all fullness might dwell in Him. “And of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.” So, He has given us His life and He has given us His Father.  
Notice, next, He has given us His Kingdom. This makes me almost stagger as I say it, yet here are His own words to His disciples, “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto Me” If Christ is King, you are kings! If He reigns, you must reign, too! When men crown the king, they also crown the queen—and if she is crowned, she is queen. And when Christ is King, His Church is queen and she shall reign with Him forever and ever. Oh, that the great marriage-day were come and that the bride had made herself ready to glory and rejoice with her adorable Bridegroom!  
Notice, too, that Christ has given us His Throne. “To Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” It is the Throne of God and Christ occupies it with His Father, but not alone, for He shares it with all His people! What a wonderful partnership is this! Christ gives us His life, His Father, His Kingdom and His Throne, as part and parcel of the joint-stock company He shares with us. This is one meaning of our being brought into fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.  
But there is something more which is quite as amazing, namely, that, *inasmuch as Christ gave us His all, He took* our all. “Of course He did,” you say. Ah, but what had we to bring into the partnership? All that we had to bring were rags, beggary, poverty, sins, curses, death, Hell—that was all we could contribute to the joint-stock.  
Yet Christ was willing to become a partner with us, for, first, He took our nature. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” He would not let His chosen ones be men without Himself being a Man, too! And if they were to be compassed with infirmities, He must be compassed with infirmities, too! And if they had to suffer hunger, cold and nakedness, He would suffer them, too, so that He could say, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” This all came because He took upon Himself our nature.  
Then, still more wonderful, He took upon Himself our sin. Though in Him was no sin, yet the Lord made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all. He was the Scapegoat upon whose head the sin of Israel was, by imputation, laid, and He carried our sin away into the wilderness where it could never be found. He willingly bore all the consequences of our sin and, therefore, He became a partaker of our curse. It does seem amazing that the Son of God should be, in any sense, cursed, yet so it was. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” And He did hang on the tree and bleed and die for us.  
Among other things which Christ took on our behalf, it always astounds me that He endured even a sense of His Father’s deserting Him till He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” God must turn away His eyes from sinners—and if Christ occupies the place of sinners, the Father leaves Him to die in the dark! Is not this an amazing partnership, that Christ should take upon Himself all that appertained to us, even to sorrow and broken-heartedness and, at last, death itself? That blessed body, though it saw no corruption, yet was as truly dead as that of anyone else who ever died! Christ took everything that belonged to us into that wonderful partnership!  
Now see the result of this union—*thus Christ meets all our needs.*For instance, I bring my sin, but against that He sets His Atonement. I bring my bondage, but against that He sets His Redemption. I bring Him death, but He brings His Resurrection. I bring Him my weakness and He meets it with His strength. I bring Him my wickedness and He is made of God unto me, righteousness. I bring Him my evil nature and He is made of God unto me, sanctification. Whatever there is of evil that I have to contribute to the partnership, He covers it all with a splendor of goodness that blots it out and makes my soul much richer than it was before. Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be brought into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, if it is thus with us,*we must make this fellowship real on our part.* We must yield to Christ all that we have if we are brought into this partnership with Him. What little we have, we must bring. He has already taken all the bad we have, and if we have any good thing, He has *given* it to us, so let us bring it all to Him. I have a something inside here for which He has done much by His Grace—something which was black as night, but which He has washed and changed. Here it is, my Lord—my heart. You say, “My son, give Me your heart.” I do deposit it with You, with all the love, all the ardor and all the zeal that I have, and place it entirely at Your disposal. Seal my heart against all intruders, that it may be wholly for Yourself. Will not you, also, my Brothers and Sisters, bring your hearts to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?  
Well, what else do you have? Have you a tongue? Then give your tongue to Him and speak for Him as best you can. But perhaps you cannot say much. Have you a purse? Then give it to Him—all the substance that you have—use as His steward, for His Glory. Have you time? Spend some of that in caring for one of Christ’s friends—I mean, yourself! And in caring for others of His friends—your wife, your children, your neighbors—for He bids you do that for Him. All the rest of your time is His—therefore waste none of it, but give it all to Him. It is only a few farthings you can ever put into the treasury by the side of His great masses of gold bullion, but do put in what you have, and feel a pleasure in saying, “Yes, I have contributed something to the partnership, little as it is.” Have you any sort of ability? Have you prayers? Have you tears? Come, put them all in! Are you so poor and so obscure that this is all you have to bring? Then be much in prayer, for my Lord will accept your cries, tears, sighs and groans—and they shall all go into the joint-stock account, for He is so condescending that when He takes us into fellowship, He is willing to take our little share and put it with His!  
But, next, if we are partners with Christ, *we must share with Him in all that He has.* Are you willing? “Oh, yes,” you say. Ah, but there is something which Christ carries which is ugly to some eyes and heavy to some shoulders. I mean, His Cross. And, you know, His Cross goes with His crown—there is no dividing them. As we say in the old proverb, “No sweat, no sweet,” so, depend upon it, it is, “No cross, no crown.” You were laughed at, yesterday, were you not, for Christ’s sake? Brother, Sister, did you stick to your partnership? Did you say, “Thank you. I am glad to receive a share of what the world gives my Lord. I am thankful that I am counted worthy to share with Him even in that”? If you are reproached for Christ’s sake, you should be happy! In that way you are proving the reality of your partnership. It must have been a glorious thing to the martyrs that they had the high privilege of dying for their Lord. He sustained and cheered them, but the grand thought that made them patient in the midst of agony—and triumphant in the hour of cruel death—was that they could say, “Now we are partakers of His sufferings! We are filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” They were such thorough partners with Christ that they took all that came—and if we go in to be partners, we must be partners. We must take the rough as well as the smooth.  
If you marry a wife, it must be for better or worse. And if you enter into fellowship with Christ, there can be no “worse” to those who are one with Him! But if it *seems* to be worse, you must cleave to Him all the more closely! There is no true fellowship with Christ if we are not willing to go with Him wherever He goes—into any measure of shame, or scorn, or loss, or suffering, or even to death by martyrdom, itself, for His dear sake.  
I told you that in this partnership, the Lord Jesus Christ supplies our needs. When we put the need down, He puts the supply down. Now, I want you who have been called into this fellowship to do the same with Christ, for *we are to supply His need.*What does He need? Well, He has gone away to Heaven. He is not here in bodily Presence, so Christ needs a voice with which to go and call in the other sheep that are not yet folded. Christ needs a voice in your house to speak to the children about their souls! Will you lend Christ your voice? There is somebody—a neighbor of yours—who never goes to any place of worship and Christ wants a voice to speak to that Sabbath-breaker. Will you lend Christ your voice? Perhaps, in the pew with you, there is somebody who only needs just a word and he or she would be decided for Christ. Will you lend—no, it is not a case of *lending*—will you *give* Christ your voice? Our tongues should be so consecrated to Christ that they are wholly His.  
There is a story which will be in the Magazine next month [*The Sword and the Trowel*, April, 1883—Visit http://www.pilgrimpublications.com/swtrowel.htm for copy

availability] which you will read, I daresay, with pleasure. I was delighted with it when I read it. It was to the effect that some people’s blunders seem to be more in the line of doing good than are other people’s best efforts. A young girl, belonging to the Normal College in New York, went home and said, “Oh*,*Father, young Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Spurgeon’s son, addressed us today, and instead of trying to make us laugh, as most visitors do, or to give us the ‘good advice’ that we have heard a hundred times, he gave us something new! He spoke about Jesus and he invited us all to Christ, and did it so naturally, and simply, and affectionately, that all the girls seemed interested. Oh, how much good it did me, Father! I wish you had been there to hear him.”

Now, mark you, it was a great blunder on “Son Charlie’s” part, because that Normal College is not only a non-sectarian institution, but many of the girls are daughters of Jews and infidels. And, according to the rules, he had no business to say anything about religion at all! And he blundered by firing the Gospel gun right into the middle of them. I rejoiced when I heard of it and I wish that you and I would always make such blunders as that, so that, if people got us to speak to them— somehow or other we will tell them of Jesus Christ because we cannot help it! What a man is full of, will come out of him. And if a man is full of Christ, he may make grand mistakes—but they will be to the glory of God! So I do not say, *lend*Christ your tongues, but *give* Him your voices which belong to Him.

Many of you, I trust, will be ready enough to give Him your tongues, but does He not want anything else? Yes. Christ wants our personal service. He wants men and women who will be, among men, what He would be if He were here in bodily Presence. He wants some of you to take little children like lambs to His fold and teach them on the Sabbath. The Sunday schools need you. No, rather let me say that Christ needs you in the Sunday school. He needs men and women to live in the midst of this great London as He would have lived if He were multiplied ten thousand times and dwelt among our citizens.

Sometimes, Jesus needs you to act as a foot-washer, to wash His feet. If you see a Brother going wrong, backsliding, and getting his feet dirty, your Lord does not want you to go and call out so that everybody can hear you, “Here is a Brother who has dirty feet.” No, no! Go and fetch a basin of water and a towel, and wash the man all by himself, and set your fallen Brother right again. Then Christ has some very poor members of His family, perhaps in the workhouse—and He wants you to go and relieve them. There are some who are sick. He wants you to visit them. There are some of His loved ones, it may be, who are cast down and ready to sink in utter despair—He wants you to go and comfort them. Since it is a joint-stock concern in which you are a partner, look out for Christ’s poor people, and say to yourself, “If I cannot give anything to Him, I will give it to them, for they are a part of Him and He will accept it as given to Himself.” God help you to do so—you who love His dear name—and thus may we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, to whom, with the ever-blessed Spirit, be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-9.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.* Paul could never have sustained the great weight of responsibility and tribulation which fell upon him if he had not felt that he was “called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.” No man will ever be fit for the ministry of the Word unless he is called to it by God. This also will be your strength in every other station of life—if God has called you to your peculiar work and warfare, He will not send you at your own charges, but He will be at the back of you and support you even to the end. I think it is for this reason that Paul so constantly dwells upon his own calling when he is about to write to the Churches—that he may remind other Believers that they have similar privileges in their spheres of labor.

**2 *,*3*.****Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*A Church should be made up of sanctified persons, those who have been set apart in Christ from before the foundation of the world, those who have been called by the Spirit of God to holiness of life. We sometimes sing—

***“With them numbered may we be***

***Now, and through eternity”—***  
but if we are not holy, if we are not truly sanctified, how can we expect to be numbered with the Church of Christ? Where there is no true holiness, there is no work of the Spirit of God. For all the holy ones Paul desires Grace and peace, for they still need these blessings. The holiest of men still have spots about them and they need that Grace and peace should be given to them from day to day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**4** ***.****I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.*It is something to be thankful for God’s goodness to yourself, but it is a higher virtue to be thankful for God’s goodness to others. How grateful we might be all day long if we had quick eyes to see the Grace of God in our fellow Christians—and if we blessed God for it whenever we saw it! There are some whose eyes are much more quick to see imperfections than to see Graces—it is a pity to have such jaundiced eyes as that—may we have good, sound, clear, gracious eyes which will see all the good there is in our fellow Believers. And may we then ascribe it all to God and bless and praise Him for it!

**5-8.***That in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* It was very wise of Paul to thus praise these Corinthians where they could be praised, for he was about to upbraid them and reprove them for many things which were not pleasing to God. If you have the unpleasant duty of rebuking those who deserve it, always take care that you begin by saying all that you can and all that ought to be said in their favor—it will prepare the way for what you have to say to them afterwards. The Corinthians were a highly-gifted Church. They probably had more knowledge and more of the gifts of utterance than any other Church of their day. But, alas, they fell into greater sin than did their sister Churches! Great gifts are not great Graces, but great gifts *require* great Graces to go with them, or they become a temptation and a snare. Yet Paul felt quite sure that God would keep even these Corinthians with all their imperfections—and confirm them to the end. And that which was true of them is also true of all the Lord’s people—God will preserve them to the very end.

**9*.****God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
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THE SPECIAL CALL AND THE UNFAILING RESULT  
NO. 616

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED SUNDAY EVENING  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus, Christ our Lord.”  
1 Corinthians 1:9.~~***

AS I look round upon this large Church, numbering far above two thousand members, my soul is often cast down within me. Yes, I am brought into the lowest depths of anxiety! Who is sufficient for these things? To order and distribute its sacred offices aright, to govern with discretion, to exercise discipline with prudence, to hide a strong hand and to show at all times a loving heart—such thoughts roll in, wave after wave, till they threaten to overwhelm the mind! And then at last to render unto the Master an account according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed. To be saluted of my God at His coming as a faithful and wise servant who has given to His household meat in due season. To be approved as a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, not having “shunned to declare the whole counsel of God,” as well to those that did forbear as to those that did hear. If such aims do sometimes wind up one’s nerves to extraordinary energy, they verily make the heart palpitate at other times with the fear that haunts and the solemnity that awes our soul.

Well, well could I be content to renounce so tremendous a charge if it were possible! This, however, is always the most painful qualm that troubles me. Will all these people hold on their way? They have professed to be converted. Many of them have come out from the world, and for several years their lives have been distinguished by all virtues. These hands have baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And so far there appears reasonable evidence that the Spirit of God has set His seal to their being His genuine work by maintaining them in the Truth of God and holiness.

But will they persevere? Will they hold on? When the world is so full of temptations in the midst of this age of sham. When godliness, when true godliness is as much hated as ever it was and when spiritual religion is as great a mystery as it was to the sages of Areopagus in the days of Paul—will these men and women, especially the younger ones of them— will they all be found faithful—or will they disgrace the cause? Will they stain the escutcheon of Christ? Will they turn their backs in the day of battle and prove recreant cowards, traitors to our Lord and Master?

Such a text as this, then, is refreshing, indeed! It comes so softly into one’s ear and breathes such gentle music because it gives the comfort which just meets the difficulty. Yes, yes, they will hold on their way! There may be some who will go out from us because they were not of us—for if they were of us, doubtless they would have continued with us— but still the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, “The Lord knows them that are His.” Yes, they shall stand, for God is faithful, who has called them unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord!

Well, now, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you not the same sort of trouble rising in your own minds? You look within. You think you see what Divine Grace has done for you. You feel as you never did feel before conversion. The things you once hated you now love and what you once loved you now hate. You feel that there has been a radical change in you—one that nature could not effect and your spirit is very glad in the prospect of what this will all lead to—“the rest which remains for the people of God,” and the crown of everlasting life that fades not away.

But here comes in this awkward “but”—you see so much corruption within! You feel so much weakness which aids and abets this corruption! You foresee so many trials awaiting you that the pale shadow of despondency falls on your heart and fitful doubts and questions vex your brain. You have no sooner overcome one adversary than you are attacked by another and sometimes the evil spirit howls in your ear, “God has forsaken you! Now it is all over with you!” And you are ready to lie down and die in despair, saying, “I shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy, I shall never see His face with joy.”

To you, also, my text comes like a whisper from Heaven—“God is faithful” who has called you “unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.” My drift this evening will be, while reminding you of your calling and of your fellowship, to comfort your hearts with regard to your perseverance. He is able to confirm and keep you even to the end and He will do it! He will present you blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ for this very reason—that He has called you to fellowship with Him. What shall we say, then? First, I want to refresh your memories with your calling. Secondly, I want to make you exercise your fellowship. And, thirdly, I want you to perceive your security.

**I.**Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, LET ME REFRESH YOUR MEMORIES WITH YOUR CALLING. Was there not a day, the mementoes of which you fondly cherish, when you were called from death unto life? Fly back, now, to the day and hour if you can and, if not, light upon the season thereabouts when the great transaction took place, in which you were made Christ’s forever, by the voluntary surrender of yourself to Him. In looking back, does it not strike you that your calling must have been of Divine origin?

The text says, “God called you”—does not your experience prove the same? We thought, perhaps, as the season transpired, that we had had no other call than that which came in the word that was addressed to us through our godly parents, through our Bibles, through the good books that we read. Yet we perceive, in looking back, as the crisis passes before us in review, that none of these things ever could have produced the effect which has been taking place in us. Did we not read the same books years before? They never touched a chord in our hearts! We listened to the same minstrel, it may be, scores of times—but he never could strike a spark into our dark natures! We had our convictions before this, but they were the mere disquietudes of natural conscience which died away like the morning’s frost, when the sun rises and scatters it all.

Therefore we conclude that this time it must have been something special and we think every man that has experienced it will say at once, “Yes, I see the finger of God in this! I am absolutely certain it was not moral persuasion. It was not the oratory of the preacher. It was not the earnestness, even, of my pleading teacher or friend—but the hand of God as clear in my conversion as in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And, being so, Beloved, do you not notice at once how irresistible that call was? Oh, we had been called scores of times before but we always turned a deaf ear! I can say earnestly that I had been dragged to the Cross of Christ before and yet I would not go. It was with me as the old proverb has it, “One man may lead a horse to water, but twenty cannot make him drink.”

How many times was I lead to the water? Brought to the foot of the Cross? Pointed to Christ, pleaded with to look to Him? Urged to put my trust in Him, but I would not? I preferred the things of this world and I would gladly have followed the devices of my own heart—my own willingness and doing and judging—rather than yield to the will, and wisdom and kindness of God!

But when this particular call came, did you struggle against it? Perhaps you did, but you had more than your match! Oh, the Divine influence, when you threw down your sword and said, “Great God, I yield. I know not how it is, but I feel sweet yearnings within. My soul relents. I can be Your enemy no more. Your love has destroyed me and made me powerless to resist. You have whispered something in my ear—I know not how You did it, but ‘tis there and I surrender at discretion. Do what You will with me, only allow me to know Yourself, that I may be saved.”

How gracious that calling must have been since it came to you from God! It came to you irresistibly and came to you with such personal demonstration! What Grace was here! What was there in you to suggest a motive why God should call you? Oh, Beloved, we can hardly ask you that question without tears rising in our own eyes—

***“What was there in us that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas even so, Father!’ we ever must sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”***

Some of you were drunkards, were profane, were injurious. Many of you cared neither for God nor man. How often have you mocked at God’s Word! How frequently have you despised God’s ministers! How constantly has the holy name of the Most High been used in a flippant, if not in a profane manner by you! And yet for all that, He fixed His eyes upon you and would not withdraw. And when you spurned the Divine Grace that would have saved you, still He followed you, determined to save, till at last, in the appointed time, He got the grasp of you and would not let you go until He had made you His friend, turned your heart to love Him and made your spirit obedient to His Grace!

I think, throughout eternity, if we had this problem to solve—“why did He call *me*”—we should still go on making wrong guesses! We could never arrive at the right conclusion unless we should say, once and for all, “I do not know.” He did as He willed. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. And here, let me say, if these things are so, oh should not this calling of ours tonight evoke our most intense gratitude, our most earnest love? Oh, if He had not called you, where had you been tonight? You shall sit tonight at the Lord’s Table—where would you have been but for Divine Grace?

To repeat the old saying of John Bradford when he saw a cartful of men going off to Tyburn to be hanged, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” When you see the swearer in the street, or the drunkard rolling home at night—there are you, there am I—but for the Grace of God. Who am I—what should I have been if the Lord, in mercy, had not stopped me in my mad career! I know there are some of us who can remember the old story of Rowland Hill, when a good Scotchman called to see him and without saying a word, sat still for some five minutes, looking into the good old gentleman’s face.

At last Rowland Hill asked him what engaged his attention. Said he, “I was looking at the lines of your face.” Well, what do you make of them? “Why,” said he, “that if the Grace of God hadn’t been in you, you would have been the biggest rascal living!” And some of us feel just that—that if it had not been for the Grace of God we should have been out-and-out ringleaders in every kind of infamy and sin. I know for myself I can never do things by halves. If I had served Baal I would have built him an altar and made victims smoke upon it day and night. And if we serve God zealously and earnestly we have the more reason to be humble and to lay low in the dust. For that very zeal of spirit would have been turned to the very worst account unless Divine Grace had been pleased to transform us.

Why, there are some people in the world that seem too insipid to do any good or hurt and *they* have reason to be thankful if they are converted. But still not that reason that others have, who, if they did mischief, would do it with both hands and if they do anything for God, must do it with all their might. This was a kind and gracious call, when we consider what we might have been. Stand up now, Believer, and look at this and remember the Grace of this call when you consider what you are.

Why, Man, tonight, what are you? A pardoned sinner—not a sin against you in God’s book. What are you?—A justified person. The righteousness of Christ girds you—even the eyes of God cannot see a spot in you! You are in Christ all fair. There is no spot in you—justified freely by His Grace—roll that thought under your tongue as a sweet morsel. What are you tonight? You are a son of God, an adopted heir of Heaven, joint heir with Christ! You are accepted in the Beloved and very precious to Jehovah, Himself. What are you? You are an heir of immortality. Heaven is your certain inheritance. Oh, I wish you could believe this! You that are Christians and know this to be true, I wish you could realize it—that within ten minutes you may be in Heaven with Christ, and that within a few years you will be there! Eternal life is yours—not maybe, not perhaps—but *is* yours tonight and you have but to heave one gentle sigh and the dust is left behind and the spirit waves the palm and wears the crown and sings the eternal hymn before the Throne of God!

God has called us! Let us look back upon the time of our calling and if some such thoughts as these should rise in our minds, they will not be unprofitable. They will fill your souls with grateful joy in retracing the steps by which you have been led. They will put courage into your souls in realizing the Grace by which you now stand. They will clear the mist from your eyes in looking forward with cheerful hope to the future. I think they will prompt you to take your harp down from the willows and touch the strings with melodious song—

***~~“ Every fallen soul, by sinning,  
Merits everlasting pain.  
But Your love, without beginning,  
Has restored Your sons again.  
Countless millions  
Shall in life, through Jesus, reign.  
Pause, my Soul! Adore and wonder!  
Ask, ‘O why such love to me?’~~***

***~~Grace has put me in the number  
Of the Savior’s family—Hallelujah,  
Thanks, eternal thanks, to You!”~~***

**II.**To what end, or for what purpose did God call you? He called you, as we had it this morning, that you might receive Christ and walk in Him, or, as the text has it, that you might have fellowship with Christ. Now the word “fellowship,” [koinonia,] is not properly to be interpreted here as a society, but as the *result* of society—that is to say, fellowship lies in mutual and identical interests. A man and his wife have fellowship with each other in that which is common to both and enjoyed in communion accordingly. All their possessions are joint possessions. They are one together in love. And if the wife has anything, it is the husband’s and the husband, in his love, thinks all that he has to be his wife’s.

Now, when we were called to Christ, we were called to have fellowship with Him of this peculiar kind—that we became relatively and absolutely identical with Christ. We were made one with Him so that everything Christ had became ours. This was the act of faith to let us take hold of what Christ had. And this is the result of faith—to give us Christ and to give us to Christ—so that we are in kinship together and made one person, Christ the Head and we the members. Now we have a unity to Christ, a fellowship to Christ, first in His loves. What Christ loves we love. He loves the saints—so do we.

He loves sinners—so do we. He loves the world and pants to see it transformed into the garden of the Lord—so do we. Whatever Christ loves, our heart loves, for our heart and Christ’s heart are welded together—put into the same furnace and then made into one—so that what He loves we love and what He hates and detests and abhors, we also deprecate and loathe. Then we are one with Christ in His desires. Does Christ desire anything?—So do we. He desires to see multitudes saved—so do we. He desires the Glory of God—we also labor for the same. He desires that the saints may be with Him where He is—we desire to be with Him there, too. He desires to drive out sin—behold we fight under His banner.

He desires that his Father’s name may be loved and adored by all His creatures—we pray daily, “Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven.” We are called, then, to a fellowship with Christ in having the same loves and the same desires. So, too, in our measure we have the same sufferings. We are not nailed to the Cross, nor do we die a bloody death. Yet many of our compeers that have gone before have done so and if it ever came to that, there are still millions of us, with true hearts, as ever became sacrifices to God in England. And when Christ is reproached, we are reproached and we have learned to bear His reproach, too.

It is a very sweet thing to be blamed for Christ’s sake—to be despised for following the Master, to have the wits of the world against us—’tis well, ‘tis well. It was so with Him. The servant would not be above his master, nor the disciple above his Lord. Some few drops of His cup we drink and they are but few. And yet it has been given to some more than to others to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” And, Beloved, we also have fellowship with Christ in His joys as well as in His trials. Is He happy? We are happy to think Christ is happy.

I do not know whether you have ever drank that joy, Believer, but I have found it a very sweet joy to be joyful because Christ is joyful. You may have known some friend, perhaps, who had another dear friend and he saw that friend prospering in the world. He did not get on himself as he could wish. He was sickly, he was often low in spirit—but somehow, as often as ever he saw his friend, marked his prosperity, saw his happy wife and smiling children, he said, “It always makes me happy to think how you prosper.” There was true friendship. Now between Christ and His people there is such love that if Christ is crowned, never mind where I am—if God also has highly exalted Him, what does it matter, what does it matter even though He crush me in the very dust?

I think a man must undergo some overwhelming trouble before he can lay hold on this as a comfort. But if he can once get it, from my own experience I bear witness, there is no sweeter, more thrilling delight to be known this side of Heaven than that of having Christ’s joy fulfilled in us that our joy may be full. Oh, see Him rise! See Him crowned! Hear the songs of angels! Mark the terror of devils! Know that His name is high over all in Heaven and earth and sky and you will feel, “Well, well, all these things that I have to suffer are nothing. It does not matter—it is all well, Christ is exalted—and I am perfectly content.” This is to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor does the fellowship end here! Nor is it possible tonight to go through the whole of it, for our fellowship with Christ leads us to be partakers of all His riches. Whatever Christ has belongs to us. If He has riches in pardoning, supporting, instructing, illuminating, sanctifying, preserving or perfecting Christians, they are all ours. Is His blood precious? It is mine. Is His righteousness complete? It is mine. Are His merits sweet? They are mine. Has He power in intercession? It is mine. Has He wisdom, righteousness—has He anything? It is mine. The father has called us to have fellowship with Christ and to be partakers in all He has. So is it with all His Glory. There is not a crown He wears but we have part of it—no, there is not a gem that sparkles in a crown He wears but it sparkles for us as well as for Him!

For us the golden streets! For us the chariot in which He rides along them! For us the crowding angels! For us the joyous acclamations! For us those chords of music! For us the shout of, “Hallelujah, Hallelujah! For You were slain and have redeemed the saints unto God by Your blood.” For us the Second Advent with all its splendors. For us the universal reign of Christ, the gathered scepters and the congregated crowns. For us the Day of Judgment with the reeling columns of the sky, and the rocks dissolved before the heat of the blast of His anger. For us the angels as they gather up the righteous and even for us the triumph of the Lord, when with shout of archangel He shall destroy His adversaries with the breath of His nostrils forever!

There is nothing to come in Scripture, or in all the prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled when Christ shall come—there is nothing anywhere to be revealed concerning Christ, but what is ours, since our fellowship is with Him. And all this, Brothers and Sisters, leads to practical spiritual fellowship with Christ! I hope that you who are in Christ will strive tonight to realize that you are in Him. Come now, I am not trying to preach. I want to talk this over with you. If you believe you are in Christ you are one with Him tonight. Say, then, to your soul, “You are one with Christ even now. In yourself you are everything that is vile, but in Him you are nothing of the sort. My Soul, tonight you are strong and rich and blessedly perfect. In Him you are in Heaven. In Him there is nothing to taunt you, nothing to accuse you, much less any thing to condemn you.”

Come, put on your silver sandals, daughter of Zion! Wrap yourself now in your scarlet and fine linen which your Lord has bought for you! Come with Him up to the mountain and sit with Him awhile, “Far from this world of grief and sin,” and let Him speak to you while He tells you, “You are Mine and I am yours.” Then will you be able to say, “Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

**III.**Now we conclude by noticing the third point in two or three words. All this leads us to perceive our security. Saints must be saved—it cannot be otherwise—for two reasons. First, because God has called them. Now the gifts and calling of God are, according to Scripture, “without repentance,” that is to say, if He has once called a man, He never sends him back again. What? Give me quickening Grace and let me die after it? Give me to taste the joys of the Spirit and yet take them away from my lips forever?

Why this were unheard of cruelty! For God to destroy the guilty in Hell is just, but, I venture to say, that for God to give spiritual enjoyments, the intense, the unutterable intense delights of spiritual enjoyment and not intend that the person should always enjoy these—to take them away forever—would be to put a sting into Hell which I cannot conceive of, because He is faithful in all His ways and righteous in all His judgments. No, let the sinner bear his guilt, but do not add the unnecessary torment of letting him, first of all, know the hope of eternal life and then find himself disappointed.

Does God play fast and loose? Does He give and then take back again? Does He make us nobles and then degrade us into beggars? Does He put crowns on our heads and then slay us? Does He make us His children and then cast us out of the family? God forbid! These are unheard of things for a God to do. God is faithful who has called you. Having called you, He has justified you! Having justified you He will glorify you! Then again, there is another reason why you are saved. He has called you into fellowship with Christ and that fellowship, if God is faithful, must be complete. You have shared His sufferings, you have had to bear a part of His reproach—His faithfulness secures the rest. He is “the strength,” yes, the eternity of Israel! “He is not a man that He should repent.”

Pronounce His name with reverence—it has in it more virtue than ten thousand material pledges. He is *God*—therefore He will maintain the fellowship all the way through. Am I to bear the Cross and not to wear the crown? Am I to come as a guilty sinner and have fellowship in His blood and yet not have fellowship in the Heaven into which, by that blood, He entered as my representative? Am I to come and trust Christ and have fellowship in the merit of that dying Savior and yet have no fellowship in His living power? Am I today, by faith, to be in fellowship with Him and never by sight to have the same? Oh this were strange! Oh this were two modes of acting, sowing many seeds! This were having mixed weights in the bag!

God acts on one principle, not on two—and where He calls us to be His sons and to be partners with Christ—He will carry out the deed of partnership and we shall see His face! And we shall wear His crown and we shall sit upon His Throne—and all that shall come by-and-by. Therefore, courage, Brothers and Sisters, and let us rejoice tonight, while we come to the Table, that we are secure, for God has called us—we must be saved, for we have fellowship with Christ.

Now I have been preaching only to the people of God and there is a large number of my hearers that are not of this happy family. I wish I were preaching to them also! But the time has fled. Let me say this word of encouragement to them—the Divine Grace that called us can call you! You cannot save yourself, but He can save you and here is a promise which He gives you—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” To call upon that name is to invoke it in prayer—venture upon it in fact and trust it by faith.

If you believe in Christ you shall be saved. I know not who you may be. To every creature under Heaven the same Gospel is preached, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you”—I know not to whom that refers just now—“you”—tough you are the vilest sinner living—“you shall be saved.” Trust Christ now and your sins are gone! Rest on Him and you are snatched from the kingdom of evil and put into the republic of life— you become members of Christ’s body—you are, by His Grace, saved!—

***“Oh, believe the message true,  
God to you His Son has given.”***  
Cast yourself upon Him! Trust His Grace and Heaven is yours forever! The Lord add His blessing, now, for Christ’s sake. Amen.  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1611 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE WORD OF THE CROSS  
NO. 1611

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 31, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18.~~***

NOTE well that in the 17th verse Paul had renounced the “wisdom of words.” He says that he was sent to “preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect.” It is very clear, therefore, that there is an excellence, elegance and eloquence of language which would deprive the Gospel of its due effect. I have never yet heard that the Cross of Christ was made of no effect by great plainness of speech, nor even by ruggedness of language—but it is the, “wisdom of words,” which is said to have this destroying power. Oh, dreadful wisdom of words! God grant that we may be delivered from making attempts at it, for we ought earnestly to shun anything and everything which can be so mischievous in its influence as to make the Cross of Christ of no effect. The “wisdom of words” works evil at times by veiling the Truths of God which ought to be set forth in the clearest possible manner.

The doctrine of Atonement by blood, which is the essence of the preaching of the Cross, is objectionable to many minds and, therefore, certain preachers take care not to state it too plainly. *Prudently*, as *they* call it— *craftily*, as the *Apostle Paul* would call it—they tone down the objectionable features of the great Sacrifice, hoping by pretty phrases to somewhat remove the “offense of the Cross.” Proud minds object to Substitution, which is the very edge of the doctrine and, therefore, theories are adopted which leave out the idea of laying sin upon the Savior and making Him to be a curse for us. Self-sacrifice is set forth as possessing a high, heroic influence by which we are stimulated to self-salvation, but the Lord’s suffering as the Just for the unjust is not mentioned! The Cross, in such a case, is not at all the Cross by which self-condemned sinners can be comforted and the hardened can be subdued, but quite another matter.

Those who thus veil an unwelcome Truth of God imagine that they make disciples, whereas they are only paying homage to unbelief and comforting men in their rejection of the Divine Propitiation for sin! Whatever the preacher may mean in his heart, he will be guilty of the blood of souls if he does not clearly proclaim a real Sacrifice for sin. Too often the “wisdom of words” explains the Gospel away. It is possible to refine a doctrine till the very soul of it is gone. You may draw such nice distinctions that the true meaning is filtered away. Certain divines tell us that they must adapt the Truth of God to the advance of the age, which means that they must murder it and fling its dead body to the dogs! It is asserted that the advanced philosophy of the 19th Century requires a progressive theology to keep abreast of it—which simply means that a popular lie shall take the place of an offensive Truth of God.

Under pretense of winning the cultured intellects of the age, “the wisdom of words,” has gradually landed us in a denial of those first principles for which the martyrs died! Apologies for the Gospel, in which the essence of it is conceded to the unbeliever, are worse than infidelity. I hate that defense of the Gospel which razes it to the ground to preserve it from destruction. The “wisdom of words,” however, is more frequently used with the intent of *adorning* the Gospel and making it to appear somewhat more beautiful than it would be in its natural form. They would paint the rose and enamel the lily, add whiteness to snow and brightness to the sun! With their wretched candles they would help us to see the stars! O superfluity of evil!

The Cross of Christ is sublimely simple—to adorn it is to dishonor it. There is no statement under Heaven more musical than this—“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” All the bells that you could ring to make it more harmonious would only add a jingle jangle to its heavenly melody which is, in itself, so sweet that it charms the harpers before the Throne of God! The doctrine that God descended upon the earth in human nature—and in that nature bore our sins, carried our sorrows and made expiation for our transgressions by the death on the Cross—is, in itself, matchless poetry, the perfection of all that is ennobling in thought and creed! Yet the attempt is made to *decorate* the Gospel as though it needed something to commend it to the understanding and the heart.

The result is that men’s minds are attracted away from the Gospel, either to the preacher or to some utterly indifferent point. Hearers carry home charming morsels of poetry, but they forget the precious blood! They remember the elaborate metaphors so daintily worked out, but they forget the five wounds and fail to look unto the Lord Jesus and be saved! The Truth of God is buried under flowers! Brothers, let us cut out of our sermons everything that takes men’s minds away from the Cross! One look at Jesus is better than the most attentive gazing at our gems of speech! One of the old masters found that certain vases which he had depicted upon the sacramental table attracted more notice than the face of the Lord, whom he had painted sitting at the head of the feast and, therefore, he struck them out at once. Let us, my Brothers, do the same whenever anything of ours withdraws the mind away from Jesus. Christ must always be in the foreground and our sermons must point to Him, or they will do more harm than good. We must preach Christ Crucified and set Him forth like the sun in the heavens, as the only Light of men!

Some seem to imagine that the Gospel does not contain within itself sufficient force for its own spreading and, therefore, they dream that if it is to have power among men it must either be through the logical way in which it is put—in which case all glory is to*logic*, or though the handsome manner in which it is stated—in which case all glory is to *rhetoric*. The notion is current that we should seek the aid of prestige, or talent, or novelty, or excitement, for the Gospel, itself, the doctrine of the Cross, is, in itself, impotent in its hands and lame upon its feet. It must be sustained by outside power and carried, as by a nurse, wherever it would go. Reason, elocution, art, music, or some other force must introduce and support it, or it will make no advance—so some injuriously dream.

That is not Paul’s notion! He speaks of the Cross of Christ as being *itself* the power of God and he says that it is to be preached, “not with wisdom of words,” lest the power should be attributed to the aforesaid wisdom of words and the Cross of Christ should be proven to have, in itself, no independent power, or, in other words, to be of no effect! Paul would not thus degrade the Cross for a moment and, therefore, though qualified to dispute with schoolmen and philosophers, he disdained to dazzle with arguments and sophistries. And, though he could speak with masterly energy—let his Epistles bear witness to that—yet he used great plainness of speech, that the force of his teaching might lie in the Doctrine, itself, and not in his language, style, or delivery.

He was jealous of the honor of the Cross and would not spread it by any force but its own, even as he says in the 4th and 5th verses of the second chapter of this Epistle—“My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” Having cleared our way of the wisdom of words, we now come to the word of wisdom. Paul preached the Cross and our first head shall be the word of the Cross. Many give the Cross a bad word and so our second head shall be the word of its despisers concerning it—they called it foolishness. And then, thirdly, we will think upon the word applied to the Cross by those who believe it—it is to them “the power of God.” O that the Holy Spirit may use it as the power of God to all of us this day!

**I.**First, then, we speak upon “THE WORD OF THE CROSS.” Borrow the term from the Revised Version, which runs thus—“The word of the Cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God.” This is, to my mind, an accurate translation. The original is not, “the *preaching* of the Cross,” but “the *word* of the Cross.” This rendering gives us a heading for our first division and, at the same time, brings before us exactly what the Gospel is—it is “the word of the Cross.” From which I gather, first, that the Cross has one uniform teaching, or word. We are *always* to preach the word of the Cross and the Cross has not many words, but one. There are not two gospels any more than there are two gods—there are not two atonements any more than there are two saviors.

There is one Gospel as there is one God, and there is one Atonement as there is one Savior. Other gospels are not tolerated among earnest Christians. What did the Apostle say? “If we or an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be candidly heard and quietly fraternized with”? Nothing of the sort! I will quote the Scripture. Paul says, “Let him be accursed.” He has no more tolerance than that for him, for Paul loved the souls of men and to tolerate spiritual poison is to aid and abet the murder of souls! There is no Gospel under Heaven, but the one Gospel of Jesus Christ!

But what about other voices and other words? They are not voices from Heaven, nor words from God, for He has not, in one place, spoken one thing, and in another place, another! Neither is it according to the Spirit of the Gospel that there should be one form of Gospel for the first six centuries and then another form of it for the 19th Century. Is it not written, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever”? If the Atonement were in *progress.* If the great Sacrifice were not complete, then I could understand that there should be progress in the preaching of it. But, inasmuch as, “It is finished,” was pronounced by Christ upon the Cross and then He bowed His head and gave up the ghost—there can be no further development in the *fact* or in the *doctrine*!

Inasmuch as the Word of the Lord which describes that Atonement is so complete that he that adds to it shall have the plagues that are written in this Book added unto him, I gather that there is no such thing as a progressive word of the Cross, but that the Gospel is the same Gospel today as it was when Paul, in the beginning, proclaimed it! The word of the Cross, since it is the express Word of God, endures forever! Generations of men come and go like yearly growths of the grass of the field, but the Word of the Lord abides evermore the same in all places, the same to all nationalities, the same to all temperaments and constitutions of the mind!

“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.” From that word I gather, next, that the doctrine of the Atonement is one word in contradistinction from many other words which are constantly being uttered. We preach Christ Crucified and His voice from the Cross is, “Look unto Me and be you saved.” But another voice cries aloud, “Do this and you shall live.” We know it—it is the voice of the Old Covenant which the Lord Jesus has removed, taking away the first Covenant that He may establish the second. The doctrine of salvation by works, salvation by feelings, salvation by outward religiousness is*not* the word of the Cross which speaks in quite another fashion! The call to salvation by works is a strange voice within the fold of the Church—and the sheep of Christ do not follow it, for they know not the voice of strangers.

The word of the Gospel speaks on this wise, “The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart.” That is, the word of *faith* which we preach—that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” “Believe and live” is the word of the Cross! Much less do we regard the word of ceremonialism and priestcraft which still lingers among us. We had thought it was a dull echo of the dead past, but, alas, it is a powerful voice and is constantly lifting itself up. Priestcraft is crying, “Confess to *me* and you shall have forgiveness! Perform *this* ceremony and undergo *this* other rite and you shall receive a sacred benediction through men ordained of Heaven!”

We do not know this voice, for it is the voice of falsehood! He that believes in Christ Jesus has everlasting life! We are complete in Him and we know nothing of any priest except that one High Priest, who, by His one Sacrifice, has perfected, forever, them that are set apart! Voices here and there are heard like mutterings from among the tombs—these are the maunderings of superstition, saying, “Lo, here,” and, “Lo, there,” and one man has this revealed to him and another that. But to none of these have we any regard, for God has spoken and our preaching, from now on is nothing but “the word of the Cross,” which is none other than the word of the crucified Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

Brothers, let us hear this word of the Cross, for, in effect, my text says, “Let the Cross speak for itself.” That is to be our preaching! We bid reasoning and speculation hold their tongues that the Cross, itself, may speak! We let the Cross speak its own word. First, it cries aloud God must be just. The dreadful voice of Justice, in its certainty and severity, rings through the world in the sighs and cries and death-groans of the Son of the Highest! Jesus has taken man’s sin upon Himself and He must die for it, for wherever sin is, God must destroy it! The Judge of all the earth must do right and it is right that sin should involve suffering! Supreme Justice must visit iniquity with *death* and, therefore, Jesus on the Cross, though in Himself perfectly innocent and unspeakably lovely, must *die the death*—deserted by His Father because the iniquity of us all has been placed upon Him.

The Cross cries unto the sons of men, “Oh, do not this abominable thing which God hates, for He will, by no means, spare the guilty.” God must make bare His arm and bathe His sword in Heaven to destroy sin wherever it is found, for He smites it even when it is imputed to His only Son! The Cross thunders more terribly than Sinai, itself, against human sin! How it breaks men’s hearts to hear its voice! How it divides men from their sins, even as the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon and shatters the rock in pieces! If God smites the Perfect One who bears our sin, how will He smite the guilty one who rejects His love?

Let the Cross speak again and what does it say with even a louder voice? God loves men and delights in mercy! Though He loves righteousness and hates wickedness, yet He loves the sons of men so much so that He gives His Only-Begotten to die that sinners may live! What more could God have done to prove His love to mankind? “God commends His love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The love within that glorious deed needs no telling, it tells itself! God had but one Son, one with Himself by mystic union and He sent Him here below to take our nature, that, being found in fashion as a man, He might die on our behalf—made *sin* for us that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in Him! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” The word of the Cross is, “God is Love.” He wills not the death of the sinner, but that he turn unto Him and live!

What does the Cross say next? Mark, we are not speaking of the *crucifix*. The crucifix represents Christ *on* the Cross, but He is not on the Cross any longer, He has finished His sacrificial work and has ascended to His Glory. If He were still on the Cross, He could not save us! We now preach the Cross as that on which He died, but who now lives and reigns full of ability to save! Let the bare Cross speak and it declares that the one Sacrifice is accepted and the Atonement is complete! Sin is put away, the work of reconciliation is accomplished and Jesus has gone up on high unto His Father’s Throne to plead for the guilty. Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more! Death has no more dominion over Him! He is risen for our justification and we are accepted in Him—

***“No more the bloody spear,  
The Cross and nails no more,  
For Hell itself shakes at His name,  
And all the heavens adore.”***

Let the Cross speak and it tells of ransom paid and atonement accepted. The Law is magnified, justice is satisfied, mercy is no longer bound by the unsatisfied demands of judgment. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” which also is the word of the Cross. When we let the Cross speak still further we hear it say—“Come and welcome! Guilty sons of men, come and welcome to the feast of mercy, for God has both vindicated His Law and displayed His love. And now, for the chief of sinners, there is free and full forgiveness to be had for nothing, for the Cross gives priceless blessings without price!” “Whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.”

Free pardon, free justification, perfect cleansing, complete salvation— these are gifts of Grace bestowed upon the unworthy as soon as they believe in Christ Jesus and trust themselves with Him. This is the word of the Cross! What more can we desire to hear? We may be forgiven in a way which shall not violate the claims of justice! God is just and yet the Justifier of him that believes! He is merciful and just to forgive us our sins. Oh that I knew how to be quite still and let the Cross, itself, speak out with its matchless tones of mercy and majesty, love and blood, death and life, punishment and pardon, suffering and glory! It speaks in thunder and in tenderness! If we will but listen to what it has to say, it is a word by which the inmost heart of God is revealed.

Now I speak yet further the word of the Cross, for in the name of Him that did hang upon the Cross I call for faith in His Atonement. The death of Christ was no ordinary matter. The dignity of His Nature made it the event of the ages! He who died on the Cross was very God of very God, as well as Man, and His Sacrifice is not to be neglected or rejected with impunity. Such a Divine marvel demands our most careful thought and joyful confidence. To do spite to the blood of the Son of God is to sin with a vengeance! God *demands* faith in His Son and especially in His Son dying for our sakes! We ought to believe every word that God has spoken, but above all, the word of the Cross. Shall we doubt the good faith and love of God when He gives His Son a hostage for His Word and offers up the Only-Begotten as the token of His Grace?

Oh, men, whatever you trifle with, disregard not the Son of God! Whatever presumption you commit, yet trample not upon the Cross of Jesus! This is the highest thought of God! The center of all His counsels, the topmost summit of the mighty Alp of Divine loving kindness! Do not think little of it or turn away from it! I beseech you, no, I *command* you, in the name of Him that lives and was dead, look to the dying Savior and live! If you do not, you shall answer for it in that day when He shall come upon the clouds of Heaven to avenge Him of His adversaries!

Thus have I set before you the word of the Cross. May the Holy Spirit bless the message.  
**II.**We have the unpleasant task, in the second place, of listening to THE WORD OF ITS DESPISERS. They call the Doctrine of the Atonement, “foolishness.” Numbers of men call the Doctrine of Salvation by the blood of Christ, “foolishness.” It is most assuredly the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God, but they stick at the first assertion and will not acknowledge the wisdom of the wondrous plan. It is, therefore, no wonder that they never feel its power! No, it is foolishness to them—a thing beneath their contempt. And why foolishness? “Because,” they say, “see how the common people take it up. Everybody can understand it. You believe that Jesus is a Substitute for you and you sing with the poorest of the poor— ***‘I do believe, I will believe  
That Jesus died for me;  
And on the Cross  
He shed His blood  
From sin to set me free.’”***  
“There,” they say, “that’s a pretty ditty for educated men. Why, the very children sing it and are able to believe it and talk of it. Psha, it is sheer foolishness! We don’t want anything so vulgar and commonplace. Don’t you know that we take in a high-class review and read the best thought of the times? You don’t suppose we are going to believe just as common plowboys and servant girls do?” Ah me! How mighty wise some people think themselves! Is every truth which can be understood by simple minds to be thrown aside as foolishness? Is nothing worth knowing except the fancy thinking of the select portion of humanity? Are the well-known facts of Nature foolishness because they are open to all? Is it quite certain that all the wisdom in the world dwells with the superfine gentlemen who sneer at everything and take in a review?  
These superficial readers of superior literature are they the umpires of truth? I wish that their culture had taught them modesty! Those who glorify themselves and sneer at others are usually not wise, but otherwise! And those who call other people fools may be looking in the glass and not out of the window. He who is truly wise has some respect for others and the most profound respect for the Word of God. But why is it that*you* count the Gospel of the Cross to be foolishness? It is this—because this religion of ours, this Doctrine of the Cross—is not the offspring of *reason*, but the *gift* of Revelation. All the thinkers of the ages continued to think, but they never invented a plan of salvation in which Divine Justice and mercy would be equally conspicuous. The Cross was not in all their thoughts. How could it be?  
As a thought, it originated with the infinite mind and could have originated nowhere else! The Doctrine of the Cross is not a speculation, but a Divine Revelation—and for this reason the learned ones cannot endure it. It is *God* telling *men* something which they could not otherwise have known! And this does not suit the profound thinkers who cannot bear to be told anything, but must excogitate everything, evolving it from their inner consciousness, or from the depths of their vast minds. Now, inasmuch as nothing can come out of a man that is not in him, and as the supreme love of God never was in such an unlovely thing as an unregenerate man, it happens that the Doctrine of Atonement never originated with man but was taught to him by God at the gates of Eden.  
The plan which blends vengeance and love was never invented by human imagination. Since man has such an aversion to the great Atonement, he could not have been the author of the idea and he was *not* the author of it—God alone reveals it in language that babes may understand and, therefore, carnal *pride* calls it, “foolishness.” Besides, the carnal man thinks it foolishness because it makes him out to be a fool—and you may take my word for it that anything which proves either you or me to be a fool will, at once, strike us as being very foolish! Our conscience is dull and, therefore, we retaliate upon those who tell us unpleasant truth. “What? Am I nobody, after all? I, bound in the best black cloth, and wearing a white cravat? So religious and so respectable, so thoughtful, so studious, so profound—am I to be a nobody?  
“Do you dare to say to *me*, ‘Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall in nowise enter the kingdom’! My dear Sir, you cannot know what you are talking about! Why, I am a professor, a philosopher, a doctor of divinity and, therefore, you cannot really mean that I am to receive truth as a little child! Such talk is foolishness!” Of course they say so! We always reckoned that they would say so! I have rejoiced when I have read the skeptical papers and have seen how they sneer at the old-fashioned Gospel! The Bible *said* that carnal men could not receive spiritual things—how true is that statement! It is written, “There shall come in the last days scoffers.” Here they are, hastening to prove, by their conduct, the things which they deny!  
One is grieved that any should scoff and yet, in a measure, we are rejoiced to find such confirmation of the Truth of God from the lips of her enemies. As long as the world lasts, ungodly men will despise a Revelation which they are unable to understand. It is beyond their sphere and, therefore, its preachers seem to be babblers and its Doctrines to be foolishness. But, in every deed it may well seem foolishness to them, for it treats on subjects for which they have no care. If I were able to explain to a general audience how to make unlimited profit upon the Stock Exchange, or in some other market, all the world would listen with profound attention! And if I make my point clearly, I would be pronounced a really clever preacher, a man well worth hearing.  
But when the sermon is only about the Word of God, eternity, the soul and the blood of Jesus—most people turn on their heels—they are not sure that they *have* souls and they refuse to argue upon the supposition of a future existence which is an old wife’s fable to them. As for eternity, their philosophy has no room for it, and they do not concern themselves about it. One said in argument, the other day, “I believe I shall die like a dog.” I could give him no better reply on the spur of the moment than to say, “If I had known that you were a dog I would have brought you a bone.” As I had the notion that he would live forever, I came to talk to him upon subjects suitable to an immortal being. But as I found out that he was going to die like a dog, what could I do for him but provide such cheer as the creature could enjoy?  
These men call the Gospel foolishness because they look after the main chance and care more for the body than for the soul. One of their wise men said, “Why do you preach so much about the world to come? Why not preach about the world which now is? Teach these people how to ventilate their sewers—that is a much more necessary matter than their believing on Jesus Christ.” Well, sanitary matters *are* important and if any of you feel that you have nothing to live for but ventilating sewers, I wish you would live at a great rate and get it done as quickly as you can! Meanwhile, as we are convinced of the need of other things besides drainage and, as many of us expect, soon, to take our happy flight to a place where there are no sewers to ventilate, we shall look into those things which concern our future life seeing they also fit us for the life which now is!  
They call the word of the Cross foolishness because they regard all the Truths of God with which it deals as insignificant trifles. “Soul?” They say, “What does it matter whether we have a soul or not? Sin—what is it but the blunder of a poor creature who knows no better?” Of all things, the eternal God is the greatest trifle to unbelieving men. It is merely a name to swear by, that is all. They admit that there may be a great master force in Nature, or an energy co-extensive with the existence of matter and, therefore, they allow Theism or Pantheism, but they will not endure a personal God whom they are bound to obey! And besides, Pantheism is only a mask for Atheism. These men will have no personal God who loves them and whom they love. God is a nonentity to them and, therefore, when we speak of God as real, and sin as real, and Heaven as real—and God knows they are the *only* real things—then straightway they mutter, “Foolishness.” As for us, we deplore their folly and pray God to teach them better. Having entered by a new birth into the realm of spiritual things, we know the reality and power of the word of the Cross.  
Now, Brothers, I say of these gentlemen who pronounce the Gospel foolishness that you need not take much notice of them because they are not capable witnesses. They are not qualified to form a judgment upon the subject. I do not depreciate their abilities in other respects, but it is certain that a blind man is no judge of colors, a deaf man is no judge of sound and a man who has never been quickened into spiritual life can have no judgment as to spiritual things! How can he? I, for instance, have felt the power of the Gospel, and I assert that I have done so. Another man declares that I am not speaking the truth. Why not? Because *he* has not, *himself,* felt that power! Is that sound reasoning?  
Have you not heard of the Irishman who, when five men swore that they saw him commit a theft, made answer that he could produce 50 people who did not see him do it? Would there have been any force in that negative evidence? And what if all the world except two men should say, “We do not feel the power of the Cross”—would *that* be any evidence against the fact asserted by the two? I think not! Two honest men who witness to a fact are to be believed, even though 20,000 persons are unable to bear such witness! The unspiritual are incapable witnesses—they put themselves out of court, for at the outset they assert that they are not cognizant of those things concerning which we bear testimony! Their assertion is that they never were the subjects of spiritual influences and we quite believe what they say—but we do not believe them when they go further and assert that, therefore, what we have seen, tasted and handled is all a delusion! Concerning that matter they are not capable witnesses.  
And I beg you to notice that those who call the Gospel of the Cross folly are, themselves, if rightly looked at, proofs of their own folly and of the sad results of unbelief. The Christians in Paul’s days felt that the Gospel had emancipated them from the bondage of idolatry and vice—and when they heard others that were captives under these delusions telling them that the emancipating force was foolishness—they looked at them and smiled at the absurdity of the statement. They noticed that such men were, themselves, perishing! What a calamity it is for a man to be perishing! A house is unoccupied, its floor is untrod, its hearth knows no genial glow. It suffers from neglect, it is perishing. Men who are not living to God are missing the end of their being and, like deserted houses, are falling into ruin—they are perishing!  
While unoccupied by good, such minds are surrounded by powers of evil. Yonder is a tree. I have seen many such—around its trunk the ivy has twisted itself, grasping it like a huge python and crushing it in its folds. The tree is perishing! Its very life is being sucked out by the parasite that grasps it. Multitudes of men have about them lusts and sins—and errors that are eating out their life—they are perishing! Their souls and characters are as timber devoured by dry rot! It remains in the fabric of the house, but it is perishing. Ungodly men are devoured by their own pride, eaten up by self-confidence. Unbelieving men are comparable to a ship that is drifting to destruction—its cable has snapped—it is nearing the rocks, it will be broken to pieces, it is perishing!  
Those that believe not in Jesus are drifting towards a sure *eternity* of misery! They are daily perishing and yet, while they perish, they condemn the means of rescue! Fancy drowning mariners mocking at the lifeboat! Imagine a diseased man ridiculing the only remedy! That which we have tried and proved, they call “foolishness.” We have only to answer them, “You are, yourselves, as you remain captives to your sins, the victims of foolishness. You are, yourselves, as you waste your lives and as you drift to destruction, proofs that the foolishness is not in the Cross, but in you that reject it.”  
The preaching of the Cross is, to them that perish, foolishness, but to nobody else! O that their hearts were changed by the power of the Word of God—then would they see all wisdom in the word of the Cross!  
**III.**We come, in the third place, to notice THE WORD OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE. What do they say of the Cross? They call it power, the power of God! The more we study the Gospel, the more we are surprised at the singular display of wisdom which it contains, but we will not say much upon that point, for we are not qualified to be judges of wisdom. But we do say this—the word of the Cross is power! It has been the power of God to us! It has worked upon us as nothing else has ever done! Its work upon many of us has been so remarkable that even onlookers must have been surprised at it. The phenomenon of conversion is a fact. Men and women are totally changed and the whole manner of their life is altered.  
It is of no use to deny the fact, for instances of it come before us every day! Unbelievers become devout, the immoral become pure, the dishonest become upright, the blasphemous become gracious, the unchaste become holy! Evil ways are all of a sudden deserted and penitents struggle towards virtue. We see persons in all ranks of society undergoing a radical transformation—self-satisfied people are humbled by the discovery of their unworthiness—and others, who were steeped in immorality, renounce their vicious pleasures and seek happiness in the service of God. How do you account for this? We who are the subjects of such a change account for it in this way—it is worked by the Doctrine of the Cross—and the power which accomplishes the change is the power of God! No force less than Divine could have effected so great a change. The word of the Cross has delivered us from the love of sin—no sin is now our master—we have broken every fetter of evil habit.  
We fall into sin, but we mourn over it and hate the sin—and hate ourselves for committing it! We have been delivered from the bondage of corruption and made free to serve the Lord. We have also been delivered from the dread which once bowed us down—a horrible dread which held us in bondage—and made us tremble before our Father and our Friend. We thought harshly of God and fled from Him, but from this we are now delivered, for now we love Him and delight in Him! And the nearer we can approach Him, the happier we are. We have been delivered, also, from the power of Satan. That evil prince has great power over men and once we were led captive at his will. Even now he attacks us, but we overcome him through the blood of the Lamb.  
We are also daily delivered from self and from the world and from all things that would enthrall us. We are being saved—yes, we *are* saved. Every day a saving force is operating upon us to set us free from the thralldom of corruption. This we feel and know! We are bound for the Kingdom of God and nothing can keep us back! We are bound for purity, for ultimate perfection—we feel eternal life within us, urging us upward and onward, beyond ourselves and our surroundings! We sit here like eagles, chained to the rock by the feebleness of our bodies, but the aspiration within us tells us that we are born to soar among pure and glorified spirits. We feel that Heaven is born within us—born by the word of the Cross through the Spirit.  
We could tell the histories of some here present, or, better still, they could tell them themselves—histories of changes sudden but complete, marvelous but enduring—changes from darkness to light, from death to life! How gladly could we detain you with details of our being held up when our temptations have been almost overwhelming—and kept pressing forward in Christ’s service when we had been altogether without strength had not the word of the Cross poured new energy into us! We have been ready to die in despair until we have looked to the Cross and then the clouds have yielded to clear shining! A sight of the bleeding Savior and a touch of His hand have made us men, again, and we have lifted up our heads as from among the dead! Under the power of the Cross we *still* advance from strength to strength! There is power in the word of the Cross to make a man grow into something nobler than he ever dreamed of. We shall not know what we shall be till we shall see our Lord and Savior as He is!  
Why, Brothers and Sisters, the power with which God created the world was no greater than the power with which He made us new men in Christ Jesus! The power with which He sustains the world is not greater than the power by which He sustains His people under trial and temptation! And even the raising of the dead at the end of the world will be no greater display of Divine power than the raising of dead souls out of their spiritual graves! These wonders of power are being performed in our own experience every day of the week, entirely through the Cross. I appeal to you who are truly converted—were you converted through the wisdom of man? I appeal to you that are kept from sinning—are you led towards holiness by the power of elocution, of rhetoric, or of logic?  
I appeal to you who are despairing—are you ever revived by musical words and rhythmical sentences? Or do you owe all to Jesus Crucified? What is your life, my Brothers, but the Cross? Where comes the bread of your soul but from the Cross? What is your joy but the Cross? What is your delight, what is your Heaven, but the Blessed One, once crucified for you, who always lives to make intercession for you? Cling to the Cross, then! Put both arms around it! Hold to the Crucified and never let Him go! Come afresh to the Cross at this moment and rest there, now and forever! Then, with the power of God resting upon you, go forth and preach the Cross! Tell the story of the bleeding Lamb! Repeat the wondrous tale and nothing else!  
Never mind how you do it, only proclaim that Jesus died for sinners. The Cross held up by a babe’s hand is just as powerful as if a giant held it up! The power lies in the word, itself, or rather in the Holy Spirit who works by it and with it. Brothers, believe in the power of the Cross for the conversion of those around you! Do not say of any man that he cannot be saved. The blood of Jesus is Omnipotent! Do not say of any district that it is too sunken, or of any class of men that they are too far gone—the word of the Cross reclaims the lost! Believe it to be the power of God and you shall find it so. Believe in Christ Crucified and preach boldly in His name and you shall see great things and gladsome things. Do not doubt the ultimate triumph of Christianity! Do not let a mistrust flit across your soul. The Cross must conquer!  
It must blossom with a crown—a crown commensurate with the Person of the Crucified and the bitterness of His agony. His reward shall parallel His sorrows. Trust in God and lift your banner high—and with Psalms and songs advance to battle, for the Lord of Hosts is with us—the Son of the Highest leads our van! Onward with blast of silver trumpet and shout of those that seize the spoil! Let no man’s heart fail him! Christ has died! Atonement is complete! God is satisfied! Peace is proclaimed! Heaven glitters with proofs of mercy already bestowed upon ten thousands times ten thousands! Hell is trembling! Heaven adoring, earth waiting! Advance, you saints, to certain victory! You shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb!

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PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED  
NO. 3218

A SERMON  
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***~~“But we preach Christ crucified.”  
1 Corinthians 1:23.~~***

IN the verse preceding our text, Paul writes, “The Jews require a sign.” They said, “Moses worked miracles; let us see miracles worked and then we will believe,” forgetting that all the wonders that Moses worked were altogether eclipsed by those which Jesus worked while He was upon the earth in the flesh. Then there were certain Judaizing teachers who, in order to win the Jews, preached circumcision, exalted the Passover and endeavored to prove that Judaism might still exist side by side with Christianity—and that the old rites might still be practiced by the followers of Christ. So Paul, who was made all things to all men that he might by all means save some, put his foot down and said, in effect, “Whatever others may do, we preach Christ crucified—we dare not, we cannot and we will not alter the great subject matter of our preaching, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Then he added, “and the Greeks seek after wisdom.” Corinth was the very eyes of Greece and the Corinthian Greeks sought after what they regarded as wisdom—that is to say, the wisdom of this world, not the wisdom of God which Paul preached! The Greeks also treasured the memory of the eloquence of Demosthenes and other famous orators. And they seemed to think that true wisdom must be proclaimed with the graces of masterly elocution—but Paul writes to these Corinthian Greeks, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Now, in these days there are some who would be glad if we would preach anything except Christ crucified! Perhaps the most dangerous among them are those who are continually crying out for intellectual preaching, by which they mean preaching which neither the heavens nor the preachers, themselves, can comprehend—the kind of preaching which has little or nothing to do with the Scripture and which requires a dictionary rather than a Bible to explain it! These are the people who are continually running about and asking, “Have you heard our minister? He gave us a wonderful discourse last Sunday morning! He quoted Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He gave us some charming pieces of poetry—in fact it was altogether an intellectual treat!” Yes, and I have usually found that such intellectual treats lead to the ruination of souls. That is not the kind of preaching that God generally blesses to the salvation of souls and, therefore, even though others may preach the philosophy of Plato or adopt the arguments of Aristotle, we preach Christ crucified, the Christ who died for sinners, the people’s Christ and, “we preach Christ crucified” in simple language, in plain speech such as the common people can understand!

I am going to try to put our text into practice by telling you, first, *what we preach.* Secondly, *to whom we preach it.* And, thirdly, *how we preach it*.

**I.**First of all, WHAT WE PREACH. Paul is the model for all preachers and he says, “We preach Christ crucified.”  
In order to preach the Gospel fully, there must be a very clear description of the Person of Christ, and we preach Christ as God—not a man made into a God, nor a God degraded to the level of a man, not something between a man and a God, but, “very God of very God.” He is One with His Father in every attribute—eternal, having neither beginning of days, nor end of years. Omnipresent, filling all space. Omnipotent, having all power in Heaven and on earth. Omniscient, knowing all things from eternity—the great Creator, Preserver and Judge of all—in all things the equal and the express Image of the invisible God! If we err concerning the Deity of Christ, we err everywhere! The Gospel that does not reveal a Divine Savior is no Gospel at all—it is like a ship without a rudder—the first contrary wind that blows shall drive it to destruction and woe be to the souls that are trusting to it! No shoulders but those almighty ones which bear the earth’s huge pillars can ever carry the enormous weight of human guilt and human need. We preach to you Christ, the Son of Mary, once sleeping in His mother’s arms, yet the Infinite even while He was an Infant! Christ the reputed Son of Joseph, toiling in the carpenter’s shop, yet being all the while the God who made the heavens and the earth! Christ, who had nowhere to lay His head, the despised and rejected of men, who is, nevertheless, “over all, God forever.” Christ nailed to the accursed tree, bleeding at every pore and dying on the Cross, yet, living forevermore. Christ suffering agonies that are indescribable, yet being at the same time the God at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore. If Christ had not been Man, He could not have sympathized with you and me, nor could He have suffered in our place. How could He have been the Covenant Head of the sons and daughters of Adam if He had not been made in all points like them, except that He was without sin? With that one exception, He was just as we are—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—yet He was as truly God as He was Man, the One of whom Isaiah was Inspired to prophesy, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” So, in preaching Christ crucified, we preach the Glory of Heaven conjoined with the beauty of earth—the perfection of humanity united with the Glory and dignity of Deity!  
Then, next, we must very clearly preach Christ as *the Messiah, the Sent One of God*. It had long been foretold that a great Deliverer would come who would be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” and to be the Glory of His people, Israel, and Jesus of Nazareth was that promised Deliverer, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. He was sent of God to be the Savior of sinners. He took not this office upon Himself without authority, but He could truly say, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God.” He became the Substitute for sinners, but this did not happen accidentally, but by Divine Decree, for we read, “the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.” A priest unordained, a prophet unsent of God, a king without Divine authority would have been only a mockery—but our great High Priest was Divinely anointed, our peerless Prophet was sent of God and our king is King of kings and Lord of lords, rightly ruling as the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father! Sinner, this Truth of God should bring you hope and comfort—the Christ whom we preach is the Lord’s Anointed! And what He does, He does by God’s appointment. When He says to you, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” He speaks for His Father as well as for Himself, for He has the warrant of the Eternal to support His declaration! Therefore, come confidently to Him and put your trust in Him!  
When the preacher has laid a good solid foundation by preaching the Person of Christ and the Messiahship of Christ, he must go on to preach *the work of Christ*. I can only give a brief summary of what would take all eternity to expound. We must so preach as to show how, in the Everlasting Covenant, Christ stood as the Surety and Representative of His people and how, in the fullness of time, He came forth from the ivory palaces dressed in the garments of flesh—and how He first worked out an active righteousness by the perfect obedience of His daily life—and at the last worked out a passive righteousness by His sufferings and death upon the Cross. Beginning at the Incarnation, going on to the great work of Redemption, telling of Christ’s burial, Resurrection, Ascension, intercession before His Father’s Throne and glorious Second Coming, we have a theme that angels might well covet—a theme that may well awaken hope in the sinner’s heart!  
But it is especially *Christ crucified*whom we are to preach. His wounds and bruises remind us that we must tell you that “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” It is at Calvary that salvation is to be found! Where Jesus bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He overcame the powers of darkness and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers! There is one word that every true servant of Christ must be able to speak very distinctly—that word is Substitution. I believe that Substitution is the keyword to all true theology—Christ standing in the place of sinners and numbered with the transgressors because of their transgressions, not His own—Christ paying our debts and discharging all our liabilities. This Truth of God involves, of course, our taking Christ’s place as He took ours, so that all Believers are beloved, accepted, made heirs of God and, in due time, shall be glorified with Christ forever! Brother ministers, whatever you fail to preach, make your hearers always clearly understand that there is a Divine and all-sufficient Substitute for sinners—and that all who put their trust in Him shall be eternally saved!  
When we have preached Christ thus, we must also preach His offices. We must preach Him as the one great High Priest who always lives to make intercession for us. We must preach Him as the Prophet whose words are Divine and, therefore, come to us with an authority that cannot be set aside. And we must mind that we always preach Him as King, putting the crown of praise upon His royal head and claiming from His people the unfaltering allegiance and loyalty of their hearts—and the undivided service of their lives!  
We must also preach *the qualifications of Christ for His offices*. Is He a Husband? We must tell how loving and how tender He is. Is He a Shepherd? We must proclaim His patience, His power, His perseverance—and we must especially tell of His self-sacrificing love in laying down His life for His sheep. Is He a Savior? We must show how He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. We must talk much of the gentleness that will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. We must delight to speak of Christ as bending over the broken in heart, binding up their wounds and having His ears always open to hear the cry of a contrite spirit! It is the Character of Christ that is the magnet that attracts sinners to Himself—and upon this blessed theme one might go on speaking forever! When Rutherford was talking of the beauties of the Christ whom he loved so dearly, one of his hearers was compelled to cry out, “Now, mon, you are on the right string, keep to that!” And, indeed, this is a theme that might stir the stammerer to speak with power and make the very dumb to be eloquent for Christ! Oh, how glorious is our blessed Lord! With the spouse we may well say, “Yes, He is altogether lovely.” We cannot exaggerate His excellence and charms and it must be our constant aim to paint such a portrait of Him that sinners may fall in love with Him and trust Him to save them with His great salvation!  
We must mind that we always preach Christ as *the sinner’s only hope*. In the olden times, there were certain simpletons who sought after a universal remedy for all diseases—a catholicon. But their search was in vain. All the advertisements of quack medicines that ever deceived silly people will never convince sensible folk that such a catholicon for all the diseases to which flesh is heir has ever been or will ever be discovered. Yet there is a catholicon for the diseases of the soul, and that catholicon is Christ! Be your disease what it may—the raging fever of lust, the shivering fits of doubts and fears, or the fell consumption of despair—Jesus Christ can heal you! Whatever form sin may take—whether it is the blind eye, or the deaf ear, or the hard, stony heart, or the dull, seared conscience—there is a medicine in the veins of Jesus that we may well call the Divine Heal-All! No case that was ever submitted to Christ has baffled His skill and He is still “mighty to save.” We must be very clear in telling the sinner that there is no hope for him anywhere else but in Christ. Nine out of ten of the arrows in a minister’s quiver ought to be shot at the sinner’s good works, for these are his worst enemies. That “deadly doing” that needs to be cast “down at Jesus’ feet”—that *trying to be* or *to feel something* in order that they may save themselves—this is the curse of many! O Sinner, if from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet, there is no sound part in you, but you are full of wounds, bruises and putrefying sores, yet, if you will but believe in Jesus, He will make you whole every whit, and you shall go your way a sinner saved by Grace!  
We must also preach Christ as *the Christian’s only joy*. We needed Christ as a life buoy when we were sinking in the waves of sin, but we need Him to be our meat and our drink, now that He has brought us safely to land. When we were sick through sin, we needed Christ as medicine, but now that He has restored our soul, we need Him as our continual nourishment. There is no lack which a Christian ever has which Christ cannot fully supply and there is nothing in Christ which is not useful to a Christian. You know that some things that we have are good, but they are not altogether of service to us. For instance, fruit is good, but there is the skin to be pared off and the seed to be thrown away. But when Christ gives Himself to us, we may take the whole of Him and enjoy Him to our heart’s content! Everything Christ is and everything Christ has, is ours. Therefore, Christian, make a covenant with your hands that you will lay hold on Christ’s Cross for your only confidence! Make a covenant with your eyes that you will look nowhere for light but to the Sun of Righteousness! Make a covenant with your whole being that it shall be crucified with Christ and then be taken up to Heaven to live and reign with Him forever! Yes, let this be the utterance of your heart— ***“You, O Christ, are all I need,  
More than all in You I find.”*  
II.**Now, secondly, TO WHOM ARE WE TO PREACH THIS?  
Possibly, one Brother says, “You ought to preach Christ to the *elect*.” But how are we to know who are the elect? I read a sermon, some time ago, in which the minister said, “I have been preaching to the living in Zion—the rest of you are dead and I have nothing to say to you. The election has obtained it and the rest are blinded.” Preachers of that sort have life to preach to the living, medicine to prescribe for those who are whole, but what is the good of that? Fancy Peter standing up with the 11 on the day of Pentecost and saying to the crowd gathered around them, “I do not know how many of you who are here are elect, but I have to say to you that the election has obtained it and the rest are blinded.” How many would have been converted and added to the Church through such a message as that? Now Peter was, at that time, filled with the Spirit—and it was by Divine Inspiration that he preached Christ crucified

to the whole of that mixed multitude and then, when they were pricked in their heart and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” He was equally Inspired when he answered, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”  
I mean to do as Peter did, for I regard Christ’s commission to His disciples as binding upon us today—“Go you into all the world, and *preach the Gospel to every creature*.” I cannot tell whether every creature to whom I preach is elect or not, but it is my business to preach the Gospel to all whom I can reach, resting assured that all of them whom God has chosen unto eternal life will certainly accept it! When a certain clergyman asked the Duke of Wellington, “Does Your Grace think it is any use preaching the Gospel to the Hindus?” he simply replied, “What are your marching orders?” As a soldier, he believed in obeying orders. And when the clergyman answered that the orders were, “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” the Duke said, “Then your duty is quite clear. Obey your Master’s orders and don’t you trouble, about anybody else’s opinions.”  
The main business of a true minister is to *preach the Gospel to sinners*and he is never so happy as when he is preaching to those who know themselves to be sinners! When he is preaching to those who are selfrighteous, he is in great trouble about the effect of his message, for he fears that it may prove to be a savor of death unto death to them. But when he meets with those who sorrowfully confess that they are guilty, lost and undone, then he rejoices in hope of blessed results from his preaching. He feels that he is now among fish that will soon take the bait, so he drops his line into the river and soon has the joy of bringing many to land! He knows that bread is always sweetest to hungry men and that even bitter medicine will be eagerly swallowed by the man who its very ill and who longs to be cured. He understands that it is the naked that need to be clothed and the penniless who clamor for alms. O Sinners, if you realize that you are foul and vile, full of all manner of evil, with nothing of your own that is worthy to be called good—and if you are longing to be delivered from evil of every sort and to be made holy as God is holy, I am glad that my Master has given me in His Word such a message as this for you—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”  
Still, a true minister of Christ will not confine his preaching to sinners who are sensible of their guilt, but he will *preach the Gospel to sinners of all ages*. To the young, whose lives have not yet been defiled by the vices of age, he preaches Christ crucified as the children’s Savior and he is glad, indeed, when the boys and the girls trust in Jesus and are saved. To you who have reached middle life, he preaches Christ crucified as the balm for every wound, the cordial for all care and thankful is he when you, also, are saved by Grace through faith in Jesus! To the old and gray-headed, to the decrepit, to those on the very verge of the tomb, he still preaches Christ crucified! If he could find a sinner who had reached the age of Methuselah, he would have the same Gospel to preach to him, for he knows that there is no Savior but the crucified Christ of Calvary! And he also knows that, old or young, or if neither old nor young—all who trust Him are immediately saved and saved forever!  
And as he preaches Christ to sinners of every age, he also *preaches Christ to sinners of every rank*. He has nothing better than Christ to preach to queens, princes and nobles—and he has nothing less than Christ to preach to peasants, artisans, or paupers—Christ crucified for men of letters and learning and Christ crucified equally for the ignorant and illiterate!  
He also*preaches Christ to sinners of every sort*, even to the atheist, the man who says there is no God! He bids him believe and live. He preaches Christ to the openly profane. When they pause for a while in their swearing, he tells them of that great oath which God has sworn, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” We preach Christ to the harlots in the street and oh, how joyfully have many of them received Him and how gladly have they found cleansing from their foul stains in Jesus’ precious blood! We preach Christ to the drunk, for we believe that nothing but the Grace of God can rescue him from his degradation and sin—and many such sinners haves we seen reclaimed by the Gospel!  
The preaching of Christ crucified, the lifting up of the dying Son of God, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” has power enough to turn the whole world upside down and to change innumerable sinners into saints, so we mean to keep on*preaching Christ to all sinners of all sorts*! We do not intend to leave out one, not even you, my Friend, who think you are left out, or ought to be left out. We know that there is a Book of Life before the Throne of God and that no more names can be written there—they were all recorded before the foundation of the world when the Father gave to Christ those who are to be eternally His. We cannot mount up to Heaven to read the names that are written there, but we believe the list contains millions upon millions of names of those who have not yet trusted in Christ, so we mean to keep on preaching Christ to sinners of every age, of every rank, of every sort, of every degree of blackness and vileness! And we believe that “there is yet room,” there is yet mercy for the miserable, there is yet forgiveness for the guilty who will come and trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified!  
**III.**Now, lastly, HOW OUGHT WE TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED?  
I think, first, we ought to preach Christ very boldly. I recollect a young man going into a pulpit to address a small congregation, and he began by saying that he hoped they would pardon his youth and forgive his impertinence in coming to speak to them. Some foolish old gentleman said, “How humble that young man is to talk like that!” But another, who was wiser, though he was younger, said, “What a dishonor to his Lord and Master! If God sent him with a message to these people, what does it matter whether he is young or old? Such mock modesty as that is out of place in the pulpit.” I think that second man was right and the first one wrong. A true minister of the Gospel is an ambassador for Christ and do our ambassadors go to foreign courts with apologies for carrying messages from their sovereign? It would be a gross insult to the crown of these realms if they showed such humility as that in their official capacity! Let ministers of the Gospel keep their modesty for other occasions when it ought to be manifested, but let them not dishonor their Master and discredit His message as that silly young man did! When we preach Christ crucified, we have no reason to stammer, or stutter, or hesitate, or apologize—there is nothing in the Gospel of which we have any cause to be ashamed! If a minister is not sure about his message, let him keep quiet till he is sure about it! We believe and, therefore, we speak with the accent of conviction! If I have not proved the power of the Gospel in my own heart and life, I am a base impostor to be standing in this pulpit to preach that Gospel to others! But as I do most assuredly know that I am saved by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and as I feel certain that I have been Divinely called to preach His Gospel—  
***“Shall I, for fear of feeble man,  
The Spirit’s course in me restrain?  
Or undismayed in deed and word,  
Be a true witness for my Lord?”***  
But while we preach Christ boldly, we must also preach Him *affectionately*. There must be great love in our proclamation of the Truth of God. We must not hesitate to point out to sinners the state of ruin to which sin has brought them. And we must clearly set before them the Divinelyappointed remedy. But we must mingle a mother’s tenderness with a father’s sternness. Paul was like both mother and father, in a spiritual sense, in his ministry. He wrote to the Galatians, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” And to the Corinthians he wrote, “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.” And every true minister of Christ can, in his measure, sympathize with him in both those experiences. Yes, Sinners, we do, indeed, love you! Often our heart is well-near broken with the longing we have to see you saved! We wish we could preach to you with Baxter’s tearful eyes— no, rather with the Savior’s melting heart and all-consuming zeal!  
Then, next, we must preach *Christ only.*With Paul, every true minister ought to be able to say to his hearers, “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” The preacher must never mix up anything else with the Gospel. Every time he preaches, he must still have the same old theme, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Christ is the Alpha of the Gospel and He is the Omega, too! The first letter of the Gospel alphabet and the last letter—and all the letters in between! It must be Christ, *Christ*, CHRIST from beginning to end! There must be no work-mongering or anything else mixed up with Christ! There must be no daubing with untempered mortar in our building upon Christ, the one Foundation that is laid once for all!  
The preacher must also mind that he preaches Christ *very simply*. He must break up his big words and long sentences and pray against the temptation to use them. It is usually the short, dagger-like sentence that does the work best. A true servant of Christ must never try to let the people see how well he can preach. He must never go out of his way to drag a pretty piece of poetry in his sermon, nor to introduce some fine quotations from the classics. He must employ a simple, homely style, or such a style as God has given him. And he must preach Christ so plainly that his hearers can not only understand him, but that they *cannot misunderstand* him even if they try to do so!  
Now as the time has gone, I must close by saying that we must try to preach Christ *savingly*. O Sinners, I would that you would trust Christ this very moment! Do you realize how great your danger is? Unconverted Soul, you are standing, as it were, over the mouth of Hell on a single plank—and that plank is rotten! Man, you may be in your grave before another Sabbath dawns and then, if unsaved, you will be in Hell! Beware lest you are taken away unprepared, for if that is your unhappy lot, there will be no ransom that can deliver your lost soul from going down to the Pit! See your need of Christ, Sinner, and lay hold of Him by faith! None but Christ can save you! Christ is the Way! You may go about all your days trying to find another entrance to Heaven, but you will not find it for this is the only one. Why will you not come to God by Christ? Why are you so ungrateful as to despise the long-suffering mercy of God? Will not the goodness of God lead you to repentance? Shall Christ die for sinners and yet will you, O Sinner, turn away from Him who alone can give you life? If you will but trust Him, He will save you! Your sins, which are many, shall all be forgiven you! You shall be adopted into the family of God and in due time you shall find yourself in Heaven to go no more out forever! If you would be happy. If you would enjoy the peace that passes all understanding. If you would have *two* heavens—a Heaven below and a Heaven above—trust in Jesus, Sinner, trust in Jesus this very moment! Go not out of this building unsaved. One believing look will bring you salvation, for—  
***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee.  
Then look, Sinner—look unto Him and be saved— Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”***  
Look unto Him, look unto Him now! May the Holy Spirit enable you to look and live, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 CORINTHIANS 1.***

**Verses 1, 2.***Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.*Note the humility of Paul in associating with himself an almost unknown Brother, Sosthenes. Although the letter is written by Paul, yet, as if he did not care to stand in isolation even for a moment, he associates Sosthenes with himself in the salutation—“Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.”

**2.***To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.*Called to sacred uses, set apart unto God. That is the call of all Believers—they are like those vessels of the sanctuary which were not to be used by any but the priests of God, and by them only for God’s service.

**2.***With all who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.* That is a very happy phrase, “both theirs and ours.” There are multitudes of saints whose faces we never saw, yet Christ is theirs. There are some with whom we might not agree in all particulars, yet Christ is theirs just as much as He is ours. All Christ is theirs, and all Christ is ours, and here is the grand bond of union between Believers of different nationalities and different tongues.

**3.***Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* Grace first, for that is the fountain. Then peace comes, for that is the fitting stream to flow from the Fountain of Grace. Seek not peace first, for there is no peace for unregenerate man! Grace first, then peace, and “both must come from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**4.***I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.*That is wisely written, for Paul was about to upbraid these Corinthians for many serious faults, yet he begins by acknowledging that they had certain excellences. It gives you a ground to stand upon if you are willing to see all that is good in those whom you have to rebuke. But Paul did not merely use this as a polite way of commencing his Epistle. He really did, every day, thank God for the Divine Grace which these Corinthians had! Yet how seldom do we thank God for the Grace that He has given to other people, especially if they outshine us, if they do more for the cause of God than we do—then we half regret that they have so much Grace! But it was not so with Paul.

**5, 6.***That in everything you are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.*[See  
Sermon #2875, Volume 50—CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Church at Corinth was an

important Church, with more than the usual number of speaking men among the members. This led to mischief, but had they known how to use this talent aright, the Church at Corinth might have been of great service! Instead, it split itself up into little parties and became one of the worst churches that then existed, as certain communities which imitate them in this present day, have also done.

**7, 8.***So that you come behind in no gift: waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*Paul continues to recognize the abundance of their endowments and to express for them the utmost of affection. And then he adds his full conviction that God would prove the power of His Grace by keeping them unto the end, and then presenting them “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**9.***God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His  
Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* [See Sermon #2580, Volume 44—PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRIST— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] As Paul

wrote to the Thessalonians, “Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.” To be called by the faithful God is the guarantee of everlasting salvation!

**10.***Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same kind and in the same judgment.*They could not speak the same thing if they had not the same mind and the same judgment. Paul dreaded the introduction of anything that would divide the hearts of Believers, one from another, and, Beloved, let every one of us, wherever we go, be on the side of Christian truth, Christian unity and Christian love. There is no true unity outside of Truth of God and the nearest way to Christian union is union in the Truth of God! When error shall be destroyed, that which divides will be taken away. When Truth is dominant, union will be universal, but it will not be so before that is the case.

**11.***For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by they which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*He does not go beating about the bush, but he speaks straight out and gives the name of his informants, for persons who bring reports about others should always be ready to have their names mentioned. It may be unpleasant for them, but it is sometimes necessary to do unpleasant things and those who will not allow their names to be mentioned in connection with a statement adverse to character, deserve no notice whatever.

**12.***Now this I say, that every one of you says, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*The last were as bad as the others—it makes no difference what the party name is—for it may only thinly conceal the most sectarian spirit to say, “I am of Christ.”

**13.***Is Christ divided?*Paul begins with that, for it is the worst of all divisions to make Christ the head of a party in His own Church!  
**13-16.***Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other.* Paul considered that it was a Providential circumstance that He had baptized no more of them, else they would have cried themselves up as superior to those who had been baptized by others.  
**17.***For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*It is true that Baptism is in the original commission of all Christ’s servants, but it occupies a very secondary place compared with the preaching of the Gospel! It was an evil day when the Christian Church began to put rites before doctrines, and ceremonies in the place that should be occupied by the Gospel, itself! Paul therefore says that his main commission was “not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.”  
**18-20***For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*Indeed He has! He has let it run the full length of its tether so that we may see the folly that can be taught by wise men!  
**21.***For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*Not by foolish preaching, but by that preaching which men call foolishness.  
**22.***For the Jews require a sign.*They were always looking for supernatural manifestations.  
**22.***And the Greeks seek after wisdom.*They would believe nothing but what could be proved to them by logic.  
**23-25.***But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*They call it foolishness, but it is wiser than men’s wisdom! God at His lowest (if we can imagine such a thing) is wiser than man at his highest “and the weakness of God (if such a thing could be) is stronger than men.”  
**26-28.***For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that*

*are.* [See Sermon #587, Volume 10—GOD’S STRANGE CHOICE—Read/download the entire sermon,

free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Those that do not even seem to have an existence—those that are so despicable that men do not deign to take any account of them—these are the very ones with which God shall break in pieces the many mighty errors of all the ages!

**29-31***That no flesh should glory in His Presence. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that gloried, let him glory in the Lord.*

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #7, 8 New Park Street Pulpit 1

CHRIST CRUCIFIED  
NOS. 7, 8

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”  
1 Corinthians 1:23, 24~~***

WHAT contempt has God poured upon the wisdom of this world! How has He brought it to nothing and made it appear as nothing. He has allowed it to work out its own conclusions and prove its own folly. Men boasted that they were wise. They said that they could find out God to perfection. And in order that their folly might be refuted once and forever, God gave them the opportunity of doing so. He said, “Worldly wisdom, I will try you. You say that you are mighty, that your intellect is vast and comprehensive, that your eyes are keen, that you can unravel all secrets—now, behold, I try you—I give you one great problem to solve. Here is the universe. Stars make its canopy, fields and flowers adorn it and the floods roll over its surface. My name is written therein—the invisible things of God may be clearly seen in the things which are made. Philosophy, I give you this problem—find Me out. Here are My works—find Me out! Discover in the wondrous world which I have made, the way to worship Me acceptably. I give you space enough to do it—there is data enough. Behold the clouds, the earth and the stars. I give you time enough. I will give you four thousand years and I will not interfere—you shall do as you will with your own world. I will give you men in abundance, for I will make great minds and vast, whom you shall call lords of earth. You shall have orators, you shall have philosophers. Find Me out, O reason. Find Me out, O wisdom. Discover My Nature, if you can—find Me out unto perfection, if you are able. And if you cannot, then shut your mouth forever and then I will teach you that the wisdom of God is wiser than the wisdom of man! Yes that the *foolishness* of God is wiser than men.”

And how did the reason of man work out the problem? How did wisdom perform her feat? Look upon the heathen nations—there you see the result of wisdom’s researches. In the time of Jesus Christ, you might have beheld the earth covered with the slime of pollution—a Sodom on a large scale—corrupt, filthy, depraved, indulging in vices which we dare not mention, reveling in lusts too abominable even for our imagination to dwell upon for a moment! We find the men prostrating themselves before blocks of wood and stone, adoring ten thousand gods more vicious than themselves. We find, in fact, that reason wrote out her own depravity with a finger covered with blood and filth. That she forever cut herself out from all her glory by the vile deeds she did. She would not worship God. She would not bow down to Him who is “clearly seen,” but she worshipped any creature—the reptile that crawled, the crocodile, the viper, everything might be a god, but not the God of Heaven! Vice might be made into a ceremony, the greatest crime might be exalted into a religion, but true worship she knew nothing of. Poor reason! Poor wisdom! How are you fallen from Heaven! Like Lucifer—you son of the morning you are lost. You have written out your conclusion, but it is a conclusion of consummate folly!

“After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe.” Wisdom had had its time and time enough. It had done its all and that was little enough. It had made the world worse than it was before it stepped upon it. And now, says God, “Foolishness shall overcome wisdom. Now ignorance, as you call it, shall sweep away your science. Now, humble, child-like faith shall crumble to the dust all the colossal systems your hands have piled.”

He calls His army. Christ puts His trumpet to His mouth and up come the warriors—clad in fisherman’s garb, with the brogue of the Lake of Galilee—poor humble mariners. Here are the warriors, O wisdom! that are to confound you. These are the heroes who shall overcome your proud philosophers! These men are to plant their standard upon the ruined walls of your strongholds and bid them fall forever. These men and their successors are to exalt a Gospel in the world which you may laugh at as absurd, which you may sneer at as folly, but which shall be exalted above the hills and shall be glorious even to the highest heavens! Since that day God has always raised up successors of the Apostles. I claim to be a successor of the Apostles, not by any lineal descent, but because I have the same roll and charter as any Apostle and am as much called to preach the Gospel as Paul, himself—if not as much acknowledged in the conversion of sinners—yet in a measure, blessed of God! And, therefore, here I stand, foolish as Paul might be, foolish as Peter, or any of those fisherman, but still with the might of God I grasp the sword of Truth—coming here to “preach Christ and Him crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Before I enter upon our text, let me very briefly explain what I believe preaching Christ and Him crucified is. My Friends, I do *not* believe it is preaching Christ and Him crucified to give our people a batch of philosophy every Sunday morning and evening and neglect the Truth of this Holy Book. I do *not* believe it is preaching Christ and Him crucified, to leave out the main cardinal Doctrines of the Word of God and preach a religion which is all a mist and a haze, without any definite Truths of God whatever. I take it that man does not preach Christ and Him crucified, who can get through a sermon without mentioning Christ’s name once!

Nor does that man preach Christ and Him crucified who leaves out the Holy Spirit’s work, who never says a word about the Holy Spirit—so that, indeed, the hearers might say, “We do not so much as know whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And I have my own private opinion that there is no such a thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the Gospel and nothing else! I do not believe we can preach the Gospel if we do not preach justification by faith, without works. Nor unless we preach the Sovereignty of God in His dispensation of Grace. Nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering, love of Jehovah! Nor do I think we can preach the Gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for His elect and chosen people. Nor can I comprehend a Gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having believed! Such a Gospel I abhor! The Gospel of the Bible is not such a Gospel as that. We preach Christ and Him crucified in a different fashion and to all gainsayers we reply, “We have not so learned Christ.”

There are three things in the text. First, a Gospel rejected—“Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.” Secondly, a Gospel triumphant—“unto those which are called, both Jews and Greeks.” And thirdly, a Gospel admired—it is to them who are called “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

**I.**First, we have here A GOSPEL REJECTED. One would have imagined that when God sent His Gospel to men, all men would meekly listen and humbly receive its Truths. We would have thought that God’s ministers had but to proclaim that life is brought to light by the Gospel and that Christ is come to save sinners and every ear would be attentive, every eye would be fixed and every heart would be wide open to receive the Truth! We would have said, judging favorably of our fellow creatures, that there would not exist in the world a monster so vile, so depraved, so polluted, as to put so much as a stone in the way of the progress of Truth! We could not have conceived such a thing. Yet that conception is the truth. When the Gospel was preached, instead of being accepted and admired, one universal hiss went up to Heaven—men could not bear it— its first Preacher they dragged to the brow of the hill and would have sent Him down headlong—yes, they did more, they nailed Him to the Cross. And there they let Him languish out His dying life in agony such as no man has borne since. All His chosen ministers have been hated and abhorred by worldlings. Instead of being listened to, they have been scoffed at—treated as if they were the offscouring of all things and the very scum of mankind. Look at the holy men in the old times, how they were driven from city to city, persecuted, afflicted, tormented, stoned to death wherever the enemy had power to do so.

Those friends of men, those *real* philanthropists, who came with hearts big with love, hands full of mercy, lips pregnant with celestial fire and souls that burned with holy influence—those men were treated as if they were spies in the camp—as if they were deserters from the common cause of mankind. They were treated as if they were enemies and not, as they truly were, the best of friends. Do not suppose, my Friends, that men like the Gospel any better, now, than they did then! There is an idea that you are growing better. I do not believe it. You are growing worse! In many respects men may be better—outwardly better—but the heart within is still the same. The human heart of today, dissected, would be just like the human heart a thousand years ago—the gall of bitterness within that breast of yours is just as bitter as the gall of bitterness in that of Simon of old. We have in our hearts the same latent opposition to the Truth of God. And therefore we find men even as of old, who scorn the Gospel!

I shall, in speaking of the Gospel rejected, endeavor to point out the two classes of persons who equally despise the Truth. The Jews make it a stumbling block and the Greeks account it foolishness. Now these two very respectable gentlemen—the Jew and the Greek—I am not going to make these ancient individuals the object of my condemnation. But I look upon them as members of a great parliament, representatives of a great constituency and I shall attempt to show that if all the race of Jews were cut off, there would still be a vast number in the world who would answer to the name of Jews, to whom Christ is a stumbling block! And that if Greece were swallowed up by some earthquake and ceased to be a nation, there would still be the Greek unto whom the Gospel would be foolishness! I shall simply introduce the Jew and the Greek. And let them speak a moment to you, in order that you may see the gentlemen who represent you—the representative men. The persons who stand for many of you, who as yet are not called by Divine Grace.

The first is the Jew. To him the Gospel is a stumbling block. A respectable man, the Jew was, in his day. All formal religion was concentrated in his person. He went up to the Temple very devoutly. He tithed all he had, even to the mint and the cummin. You would see him fasting twice in the week, with a face all marked with sadness and sorrow. If you looked at him, he had the Law between his eyes. There was the phylactery and the borders of his garments of amazing width, that he might never be supposed to be a Gentile dog—that no one might ever conceive that he was not a Hebrew of pure descent! He had a holy ancestry. He came of a pious family. A right good man was he. He could not endure those Sadducees at all, who had no religion. He was thoroughly a religious man. He stood up for his synagogue. He would not have that temple on Mount Gerizim. He could not bear the Samaritans, he had no dealings with them. He was a religionist of the first order, a man of the very finest kind. A specimen of a man who is a moralist and who loves the ceremonies of the Law. Accordingly, when he heard about Christ, he asked who Christ was. “The son of a carpenter.” “Ah, The son of a carpenter and His mother’s name was Mary. And His father’s name Joseph.” “That, of itself, is presumption enough,” he said, “positive proof, in fact, that He cannot be the Messiah!”

And what does Christ say? Why He says, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. That won’t do. Moreover,” He says, “It is not by the works of the flesh that any man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” The Jew tied a double knot in his phylactery at once. He thought he would have the borders of his garment made twice as broad. *He* bow to the Nazarene? No, no! And if so much as a disciple crossed the street, he thought the place polluted and would not tread in his steps. Do you think he would give up his old father’s religion—the religion which came from Mount Sinai—that old religion that lay in the Ark and the overshadowing cherubim? He give that up? Not he! A vile impostor—that is all Christ was in his eyes. He thought, “A stumbling block to me? I cannot hear about it! I will not listen to it.” Accordingly, he turned a deaf ear to all the Preacher’s eloquence and listened not at all. Farewell, old Jew! You sleep with your fathers and your generation is a wandering race, still walking the earth. Farewell, I have done with you. Alas, poor wretch, that Christ who was your stumbling block, shall be your Judge and on your head shall be that loud curse—“His blood be on us and on our children.” But I am going to find out Mr. Jew here in Exeter Hall—persons who answer to his description—to whom Jesus Christ is a stumbling block.

Let me introduce you to yourselves, some of you. You were of a pious family, too, were you not? Yes. And you have a religion which you love— you love it so far as the chrysalis of it goes, the outside, the covering, the husk. You would not have one rubric altered, nor one of those dear old arches taken down, nor the stained glass removed for all the world. And any man who should say a word against such things, you would set down as a heretic at once. Or, perhaps you do not go to such a place of worship, but you love some plain old meeting house where your forefathers worshipped, called a dissenting Chapel. Ah, it is a beautiful, plain place. You love it, you love its ordinances, you love its exterior. And if anyone spoke against the place, how vexed you would feel. You think that what they do there, they ought to do everywhere. In fact *your* church is a model one. The place where you go is exactly the sort of place for everybody! And if I were to ask you why you hope to go to Heaven, you would, perhaps, say, “Because I am a Baptist,” or, “Because I am an Episcopalian,” or whatever other sect you belong to. There is yourself. I know Jesus Christ will be a stumbling block to you. What if I come and tell you that all your going to the House of God are good for nothing? What if I tell you that all those many times you have been singing and praying—all mean nothing in the sight of God—because you are a hypocrite and a formalist? What if I tell you that your heart is not right with God and that unless it is so, all the external is good for nothing? I know what you will say—“I shan’t hear that young man again.” It is a stumbling block. If you had stepped in anywhere where you had heard formalism exalted. If you had been told, “this must you *do* and this other must you *do* and then you will be saved,” you would highly approve of it. But how many are there externally religious, with whose characters you could find no fault, but who have never had the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit? How many are there who never were made to lie prostrate on their face before Calvary’s Cross—who never turned a wishful eye to yonder Savior crucified?

How many are there who never put their trust in Him who was slain for the sons of men? They love a superficial religion, but when a man talks deeper than that, they set it down for cant! You may love all that is external about religion, just as you may love a man for his clothes— caring nothing for the man, himself. If so, I know you are one of those who reject the Gospel. You will hear me preach. And while I speak about the externals, you will hear me with attention. And while I plead for morality and argue against drunkenness, or show the heinousness of Sabbath-breaking, all well and good. But if once I say, “Except you be converted and become as little children, you can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God.” If once I tell you that you must be elect of God—that you must be purchased with the Savior’s blood—that you must be converted by the Holy Spirit—you will say, “He is a fanatic! Away with him, away with him! We do not want to hear that any more.” Christ crucified is to the Jew—the ceremonialist—a stumbling block!

But there is another specimen of this Jew to be found. He is thoroughly orthodox in his sentiments. As for forms and ceremonies, he thinks nothing about them. He goes to a place of worship where he learns sound Doctrine. He will hear nothing but what is true. He likes that we should have good works and morality. He is a good man and no man can find fault with him. Here he is, regular in his Sunday pew. In the market he walks before men in all honesty—so you would imagine. Ask him about any Doctrine and he can give you a formal discourse upon it. In fact, he could write a treatise upon anything in the Bible and a great many things besides. He knows almost everything. And here, up in this dark attic of the head, his religion has taken up its abode. He has a better parlor down in his heart, but his religion never goes there—that is shut against it. He has money in there—mammon, worldliness. Or he has something else—self-love, pride. Perhaps he loves to hear experimental preaching. He admires it all. In fact, he loves anything that is sound. But then he has not any sound in himself—or rather, it is all sound and there is no substance. He likes to *hear* true Doctrine. But it never penetrates his inner man. You never see him weep. Preach to him about Christ crucified, a glorious subject, and you never see a tear roll down his cheek. Tell him of the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit—he admires you for it—but he never had the hand of the Holy Spirit on his soul. Tell him about communion with God, plunging into the Godhead’s deepest sea and being lost in its immensity—the man loves to hear—but he never experiences! He has never communed with Christ and accordingly when once you begin to strike home, when you lay him on the table, take out your dissecting knife, begin to cut him up and show him his own heart—let him see what it is by nature and what it must become by Grace—the man starts, he cannot stand that! He wants none of that—Christ received in the heart and accepted.

Albeit that he loves it enough in the head, ‘tis to him a stumbling block and he casts it away. Do you see yourselves here, my Friends? Do you see yourselves as others see you? Do you see yourselves as God sees you? For so it is, here are many to whom Christ is as much a stumbling block now as ever He was. O you formalists! I speak to you! O you who have the nutshell, but abhor the kernel! O you who like the trappings and the dress, but care not for that fair virgin who is clothed therewith— O you who admire the paint and the tinsel, but abhor the solid gold, I speak to you! I ask you, does your religion give you solid comfort? Can you stare death in the face with it and say, “I know that my Redeemer lives”? Can you close your eyes at night, singing as your vesper song—

***“I to the end must endure,***

***As sure as the earnest is given”?***  
Can you bless God for affliction? Can you plunge in, furnished as you are, and swim through all the floods of trial? Can you march triumphant through the lion’s den, laugh at affliction and bid defiance to Hell? Can you? No! Your Gospel is an effeminate thing! A thing of words and sounds and not of power. Cast it from you, I beseech you—it is not worth your keeping. And when you come before the Throne of God, you will find it will fail you and fail you so that you shall never find another! For lost, ruined, destroyed, you shall find that Christ who is now *standing*, “a stumbling block,” will be your Judge!

I have found out the Jew and I have now to discover the Greek. He is a person of quite a different exterior to the Jew. As to the phylactery, to him it is all rubbish. And as to the broad-hemmed garment, he despises it. He does not care for the forms of religion. He has an intense aversion, in fact, to broad-brimmed hats, or to everything which looks like outward show. He appreciates eloquence. He admires a smart saying. He loves a quaint expression. He likes to read the last new book. He is a Greek and to him the Gospel is foolishness! The Greek is a gentleman found in most places now-a-days—manufactured sometimes in colleges, constantly made in schools, produced everywhere. He is on the exchange. In the market. He keeps a shop. Rides in a carriage. He is a noble, a gentleman. He is everywhere. Even in court. He is thoroughly wise. Ask him anything and he knows it. Ask for a quotation from any of the old poets, or anyone else and he can give it you. If you are a Mohammedan and plead the claims of your religion, he will hear you very patiently. But if you are a Christian and talk to him of Jesus Christ, “Stop your cant,” he says, “I don’t want to hear anything about that.” This Grecian gentleman believes all philosophy except the true one. He studies all wisdom except the wisdom of God. He seeks all learning except spiritual learning. He loves everything except that which God approves! He likes everything which man makes and nothing which comes from God. It is foolishness to him, confounded foolishness. You have only to discourse about one Doctrine in the Bible and he shuts his ears. He wishes no longer for your company. It is foolishness. I have met this gentleman a great many times. Once when I saw him, he told me he did not believe in any religion at all. And when I said I did and had a hope that when I died I should go to Heaven, he said he dared say it was very comfortable, but he did not believe in religion and that he was sure it was best to live as nature dictated.

Another time he spoke well of all religions and believed they were very good in their place and all true. And he had no doubt that if a man were sincere in any kind of religion, he would be all right at last. I told him I did not think so and that I believed there was but one religion revealed of God—the religion of God’s elect, the religion which is the gift of Jesus. He then said I was a bigot and wished me good morning. It was to him foolishness. He had nothing to do with me at all. He either liked no religion, or every religion. Another time I held him by the coat button and I discussed with him a little about faith. He said, “It is all very well, I believe that is true Protestant Doctrine.” But presently I said something about election and he said, “I don’t like that. Many people have preached that and turned it to bad account.” I then hinted something about free Grace, but that he could not endure, it was to him foolishness. He was a polished Greek and thought that if he were not chosen, he ought to be. He never liked that passage—“God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and the things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.” He thought it was very discreditable to the Bible and when the Book was revised, he had no doubt it would be cut out. To such a man—for he is here this morning, very likely come to hear this reed shaken of the wind—I have to say this—Ah, you wise man, full of worldly wisdom. Your wisdom will stand you here, but what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? Philosophy may do well for you to lean upon while you walk through this world. But the river is deep and you will need something more than that. If you have not the arm of the Most High to hold you up in the flood and cheer you with promises, you will sink, Man! With all your philosophy, you will sink—with all your learning, you shall sink and be washed into that awful ocean of eternal torment, where you shall be forever. Ah, Greeks, it may be foolishness to you, but you shall see the Man, your Judge and then you shall rue the day that ever you said that God’s Gospel was foolishness!

**II.**Having spoken thus far upon the Gospel rejected, I shall now briefly speak upon the GOSPEL TRIUMPHANT. “Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Yonder man rejects the Gospel, despises Grace and laughs at it as a delusion. Here is another man who laughed at it, too. But God will fetch him down upon his knees. Christ shall not die for nothing. The Holy Spirit shall not strive in vain. God has said, “My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be abundantly satisfied.” If one sinner is not saved, another shall be. The Jew and the Greek shall never depopulate Heaven. The choirs of Glory shall not lose a single songster by all the opposition of Jews and Greeks. For God has said it—some shall be called, some shall be saved—some shall be rescued—

***“Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,  
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord! The atonement a Redeemer’s love has worked Is not for you—the righteous need it not.  
See you yon harlot wooing all she meets,  
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets, Herself from morn to night, from night to morn, Her own abhorrence and as much your scorn? The gracious shower, unlimited and free, Shall fall on her when Heaven denies it thee. Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift, That man is dead in sin and life a gift.”***

If the righteous and good are not saved—if they reject the Gospel— there are others who are to be called, others who shall be rescued, for Christ will not lose the merits of His agonies, or the purchase of His blood! “*Unto us who are called.*” I received a note this week asking me to explain that word “*called*”—because in one passage it says, “Many are called but few are chosen,” while in another it appears that all who are called must be chosen. Now, let me observe that there are two calls. As my old friend, John Bunyan, says, “The hen has two calls, the common cluck, which she gives daily and hourly and the special one which she means for her little chickens.” So there is a *general* call, a call made to every man—every man hears it. Many are called by it. You are all called this morning in that sense—but very few are chosen. The other is a *special* call, the children’s call. You know how the bell sounds over the workshop to call the men to work—that is a general call. A father goes to the door and calls out, “John, it is dinner time!”—that is the special call. Many are called with the general call, but they are not chosen. The special call is for the children, only, and that is what is meant in the text, “Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” That call is always a special one. While I stand here and call men, nobody comes. While I preach to sinners universally, no good is done. It is like the sheet lightning you sometimes see on the summer’s evening, beautiful, grand, but who has ever heard of anything being struck by it? But the special call is the forked flash from Heaven. It strikes somewhere, it is the arrow sent in between the joints of the harness. The call which saves is like that of Jesus, when He said, “Mary,” and she said unto Him, “Rabboni.” Do you know anything about that special call, my Beloved? Did Jesus ever call you by name? Can you recollect the hour when He whispered your name in your ear, when He said, “Come to Me”? If so, you will grant the truth of what I am going to say next about it—that it is an *Effectual Call*.

There is no resisting it. When God calls with His special call, there is no keeping back. Ah, I know I laughed at religion. I despised, I abhorred it. But that call! Oh, I would not come. But Jesus said, “You shall come. All that the Father gives to Me shall come.” “Lord, I will not.” “But you shall,” said Christ. And I have gone up to God’s House, sometimes, almost with a resolution that I would not listen, but listen I must! Oh, how the Word came into my soul! Was there a power of resistance? No. I was thrown down—each bone seemed to be broken. I was saved by *Effectual Grace*. I appeal to your experience, my Friends. When God took you in hand, could you withstand Him? You stood against your minister times enough. Sickness did not break you down—disease did not bring you to God’s feet. Eloquence did not convince you—but when God put His hand to the work, ah, then what a change! Like Saul, with his horses going to Damascus, that Voice from Heaven said, “I am Jesus whom you persecute. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” There was no going further then. That was an Effectual Call! Like that, again, which Jesus gave to Zaccheus, when he was up in the tree—stepping under the tree, He said, “Zaccheus, come down, today I must abide at your house.” Zaccheus, was taken in the net, he heard his own name. The call sank into his soul. He could not stay up in the tree, for an Almighty impulse drew him down. And I could tell you some singular instances of persons going to the House of God and having their characters described, to perfection, so that they have said, “He is describing me! He is describing me!” Just as I might say to that young man here who stole his master’s gloves yesterday, that Jesus calls him to repentance. It may be that there is such a person here. And when the call comes to a peculiar character, it generally comes with a special power. God gives his ministers a brush and shows them how to use it in painting life-like portraits. And thus the sinner hears the special call. *I* cannot give the special call—*God* alone can give it and I leave it with Him. Some must be called. Jew and Greek may laugh, but still there are some who are called—both Jews and Greeks!

Then to close up this second point—it is a great mercy that many a Jew has been made to drop his self-righteousness, many a legalist has been made to drop his legalism and come to Christ. Many a Greek has bowed his genius at the Throne of God’s Gospel. We have a few such. As Cowper says—

***“We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways, And one who wears a coronet and prays. Like gleanings of an olive tree they show, Here and there one upon the topmost bough.”***

**III.**Now we come to our third point, A GOSPEL ADMIRED. Unto us who are called of God, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Now, Beloved, this must be a matter of pure experience between your souls and God. If you are called of God this morning, you will know it. I know there are times when a Christian has to say—

***“Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought—  
Do I love the Lord or no?  
Am I His, or am I not?”***

But if a man never in his life knew himself to be a Christian, he never was a Christian! If he never had a moment of confidence, when he could say, “Now I know in whom I have believed,” I think I do not utter a harsh thing when I say that *that* man could not have been born-again. For I do not understand how a man can be born-again and not know it. I do not understand how a man can be killed and then made alive again and not know it—how a man can pass from death unto life and not know it—how a man can be brought out of darkness into marvelous light without knowing it. I am sure I know it, when I shout out my old verse—

***“Now free from sin, I walk at large,  
My Savior’s blood’s my full discharge.  
At His dear feet content I lay,  
A sinner saved and homage pay.”***

There are moments when the eyes glisten with joy. And we can say, “We are persuaded, confident, certain.” I do not wish to distress anyone who is under doubt. Often gloomy doubts will prevail. There are seasons when you fear you have not been called—when you doubt your interest in Christ. Ah, what a mercy it is that it is not your hold of Christ that saves you, but *His* hold of you! What a sweet fact that it is not how *you* grasp His hand, but His grasp of yours, that saves you! Yet I think you ought to know sometime or other, whether you are called of God. If so, you will follow me in the next part of my discourse which is a matter of pure experience—unto us who are saved, it is, “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

The Gospel is to the true Believer a thing of power. It is Christ, the power of God. Yes, there is a power in God’s Gospel beyond all description! Once, I, like Mazeppa, bound on the wild horse of my lust, bound hand and foot, incapable of resistance, was galloping on with Hell’s wolves behind me, howling for my body and my soul, as their just and lawful prey. There came a mighty Hand which stopped that wild horse, cut my bands, set me down and brought me into liberty. Is there power, Sir? Yes, there is power and he who has felt it must acknowledge it. There was a time when I lived in the strong old castle of my sins and rested in my works. There came a trumpeter to the door and bade me open it. I with anger chided him from the porch and said he should never enter. There came a goodly Personage, with loving Countenance. His hands were marked with scars, where nails were driven and His feet had nail prints, too. He lifted up His Cross, using it as a hammer. At the first blow the gate of my prejudice shook. At the second it trembled more. At the third, down it fell and in He came. And He said, “Arise and stand upon your feet, for I have loved you with an everlasting love.” A thing of power! Ah, it is a thing of power. I have felt it here, in this heart. I have the witness of the Spirit within and know it is a thing of might, because it has conquered me! It has bowed me down—

***“His free Grace alone, from the first to the last,***

***Has won my affection and held my soul fast.”***The Gospel to the Christian is a thing of power! What is it that makes the young man devote himself as a missionary to the cause of God—to leave father and mother—and go into distant lands? It is a thing of power that does it—it is the Gospel. What is it that empowers yonder minister, in the midst of the cholera, to climb up that creaking staircase and stand by the bed of some dying creature who has that dire disease? It must be a thing of power which leads him to risk his life. It is love of the Cross of Christ which bids him do it! What is that which enables one man to stand up before a multitude of his fellows, all unprepared he may be, but determined that he will speak nothing but Christ and Him crucified? What is it that enables him to cry, like the warhorse of Job in battle, “Aha,” and move glorious in might? It is a thing of power that does it—it is Christ crucified! And what emboldens that timid female to walk down that dark lane in the wet evening, that she may go and sit beside the victim of a contagious fever? What strengthens her to go through that den of thieves and pass by the profligate and profane? What influences her to enter into that charnel-house of death and there sit down and whisper words of comfort? Does gold make her do it? They are too poor to give her gold! Does fame make her do it? She shall never be known, nor written among the mighty women of this earth! What makes her do it? Is it love of merit? No! She knows she has no desert before high Heaven. What impels her to it? It is the power of the Gospel on her heart! It is the Cross of Christ! She loves it and she therefore says—

***“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small!  
Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!”***

But I behold another scene. A martyr is hurried to the stake. The executioners are around him. The crowds are mocking, but he is marching steadily on. See, they bind him with a chain around his middle, to the stake. They heap fire wood all about him—the flame is lighted up—listen to his words—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” The flames are kindling round his legs. The fire is burning him even to the bone! See him lift up his hands and say, “I know that my Redeemer lives and though the fire devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see the Lord.” Behold him clutch the stake and kiss it as if he loved it. Listen, as he says, “For every chain of iron that man girds me with, God shall give me a chain of gold. For all this fire wood and this ignominy and shame, He shall increase the weight of my eternal glory!” See, all the under parts of his body are consumed—still he lives in the torture. At last he bows himself and the upper part of his body falls over. And as he falls you hear him say, “Into Your hands I commend my spirit.” What wondrous magic was on him, Sirs? What made that man strong? What helped him to bear that cruelty? What made him stand unmoved in the flames? It was the thing of power! It was the Cross of Jesus crucified! For “unto us who are saved it is the power of God.” But behold another scene far different. There is no crowd there. It is a silent room. There is a poor pallet, a lonely bed—a physician standing by. There is a young girl. Her face is blanched by consumption—long has the worm eaten her cheek and though sometimes the flush came, it was the death-flush of the deceitful Destroyer. There she lies, weak pale, wan, worn, dying—yet behold a smile upon her face, as if she had seen an angel! She speaks and there is music in her voice. Joan of Arc of old was not half so mighty as that girl! She is wrestling with dragons on her deathbed—but see her composure and hear her dying sonnet—

***“Jesus! lover of my soul,  
Let me to Your bosom fly,  
While the billows near me roll,  
While the tempest still is high!  
Hide me, O my Savior! Hide  
Till the storm of life is past!  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Oh, receive my soul at last!”***

And with a smile she shuts her eyes on earth and opens them in Heaven! What enables her to die like that? It is the power of God unto salvation! It is the Cross! It is Jesus crucified!

I have little time to discourse upon the other point and be it far from me to weary you by a lengthened and prosy sermon, but we must glance at the other statement—Christ is, to the called ones, the wisdom of God, as well as the power of God. To a Believer, the Gospel is the perfection of wisdom and if it appear not so to the ungodly, it is because of the perversion of judgment consequent on their depravity.

An idea has long possessed the public mind that a religious man can scarcely be a wise man. It has been the custom to talk of infidels, atheists and deists as men of deep thought and comprehensive intellect. And to tremble for the Christian controversialist, as if he must surely fall by the hand of the enemy! But this is purely a mistake. For the Gospel is the sum of wisdom, an epitome of knowledge, a treasure house of Truth and a Revelation of mysterious secrets! In it we see how justice and mercy may be married. Here we behold inexorable Law entirely satisfied and Sovereign Love bearing away the sinner in triumph. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind. And as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it. Ah, dear Friends! If you seek wisdom, you shall see it displayed in all its greatness. Not in the balancing of the clouds, nor the firmness of earth’s foundations—not in the measured march of the armies of the sky, nor in the perpetual motion of the waves of the sea. Not in vegetation with all its fairy forms of beauty. Nor in the animal with its marvelous tissue of nerve, vein and sinew—nor even in man—that last and loftiest work of the Creator. But turn aside and see this great sight! An Incarnate God upon the Cross! A Substitute atoning for mortal guilt! A Sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of Heaven—and delivering the rebellious sinner! Here is essential wisdom enthroned, crowned, glorified. Admire this wisdom, you men of earth. And if you are not blind—even you who glory in your learning. If you will only bend your heads in reverence you will have to admit that all your skill could not have devised a Gospel at once so just to God, so safe to man!

Remember, my Friends, that while the Gospel is, in itself, wisdom, it also confers wisdom on its students. She teaches young men wisdom and discretion and gives understanding to the simple. A man who is a believing admirer and a hearty lover of the Truth, as it is in Jesus, is in a right place to follow with advantage any other branch of science. I confess I have a shelf in my head for everything now. Whatever I read I know where to put it. Whatever I learn I know where to stow it away. Once when I read books, I put all my knowledge together in glorious confusion. But ever since I have known Christ, I have put Christ in the center as my sun and each science revolves round it like a planet, while minor sciences are satellites to these planets! Christ is to me the wisdom of God. I can learn everything now. The science of Christ crucified is the most excellent of sciences—she is to me the wisdom of God. Oh, young man, build your studio on Calvary! There raise your observatory and scan by faith the lofty things of nature! Take a hermit’s cell in the garden of Gethsemane and bathe your brow with the waters of Siloa. Let the Bible be your standard classic—your last appeal in matters of contention. Let its light be your illumination and you shall become more wise than Plato—more truly learned than the seven sages of antiquity!

And now, my dear Friends, solemnly and earnestly, as in the sight of God, I appeal to you. You are gathered here this morning, I know, from different motives. Some of you have come from curiosity. Others of you are my regular hearers. Some have come from one place and some from another. What have you heard me say this morning? I have told you of two classes of persons who *reject* Christ. The religionist who has a religion of form and nothing else. And the man of the world, who calls our Gospel foolishness. Now put your hand upon your heart and ask yourself this morning, “Am I one of these?” If you are, then walk the earth in all your pride. Then go as you came in. But know that for all this, the Lord shall bring you into judgment—know you that your joys and delights shall vanish like a dream, “and, like the baseless fabric of a vision,” be swept away forever! Know this, moreover, O Man, that one day in the halls of Satan, down in Hell, I perhaps may see you among those myriad spirits who revolve forever in a perpetual circle with their hands upon their hearts. If your hand is transparent and your flesh transparent, I shall look through your hand and flesh and see your heart within. And how shall I see it? Set in a case of fire—in a case of fire! And there you shall revolve forever, with the worm gnawing within your heart, which shall never die—a case of fire around your never-dying, ever-tortured heart. Good God! Let not these men still reject and despise Christ! But let this be the time when they shall be called.

To the rest of you who *are* called, I need say nothing. The longer you live, the more powerful will you find the Gospel to be. The more deeply Christ-taught you are, the more you live under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit. The more you will know the Gospel to be a thing of power, the more you will understand it to be a thing of wisdom! May every blessing rest upon you. And may God come up with us in the evening—

***“Let men or angels dig the mines  
Where nature’s golden treasure shines.  
Brought near the Doctrine of the Cross,  
All nature’s gold appears but dross!  
Should vile blasphemers with disdain  
Pronounce the Truths of Jesus vain,  
We’ll meet the scandal and the shame.  
And sing and triumph in His name.”***

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

CHRIST—THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD  
NO. 132

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 17, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.~~***

***~~“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:24.~~***

UNBELIEF towards the Gospel of Christ is the most unreasonable thing in all the world because the reason which the unbeliever gives for his unbelief is fairly met by the character and constitution of the Gospel of Christ. Notice that before this verse we read—“The Jews required a sign, the Greeks seek after wisdom.” If you met the Jew who believed not on Christ in the Apostle’s day, he said, “I cannot believe, because I need a sign.” And if you had met the Greek, he would have said, “I cannot believe because I need a philosophic system, one that is full of wisdom.” “Now,” says the Apostle, “both these objections are untenable and unreasonable! If you suppose that the Jew requires a sign, that sign is given him—Christ is the power of God! The miracles that Christ worked upon earth were signs more than sufficiently abundant, and if the Jewish people had but the will to believe, they would have found abundant signs and reasons for believing in the personal acts of Christ and His Apostles.” And let the Greeks say, “I cannot believe because I require a wise system.” “O Greek, Christ is the wisdom of God! If you would but investigate the subject, you would find in it profoundness of wisdom—a depth where the most gigantic intellect might be drowned! It is no shallow Gospel but a deep and a great deep, too! A deep which passes understanding. Your objection is ill-founded, for Christ is the wisdom of God and His Gospel is the highest of all sciences! If you wish to find wisdom, you must find it in the words of Revelation.”

Now, this morning we shall try to bring out these two thoughts of the Gospel. And it may be that God shall bless what we shall say to the removing of the objection of either Jew or Greek—that the one requiring a sign may see it in the *power*of God in Christ—and that he who requires wisdom may behold it in the *wisdom* of God in Christ! We shall understand our text in a three-fold manner—Christ, that is, *Christ Personally*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Christ, that is, *Christ’s Gospel*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Christ, that is, *Christ in the heart—true* religion, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

**I.**First, to begin with CHRIST PERSONALLY. Christ considered as God and Man, the Son of God equal with His Father and yet the Man born of the Virgin Mary. Christ, in His complex Person, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” *He is the power of God from all eternity*. “By His Word were the Heavens made and all the hosts of them.” “The Word was God and the Word was with God.” “All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.” The pillars of the earth were placed in their everlasting sockets by the Omnipotent right hand of Christ! The curtains of the heavens were drawn upon their rings of starry light by Him who was from everlasting the All-glorious Son of God! The orbs that float aloft in ether—those ponderous planets and those mighty stars—were placed in their positions or sent rolling through space by the eternal strength of Him who is “the First and the Last,” “the Prince of the kings of the earth.” Christ is the power of God, for He is the Creator of all things and by Him all things exist!

*When He came to earth* , took upon Himself the fashion of a Man, tabernacled in the inn and slept in the manger, He still gave proof that He was the Son of God. Not so much so when, as an Infant of a span long, the Immortal was the Mortal and the Infinite became a Baby. Not so much so in His youth, but afterwards when He began His public ministry. Then He gave abundant proofs of His power and Godhead. The winds hushed by His uplifted finger. The waves calmed by His voice so that they became solid as marble beneath His tread. The tempest cowered at His feet as before a conqueror whom it knew and obeyed. These things, these stormy elements, the wind, the tempest and the water, gave full proof of His abundant power. The lame man leaping, the deaf man hearing, the dumb man singing, the dead rising—these, again, were proofs that He was the “power of God.” When the voice of Jesus startled the shades of Hades and tore the bonds of death, with “Lazarus come forth!” and when the carcass, rotten in the tomb woke up to life, there was proof of His Divine power and Godhead! He afforded a thousand other proofs. But we need not stay to mention them to you who have Bibles in your houses and who can read them every day. At last He yielded up His life and was buried in the tomb. Not long, however, did He sleep, for He gave another proof of His Divine power and Godhead when starting from His slumber, He frightened the guards with the majesty of His grandeur! Not being held by the bonds of death, they being like green withers before our conquering Samson who had, meanwhile, pulled up the gates of Hell and carried them on his shoulders far away!

That He is the *power*of God, *now*, Scripture very positively affirms. For it is written, “He sits at the right hand of God.” He has the reins of Providence gathered in His hands! The fleet coursers of time are driven by Him who sits in the chariot of the world and bids its wheels run round. And He shall bid them stay when it shall please Him. He is the great umpire of all disputes, the great Sovereign Head of the Church, the Lord of Heaven and death and Hell! And by-and-by we know that He shall come—

***“On fiery clouds and wings of wind,  
Appointed Judge of all mankind,”***  
and then the quickened dead, the startled myriads, the divided firmaments, the, “Depart you cursed,” and the, “Come, you blessed,” shall proclaim Him to be the power of God who has power over all flesh to save

or to condemn as it pleases Him!

But He is equally “the *wisdom* of God.” The great things that He did *before all worlds* were proofs of His wisdom. He planned the way of salvation. He devised the system of Atonement and Substitution. He laid the foundations of the great plan of salvation. There was wisdom! He built the Heavens by wisdom and He laid the pillars of light, whereon the firmament is balanced by His skill and wisdom. Mark the world! And learn, as you see all its multitudinous proofs of the wisdom of God, that there you have the wisdom of Christ, for He was the Creator of it! And *when He became a Man*, He gave proofs enough of wisdom. Even in childhood, when He made the doctors sit abashed by the questions that He asked, He showed that He was more than mortal. And when Pharisee and Sadducee were all, at last, defeated, and their nets were broken, He proved again the superlative wisdom of the Son of God! And when those who came to take Him stood enchained by His eloquence, spellbound by His marvelous oratory—then was again a proof that He was the wisdom of God, who could so enchain the minds of men. And now that He intercedes before the Throne of God; now that He is our Advocate before the Throne; the Pledge and Surety for the blessed; now that the reins of government are in His hands and are ever wisely directed, we have abundant proofs that the wisdom of God is in Christ, as well as the power of God! Bow before Him, you that love Him! Bow before Him, you that desire Him! Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him! He is worthy of it—unto Him is everlasting might! Unto Him is unswerving wisdom—bless His name! Exalt Him. Clap your wings, you seraphs! Cry aloud, you cherubim! Shout, shout, shout to His praise, you ransomed hosts above! And you, oh men who know His Grace—extol Him in your songs forever, for He is Christ— the power of God and the wisdom or God!

**II.**But now Christ, that is, Christ’s GOSPEL, is the power and the wisdom of God!  
**1.**Christ’s Gospel is *a thing of Divine Power*. Do you need proofs of it? You shall not go far. How could Christ’s Gospel have been established in this world as it were, if it had not, in itself, intrinsic might? By whom was it spread? By mitered prelates, by learned doctors, by fierce warriors, by caliphs, by Prophets? No—by fishermen, untaught, unlettered—save as the Spirit gave them utterance—not knowing how to preach or speak! How did they spread it? By the bayonet, by their swords, by the keen metal of their blades? Did they drive their Gospel into men at the point of the lance and with the scimitar? Say, did myriads rush to battle, as they did when they followed the crescent of Mohammed and did they convert men by force, by law, by might? Ah, no! Nothing but their simple words, their unvarnished eloquence, their rough declamation, their unhewn oratory! These it were, which, by the blessing of God’s Spirit, carried the Gospel around the world within a century after the death of its Founder!  
But what was this Gospel which achieved so much? Was it a thing palatable to human nature? Did it offer a Paradise of present happiness? Did it offer delight to the flesh and to the senses? Did it give charming prospects of wealth? Did it give licentious ideas to men? No! It was a Gospel of most strict morality. It was a Gospel with delights entirely *spiritual*—a Gospel which abjured the flesh—which, unlike the coarse delusions of Joe Smith—cut off every prospect of men delighting themselves with the joys of lust! It was a holy Gospel—spotless, clean as the breath of Heaven! It was pure as the wings of angels! Not like that which spread of old, in the days of Mohammed—a gospel of lust and vice and wickedness—but pure—and consequently not palatable to human nature. And yet it spread! Why? My Friends, I think the only answer I can give you is because it has in it the power of God!  
But do you need another proof? How has it been maintained since then? No easy path has the Gospel had. The good boat of the Church has had to plow her way through seas of blood and those who have manned her have been bespattered with the bloody spray! Yes, they have had to man her and keep her in motion by laying down their lives unto the death! Mark the bitter persecution of the Church of Christ from the time of Nero to the days of Mary and further on—through the days of Charles the Second and of those kings of unhappy memory who had not as yet learned how to spell “toleration.” From the dragoons of Claverhouse, right straight away to the gladiatorial shows of Rome—what a long series of persecutions has the Gospel had! But, as the old divines used to say, “The blood of the martyrs” has been “the seed of the Church.” It has been, as the old herbalists had it, like the herb, chamomile—the more it is trodden on, the more it grows—and the more the Church has been illtreated, the more has it prospered! Behold the mountains where the Albigenses walk in their white garments—see the stakes of Smithfield, not yet forgotten! Behold the fields among the towering hills where brave bands kept themselves free from despotic tyranny. Mark the pilgrim fathers—driven by a government of persecution across the briny deep. See what vitality the Gospel has. Plunge her under the wave and she rises, the purer for her washing! Thrust her in the fire and she comes out the more bright for her burning! Cut her in two and each piece shall make another Church. Behead her and like the Hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for every one you cut away! She cannot die, she must live, for she has the power of God within her!  
Do you need another proof? I give you a better one than the last. I do not wonder that the Church has outlived persecution as much as I wonder she has outlived the unfaithfulness of her professed teachers! Never was a Church so abused as the Church of Christ has been all through her history! From the days of Diotrephes who sought to have the preeminence, even to these latter times, we can read of proud arrogant prelates and supercilious haughty lords over God’s inheritance. Bonners, Dunstans and men of all sorts have come into her ranks and done all they could to kill her. And with their lordly priestcraft they have tried to turn her aside—and what shall we say to that huge apostasy of Rome? A thousand miracles that ever the Church outlived that! When her pretended head had become apostate and all her bishops, disciples of Hell— and she had gone far away—wonder of wonders that she should come out in the days of the glorious Reformation and should still live! And even now, when I mark the inactivity of many of my Brothers in the ministry— when I mark their utter and entire inefficiency for doing anything for God—when I see their waste of time, preaching now and then on the Sunday instead of going to the highways and hedges and preaching the Gospel everywhere to the poor! When I see the need of unction in the Church, itself, the need of prayerfulness—when I see wars and fights, factions and disunions—when I see hot blood and pride even in the meeting of the saints, I say it is a thousand, thousand miracles that the Church of God should be alive at all, after the unfaithfulness of her members, her ministers and her bishops! She has the power of God within her, or else she would have been destroyed, for she has got enough within her own loins to work her destruction!  
“But,” one says, “you have not yet proven it is the power of God to my understanding.” Sir, I will give you another proof. There are not a few of you who are now present who would be ready, I know, if it were necessary, to rise in your seats and bear me witness that I speak the truth. There are some who, not many months ago, were drunks. Some who were wicked—men who were unfaithful to every vow which would keep a man to truth and right and chastity and honesty and integrity. Yes, I repeat, I have some here who look back to a life of detestable sin! You tell me, some of you, that for 30 years, even, (there is one such man present), you never listened to a Gospel ministry, nor ever entered the House of God at all! You despised the Sabbath, you spent it in all kinds of evil pleasures. You plunged headlong into sin and vice and your only wonder is that God had not cut you off long ago, as cumberers of the ground1 And now you are here, as different as light from darkness! I know your characters and have watched you with a father’s love, for, child though I am, I am the spiritual father of some here whose years outnumber mine by four times the number! And I have seen you honest, who were thieves—and you sober, who were drunkards. I have seen the wife’s glad eyes sparkling with happiness! And many a woman has grasped me by the hand, shed her tears upon me and said, “I bless God! I am a happy woman now. My husband is reclaimed, my house is blessed. Our children are brought up in the fear of the Lord.” Not one or two, but scores of such are here! And, my Friends, if these are not proofs that the Gospel is the power of God, I say there is no proof of anything to be had in the world and everything must be conjecture! Yes, and there worships with you this day, (and if there is a secularist, here, my Friend will pardon me for alluding to him for a moment)—there is in the House of God this day one who was a leader in your ranks, one who despised God and ran very far away from right. And here he is! It is his honor, this day, to call himself a Christian! And I hope, when this sermon is ended, to grasp him by the hand, for he has done a valiant deed—he has bravely burned his papers in the sight of all the people and has turned to God with full purpose of heart! I could give you proofs enough, if proofs were needed, that the Gospel has been to men the power of God and the wisdom of God! More proofs I could give, yes, thousands, one upon the other!  
But we must notice the other points—Christ’s Gospel is the wisdom of God. Look at the Gospel, itself, and you will see it to be wisdom. The man who scoffs and sneers at the Gospel does so for no other reason but because he does not understand it. We have two of the richest books of theology extant that were written by professed infidels—by men that were so, I mean, before they wrote the books. You may have heard the story of Lords Lyttleton and West. I believe they determined to refute Christianity—one of them took up the subject of Paul’s conversion and the other the subject of the Resurrection. They sat down, both of them, to write books to ridicule those two events and the effect was, that in studying the subject, they, both of them, became Christians and wrote books which are now bulwarks to the Church they hoped to have overthrown! Every man who looks the Gospel fairly in the face and gives it the study it ought to have, will discover that it is no false Gospel but a Gospel that is replete with wisdom and full of the knowledge of Christ! If any man will mock the Bible—he must do it. There are some men who can find no wisdom, anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are not judges of wisdom! We would not set a mouse to explain the phenomena of astronomy, nor would we set a man who is so foolish as to do nothing but argue, to understand the wisdom of the Gospel. It needs that a man should at least be honest and have some share of sense, or we cannot dispute with him at all. Christ’s Gospel, to any man who believes it, is the wisdom of God!  
Allow me to hint that to be a believer in the Gospel is no dishonor to a man’s intellect. While the Gospel can be understood by the poorest and the most illiterate—while there are shallows in it where a lamb may wade—there *are* depths where leviathan may swim! The intellect of Locke found ample space in the Gospel. The mind of Newton submitted to receive the Truth of Inspiration as a little child and found a something in its majestic being higher than itself, unto which it could not attain. The rudest and most untaught have been enabled, by the study of the Holy Scripture of God’s Truth, to enter the Kingdom of God! And the most learned have said of the Gospel, it surpasses thought! I was thinking the other day what a vast amount of literature must be lost if the Gospel is not true. No book was ever so suggestive as the Bible. We have large volumes in our library which it takes all our strength to lift, all upon Holy Scripture! Myriads upon myriads of smaller volumes—tens of thousands of every shape and size—all written upon the Bible! And I have thought that the very suggestiveness of Scripture, the supernatural suggestiveness of Holy Writ, may be, in itself, a proof of its Divine wisdom, since no man has ever been able to write a book which would have so many commentators and so many writers upon its text as the Bible has received, by so much as one millionth part!  
**III.**CHRIST IN A MAN, THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUL is the power of soul and the wisdom of God. We will picture the Christian from his beginning to his end. We will give a short map of his history. He begins there, in that prison, with huge iron bars which he cannot file—in that dark damp cell where pestilence and death are bred. There, in poverty and nakedness, without a pitcher to put to his thirsty lips, without even a mouthful of dry crust to satisfy his hunger, that is where he begins—in the prison chamber of conviction,

powerless, lost and ruined! Between the bars I thrust my hand to him and give him, in God’s name, the name of Christ to plead. Look at him! He has been filing away at these bars many and many a day without their yielding an inch! But now he has got the name of Christ upon his lips. He puts his hand upon the bars and one of them is gone and another and another! And he makes a happy escape, crying, “I am free, I am free, I am free! Christ has been the power of God to me, in bringing me out of my trouble.” No sooner is he free, however, than a thousand doubts meet him. This one cries, “You are not elect!” Another cries, “You are not redeemed!” Another says, “You are not called!” Another says, “You are not converted!” “Go away,” he says, “go away! Christ died.” And he just pleads the name of Christ as the power of God and the doubts flee and he walks straight on!  
He soon comes into the furnace of trouble. He is thrust into the innermost prison and his feet are made fast in the stocks. God has put His hand upon him. He is in deep trouble. At midnight he begins to sing of Christ and lo, the walls begin to totter and the foundation of the prison to shake! And the man’s chains are taken off and he comes out free, for Christ has delivered him from trouble! Here is a hill to climb on the road to Heaven. Wearily he pants up the side of that hill and thinks he must die before he can reach the summit. The name of Jesus is whispered in his ear—he leaps to his feet and pursues his way with fresh courage until the summit is gained, and he cries, “Jesus Christ is the strength of my song! He also has become my salvation!” Look at him again. He is, all of a sudden, beset by many enemies. How shall he resist them? With this true sword, this true Jerusalem blade, Christ and Him Crucified! With this he keeps the devil at arm’s length. With this he fights against temptation, against lust, against spiritual wickedness in high places and with this he resists. Now, he has come to his last struggle—the river Death rolls black and sullen before him. Dark shapes rise upward from the flood and howl and frighten him. How shall he cross the stream? How shall he find a landing place on the other side? Dread thoughts perplex him for a moment. He is alarmed. But he remembers *Jesus* died. And catching up that watchword he ventures to the flood. Before his feet the Jordan flies apace—like Israel of old, he walks through, dry shod, singing as he goes to Heaven—“Christ is with me! Christ is with me passing through the stream! Victory, victory, victory, to Him that loves me!”  
To the Christian in his own experience, Christ is always the power of God. As for temptation, he can meet that with Christ. As for trouble he can endure that through Christ who strengthens him. Yes, he can say with Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Have you ever seen a Christian in trouble, a true Christian? I have read a story of a man who was converted to God by seeing the conduct of his wife in the hour of trouble. They had a lovely child, their only offspring. The father’s heart perpetually doted on it and the mother’s soul was knit up in the heart of the little one. It lay sick upon its bed and the parents watered it night and day. At last it died. The father had no God—he tore his hair, he rolled upon the floor in misery, wallowed upon the earth, cursing his being and defying God in the utter casting down of his agony! There sat his wife, as fond of the child as ever he could be. And though tears would come, she gently said, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” “What?” he said, starting to his feet, “you love that child? I thought that when that child died you would break your heart. Here am I, a strong man. I am mad—here are you, a weak woman and yet you are strong and bold. Tell me what it is that possesses you?” she said, “Christ is my Lord. I trust in Him. Surely I can give this child to Him who gave Himself for me.” From that instant the man became a Believer! “There must,” he said, “be some truth and some power in the Gospel which could lead you to believe in such a manner, under such a trial.” Christians! Try to exhibit that spirit wherever you are and prove to the worldling that in your experience, at least, “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God!”  
And now the last point. In the *Christian’s experience*, Christ is wisdom, as well as power. If you want to be a thoroughly learned man, the best place to begin is to begin at the Bible, to begin at Christ! It is said that even children learn to read more quickly from the Bible than from any other book! And this I am sure of—that we, who are but grown up children—will learn better and learn faster by beginning with Christ than we could by beginning with anything else. I remember saying once, and as I cannot say it better, I will repeat it, that before I knew the Gospel, I gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there and everywhere. A bit of chemistry, a bit of botany and a bit of astronomy and a bit of this, that and the other. I put them all together in one great confused chaos. When I learned the Gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put everything away just where it should be! It seemed to me as if when I had discovered Christ and Him Crucified, I had got the center of the system so that I could see every other science revolving around in order! From the earth, you know, the planets appear to move in a very irregular manner—they are progressive, retrograde, stationary. But if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion. So with knowledge! Begin with any other science you like and truth will seem to be awry. Begin with the science of Christ Crucified and you will begin with the sun—you will see every other science moving round it in complete harmony! The greatest mind in the world will be evolved by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, “Go from Nature up to Nature’s God,” but it is hard work going uphill! The best thing is to go from Nature’s God *down* to Nature—and if you once get to Nature’s God and believe Him and love Him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds—to see God everywhere—in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks and hear Him everywhere—in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunders and in the fury of tempests! Get Christ first. Put Him in the right place and you will find Him to be the wisdom of God in your own experience.  
But wisdom is not knowledge. And we must not confuse the two. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge and Christ’s Gospel helps us by teaching us the right use of knowledge. It directs us. Yonder Christian has lost his way in a dark forest, but God’s Word is a compass to him and a lantern, too. He finds his way by Christ! He comes to a turn in the road. Which is right and which is wrong? He cannot tell. Christ is the great signpost, telling him which way to go. He sees every day new straits—he knows not which way to steer. Christ is the great Pilot who puts his hand on the tiller and makes him wise to steer through the shoals of temptation and the rocks of sin. Get the Gospel and you are a wise man. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and right understanding have they who keep His Commandments.” Ah, Christian, you have had many doubts, but you have had them all solved when you have come to the Cross of Christ! You have had many difficulties, but they have been all explained in the light of Calvary. You have seen mysteries, when you have brought them to the face of Christ, made clear and manifest which once you never could have known! But allow me to remark, here, that some people make use of Christ’s Gospel to illuminate their *heads*, instead of making use of it to illuminate their *hearts*. They are like the farmer Rowland Hill once described. The farmer is sitting by the fire with his children. The cat is purring on the hearth and they are all in great comfort. The plowman rushes in and cries, “Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!” The farmer rises up in a moment, grasps the candle, holds it up to his head, rushes after the thieves and,” says Rowland Hill, “he tumbles over a wheelbarrow, because he holds the light to his head, instead of holding it to his feet.” So there are many who just hold religion up to illuminate their intellect, instead of holding it down to illuminate their practice— and so they make a sad tumble of it and cast themselves into the mire and do more hurt to their Christian profession in one hour than they will ever be able to retrieve! Take care that you make the wisdom of God, by God’s Holy Spirit, a thing of true wisdom, directing your feet into His statutes and keeping you in His ways.  
And now a practical appeal and we have done. I have been putting my arrow on the string. And if I have used many light similes, I have but done so just as the archer tips his arrow with a feather to make it fly the better. I know that a rough quaint saying often sticks, when another thing is entirely forgotten. Now let us draw the bow and send the arrow right at your hearts. Brothers and Sisters, how many of you have felt in yourselves that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God? Internal evidence is the best evidence in the world for the Truth of the Gospel! No Paley or Butler can prove the Truth of the Gospel as well as Mary, the servant girl yonder, who has got the Gospel in her heart and the power of it manifest in her life! Has Christ ever broken your bonds and set you free? Has He delivered you from your evil life and from your sin? Has He given you “a good hope through Grace” and can you now say, “On Him I lean. On my Beloved I stay myself”? If so, go away and rejoice—you are a saint—for the Apostle has said, “He is unto us who are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” But if you cannot say this, allow me to affectionately warn you. If you need not this power of Christ and this wisdom of Christ, now, you will need them in a few short moments when God shall come to judge the quick and the dead—when you shall stand before His bar and when all the deeds that you have done shall be read before an assembled world. You will need religion then! Oh that you had Grace to tremble now—Grace to “kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”  
Hear how to be saved and I have done. Do you feel that you are a sinner? Are you conscious that you have rebelled against God? Are you willing to acknowledge your transgressions and do you hate and abhor them, while at the same time you feel you can do nothing to atone for them? Then hear this—Christ died for you! And if He died for you, you cannot be lost! Christ died in vain for no man for whom He died. If you are a penitent and a Believer, He died for you and you are safe. Go your way! Rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, for He who has taught you your need of a Savior will give that Savior’s blood to be applied to your conscience and you shall, before long, with yonder bloodwashed host, praise God and the Lamb saying, “Hallelujah, forever, Amen!”  
Only do you feel that you are a sinner? If not, I have no Gospel to preach to you. I can but warn you. But if you feel your lost estate and come to Christ, come and welcome, for He will never cast you away!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #587 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S STRANGE CHOICE  
NO. 587

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1864, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For you see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world~~***

***~~to confuse the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which  
are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.”  
1 Corinthians 1:26-29.~~***

THE Apostle Paul had been led to make the confession that Christ Jesus was despised both by Jew and Gentile. He confessed that this was no cause of stumbling to him, for what others counted foolishness he believed to be wisdom and rejoiced that the foolishness of God was wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men! Lest, however, any of the Corinthian Church should be confused by the fact that Christ was despised, the Apostle goes on to show that it was the general way of God’s proceeding to select means which men despised in order that by accomplishing His purpose through them, He might have all the Glory.

And he reminds them, for the proof of this, to the one instance of their own election and calling—“You see your calling, Brethren,” says he, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” But you, the poor, illiterate, the despised, you have been called—still for the same reason—that God may be All in All and that no flesh may glory in His Presence. It is clear to everyone who will observe either Scripture or fact that God never did intend to make His Gospel fashionable! The very last thing that was ever in His thoughts was to select the elite of mankind and gather dignity for His Truth from the gaudy trappings of rank and station.

On the contrary, God has thrown down the gauntlet against all the pride of manhood. He has dashed mire into the face of all human excellency. And with the battle-ax of His strength He has dashed the escutcheon of man’s glory in two. “Overturn! Overturn! I overturn!” seems to be the very motto of the Lord of Hosts and shall be so “until He shall come whose right it is to reign and He will give it Him,” for His is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. There is no doctrine more truly humbling than the doctrine of election. And it was for this reason that the Apostle Paul refers to it—that the disciples at Corinth might be quite content to follow the humble and despised Cross-bearing Savior because the election of Grace consists of the humble and despised, who, therefore, cannot be ashamed to follow One, who, like themselves, was despised and rejected of men.  
Coming then, at once to our text, we observe in it very clearly, first, the

Elector. Secondly, a strange election. Then the elected. And when we have considered all these a little, we shall pause over the reasons which God has given for His election—that “no flesh should glory in His Presence.”

**I.**First, then, let us this morning soar aloft upon the wings of thought to consider for awhile, the ELECTOR. Some men are saved and some men are not saved. It remains as a fact never to be questioned that some enter into eternal life and some pursue the evil way and perish. How is this difference caused? How is it that some mount to Heaven? The reason why any sink to Hell is their sin and only their sin. They will not repent, they will not believe in Christ, they will not turn to God—and therefore they perish willfully by their own act and deed.

But how is it that others are saved? Whose will is it that has made them to differ? The text three times most peremptorily answers the question. It says not “man has chosen,” but it says three times, “God has chosen, God has chosen, God has chosen.” The Grace which is found in any man, and the glory and eternal life to which any attain are all the gifts of God’s election and are not bestowed according to the will of man. This will be clear to any thoughtful person if we first of all turn to facts. Wherever we find a case of election in the Old Testament, it is manifestly God who makes it. Go back, if you will, to the very earliest time. Angels fell—a multitude of bright spirits who surrounded the Throne of God and sang His praises were deceived by Satan and fell into sin.

The great serpent drew with him the third part of the stars of Heaven— they fell from their obedience—they were condemned to chains and to eternal fire forever. Man also sinned. Adam and Eve broke the covenant with God and ate of the forbidden fruit—were they condemned to eternal fire? No, but God, in the plenitude of His Grace, whispered this promise in the woman’s ear—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Some men are saved, but no devils are saved. Why? Did man make the difference?

Silence, you vain boaster who dreams of such a thing! It is God Himself who testifies, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” It was from such sovereignty as this that the Lord virtually declared, “I purpose and decree that of the race of man I will save a multitude that no man can number. They shall be the vessels of My mercy, while yonder angels, once My servants but now traitors to their liege Lord, shall, without hope forever, experience the terror of My righteousness, the majesty of My justice.” Here no one ever raises a question. I have never heard the most ultra-Pelagian enter a plea for the devil!

I have heard of Origen who did seem to plead that Satan should be included in the general law of mercy, but very few persons nowadays talk so. Here is an instance of election—some of the human race saved and the angelic race left forever to perish. Who could have made this distinction but Jehovah Himself? And we must say there of our favored race, “God has chosen.” We are not at a loss to see the same discriminating Sovereignty at work among the individuals of our own race. All men were in the Patriarchal age sunk in heathenism with but a few exceptions. There were a few Patriarchs who still, chosen of God, held fast to the pure worship of the Most High.

The Lord determined to adopt a special people who should read the Oracles of God—preserve and maintain His Truth. He selected Abram as the progenitor of the chosen race. Did Abram choose God, or did God call and choose Abram? Was there anything naturally in Abram to entitle him to be the servant of the Most High? We have very plain proof in Scripture that there was not. He was, on the contrary, described as a Syrian ready to perish and his race was like the rest, tainted, to say the least, with idolatry. Nevertheless he was called out of the east and made the father of the faithful by God’s own special will.

What was there, let me ask you, in the Jews? Why should they be blessed with Prophets and the sacrifices and the rites and ordinances of true worship, while all the nations were left to bow down before gods of wood and stone? We can only say God has done it—His will lights upon the race of Israel and leaves the rest in sin. Take any particular case of Divine Grace mentioned in the Old Testament, as, for instance, that of David. Do we find that David chose the throne and set himself apart to be the chosen messenger of God to Israel? Was there some manifest fitness in the youngest son of Jesse? No, on the contrary, men had chosen his Brethren! Even Samuel said, “Surely the Lord’s Anointed is before me,” as he saw Abinadab go forth.

But God sees not as man sees and He had chosen the ruddy David that he might be king in Jeshurun. So might we multiply cases but your own thoughts will spare my words. All the facts of the Old Testament go to show that God does as He wills in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world. He pulls down and He raises up! He lifts the beggar from the dunghill that He may set him among the princes of His people. God has chosen, God has chosen and not man! “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.”

Let us look at the matter in another light. Clearly the Lord’s will must determine the matter if we consider His office and position towards men. God’s office. God is a King. Shall not the king have his own will? Men may set up a constitutional monarchy and they are right in so doing. But if you could find a being who was perfection itself, an absolute form of government would be undeniably the best. At any rate, God’s government is absolute and though He never violates righteousness, for He is Holiness and Truth itself, yet He regards this jewel of His crown as being the dearest that He has. “I Am and there is none beside Me.”

He gives no account of His matters. Unto all questions He gives this answer, “No but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” The absolute position of God as King demands that, especially in the work of salvation, His will should be the great determining force.

Let us state the case and you will see this. A number of criminals are shut up in prison, all deserving to die. Their guilt is the same. If they are all taken out to execution tomorrow morning, no one can say a word against justice. Now if some of these persons are spared, to whose discretion should the sparing be left? To their own? True, it will be most gracious to send a messenger and bid them all come forth and receive sparing mercy if they will come. But suppose they all, with one consent, refuse to be saved? Suppose that having been invited to be saved, every one of them refuses to accept pardon? If in such a case superior mercy determines to override their wicked wills and sets itself to secure that some of them shall effectually be saved, with whom shall the choice be left?

If it were left with them they would all of them still choose death rather than life. Therefore it were useless to leave it with them. Besides, to leave the attribute of mercy in the hand of the criminal would be an exceedingly strange mode of procedure. No, let it be the king! Let it be the king who shall say who it is that shall be spared in mercy and who shall die according to the rule of justice. The position of God as King and the position of men as criminals demands that salvation shall depend upon the will of God. And truly we may better leave it with His will than with our own, for He is kinder to us than we are to ourselves! He is more full of love to man than man is of love to himself. He is Justice, he is Love! Justice in fullorbed splendor—love in unbounded might. Mercy and Truth have met together in Him and kissed each other! And it is well, it is well! It is best of all that the rule and management of salvation should be left with Him.

We will now introduce to you a few figures made use of in Scripture in connection with the work of salvation and I think you will then see that the will must be left with God. Salvation consists in part of an adoption. God adopts sinners who were heirs of wrath, even as others, into His family. Who is to have authority in the matter of gracious adoption? The children of wrath? Surely not. And yet *all* men are such! No. It stands to nature, to reason, to common sense that none but the parent can have the discretion to adopt.

As a father I have a right, if any desire to enter my family, to adopt or to refuse to adopt the persons in question. Certainly no person can have a right to force himself upon me and say that I shall be considered as his reputed parent. The right must, I say, according to reason and common sense, lie with the parent. And in adoption it must be God who chooses His own children. The Church, again, is called a building. With whom does the architecture of the building rest? With the building? With the stones? Do the stones select themselves? Did that stone over yonder in the corner choose its place? Or that which is buried there in the foundation, did it select its proper position? No. The architect alone disposes of his chosen materials according to his own will. And thus, in building the Church which is the great House of God, the great Master Builder reserves to Himself the choice of the stones and the places which they shall occupy.

Take a yet more apparent case. The Church is called Christ’s Bride. Would any man here agree to have any person forced upon him as his bride? There is not a man among us who would, for a single moment, so demean himself as to give up his rights to choose his own spouse! And shall Christ leave to human will who His Bride shall be? No. But my Lord Jesus, the Husband of the Church, exercises the Sovereignty which His position permits Him and selects His own Bride.

Again, we are said to be members of Christ’s Body. We are told by David that in God’s Book, “all our members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them”—thus every man’s body had its members written in God’s Book. Is Christ’s Body to be an exception to this rule? Is that great Body of Divine manhood, Christ Jesus, the mystical Savior—is that to be fashioned according to the whims and wishes of free will—while other bodies, vastly inferior, have their members written in the Book of God? Let us not dream thus—it were to talk idly and not to know the meaning of the metaphors of Scripture! It seems clear to me, according to the figures and illustrations of Scripture, that the final choice of the men to be saved must be left with God.

Is not this, dear Friends, most agreeable to your own experience? I am sure it is to mine. There may be some who hate this doctrine—there may be some whose very mouths foam while they hear us talk of the Sovereignty of God! But I confess it touches a secret spring in my nature which can compel me to weep when nothing else can. There is a something in my consciousness which seems to say, “He must have chosen me, for I never could have chosen Him.” Determined to live in sin was I! Prone to wander! Fond of iniquity! Drinking down evil as the ox drinks his fill of water! And now saved by Grace! Dare I for a moment impute that salvation to my own choice?

I do choose God most freely, most fully, but it must be because of some previous work upon my heart changing that heart—for my unrenewed heart never could have chosen Him. Beloved, do you not feel at this very time that the natural bent of your thoughts is away from God? If the Grace of God were taken from you, what would you be? Are you not just like the bow which is bent when the string keeps it so—but cut that string and it flies back to its old place? Would it not be so with you? Would you not at once return to your former ways if the mighty Grace of God were withdrawn from you? Well then, you clearly see that if even now you are regenerate, your corrupt nature does not choose God, much less could it have chosen Him when there was no new nature to keep it in check and to control it. My Master looks into your faces, O you His people, and He says, “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” And we each feel that He wakes the echo of our hearts, for we reply, “Yes, Lord, we have not chosen You in our natural estate, but You have chosen us and unto Your free and Sovereign choice be honor forever and ever.”

**II.**May we feel the present influences of the Holy Spirit while we dwell upon the ELECTION ITSELF. The Lord is about to choose a people who shall give honor to the Cross of Christ. They are to be redeemed by precious blood and they are to be in some sense a worthy reward for the great sufferings of Jesus. Now observe how strange is the choice He makes. I read with astonishment, “He has not chosen many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.”

If man had received the power of choosing, these are just the persons who would have been selected! “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confuse the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty. And base things of the

world and things which are despised.” If man had governed the selection, these are the very persons who would have been left out! The choice is very strange, *very* strange! I believe even in Heaven it will be the subject of eternal wonder, and except for the reasons given in our text, we should have been at a loss to know why it was that with Divine scorn He passed by the palaces of haughty kings and looked after the base-born and the lowly to make them the subjects of His choice.

Observe that while it is strange, it has this peculiarity about it—it is directly contrary to human choice! Man chooses those who would be most helpful to him—God chooses those to whom *He* can be the most helpful. We select those who may give us the best return—God frequently selects those who most need His aid. If I choose a friend, the tendency is to him because of a certain serviceableness that there may be in him to myself— this is the selfishness of man. But God chooses His friends according to the serviceableness which He Himself may render to the chosen one! It is the very opposite way of choosing.

We select those who are best because they are most deserving. God selects those who are *worst* because they are least deserving so that His choice may be more clearly seen to be an act of Grace and not of merit. I say it is clearly contrary to man’s way of choosing. Man selects the most beautiful, the most lovely. God, on the contrary, seeing the blackness and filthiness of everything which is called lovely, will not select that which is called so, but takes that which even *men* discover to be unlovely. God then makes it lovely with the loveliness which He puts upon it. Strange choice! Is this the manner of men, O Lord?

You will observe that the choice is very gracious—oh, how gracious in your case and in mine! It is gracious even in its exclusion. It does not say, “Not any wise men,” it only says, “Not *many*,” so that the great ones are not altogether shut out. Grace is proclaimed to the prince and in Heaven there are those who on earth wore coronets and prayed. How blessed is the condescending Grace of the choice—it takes the weak things, the foolish things. One would have thought that when God said, “No,” to the prince, He must have said it in order that He might be excused from giving mercy to *anybody*—for we are in the habit of saying, “Well, we have refused Mr. So-and-So and he is a much more important person than you are, therefore I cannot give the favor to you. Why, the king asked me such a favor and I would not do it for him! Do you think I would do it for you?”

But God reasons another way. He passes by the king on purpose that He may meet with the beggar. He leaves the noble that He may lay hold upon the base. He passes over the philosopher that He may receive the fool. Oh this is strange! It is unbelievably strange! It is marvelous! Let us praise Him for this wondrous Grace! Oh, how encouraging is this for us this morning. Some of us cannot boast of any pedigree. We have no great learning. We have no wealth. Our names are all unknown to fame. But oh, what a mercy! He has been pleased to choose just such foolish things as we are! Such despised creatures as ourselves! Such things that are not— to bring to nothing the things that are!

Not to spend all the time this morning in simply pointing out this strange choice and wondering at it, let it suffice us to observe that every Christian who finds himself chosen will think his own election to be the strangest choice that could have been made***—***

***“What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
‘It was even so, Father!’ you ever must sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’ ”***

**III.**We will now turn to THE ELECTED. The chosen ones are described negatively and positively. They are described negatively. “Not many wise men after the flesh.” Observe, it does not say, “Not many wise men merely,” but, “not many wise men after the flesh,” because God has chosen truly wise men, since all His people are *made* truly wise, but it is the “wise after the flesh” that God has *not* chosen. The “sophoi,” as the Greek calls them. The philosophers, the men who pretend to have wisdom or to love wisdom. The cunning, the metaphysical, the great students, the keen observers, the rabbis, the doctors, the infallibles—the men who look down with profound scorn upon the illiterate and call them idiots—and treat them as if they were the dust beneath their feet. These are not chosen in any great number.

Strange, is it not? And yet a good reason is given. If they were chosen, why then they would say, “Ah, how much the Gospel owes to us! How our wisdom helps it!” If the first twelve Apostles had all been twelve doctors or sages, everybody would have said, “Why, of course the Gospel was mighty! There were the twelve picked wise men of Judea, or of Greece, to support it.” But instead of that, God looks round the creeks and bays after twelve poor fishermen who are as ignorant as any He can find! He takes them and they become the Apostles. They spread the Gospel and the Gospel has the glory and not the Apostles. The wise are passed by in the wisdom of God.

Observe next, He says, “Not many mighty.” The wise might have forced their way to Heaven by their wit, one would think, but there they are with their blind learning, fumbling for the latch of Heaven’s door—while the illiterate and simple-minded have already entered in! Blind wisdom gropes in the dark and like the wise men, it goes to Jerusalem in vain, while poor, humble shepherds go to Bethlehem and find Christ at once! Here comes another order of great men! The mighty men, the valiant champions, the princes, his Imperial Highness, the conquerors, the Alexanders, the Napoleons—are not these chosen? Surely when the king becomes a Christian, he can, with his sword, compel others to receive Christ—why not choose him?

“No,” says the text, “not many mighty.” And you see why—because if the mighty had been chosen, we should all say, “Oh, yes, we see why Christianity spreads so—it is the good temper of the sword and the strength of the arm that wields it.” We can all understand the progress of Mohammedanism during its first three centuries. Men like Ali and Khaled were ready to strike whole nations! They leaped upon their steeds, waved their scimitars over their heads and dashed against hundreds, fearless of the fight! And it was only when they met such men as our Richard Coeur de Lion that Mohammedanism was put back for awhile. When the sword

met sword, then they that took it perished with it!

Christ chose no warriors—one of his disciples used a sword but it was to very poor effect—for he only cut off a man’s ear and Christ touched that and healed it! And that was the end of poor Peter’s fighting. So the glory of the Lord’s conquests does not depend upon the mighty! God has not chosen them. Then he says, “Not many noble,” by which he means those with a long pedigree, descended through a line of princes, from the loins of kings, with blue blood in their veins. “Not many noble,” for nobility might have been thought to stamp the Gospel with its prestige. “Oh, yes, there is no wonder that the Gospel spreads when My Lord This and the Duke of That bends to it.”

Yes, but you see there were few such in the early Church. The saints in the catacombs were poor, humble men and women. And it is a very memorable fact that out of all the inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome written by the early Christians, there is scarcely one which is properly spelled. But nearly all of them are as bad in grammar as they are in spelling—a clear proof that they were scratched there by poor, illiterate, ignorant men who were then the defenders of the faith and the true conservators of the Grace of God. We have thus the negative side—not the wise, not the mighty, not the noble.

But now the positive side and I want your careful attention to the expression used by the Apostle. “God has chosen the foolish men”?—no, it does not say so! “The foolish *things*,” as if the Lord’s chosen were not by nature good enough to be called men, but were only “things.” As if the world looked down on them with such scorn that they did not say, “Who are these men?” but, “Who are these things?” Once or twice in Luke you will observe Christ called a “fellow,” but the word “fellow” is put in italics, not being in the original—for the Greek runs, “as for this, we know not where He is.” They did not say what He was, did not even call Him a “fellow,” though the translation is very good, as giving a correct idea to the ordinary reader.

They seem to say of Christ, “as for this—well, call Him a *beast* if you like—a *thing* if you like.” And so Paul has put it here—“the foolish *things*”—not simply foolish men whom the world should consider to be unlearned, ignorant, stupid dolts led by the nose and easily deceived into believing this or that, but—“foolish things,” which are nothing but stupidity has God chosen.

Next, God has chosen, “The weak things.” Do observe the word “things” with care. They were not merely weak men, but the world thought them weak *things*. “Ah,” said Caesar in the hall, if he said anything at all about it—“Who is King Jesus? A poor wretch who was hanged upon a tree! Who are these men that are setting Him up? Twelve poor fishermen who could hardly muster one single talent of gold between them! Who is this Paul who raves so lustily about Christ? A tentmaker! Who are his followers? A few despised women who meet him at the waterside! Is Paul a philosopher? No, he was publicly laughed at upon Mars’ Hill—they counted what he said to be mere babbling.” No doubt Caesar thought they were altogether too inconsiderable to be worthy of his notice. But the “weak things” God has chosen.

Observe the next description, “The base things.” The word there signifies things without pedigree, things without a father, things which cannot trace their descent—no Sir Harry, no Right Honorable is akin to them. Their father was a nobody and their mother was a nothing. Such were the Apostles of old—they were the base things of this world and yet God chose them! As if this were not enough, it is written, “Things that are despised,” sneered at, persecuted, hunted about, or treated with what is worse—with indifference—which is worse than scorn. They are not worth notice— inconsiderable fools—pass them by and let them alone.” And yet these had God chosen!

Once more, as if to outdo all and sum it up in one word, “Things that are not” has God chosen. Nothings, nonentities. “Oh,” says the man of the world, “yes, I did just hear that there were a parcel of fanatics of that kind.” “Oh,” says another, “I never even heard of them! I never mix myself up in any way with such a low-bred, vulgar set. Did they ever have a bishop among them? A Right Reverend Father in God?” “No, nothing of the kind, Sir, they are foolish, base, mean, despised. The world, therefore, rejects them.” “Yet,” says God, “*I* choose them.” They are the very people that He chooses.

Now observe that what was true in Paul’s day is true now. The Bible does not change as years revolve. And in 1864 God chooses the things which are despised just as much as in the year 64. And He will yet let the world know that those who are ridiculed, styled fanatics, thought to be mad and wicked, are yet, after all, His chosen ones destined for God and for His Truth to rally the sacramental host of the elect and win for God the battle of the last day! In this we are not ashamed to glory, that God chooses the things which are despised. And we can take our place with the despised people of God, hopeful to partake in the election of His Sovereign Grace.

**IV.**To conclude, you have THE REASONS WHY GOD HAS CHOSEN THESE PEOPLE. There are two reasons given—the first is the immediate reason. The second is the ultimate reason. The first, or immediate reason, is contained in these words, “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confuse the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty. And base things of the world and things which are despised has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are.”

Observe, then, the immediate reason is, first, to confuse the wise. For one wise man to confuse another wise man is remarkable. For a wise man to confuse a foolish man is very easy. But for a *foolish* man to confuse a *wise* man—ah, this is the finger of God! You know how it was with the first Apostles. A philosopher listened to Paul and when he had heard him, he said, “There is nothing in it! Perfect foolishness! Pack of stuff from beginning to end! No need for us to take the trouble to answer it.” Years rolled on and when the philosopher was getting very gray, that pestilent heresy of Christianity was spreading everywhere—his own daughter was converted—even his wife used to steal out at night to the secret assembly!

The philosopher could not understand it. “There,” he said, “I proved without a doubt that it was all stupidity and yet these people stick to it! I answered all their arguments, did I not? I not only answered and confuted, but I clinched my arguments in such a way that I thought I had put an end to the folly altogether. But here I see it, in my own household!” Sometimes the philosopher had to stand with tears in his eyes and say, “I feel it in my own heart, it has beaten me. It has confused me—I could reason and rationalize and beat poor Paul—but Paul has beaten me! What I thought was folly has confused my wisdom.”

Within a few centuries after the death of Christ the Christian religion had spread over the civilized world, while Paganism which had all the philosophy of the east and of the west to back it up, had fallen into disrepute and was laughed to scorn. Again, God has chosen the weak things to confuse the mighty. “Oh,” said Caesar, “we will soon root up this Christianity—off with their heads.” The different governors hastened one after another of the disciples to death, but the more they persecuted them the more they multiplied. The proconsuls had orders to destroy Christians. The more they hunted them, the more Christians there were, until at last men pressed to the judgment seat and asked to be permitted to die for Christ!

The State invented torments. They dragged the saints at the heels of wild horses. They laid them upon red-hot gridirons. They pulled off the skin from their flesh piece by piece. Thy were sawn in two. They were wrapped in skins and daubed with pitch—and set in Nero’s gardens at night to burn. They were left to rot in dungeons. They were made a spectacle to all men in the amphitheatre. The bears hugged them to death. The lions tore them to pieces—wild bulls tossed them upon their horns—and yet Christianity spread! All the swords of the legionaries which had put to rout the armies of all nations and had overcome the invincible Gaul and the savage Briton could not withstand the feebleness of Christianity—for the weakness of God is mightier than men.

If God had chosen the mighty men they would have turned round and said, “God is beholden to us.” If He had chosen the wise they would have said, “Our wisdom has done it.” But when He chooses the foolish and weak, where are you now, philosopher? Has not God laughed you to scorn? Where are you now, O sword and spear? O mighty man who wields them, where are you? God’s weakness has routed you! It is said that He chose the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are. This is even more than confusing them to bring them to nothing—“the things that are.”

What were they in the Apostle’s days? Jupiter seated upon his lofty throne holds the thunderbolt in his hand. Saturn reclined as the father of the gods. Venus delighted her votaries with her lustful pleasures. The chaste Diana sounded her horn. Here comes Paul with, “there is no God but God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” He represents “the things that are not.” So contemptible is the heresy of Christianity that if a list were made out of the religions of different countries, Christianity would have been left out of the catalog!  
But see the result! Where is Jupiter now? Where Saturn? Where Venus and Diana? Except as classical names in the dictionaries of the learned, where are they? Who bows before the shrine of Ceres in the day of harvest, or who lifts up his prayers to Neptune in the hour of storm? Ah, they have gone. “The things that are” have been brought to nothing by the “things that are not.” Let us reflect that what is true in Paul’s day is true today. This year 1864 shall see repeated the miracles of the olden times—the things that are shall be brought to nothing by the things that are not.

See in Wickliffe’s time. The things that are were the holy crucifixes in every Church. St. Winifred, St. Thomas of Canterbury are worshipped by all the multitudes of Englishmen. There comes My Lord Archbishop through the street! Yonder is the pope worshipped by thousands and there is the Virgin adored of all! What do I see? A solitary monk at Lutterworth begins to preach against the begging friars. And in preaching against them he finds out the Truth of God and begins to preach that Christ is the only ground of salvation and that they who trust in Him are saved!

Well, it was such a contemptible thing that at first they did not care to persecute him. It is true at last he was brought up before His Grace at St. Paul’s, but there was a strong man, one John O’Gaunt, who came up with him and said a word or two in his rough way and Wickliffe was allowed to sit down. And though condemned, he returns to his parish of Lutterworth. “The thing that was not!” It was not worthy to be put down by blood, it would die out of itself. Did it die out? Where are your holy crucifixes today? Where is St. Thomas of Canterbury, where are St. Agnes and St. Winifred?

Ask our Puseyite friends, for they, alone, can tell you. True consorts of the moles and of the bats—they know where the idols have been cast— they seek to restore the superstitions of the past. But by God’s Grace their task shall be no easy one. The present system of English superstition, with its water regeneration, its baptismal grace, its confirmations and its giving of grace through bread and wine—though it is attacked by those who are things that are not—shall yet cease to be! And the Truth as it is in Jesus—the pure simple faith that no man is a priest distinctively above his fellows—that every Christian is a priest unto God. The pure Truth, I say, that no water can necessarily bring the Spirit of God with it, and that no outward forms and rites have any virtue in them—apart from the faith of those who receive them—these, backed by the Spirit of God, shall bring to nothing the things that are.

Here we fall back upon the strength of God. I would not have God’s champions stronger. Brethren, were they stronger they would take glory to themselves. Let them be weak and let them be few and let them be despised. Their fewness, their poverty, their weakness shall make the shout of praise unto the eternal Conqueror yet more loud and the music shall be undivided! There shall only be this refrain, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory for Your Truth’s sake.” This, then, is God’s immediate object in choosing foolish things, weak things, things that are not—to confuse the mighty.

But His ultimate reason is “that no flesh may glory in His Presence.” I want you to notice that last sentence and I have done. He does not say, “that no man.” No, the text is in no humor to please anybody. It says, “that no flesh.” What a word! What a word, I say! Here are Solon and Socrates, the wise men. God points at them with His finger and calls them, “flesh.” Flesh is sold in the shambles, is it not? Dogs tear it. Worms eat it—nothing but flesh. There is Caesar with his imperial purple cast about him and as he stands erect, the mighty Imperator, how the Praetorian guards unsheathe their swords and shout, “Great is the Emperor! Long may he live!” “Flesh,” says God’s Word, “flesh.”

Here they come tramping on, hundreds in a line, the strong legionaries of Rome! Who can stand against their swords and shields? “Flesh,” says the Word, “flesh.” Here are men whose sires were of royal lineage and grandsires of imperial rank and they can trace back the long line of honor. “Flesh,” says God, “flesh, nothing but flesh.” Dogs’ meat. Worms’ meat when God wills it. “That no flesh may glory in His Presence.” Do you see, then? God puts this stamp upon us all—that we are nothing but flesh— and He chooses the poorest flesh and the most foolish flesh and the weakest flesh—that all the other flesh that is only flesh and only grass may see that God pours contempt on it and will have no flesh glory in His Presence!

Now what is your spirit this morning towards this subject? Do you kick at it? Do you say you cannot bear it? I am afraid you want to glory in God’s Presence. Your views of things and God’s views of things differ, and therefore you need to have a new heart and a right spirit. But, on the contrary, do you say this morning, “I have nothing to boast of. I would not glory in Your Presence, but I would lie in the very dust and say, ‘Do with me as You will’ ”? Sinner, do you feel that you are nothing but flesh and sinful flesh? Are you so broken before God that you feel let Him do as He will with you? Do you know that He will be just and you can only appeal to His Sovereign Mercy?

Then God and you are one, you are reconciled! I can see that you are reconciled. When God and you are agreed that God should reign, then God is agreed that you should live! Sinner, touch the scepter of His Grace! Jesus Crucified stands before you now and bids you look to Him and live! That you are bid to look is an instance of mighty Grace—and that you are *enabled* to look this morning will be a wonder of Divine love for which you will have to bless Him in time and eternity! And now may that God whose name we have sought to honor this morning bless these stammering of ours, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #991 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FOURFOLD TREASURE  
NO. 991

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written,  
he that glories, let him glory in the Lord.”  
1 Corinthians 1:30, 31.~~***

WE meet somewhere in the Old Testament with the expression “salt without prescribing how much.” Beyond all question the name, Person, and work of Jesus are the salt and savor of every true Gospel ministry and we cannot have too much of them. Alas, that in so many ministries there is such a lack of this first dainty of the feast, this essence of all soulsatisfying doctrine. We may preach Christ without prescribing how much, only the more we extol Him the better. It would be impossible to sin by excess in preaching Christ Crucified. It was an ancient precept, “With all your offerings you shall offer salt.” Let it stand as an ordinance of the sanctuary now—“With all your sermonizing and discoursing you shall ever mingle the name of Jesus Christ, you shall ever seek to magnify the Alpha and Omega of the plan of redemption.”

The Apostle, in the first chapter of this Epistle, was anxious to speak to the Corinthians about their divisions and other serious faults. But he could not confine himself to that unpleasant theme. As naturally as possible his heart bounded over the mountains of division to his Lord and Master. Divisions did but remind him of the great Uniting One who has made all His people one, and human follies did but drive him nearer to the Infallible Christ who is the Wisdom of God. Though Paul had to write many sharp things to those ancient Plymouth Brethren at Corinth, yet how sweetly did he prevent all bitterness by dipping his pen in the honeyed ink of love to the Lord Jesus, and admiration of His Person and work!

Let us, dear Friends, if we have to preach, preach Christ crucified! And if we are private persons, let us in our household life, and in all our conversation, make His name to be as ointment poured forth. Let your life be Christ living in you. May you be like Asher, of whom it is said he dipped his foot in oil. May you be so anointed with the Spirit of your Lord that wherever you put down your foot, you may leave an impression of Divine Grace. The balmy south wind bears tokens of having passed over sunny lands—may the ordinary bent and current of your life bear evidences in it that you have communed with Jesus.

Tonight we have before us a text which is extraordinarily comprehensive, and contains infinitely more of meaning than mind shall grasp or tongue shall utter at this hour. Considering it carefully, let us observe, first, that the Apostle here attributes the fact that we are in Christ Jesus to the Lord alone. He shows that there is a connection between our very being as Christians, and the love and Grace of God in Christ. “Of Him,”

(that is of God), “are you in Christ Jesus.” So we will first speak about *our spiritual existence*.

Then Paul goes on to write of *our spiritual wealth*, which he sums up under four heads—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But which indeed, I might say, he sums up under *one* head, for he declares that Christ is made of God unto us all these four things. And then he closes the chapter by telling us where our glorying ought to go—it should return to the *source* of our spiritual existence and heavenly wealth. “He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

**I.**To begin, then, where God began with us—OUR SPIRITUAL EXISTENCE. “Of Him are you in Christ Jesus.” Different translators have read this passage in various ways. “Of Him,” they think properly should be, “Through Him”— that is, “Through God we are in Christ Jesus.” Are you this day united to Christ—a stone in that building, of which He is both Foundation and Topstone? Are you a limb of that mystical body, of which He is the Head? Then you did not get there of yourself. No stone in that wall leaped into its place. No member of that body was its own creator.

You come to be in union with Christ through God the Father. You were ordained unto this Divine Grace by His own purpose, the purpose of the Infinite Jehovah, who chose you, before the earth was. “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” The first cause of your union with Christ lies in the purpose of God who gave you Grace in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world.

And as to the purpose, so to the power of God is your union with Christ to be attributed. He brought you into Christ. You were a stranger, He brought you near. You were an enemy, He reconciled you. You had never come to Christ to seek for mercy if first of all the Spirit of God had not appeared to you to show you your need, and to lead you to cry for the mercy that you needed. Through God’s operation as well as through God’s decree you are this day in Christ Jesus. It will do your souls good, my Brethren, to think of this very commonplace Truth of God. Many days have passed since your conversion, it may be, but do not forget what a high day the day of your new birth was!

And do not cease to give glory to that mighty power which brought you out of darkness into marvelous light. You did not convert yourself. If you did, you still have need to be converted again. Your regeneration was not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of birth. If it were so, let me tell you the sooner you are rid of it, the better. The only true regeneration is of the will of God and by the operation of the Holy Spirit. “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” He “has begotten us again unto a lively hope.” “He that has worked us to the selfsame thing is God.” “Of Him are you in Christ Jesus.”

Through the operation and will and purpose of God are you this day a member of Christ’s body and one with Jesus. Give all the glory, then, to the Lord alone. But suppose we read it as we have it in the text, and then we shall not have an allusion to the source of our spiritual life, but to the dignity of it. “Of God are you in Christ Jesus.” Being in Christ you are of God. Not of the earth earthy now. Not of Satan, not of the bondage of the Law. Not of the powers of evil, but of God are you—God’s husbandry, God’s people, God’s children, God’s beloved ones. “You are of God,” little children, “and the whole world lies in wickedness.”

On you has God’s Light shone. To you has God’s Life come. In you God’s Love is made manifest, and in you shall God’s Glory be fully revealed. What a dignity is this to be “of God!” Some have thought it a great thing to have it said, “These are they which are of the prince’s household,” and others have been yet more boastful when they have been pointed at as parts of an imperial court. But you are of the Divine Family, descended from Him only who has immortality. “They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up My jewels.” “For the Lord’s portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.”

Of God, are you, every one of you who are in Christ Jesus—you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. The Creator, the Upholder, the Sublime, the Invisible, the Infinite, the Eternal claims you! You have a part and lot with Him, and you are herein uplifted to the highest degree of exaltation because you are in Christ. Here, then, you have the dignity of the Christ life—it is *of* God, as its source is *through* God. But note the essence of the Christ life—“Of God are you *in Christ Jesus*.”

You have no life before the Lord, except as you are in Christ Jesus. Apart from Him you are as the branch that is severed from the vine— dead, withered, useless, obnoxious, rotten. Men gather these branches and cast them into the fire and they are burned. A ghastly sight it must be on the battlefield, to see on all sides—arms, legs, and various portions of limbs torn away from the bodies to which they belonged—and scattered in hideous disorder! Once of the utmost service, these severed limbs are now useless. Everyone knows that they are dead, for they cannot live divided from the vital regions—even thus if you and I could be separated from Christ, our vital Head, death—spiritual death—must be the inevitable result.

Our life hinges upon union to our Lord. “Because I live, you shall live, also.” Out of Christ we abide in death, but in Christ we live, and we are of God. Our spiritual being, and the fact that our spiritual being is an exalted one, both hang upon this—that we are in Christ. Beloved Christian Friends, I can congratulate you upon your being able to know that you are in Christ, and that so you are of God. But I must not speak so broadly to all this congregation. I must rather put a grave enquiry and ask each of my hearers—Are you all in Christ Jesus? Could the Apostle write to you, and say—“Of God are you in Christ Jesus”? Have you ever been the subject of a work of God, putting you into Christ Jesus?

Are you now of God in Christ Jesus so as to be depending for everything upon Him, dwelling in Him, and He in you? Are you feeling His life within you, and that your life is hid with Him in God? Beloved Hearer, there is no joy in this world like union with Christ. The more we can feel it, the happier we are, whatever our circumstances may be. But if you are without Christ, you are without hope. Joy comes not where Jesus comes not.

No Savior, then no peace in life or death. Oh remember, Beloved Hearer, that you will soon die. Where, where will you look for consolation in your last moments? Your soul will soon have to fly through tracks unknown, and face the burning Throne of Judgment. What will you do, then, without the hand of love to guide you and the righteousness of Christ to

cover you? He who wraps himself about with Christ’s matchless robe can

say— ***“Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who anything to my charge shall lay? While through Your blood absolved I am  
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”***

But he that has no Savior, it were better for him that he had never been born. That day is cursed and has no blessing on which he first saw the light. Jesus Christ is willing to receive you if you desire to come to Him. Noah’s ark was shut, but not until the flood came. It was open till then— Christ is the Ark of the Covenant, and the door is not shut yet. Let not this, however, cause you to delay, for the flood will rise, and the rains will fall, and then to those who shall knock at the door, it will be said, “Too late! Too late! You cannot enter now.”

Of Him, beloved Believers in Christ, are you in Christ Jesus. All you are—even to your bare existence as Christians—you have to trace to “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away.”

**II.**Now let us turn to the second part of our subject, and contemplate OUR SPIRITUAL WEALTH. Christ Jesus is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Here are four things—only it is to be noticed that in the original Greek the second and third have a peculiar connecting link, which the others have not. The wisdom stands alone, and the redemption—but the righteousness and sanctification have a special link—as though we should be taught that they always go together. That they should always be considered as united—a warning to modern theology—which so often divides what God has joined together.

Let us take the first blessing first, asking to be partakers of it at this very moment. Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom. You noticed when we read the chapter that the Apostle had been speaking of some other wisdom which he treated somewhat roughly. It had set itself up in opposition to the Cross of Christ, and the Apostle handled it with no gentle handling. There have always been those in the world who have conceived that wisdom would come to them as the result of the exercise of their own thoughts assisted by culture.

That is to say, they hoped to know Divine Truth by their own thoughts and the additional light arising from the thoughts of other men. They fancied that wisdom would rise out of the human mind and would not need to be taught us from above. There were those in Paul’s days who were always ruminating, considering, contemplating with themselves, and then disputing, dialoging, and conversing with others. These were the philosophers of the time. They looked for wisdom through *man*, and expected to find it in the shallow brain of a poor son of Adam. They believed that they, themselves, were wise.

That though they affected modesty and did not call themselves “the Sophoi, or wise,” but “the Philosophoi,” or lovers of wisdom. Yet for all that, in their innermost hearts they esteemed themselves to be an inner circle of instructed persons and they looked upon the rest of mankind as the unilluminated and the ignorant. They had found a treasure which they kept to themselves, and virtually said to their fellow men, “You are almost, without exception, hopelessly ignorant.”

Now, the Apostle, instead of pointing to his own brain, or pointing to the statue of Socrates or Solon, says Jesus Christ is made of God unto us wisdom. We look no more for wisdom from the thoughts that spring of human mind, but to Christ Himself. We do not expect wisdom to come to us through the culture that is of man, but we expect to be made wise through sitting at our Master’s feet and accepting Him as Wisdom from God Himself.

Now, as it was in the Apostle’s day, so is it very much at this present. There are those who will have it that the Gospel—the simple Gospel—such as might have been preached by John Bunyan or Whitfield, or Wesley, and others—was very well for the many. And for the dark times in which they lived—the great mass of mankind would be helped and improved by it. But there is wanted, according to the wiseacres of this intensely luminous century, a more progressive theology, far in advance of the Evangelism now so generally ridiculed.

Men of mind—gentlemen of profound thought—are to teach us doctrines that were unknown to our fathers. We are to go on improving in our knowledge of Divine Truth till we leave Peter and Paul and those other old dogmatists far behind. Nobody knows how wise we are to become. Brethren, our thoughts loathe this! We hate this cant about progress and deep thought! We only wish we could know as much of Christ as the old preachers did. We are afraid, that instead of getting into greater light through the thinking of men—the speculations and contemplations of the scribes, ancient and modern, and the discoveries of the intellectual and eclectic—have made darkness worse, and have quenched some of the light that was in the world.

Again has it been fulfilled—“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” It seems to me to be greater wisdom to believe what Christ has said than to believe what my deepest thoughts have discovered. And though I have thought long upon a subject, and turned it over and over, and think I know more of it than another man, yet, in one simple word of Christ there is more wisdom than in all my thoughts and ruminating.

I am never to look to myself for wisdom, and to fancy that I am the creator of truth or the revealer of it—but ever to go to Him—my Lord, my Teacher, my All—and to believe that the highest culture, the best results of the highest education are to be found by sitting at His feet. And the best results of the deepest meditation, too, are to be gained in lying down in the green pastures beside the still waters, where He, as the Good Shepherd, leads me. Brethren, when we read that Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, let us remember what wisdom is. Wisdom is, I suppose, the right use of knowledge.

To know is *not* to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the more fools for what they know. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom. Now that man is wise in three respects who has Christ for his wisdom. Christ’s

*teaching*will make him wise of thought, and wise of heart. All you want to know of God, of sin, of life, of death, of eternity, of predestination, of man’s responsibility—Christ has either personally, or by His Spirit in the Word of God, taught you. Anything that you find out for yourself, anything over and above Revelation—is folly—but whatever He has taught is wisdom.

And He has so taught it that if you learn it in the spirit in which He would have you learn it, it will not be dry, dead doctrine to you, but spirit and life. And His teaching will endow you with wisdom as well as knowledge. Let us always be scholars at the foot of the Cross. Never let us go to any other school than Schola Crucis, for the learners of the Cross are the favorites of wisdom. Let Corpus Christi be the college in which we study. To know Jesus, and the power of His resurrection—this is wisdom.

But, in addition to profiting by our Lord’s instruction, the Christian learns wisdom through his Master’s *example*. “How shall a young man cleanse his way?” How shall I be made wise in action? Policy says, “Adopt this expedient and the other.” And the mass of mankind at this age are guided by the policy of the hour. But policy is seeming wisdom and real folly. Remember it is always wisest to act in any condition as Jesus would have acted, supposing Him to have been in that condition. Never did He temporize. Principle guided Him, not fashion nor personal advantage. You shall never be a fool if you follow Christ, except in the estimation of fools— and who wishes to be wise in a fool’s esteem?

But sometimes it may be said—“To do as Christ would have done would involve me in present difficulty or loss.” It is true. But there is no man that loses anything in this life for Christ’s sake who shall remain a loser, for he shall receive tenfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. The wisest action is not always the most peculiarly profitable. It is wise, sometimes, for men to be poor, yes, even to lose their lives. Truest wisdom—not sham wisdom, not temporary wisdom—you shall manifest by following the example of Christ, though it lead you to prison or to death.

His teachings and His example, together, will give you the wisdom which comes from above. Above all, if you have the Redeemer’s *Presence*, He will be made of God unto you wisdom in a very remarkable sense. Never forget or doubt that Jesus is still with His people. They who know how to enter into the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, find Him still at the Mercy Seat. He feeds among the lilies, and they who know the lilies know where to find Him. And those who live with Him, and catch His spirit, have their garments perfumed as His are with myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.

These may be thought to be mad by some, and others may call them fanatical enthusiasts. But these are the wisest of mankind. O happy men that live at the gates of Heaven while yet on earth! That sit at the feet of the Blessed in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus while they are toiling along through the pilgrimage of this life! This is to be wise, to have Christ’s teaching, Christ’s example and above all, Christ’s Presence. So may the poorest find the Lord Jesus made of God unto them wisdom.

Pause just a minute. Let none of us ever be so foolish as to suppose that when we have received Jesus and His Gospel, we have occasion to blush when we are in the company of the very wisest of the present day. Carry a bold face when you confront the bronze-faced philosophy which insults your Lord. The man who does not believe the Bible does not know so much as you do. Blush not, though with mimic wisdom the unbeliever tries to laugh or argue you down. He who knows not Christ, though he propounds wonderful theories as to the creation of mankind and the formation of the world, and though he has a glib tongue, is only an educated *fool*, a learned *idiot*, who thinks his own rush light brighter than God’s own sun.

“Ah, but he has been to college, and he has a degree, and he is esteemed by men! He has written books that nobody can comprehend.” “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.” And I do not care even if he is a Solon, if he has said that there is no God, he is a fool. Do not blush, then, if you find yourself in his company. Do not make yourself the blushing one because the fool is there. Self-conceit were to be avoided and loathed—but this is not self-conceit—but a holy courage in a case which demands of you to be courageous. To know Christ is the best of all philosophy, the highest of all sciences.

Angels desire to look into this—but I do not know that they care a fig for half the sciences so valued among men. If you know Christ you never need be afraid of being ashamed and confounded whatever company you may be in. If you stood in a senate of emperors, or amidst a parliament of philosophers and only told them of the God that came in human flesh, and loved, and lived, and died to redeem mankind—you would have told them a greater mystery and a more profound secret than reason could discover. Be not ashamed, then, amid the intellectual pride of this boastful age.

At the same time let me remind you of another evil—do not seek to complete your wisdom at any other source—be satisfied that in keeping close to Christ you have the highest and truest wisdom. As I would not have you cowed before the pretender, neither would I have you envy him, or seek to supplement the wisdom that is in Christ Jesus by the wisdom that is of man. Are you so foolish, having begun with Jesus—will you end with a German neologian, or a French wit, or a Puseyite dreamer?

Have you taken Christ’s Word to be your guide, and will you go and tack on to that some decree of Convocation, some rubric of a Church, some minute of Conference, or other invention of human brain and fallen fancy? God forbid! Array yourself solely in this armor of gold, and go forth and gleam in the sun—and angels themselves shall marvel at you as they see your brightness. “Jesus Christ is made of God unto you wisdom.” It is high time for us to proceed to review the next blessing.

He is made of God unto us *righteousness*. This was a great want of ours, for naturally we were unrighteous, and to this hour in ourselves we are the same. Righteous we must be to be acceptable with God, but righteous we certainly are not personally or by merit. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we are unable to stand before the great King. But there is One who says—“Take away his filthy garments from him”—and that same Deliverer, even the Lord Jesus Christ, is made of God unto us righteousness. You know how we usually speak of this as a double work. His blood cleanses us from all guilt—by it pardon is bestowed upon the

Believer.

He that looks to Christ is absolved from all sin—completely so. Then, in addition to that cleansing, which we call pardon, there is the clothing, the arraying in the righteousness of Christ—in a word, there is justification by faith. The doctrine of imputed righteousness seems to me to be firmly established in the Word of God. Yet I have sometimes fancied I have heard a little too much stress put upon the word, “imputed,” and scarcely enough upon the word, “righteousness.” For though I know that righteousness is imputed to us, yet I believe it is not all the truth that we are righteous by imputation.

It is true, most true—but there is something true *beyond* it. Not only is Christ’s righteousness imputed to me, but it is mine actually, for Christ is mine. He who believes in Jesus has Jesus Christ to be his own Christ, and the righteousness of Christ belongs to that Believer, and is his. We are not merely imputedly righteous, but the righteousness of our Substitute is legally, actually, truly our righteousness. I am not now speaking of our *nature*—that would have to do with sanctification—but I am speaking of repute before God. He reckons us to be righteous in Christ, and He does not reckon wrongly.

The imputation is not a legal fiction or a charitable error. We are righteous. Depend upon it, God’s imputation is not like human imputation which makes a thing to be what it is not—we are in Christ made *actually* righteous—because we are one with Him. Do you think that there is an unrighteous member of Christ’s body? God forbid! Do you think Christ mystical to be a building with an unholy stone in it? Is Christ a vine with branches which bear deadly fruit? As He is, so are we also in this respect. His salt has seasoned the whole lump. In the mystical body every member is made righteous before God, because joined to the living Head.

Here is an actual righteousness given to us through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is made of God unto us righteousness. Consider this, O Believer—you are, tonight, righteous before God. You are a sinner in yourself worthy to be condemned—but God does not condemn you—and He will never do so, for before the eye of His Justice you are arrayed in perfect righteousness. Your sin is not upon you—it was laid upon the Scapegoat’s head of old. All your iniquities were made to meet upon the head of the Crucified Savior—He bore your transgressions in His own body on the tree.

Where are your sins now? You may ask the question without fear, for they have ceased to be. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” “He has cast our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” Glory be to His name, there is no sin in existence against a Believer. Is it not written—“He has finished transgression, made an end of sin [what stronger expression can there be?], and brought in everlasting righteousness”? And that is true of you tonight, Christian—as true of you tonight as it will be when you are in Heaven. You are not so *sanctified* tonight as you will be in the Heaven, but you are as *righteous* as you can be even there.

In God’s sight you are as much “accepted in the Beloved,” as you will be when you stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire. You are Beloved of God, and dear to Him and justified, so that even tonight you can say— “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?” You cannot lift up a louder boast than that, even when you shall see your Savior, and shall be like He because you see Him as He is. By faith this righteousness is yours at this present moment, and will always be yours without a change—yours when your spirit is cast down—as much as when your joys abound.

You are accepted not because of anything in yourself, but because you stand in the Lord, your Righteousness. I remarked some time ago that the next blessing in our text is pinned on to this one. I need not say much about that fact, but just note it. Righteousness and sanctification must always go together, and though they are two different things, or else there would not have been two different words, yet they blend into each other most remarkably, hence the Greek joins the two words by a close link.

Our *sanctification* is all in Christ—that is to say it is because we are in Christ that we have the basis of sanctification, which consists in being set apart. A thing was sanctified of old, under the Law, when it was set apart for God’s service. We were sanctified in Christ Jesus when we were set apart by the Divine Spirit to be the Lord’s own peculiar people forever. Election is the basis of sanctification. Moreover, the power by which we are sanctified comes to us entirely by virtue of our union with Christ.

The Holy Spirit who sanctifies us through the Truth of God, works in us by virtue of our union with Jesus. That which becomes holy in us is the new life. The old nature never changes into a holy thing. The carnal mind is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be. The old man is not sent to the hospital to be healed, but to the Cross to be crucified. It is not transformed and improved, but doomed to die and to be buried. The ordinance of Baptism, which is placed at the outset of Christ life, is meant to show, by our immersion in the liquid tomb, that it is by death and burial that we pass into life by the power of resurrection.

If any man is in Christ, he is not an old creature mended up—he is a new creature. “Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” Now, it is because this new life is the great, the true matter of sanctification, and because it comes to us by virtue of our oneness with Christ, that Jesus Christ is made to us the power and the life by which we are sanctified. Beloved, let your hearts add another meaning—let Jesus always be the *motive* for your sanctification. Is it not a strange thing that some professors should look to Christ, alone, for pardon and justification, and run away to Moses when they desire sanctification?

For instance, you will hear persons preach this doctrine—“The Christian is to be holy, because if he is not holy he will fall from Grace and perish.” Do you not hear the crack of the old legal whip in all that? What is that but the yoke of that Covenant which none of our fathers were able to bear? It is the bondage of Egypt—not the freedom of the children of God. Christ talks not so, nor His Gospel. Think not to make yourself holy by motives of that kind. They are not right motives for a child of God.

How, then, should we urge the child of God to holiness? Should it not be in this way—“You are God’s child—walk worthy of Him who is your Father”? His love to you will never cease. He cannot cast you away—He is faithful and never changes, therefore love Him in return. This is a motive fit for the child of the free woman, and it moves his heart. The child of

the bond woman is driven by the whip, but the child of the free woman is drawn by cords of love. “The love of Christ constrains us.”

Not fear of Hell, but love of Christ. Not fear that God will cast us away, for that He cannot do, but the joy that we are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation constrains us to cling to Him with all our heart and soul, forever and ever. Rest assured, if motives fetched from the Gospel will not kill sin, motives fetched from the Law never will. If you cannot be purged at Calvary, you certainly cannot be cleansed at Sinai. If “the water and the blood from the riven side which flowed,” are not sufficient to purify you, no blood of bulls or of goats—I mean no argument from the Jewish Law, or hope of salvation by your own efforts—will ever furnish motives sufficiently strong to cast out sin.

Let your reasons for being holy be found in Christ, for He is made of God unto you sanctification! I have ever found, and I bear my witness to it, that the more entirely for the future as well as for the present, I lean upon my Lord, the more conscious I am of my own emptiness and unworthiness. And the more completely I rest my whole salvation upon the Grace of God in Christ Jesus, the more carefully do I walk in my daily life. I have always found that self-righteous thoughts very soon lead to sinful actions.

But, on the other hand, the very faith which leads to assurance, and makes the heart rest in the faithfulness of God in Christ, purifies the soul. “He that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” Jesus, the Savior, saves us from our sins, and is made of God to us “sanctification.”

Now the last item of our boundless wealth cataloged in the text is “ *redemption*.” Somebody says—“That ought to have come first, because redemption, surely, is the first blessing that we enjoy.” Yes, but it is the last as well. It is the *alpha*blessing, I grant you that—but it is the *omega* blessing, too. You are not yet redeemed altogether. By price you are—for He that redeemed you on the tree did not leave unpaid a penny of your ransom. But you are not yet altogether redeemed by *power*. In a measure, you are set free by Divine power. For you have been brought up out of the Egypt of your sin—you have been delivered from the galling bondage of your corruption, and led through the Red Sea, to be fed upon the heavenly manna.

But you are not altogether redeemed by power as yet. There are links of the old chains yet to be snapped from off you, and there is a bondage still about you from which you are before long to be delivered. You are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.” You will fall asleep, rejoicing that you were redeemed. But you will not, even when you die, have received the full redemption. When will that come—the full redemption? Only at the second advent of the Lord Jesus. For when the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, then the bodies of His saints, which have long been lying in the prison of the sepulcher, shall be redeemed by a glorious redemption from the power of death.

“I know that my redeemer lives.” The bodies of the saints shall come again from the land of the enemy. Then their body, soul, and spirit—their entire manhood, which Christ has bought—shall be altogether free from the reign of the enemy. Then will redemption be completed. Remember the saints in Heaven without us cannot be made perfect! That is to say, they wait till we arrive among them. And when all the rest of the chosen ones shall be gathered in, and the fullness of time has come, then shall the bodies of the dead arise.

And then, in body and soul made perfect, the year of the redeemed shall have fully come. “Lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near.” Here, then, is my joy—that Christ is my redemption. My soul is free from slavery, but my poor trembling and much suffering body feels the chains of death. Weakened by pain, my body shall in all probability bow before the stroke of death’s sword. Unless the Lord soon comes, it must be the portion of this frame to feed the worm and mingle with the dust—but, O my Body, you are redeemed! And you shall rise in power and incorruption! You shall yet adore the Lord without weariness, and without pain shall you serve Him day and night in His temple!

Even you, O my weary Body—even you shall be made glorious like unto the Lord Himself—You shall rise and live in the brightness of His Presence! All, then, that you can possibly want, O Christian, is in Christ. You cannot conceive a need which Jesus does not supply. “Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption”—you have all in Him. Some gather a flower here. Some gather another there. Some will go farther, and pluck another there. And some will go yet beyond to grasp a fourth. But when we win Christ we have a bouquet! We have all sweet flowers in one—

***“All human beauties, all Divine,  
In my Beloved meet and shine.  
You brightest, sweetest, fairest One,  
That eyes have seen or angels known.”***

But we cannot stay on this tempting subject, though even amid my present pain I would gladly talk on by the hours together. And therefore I must finish with the last point. And on that only a word. You see then, Brethren, our very existence as Christians, and all that we possess as Christians, we get from God by Jesus Christ. Let *all our glory, then, be unto Him*. What insanity it is to boast in any but in our Lord Jesus! How foolish are they that are proud of the beauty of their flesh—worms’ meat at the best! How foolish are they who are proud of their wisdom! The wisdom of which a man is proud is but folly in a thin disguise.

How foolish are they that are vain of their wealth! He must be a poor man who can think much of gold. He must be a beggar, indeed, who counts a piece of dirt a treasure. They that know Christ always value these things at their right estimate, and that is low, indeed. If any glory— and I suppose it is natural to us to glory, there is a boasting bump on all our heads—let us glory in the Lord. And here is a wide field and ample ocean. Now, put out every stitch of canvas, run up the top gallants, seek as stiff a breeze as you will—there is no fear of running on a lee shore here, or striking a rock, or drifting on a quicksand!

O Men! O Angels! O Cherubim! O Seraphim! Boast in Jesus Christ! Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption is He—therefore you may boast and boast, and boast again! You will never exaggerate. You cannot exceed His worth, or reach the tithe of it. You can never go beyond the Truth of God—you do not even reach beyond the skirts of His garments. So glorious is God that all the angels’ harps cannot sound forth half His Glory. So blessed is Christ that the orchestra of the countless

multitudes of the redeemed, though it continue forever and forever its pealing music, can never reach to the majesty of His name or the glory of His work. “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.”

Let time and space become great mouths for song! Let the infinite roll up its waves. Let all creatures lift up their voices in praise of Him that lives and was dead! But chiefly, O my Soul, since to Him you owe in a double sense your existence, give your praise to Him from whom all blessing comes. Give the homage of your intellect to Him who is your Wisdom. Let your conscience and love of rectitude adore Him who has made you righteous. Give the tribute of your soul to Him who sanctifies you. Let your sanctified nature consecrate itself continually. And to Him that has redeemed you give never-ceasing praise.

I wish it were possible for me to rise to the height of my text, but my wings flag. I cannot ascend as the eagle, and face the full blaze of the sun. I can but mount a little as the lark, and sing my song, and then return to my nest. God grant you to know the Lord Jesus in His fullness in your personal experience. O you to whom Christ is not wisdom, how foolish are you! O you to whom He is not righteousness, you are condemned sinners! O you to whom He is not sanctification, the fire of God’s wrath will consume you! O you to whom He is no redemption, you are slaves in hopeless bondage! God deliver you! May you be led to put your trust in Jesus even now. Amen.

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

[Mr. Spurgeon earnestly requests the prayers of the Lord’s people for his restoration to health. He has now been laid aside for eight most painful weeks, and at present there are very feeble signs of recovery.] Twentieth Thousand. Price, Two Shillings and Sixpence. “*FEATHERS FOR ARROWS*,” or, “*Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers from My Note Book,*” By C. H. SPURGEON. “A treasury of figures and metaphors—and plenty of them— from Mr. Spurgeon’s Note Book which he has done well to reduce to 280 pages of type, for the benefit of Christian workers, to whom the book is now presented as a sincere offering of hearty brother-help.” *The Latter Rain*.

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GLORYING IN THE LORD  
NO. 1178

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.”  
1 Corinthians 1:31.*

THERE is an irresistible tendency in us to glory in something or other. All classes of men glory—the highest and the lowest, the richest and the poorest, the best educated and the most illiterate. Solomon glories and so does the fool. Goliath glories and so does David. Pharaoh glories and so does his slave. Even in the most modest, the tendency to boast is present—only its nakedness is daintily concealed. Good men glory, yes, and in hours of weakness they have gloried in objects very unworthy of their boasts. You remember how, when the ambassadors came out of Babylon, Hezekiah showed them all his riches and his stores—and no doubt he gloried while he took them from treasure house to treasure house—and opened his caskets and showed all his precious things.

But it was an evil thing, and the Lord was angry with him for that glorying, and bade the Prophet foretell that all his choice vessels should be carried away as plunder by the very people whose ambassadors he had so delighted with the sight. The very first person who was born into this world was the subject of glorying and his mother, as she gazed upon him with rapture, said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord.” Perhaps she even said, as the original has been construed, “I have gotten a man—the Lord,” thinking that surely he might be the promised seed of the woman who would bruise the serpent’s head and would prove to be both a man and the Lord. Alas, it was Cain, who slew his brother, and was a child of the serpent rather than the bruiser of his head. The thing we glory in, though it is a dear child, may turn out to be a scourge for our backs—a Cain and not a consolation. Jacob glories in Joseph’s princely coat, but he wept, indeed, when he saw its many colors all turned to a blood-red hue.

I say good people have the tendency to glory and sometimes they glory in unworthy objects. Therefore it is that God has prepared a cure for it— not by repressing the instinct *to* glory—but by giving a worthy Subject for glorying—which finds in it a wider range and full liberty, but only in a licensed field. It may not wander there, nor there, nor there, for it is ill to glory in worldly things, but it may fly away up yonder to God Himself, and stretch its wings, and plume itself as much as it will in Heaven. The cure for vainglory is true glory! Somewhat upon the homeopathic principle, the cure for boasting is to boast in the Lord all the day long.

The prevention of glorying in men, glorying in riches and glorying in self, is glorying in the Lord. “He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.” On that text we shall now speak. And we shall have these four points. First,

let us, dear Brothers and Sisters, as many of us as know the Lord, *glory only in the Lord*. Then, secondly,*let us glory heartily in the Lord*. Thirdly, let us *glory growingly in the Lord*. And, lastly, let us *glory practically in the Lord*.

**I.**First, then, LET US GLORY ONLY IN THE LORD. And we should do this because *the theme of glorying is too great to admit of another*. It was a good argument of a simple-minded man that there could not be two gods, because the first God filled Heaven and earth and all places, and therefore there was not room for another. If God is everywhere and fills all in all, there can be no other God. And if the glory of God is infinite, then there can be no second glory. And if the theme is boundless, then there is not room for a second. As all other gods but Jehovah must be idols, so all other glory except that which is in the Lord must be foolish and sinful.

Those men who really know the Lord feel that such is the greatness of His Glory, that it takes up all our faculties, absorbs all our powers, demands, indeed, our whole energy—and we cannot spare time, or love, or skill, or power, or thought for any other topic. Let the Lord be gloried in, and Him alone, because the Lord, alone, is worthy to be gloried in. He, only, is great! He is the blessed and only Potentate! From Him, only, comes our salvation! He is God alone! Therefore in one rolling flood let all our glorying cheerfully flow at His feet. All glory should be given unto God, because *any other object of glory highly provokes the Most High*. He has said, “My glory will I not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.”

It is written concerning Israel, “They moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was angry and greatly abhorred Israel” (Psa. 78:58, 59). The moment we begin trusting in a created arm, God is highly provoked with us. “Cursed is he that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm.” And if we begin glorying in anything else, either the Lord will send the worm at the root to make the gourd wither, or He will stamp our idol into pieces and make us drink of the bitter water with which it is mixed—or else He will inflict upon us some other severe chastisement, for He cannot bear a rival. Where the ark of the Lord is, Dagon must come down. God will be all, or nothing. He cannot accept divided homage. Let us not provoke Him, then, especially when He tells us, “The Lord your God is a jealous God.”

Since He is so tender of His own name, let us be tender of it, too. If He would bear it, even then it would be wrong of us to test and try Him. But since He will *not* bear it, but is jealous, and His fury goes forth like flames of fire, let us take heed what we do. Think of Nebuchadnezzar and how his proud speech led to his loss of his reason and herding with cattle. Remember Belshazzar and how he was found wanting, because it was said of him, “The God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified, but you have praised the gods of silver and gold, and wood, and stone, and iron, which see not, nor hear, nor know.” Remember how the Lord smote Herod so that he was eaten of worms, because he received divine honors and gave not God the glory—“Give glory to the Lord your God before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains.” Glory in the Lord alone, for He will not endure to have it otherwise.

There is, indeed, my dear Brothers and Sisters, *no other fit ground for glorying in all the world except the Lord*. For what would there be in this world if God were to withdraw His power? If there were some other object in which we thought we could glory, yet since it came from Him, it would be idle to glory in the streams—we had better boast in the Fountainhead from which the stream descends! All things that are, exist only by the will and sovereign good pleasure of the Lord of All! Let us not glory, then, in that which depends upon Him, but in God Himself, the Wellhead of all! Glory not in the sunbeams but in the sun which scatters them, not in the drops but in the Heaven from which they distil, not in the goods but in the Supreme Good who bestows them!

Moreover, all things in this world are fleeting, so why should we glory in that which is today and tomorrow will pass away? “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of grass.” Who will dare to rejoice in it? The grass withers—though today it is in its prime, tomorrow it is cast into the oven—it is a poor thing upon which to boast. The drunks of Ephraim chose for their crown of pride and glorious beauty a fading flower—but we who are sober reject so fleeting a diadem. Only very benighted heathens could worship a god of snow, melting at every glance of the sun! Shall an immortal spirit delight in dying joys? Shall the heirs of eternal bliss glory in a momentary treasure? Glory not, therefore, in the things that so soon depart!

Let your glory be in that which will last as long as your own being. Heir of Immortality, take care that you have something to glory in which will never wither or decay! Set your love upon that which rust cannot canker, nor moth devour. Besides, there is nothing in this world that has in it qualities worthy of our glorying in comparison with God. He *is* the sun! The stars must hide their heads when He appears. He is the ocean! All these ponds and pools are of small account. Let us bless the eternal ocean of all-sufficient Glory and Goodness and not turn aside to magnify our little Abanas and Pharpars. Sin is stamped upon almost everything—and even the unfallen angels, in comparison with God, are of little worth—the purity that excels eclipses all. “The heavens are not pure in His sight, and He charged His angels with folly.” Foolish is he, therefore, who shall boast in these inferior things while the thrice Holy God presents Himself as the true and legitimate subject of our glorying—

***~~“Praise the God of all creation,  
Praise the Father’s boundless love!  
Praise the Lamb, our expiation,  
Priest and King enthroned above!  
Praise the Fountain of salvation,  
Him by whom our spirits live!~~***

***~~Undivided adoration  
To the One Jehovah give!”~~***

Dear Friends, we ought to glory in the Lord because *when we do so we shall be in accord with the true order of the universe*. Look abroad and mark the works of God in Creation—what do *they* glory in? “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” The great pulses of the universe will keep time and tune to your heart if you glory in the Lord. “All Your works praise You, O God.” Creation is a temple in which everyone speaks of the glory of Jehovah. Turn to Providence and faith’s eye perceives that Providence is always displaying the glory of the Lord. All things work not only for the good of the elect, but for the glory of the Most High—“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be the glory forever.” The ponderous wheels, as they revolve in all their solemn grandeur, are full of eyes—and those eyes look to the glory of God!

You are in accord both with Providence and Creation when you glory only in the Lord. Lift up, now, your eyes and behold the angels, those bright spirits who watch over us and rejoice when we repent. What do you think is their song? “Glory to God in the highest.” Truly they sing, “Peace, good will towards men,” but first of all they cry to one another, “Glory to God.” This is their ancient song and they have not ceased to sing it! You are in accord, therefore, with the blessed spirits who do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word, when you glory only in Him. Yes, and you are in accord with the Divine Trinity, for what does the Father do but glorify the Son? What does the Son aim at when He says, “Father, glorify Your Son”? It is, “that Your Son, also, may glorify You.”

What does the Holy Spirit do when He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us? Has not Jesus said of Him, “He shall glorify Me”? There is a mutual delight in each Other in the Persons of the blessed Trinity, so that each Divine Person delights to glorify the rest. God thus glorifies Himself! All His works praise Him! All His decrees praise Him. All things which are, or shall be, show forth His sole Glory. Well, dear Brothers and Sisters, as we do not wish to be out of gear with the works of God, or opposed to His nearest attendants, or in rebellion against the sacred Trinity, let us stand to it that our souls shall glory only in the Lord as long as we live! So much upon that first head, let us glory only in the Lord.

**II.**Now, secondly, may the Spirit of God help us to GLORY HEARTILY IN THE LORD with the whole force of our nature renewed by Divine Grace—not as a matter of form—but in deed and in truth! Let us make our boast in the Lord heartily, doing it so that the humble may hear of it and be glad, since there is good cause for heartily glorying in the Lord, first, because of His love. “God is love.” O you that have tasted of that love, glory in it! Glory that it is eternal, that it never had a beginning, that He fixed His love upon the objects of His choice before the mountains lifted their hoary heads above the clouds! Glory in it! It is no passion of yesterday, but the deep-seated, fixed resolve of all eternity—the purpose of the Ancient of Days when as yet days had not begun their little round. Speak they of antiquity? Lo, it is here! “I have loved you with an everlasting love!”

Shall we not glory in this? I am resolved that none shall stop me of this glorying while my tongue can speak! Glory in the Divine Love in its wonderful benefactions, inasmuch as having loved His people He gave His only begotten Son that they might be redeemed from wrath through Him. God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. The Only Begotten is God’s unspeakable gift, including and securing every good gift. What manner of love is this? We can never measure it, nor fully declare it—let us resolve forever to glory in it! There was never such love as this, love so ancient, love so disinterested, so boundless—love which brought the Darling of Heaven down to be despised and rejected of men.

Oh, mighty Love that could hold the Son of God, Himself, in fetters of affection, lead Him into a lifelong captivity to its power and at last fasten Him to the deadly tree! That love of God to us was free, unpurchased, unsought. He loved us because He would love us—not because we were lovely, but because He is love. He must love, for love is His Nature. There was no other constraint upon Him. Oh, blessed, blessed be the love of God, to think it should come to us unsought, unbought, undeserved— spontaneously leaping up like a living fountain with none to dig the well, but springing up in the midst of the Sahara of our barren nature and then blessing us with unspeakable blessings as it overflowed! Glory in the love of God!

Here is sea-room for you. Beloved, there is no love comparable to it! If all the loves that ever burned in the hearts of mothers, brothers, wives and husbands could all be heaped up, they would be but a mole hill compared with the love of God in Christ Jesus! And if all the loves that ever were among men or angels could be gathered together they would be as a spark—and God’s love to us like a mighty furnace flame. Glory in it, therefore, all the day long, for well you may. “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” You need not give up glorying when you have reached the center of your Subject, for you can glory, next, in the Lord’s *faithfulness*. Glory in the fact that He never yet changed the objects of His love. Whom once He loves He never leaves, but loves them to the end. No fickle lover is He! He is no husband who sues out a divorce against his errant spouse. “Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement that I put away? To which of My creditors have I sold you?” No, we can challenge all mankind and say, “The Lord, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away.”

You may glory in the faithfulness of God as to all His promises. He has newer broken His Covenant, nor neglected to fulfill His Word. To no child of His has He acted unkindly. In no hour of need has He deserted one that trusted in Him. Under no peril and under no provocation has He cast away His people whom He did foreknow, so that this day the whole

Church is persuaded that, “Neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Go and glory that His mercy endures forever! Tell it everywhere that man can lie, but God cannot. That man can forget his promise and can utterly forsake his dearest friend, but that the faithful God has never yet run back from His Covenant nor forfeited the oath of His Divine Grace.

And if you should need a change of subject, I would recommend you glory in the Lord as to His *holiness*. This is an attribute which has charm to Christians, but to none besides. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul,” says David, and he adds, “And all that is within me, bless”—His *gracious* name, is it? No! Bless His *loving* name? No! It runs thus, “Bless His *holy* name,” because the whole includes all the parts and the holiness, or the wholeness of God is a grander thing than any one of the distinct attributes which make up the whole, or the holiness of His Character. Go and glory in the holiness of God, for there is none as holy as the Lord, neither is there any god like our God. It is this which angels glory in, for as they veil their faces, they say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.” It is a grand attribute of God. “The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all the people. Let them praise Your great and terrible name, for it is holy.”

Bless His name that even to show His love He would not be unholy— and even to forgive sins He would not be unjust. He never blunted the edge of the sword of justice in order to stretch out His hand of mercy. He is as sternly and inflexibly just towards sin as if He never forgave iniquity. And yet He forgives sinners through Christ Jesus as freely and fully as if He never punished a transgression! All His attributes are full-orbed—no one encroaches upon the other so as to diminish its luster. “The Lord our God is holy,” while at the same time, “God is love.” Let us therefore glory in His Divine perfection and in the wondrous Atonement for sin which was required in consequence. An unholy God could have dispensed with an expiation, but then we should have had no ground for confidence, since He who can set aside justice in one direction might do it in the opposite. He who pardons without atonement might also punish without fault.

For my part, I always glory in the old-fashioned doctrine of Substitution. I do not know anything about the Atonement which has been invented by the cultured gentlemen of modern times—though their theory is so often cried up—it contains so little worth the crying. They call ours a *commercial* atonement, and truly we cannot call theirs by the same name, for it is worth *nothing* and none would care to commerce with it! It is a hazy kind of atonement which did something or other, I do not know what it was, in so intangible and mysterious a manner that it is but remotely connected with our getting to Heaven! What it was nobody knows, but each Divine has a theory for his own private use.

I believe Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that, “the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and that with His stripes we are healed.” I believe that there was a literal and actual expiation made by Christ, and that—

***“He bore, that we might never bear,***

***His Father’s righteous ire.”***  
And this I glory in because it shows the Justice and the Mercy of God walking hand in hand—Righteousness and Peace kissing each other and entering into a solemn compact for the salvation of the sons of men. Surely in the Lord Jehovah we have righteousness and strength, and therefore will we glory in Him forever—

***“Holy, Holy, Holy!  
All Heaven’s triumphant choir shall sing  
When the ransomed nations fall  
At the footstool of their King!  
Then shall saints and seraphim,  
Harps and voices, swell one hymn  
Round the Throne with full accord,  
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.”***

And if you feel you would like to alter the subject, then glory in the *allsufficiency* of your God, and in the liberality with which He distributes His mercies among His chosen. Notice the verse that precedes the text—“But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” In Christ Jesus is not *one* good thing given to us, but *every* good thing!

He does not give us *part* of salvation, but the *whole* of salvation. Do we need to be instructed? Christ is our wisdom. Do we need to be clothed in the sight of God with a righteousness that shall render us acceptable? Christ is our righteousness. Do we need to be purified and cleansed? Christ is our sanctification. And do we need to be set free and delivered from all bondage? Christ is our redemption. In God the Christian finds sufficiency—let us improve the word—all-sufficiency! There are riches of Divine Grace in Christ Jesus, all that you can ever need, all that the myriads of God’s chosen can need—so much that after all the saints have taken immense draughts, there is as much left as before!

I felt, when I was coming up to preach tonight, as if I had been down, like a little child, to the sea, and I had stooped to the wave and filled my palms as well as I could with the sparkling water. But as I have been coming to bring it to you, it has nearly all trickled away, for I am not able to hold it by reason of my leaking hands. Yet, for all that, the little I can bring will make you, I hope, rejoice in the great eternal ocean from which it was taken, for you will never drain God’s love, mercy and Truth dry, though you should draw from it forever! You need never think you will exhaust Infinity! When a child of God thinks he has exhausted the patience and mercy of God he is something like a little fish in the sea which said, “Oh, I am so thirsty, I am afraid I shall drink up the Atlantic.” O little fish, you have no idea how mighty the ocean is! Countless myriads such as

you are may swim in it and the ocean will be none the less.

O beloved Believer, yours is no stinted store! Joseph said to his brothers, “The good of all the land of Egypt is yours,” and it was a great promise. But the Lord Jesus says to you tonight, “All things are yours, whether things present, or things to come, life or death, all are yours.” We have not gone to the full length when we have quoted that, for there is another word that tops it all, “I am your God.” And to have God to be ours is more than to have Heaven and earth, and things present and things to come! No one living on earth, or even in Heaven, can tell how vast are the possessions of a Believer who can say, “The Lord is my portion.” Go and glory in God’s all-sufficiency and the freeness with which He gives it out!

There is one point every child of God may glory in, but he will scarcely care to do so unless, when he is alone by himself, or with Brethren who can sympathize. We glory in the *nearness and dearness of the relationship* which God holds to us. The man who can bow his knee and say from his heart, “Our Father,” has more to glory in than the Czar of all the Russias, or the Emperor of the grandest nations of antiquity! Is Christ *my* Brother? I am ennobled by that relationship! Is He married to *my* soul? Is it, indeed, true that your Maker is your Husband? Is God so very near that He cannot be nearer? And am *I*so very dear to Him that I cannot be dearer, because in the Person of His Son I am as dear as He? Then ought I not to glory in this? And while some will say, “We are rich, and our riches are the main thing,” and others will say, “We have followed after wisdom, and we rejoice in what we have discovered.” And a third party will say, “We are famous and great, and we glory in our honors,” *we* will sit down in some quiet corner, where none shall hear us but the Lord, and we will say, “I am my Beloved’s, and He is mine—this is my glory, and I will boast in it both in life and in death.”

So then, Beloved, I have shown that you have good cause to glory in the Lord heartily, but I cannot *make* you do it. I pray the Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of all God’s people to make them glory in the Lord, and exult in the God of their salvation—

***“My God, I’ll praise You while I live,  
And praise You when I die,  
And praise You when I rise again,  
And to eternity.”***

Neither till death, nor in death, nor after death will we cease glorying in the Lord!

**III.**Now we come to the third point, and that is, we ought to GLORY IN THE LORD GROWINGLY. That is to say, Beloved, we should glory in God in proportion as we learn more *of* Him and receive more *from* Him. Many Believers only know the elements—they are at a preparatory school and sit among the babes in Christ—therefore their songs are children’s hymns and not the grand old Psalms of heroes and sages. It should be our desire to grow in the knowledge of our Lord. Beyond the rudiments of the faith there are deeper, higher and fuller Truths of God which invite our consideration and will abundantly repay it.

Perhaps you learned justification by faith a long while ago, but you have not learned the doctrine of election, yet, nor the doctrine of the unchangeable love of God. Labor to know them, for ignorance of them is neither bliss nor strength. As a faithful disciple, go on to learn more and more, and when you have learned the more mysterious doctrines, glory in God more. As you know more, be sure you return more praise to Him, for, if anything which you believe concerning the Lord does not cause you to praise Him more, it cannot be the Truth of God or else your heart is in a wrong condition. Every genuine Revelation of God has this mark upon it— that it makes Him appear more glorious! The wisdom which derogates from the honor of God comes from beneath and is founded in a lie—true wisdom exalts the name of the Lord and bows the heart in adoration.

Beloved, glory growingly in the Lord as you know more of Him by Revelation. Moses said, “I beseech You show me Your Glory,” and surely, after he had been put in the cleft of the rock, and seen his God, he gloried more in Him than ever! Isaiah was a man of stammering lips and was afraid to speak in God’s name, until one day which he never forgot—for he tells us the year, “In the year that King Uzziah died,” he remembered it well enough—he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple, while the Glory of His Presence made the posts of the doors to move. Then Isaiah became very bold for his Lord and said, “Here am I, send me.” Paul was, also, all the more resolved to know nothing but Christ crucified after he had been caught up into the third Heaven, and there had seen and heard the Glory of the Lord!

Now I pray the Lord to reveal Himself to you, dear Friends, more and more, that you, also, may behold His Glory and receive a sacred bias thereby. May you see Jesus in your meditations and see Him by communion and fellowship with Him. And as you see more of Him, go and tell abroad more of Him, and let others know what a glorious God you serve! His angels behold Him and then He makes them messengers—may yours be the vision and then the errand. What we have seen and heard—that must we testify unto men. You will, as you live, see more of the Glory of God in His gracious dealings with you, for that is one of the methods by which that Glory is revealed. Christ said to Mary and Martha, “Said I not unto you, if you would believe you should see the Glory of God?” And as we get our prayers answered—as we are delivered in times of trouble and as all things are made to work for our good—we see the Glory of God! Never let a special season of mercy pass without praising Him. Never let an answer to prayer be unrecognized, but magnify the Lord, who in His abundant mercy has had such compassion upon you. Glorify Him, then, growingly.

As answers to prayer increase, glorify God more. As Grace is given to you in times of need, time after time, glorify Him more. As you find yourself helped, Providentially, in hours of trouble, and so see the wonderful

work of the hand of the Lord on behalf of His people, glorify Him more! And I will tell you what will help you to glorify Him more—it will be the sight of conversion-work going on in other people. I do not think Christian people glorify God at any time so heartily and thoroughly as when they see others saved! The sight of a young convert warms up old blood—and whereas we had doubts, troubles and inward fighting while we were wrapped up in *ourselves*—when we get to hear little children in Christ cry to their Father and hear them rejoice as the Lord puts away their sins, our confidence comes back, all our sacred passions begin to glow, and we say—“This is the place for me, for here I see the Glory of God.”

“His Glory is great in your salvation.” Where Christ works savingly, there the Glory of God is mightily revealed. And when the Lord builds up Zion, He appears in His Glory, and His servants rejoice to behold Him. How can they do otherwise? The stones would rebuke them if they were not to do so! They *must* glory in God more than they have ever done before. By-and-by, dear Brothers and Sisters, as time rolls on, we shall know more of the Lord, and get to be more like He and approach nearer to Glory itself. Beholding that Glory, as in a glass, we are changed from glory to glory, as by the image of the Lord. As we come nearer to the approaching hour of our full redemption, the pins of our tent are taken up and the curtains of our tabernacle begin to be removed—and we look forward to the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” in which our one employment shall be to behold the Glory of our Lord forever! Let us even now wholly glory in the Lord.

I have known some old Christians who were just one mass of glorying in the Lord. Their very faces shone with the brightness of His Presence! They did neither talk to you in private, nor join in the public prayer, nor give forth any utterance but what you had to say of it, “Surely they have seen the Glory and their hearts are burning with it! And therefore their tongues speak marvelous things and they talk as men whose lips have been touched with a live coal from off the altar.” When these hairs grow gray, may we be such old men and old women—may we be continually praising and glorying in the Lord all the day long! We had better begin at once, for time is precious, and a good work cannot be commenced too promptly—

***“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise,  
O for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies.”*  
IV.**Now I come to the last point, which is, let us GLORY IN THE LORD PRACTICALLY. And how can we do that? Every Christian ought to glory in the Lord practically by admitting that he belongs to his redeeming Lord. Are you a Christian and are you ashamed of it? How can you be said to glory in the Lord? A man does not hide away that which he glories in! If he glories in it he does not object to its being seen. Why, if he glories in *anything*, if others accuse him that he has something to do with it, he admits the accusation and he says, “It is even so. And I am not ashamed of it. I glory in it.”  
Charge a veteran with having been at Waterloo and he will glory in it! Accuse an artist of being a Royal Academician and he will not deny the charge. Accuse me of loving my wife and children, and I smile at you. Why, then, blush to be called a follower of Jesus? You that love the Lord, I beseech you, come forward and say that you glory in Him! The Lord deserves that His people should confess with their mouth that which they feel in their hearts. It is the least thing we can do, if He has saved us, to be willing to acknowledge that he is our Savior and that we rejoice in Him. Then, Brethren, after we have thus confessed His Glory, let us continue to glory in Him by talking about it on all fit occasions. Do you not think that we are a great deal too silent in our piety?  
We love the Lord, but we seem as if we do not want to tell anybody we do—and our common conversation does not betray us as it ought to do. It ought to be so full of Divine Grace and the Truths of God that men would find us out at once! Even as the rose betrays itself by its perfume, and even the glowworm by its shining, so should our glorying in the Lord reveal us to all observers! I have heard talk of a professed Christian of whom his servant said, “I am glad my master goes to the Lord’s Table, for if he had not done so, I would not have known he was a Christian.” I should think the chances were he was not a Christian at all—for we ought, in our common conversation, so glorify God that others would at once take knowledge of us—that we truly know and love His name!  
A foreigner may speak English well, but he is known by his accent— and the accent of Divine Grace is quite as marked as that of Nature. Speak to all around you about the Savior! I do not know a better way of getting rid of troublesome people than often to talk of Jesus. There are certain ones who vex you with their evil discourses—bring in the Lord Jesus Christ and they will soon go away—for they will not like such weighty discourse. And at the same time better friends will be attached to you who will love to join you in holy glorying. Glory in the Lord by standing up for Him when He is opposed. If you hear the proud ones ridicule His Gospel and despise His people, put in a word for Jesus! Stand out and say, “I am one of His disciples. Despise *me*! I hold those opinions! Ridicule *me*! That way which you call heresy is the same way I worship the Lord God of my fathers.”  
This is a practical way of glorifying Him, but many who have grown rich and respectable are much too mean-spirited to practice it. I am ashamed of the cowardly spirit of many in these days who give up their Nonconformity because they cannot otherwise get into what they call, “good society.” The Lord have mercy on them! Glorify Him, again, by being calm under your troubles. When others are fretting and worrying, possess your soul in patience, and say, “No, I do not serve a fair-weather God, and I am not to be cowed and put down, for the eternal God is my refuge and underneath me are the everlasting arms. It does not become a man to tremble who has the God of Jacob for his help. I will bear trouble joyfully, if He wills to send it.”  
Glory in the Lord, Brothers and Sisters, practically, by having a contempt for those things which others value so much. Do not be greedy after the world. Love God too much to care for earthly treasures. If God gives you wealth, thank Him for it and use it. If He does not, do not worry about it. Feel that you are rich enough without the heaps of yellow metal. You have your God and that is the best wealth! You have a Heaven to go to, and a little Heaven below. Rejoice in that which you find in your God. Live above the world. Pray that God’s Spirit will help you. “Let your conversation be in Heaven.” Thus glorify God and when men look at you, compel them to feel that there is something in you and about you which they cannot understand, for you have been with Jesus and you have learned of Him. In all these ways, “he that glories let him glory in the Lord.” I am sorry, in closing, to feel compelled to say that I am afraid many do not understand this. Perhaps you have gloried in your priests and thought *they* were great. Very possibly some of you glory in your minister—you think he is very eminent. And some of you, it may be, glory in your purses and your possessions. Some of you glory in your broad acres and large houses. Some of you glory in the skill you have in your trade, or your quickness in business. It may be many of you glory in the fact that you are not as other men are. All these gloryings are evil! God help you to put them down! Even to glory in your Church, and glory in your sect, and glory in your creed is wrong!  
To glory in the *Lord* is the work of His Spirit—and to live to make Him glorious in the esteem of men is the only thing worthy of an immortal mind. You will never glory in God till, first of all, God has killed your glorying in yourself. May He be pleased, in His infinite mercy, to show you unconverted sinners that there is nothing about you which you can justly glory in, but everything for which you ought to be ashamed and to loathe yourselves. May He make you fly to Jesus. I pray you trust Him and be saved! The Lord bless you in this matter, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 1.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—242, 174, 420.** Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1264 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MAN OF ONE SUBJECT  
NO. 1264

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 31, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”  
1 Corinthians 2:2.~~***

Paul was a very determined man and whatever he undertook he carried out with all his heart. Once let him say, “I determined,” and you might be sure of a vigorous course of action! “This one thing I do” was always his motto. The unity of his soul and its mighty resoluteness were the main features of his character. He had once been a great opposer of Christ and His Cross and had shown his opposition by furious persecutions. It was not so very much to be wondered at that when he became a disciple of this same Jesus, whom he had persecuted, he should become a very ardent one and bring all his faculties to bear upon the preaching of Christ crucified.

His conversion was so marked, so complete, so thorough, that you expect to see him as energetic for the Truth of God as once he had been violent against it. A man so whole-hearted as Paul, so thoroughly capable of concentrating all his forces as the Apostle was—and so entirely won over to the faith of Jesus—was likely to enter into his cause with all his heart and soul. And thus he was determined to know nothing else but his crucified Lord. Yet do not think that the Apostle was a man easily absorbed in one thought. He was, above the most of men, a reasoner, calm, judicious, candid and prudent.

He looked at things in their bearings and relations and was not a stickler for minor matters. Perhaps even more than might perfectly be justified, he made himself all things to all men that he might by all means win some and, therefore, any determination which he came to was only arrived at after taking counsel with wisdom. He was not a zealot of that class which may be likened to a bull which shuts its eyes and runs straight forward, seeing nothing which may lie to the right or to the left— he looked all round him, calmly, quietly and though he did, in the end, push forward in a direct line at his one objective, yet it was with his eyes wide open, knowing perfectly what he was doing and believing that he was doing the best and wisest thing for the cause which he desired to promote.

If, for instance, to have opened his ministry at Corinth by proclaiming the unity of the Godhead, or by philosophically working out the possibilities of God’s becoming Incarnate—if these had been the wisest plans for spreading the Redeemer’s kingdom—Paul would have adopted them. But he looked at them all and having examined them with all care, he could not see that anything was to be gained by indirect preaching, or by keeping back a part of the Truth. Therefore he determined to go straight forward and promote the Gospel by proclaiming the Gospel! Whether men

would hear or whether they would forbear, he resolved to come to the point at once and preach the Cross in its naked simplicity.

Instead of knowing a great many things which might have led up to the main subject, he would not know anything in Corinth save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul might have said, “I had better beat about the bush and educate the people up to a certain point before I come to my main point. To lay bare my ultimate intent at the first might be to spread the net in the sight of the birds and frighten them away. I will be cautious and reticent and will take them with guile, enticing them on in pursuit of the Truths of God.” But Paul did not do that! Looking at the matter all round as a prudent man should, he comes to this resolve, that he will know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I would to God that the “culture” we hear of in these days, and all this boasted “modern thought” would come to the same conclusion! This most renowned and scholarly Divine, after reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting everything as few men could do, yet came to this as to the issue of it all—“I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” May God grant that the critical skill of our contemporaries and their laborious consideration may land them on the same shore by the blessing of the Holy Spirit!

**I.**Our first consideration, this morning, will be, WHAT WAS THIS SUBJECT TO WHICH PAUL DETERMINED TO SHUT HIMSELF UP WHILE PREACHING TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH? That subject was one, though it may also be divided into two—it was *the Person and the work*of our Lord Jesus Christ—laying special stress upon that part of His work which is always the most objected to, namely, His substitutionary Sacrifice, His redeeming death. Paul preached Christ in all His positions, but he especially dwelt upon Him as the Crucified One.

The Apostle first preached his great Master’s *Person—*Jesus Christ. There was no equivocation about Paul when he spoke of Jesus of Nazareth. He held Him up as a real Man, no phantom, but one who was crucified, dead and buried—and rose again from the dead in actual bodily existence. There was no hesitation about His Godhead, either. Paul preached Jesus as the Son of the Highest, as the wisdom and the power of God, as One, “in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” You never doubted when you heard Paul, but that he believed in the Divinity and the Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ—and worshipped and adored Him as very God of very God. He preached His Person with all clearness of language and warmth of love. The Christ of God was All in All to Paul.

The Apostle spoke equally clearly upon the Redeemer’s *work*, especially laying stress upon His death. “Horrible!” said the Jew, “How can you boast in a Man who died a felon’s death and was cursed because He was hanged on a tree?” “Ah,” said the Greek, “tell us no more about your God that died! Babble no longer about resurrection. We never shall believe such unmitigated foolishness.” But Paul did not, therefore, put these things into the background and say, “Gentlemen, I will begin with telling you of the life of Christ and of the excellency of His example—and by these means I shall hope to tempt you onward to the conclusion that there was something Divine in Him and then, afterwards, to the further conclusion that He made an atonement for sin.”

No, he began with His blessed Person and distinctly described Him as he had been taught by the Holy Spirit! And as to His crucifixion, he put it in the front and made it the main point. He did not say, “Well, we will leave the matter of His death for a time,” or, “We will consider it under the aspect of a martyrdom by which He completed His testimony.” No! Paul gloried in the crucified Redeemer, the dead and buried Christ, the sinbearing Christ, the Christ made a curse for us, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” *This* was the subject to which he confined himself at Corinth—beyond this he would not stir an inch. He does not merely determine to keep his preaching to that point, but he resolves not even to know any other subject! He would keep his mind fast closed among them to any thought but Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

Very unwise this must have seemed. Call in a council of worldly wise men and they will condemn such a rash course, for, in the first place, such preaching would drive away all the Jews. Holding, as the Jews did, the Old Testament Scriptures and receiving, therefore, a great deal of teaching about the Messiah and holding very firmly to the unity of the Godhead, the Jews had gone a long way towards the light—and if Paul had kept back the objectionable points a little while, might he not have drawn them a little further—and so by degrees have landed them at the Cross? Wise men would have remarked upon the hopefulness of the Israelites, if handled with discretion, and their advice would have been, “We do not say, renounce your sentiments, Paul, but *disguise* them for a little while! Do not say what is untrue, but at the same time be a little reticent about what *is* true, or else you will drive away these hopeful Jews.”

The Apostle yielded to no such policy! He would not win either Jew or Gentile by keeping back the Truth of God, for he knew that such converts are worthless. If the man who is near the kingdom will be driven right away from the Gospel by hearing the unvarnished Truth, that is no guide as to Paul’s duty. He knows that the Gospel must be a “savor of death unto death” to some as well as, of “life unto life” unto others and, therefore, whichever may occur he must deliver his own soul. Consequences are not for Paul, but for the Lord! It is ours to speak the Truth boldly and in every case we shall be a sweet savor unto God. But to compromise, in the hope of making converts, is to do evil that good may come—and this is never to be thought of for an instant!

Another would say, “But, Paul, if you do this, you cause opposition. Do you not know that Christ crucified is a byword and a reproach to all thinking men? Why, at Corinth there are a number of philosophers and, I tell you, it will create unbounded ridicule if you so much as open your mouth about the Crucified One and His Resurrection. Do not you remember on Mars’ Hill how they mocked you when you spoke upon that theme? Do not provoke their contempt! Argue with their Gnosticism and show them that you, too, are a philosopher! Be all things to all men. Be learned among the learned and rhetorical among the orators. By these means you will make many friends and, by degrees, your conciliatory conduct will

bring them to accept the Gospel.”

The Apostle shakes his head, puts down his foot and with firm voice utters his decision, “I have *determined*,” he says, “I have already made up my mind. Your counsels and advice are lost upon me. I have *determined* to know nothing among the Corinthians—however learned the Gentile portion of them may be, or however fond of rhetoric—save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” He stands to that. It is further worthy of note that the Apostle had resolved that his subject should so engross the attention of his hearers that he would not even speak it with excellency of speech or garnish it with man’s wisdom!

You have heard, perhaps, of the famous painter who drew the likeness of James I. He represented him sitting in a bower with all the flowers of the season blooming around him—and nobody ever took the smallest notice of the king’s visage for all eyes were charmed by the excellency of the flowers! Paul resolved that he would have no flowers at all! The portrait which he sketched would be Christ crucified, the bare facts and doctrine of the Cross without so much as a single flower from the poets or the philosophers! Some of us need not be very loud in our resolution to avoid fine speech, for we may have but slender gifts in that direction. But the Apostle was a man of fine natural powers and of vast attainments—a man whom the Corinthian critics could not have despised—and yet he threw away all ornaments to let the unadorned beauty of the Cross win its own way!

As he would not add flowers, so he would not darken the Cross with smoke, for there is a way of preaching the Gospel amid a smother of mystification and doubt so that men cannot receive it. A numerous band of men are always boiling and stirring up a huge philosophic caldron which steams with dense vapor, beclouding the Cross of Christ most horribly. Alas for that wisdom which conceals the Wisdom of God! It is the most guilty form of folly. Some people preach Christ as I have seen representations of a man-of-war in battle. The painter painted nothing but the smoke and you have said, “Where is the ship?” Well, if you looked long you might discern a fragment of the top of one of the masts and, perhaps, a portion of the boom. The ship was there, no doubt, but the smoke concealed it! So there may be Christ in some men’s preaching, but there is such a cloud of thinking, such a dense pall of profundity, such a horrid smoke of philosophy that you cannot see the Lord!

Paul painted beneath a clear sky. He would have no learned obscurity. He determined not to know how to speak after the manner of the orators, not to know how to think deeply according to the mode of the philosophers, but only to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified—and just to set Him forth in His own natural beauties. He dispensed with those accessories which are so apt to attract the eyes of the mind from the central point—Christ crucified. “A rash experiment,” says one. Ah, Brethren, it is the experiment of faith and faith is justified of all her children! If we rely upon the power of mere persuasion, we rely upon that which is born of the flesh! If we depend upon the power of logical argument, we, again, rely upon that which is born of men’s reason! If we trust to poetic expressions and attractive turns of speech, we look to carnal means.

But if we rest upon the naked Omnipotence of a crucified Savior, upon the innate power of the wondrous deed of love which was consummated upon Calvary—and if we believe that the Spirit of God will make this the instrument for the conversion of men, the experiment cannot possibly end in failure! But oh, my Brothers and Sisters, what a task this must have been for Paul! He was not like many of us who are neither familiar with philosophy, nor capable of oratory. He was so great a master of both that he must have found it necessary to keep himself constantly in check. I think I can see him, every now and then—when a deeply intellectual thought has come across his mind and a beautiful mode of utterance has suggested itself—reining himself up and saying to his mind, “I will leave these deep thoughts for the letter to the Romans.

“I will give them all this in the eighth chapter. But as for these Corinthians, they shall have nothing but Christ crucified, for they are so carnal, so grossly slavish before men that they will run away with the idea that my excellent way of putting the Truth of God was the power of it. They shall have Christ only—and only Christ. They are children, and I must speak to them as such. They are mere babes in Christ and have need of milk—and milk, alone, must I give them. They claim to be clever and learned but they are conceited, high-minded, full of divisions and controversies. I will give then nothing but ‘the old, old story of Jesus and His love,’ and I will tell them that story simply as to a little child.”

Boundless love to their souls thus made him concentrate his testimony upon the one central point of Jesus crucified! And thus I have shown you what his subject was.

**II.**Now, secondly, ALTHOUGH PAUL THUS CONCENTRATED HIS ENERGIES UPON ONE POINT OF TESTIMONY, IT WAS QUITE SUFFICIENT FOR HIS PURPOSE. If the Apostle had aimed at pleasing an intelligent audience, Christ and Him crucified would not have done at all. If, again, he had designed to set himself up as a profound teacher, he would naturally have looked out for something new, something a little more dazzling than the Person and work of the Redeemer. And if Paul had desired, as I am afraid some of my Brothers do, to collect together a class of highly independent minds which is, I believe, the euphemism for free-thinkers—to draw together a select Church of the “men of culture and intellect,” which generally means a club of men who despise the Gospel—he certainly would not have kept to preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This order of men would deny him all hope of success with such a theme. They would assure him that such preaching would only attract the poorer sort and the less educated—the servant maids and the old women. But Paul would not have been discouraged by such observations, for he loved the poorest and feeblest souls and, besides, he knew that what had exercised power over his own educated mind was likely to have power over other intelligent people, and so he kept to the doctrine of the Cross, believing that he had, therein, an instrument which would effectually accomplish his one desire with all classes of men.

Brethren, what did Paul wish to do? Paul desired, first of all, to awaken sinners to a sense of sin—and what has ever accomplished this so perfectly as the doctrine that sin was laid upon Christ and caused His death? The sinner, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, sees at once that sin is not a trifle, that it is not to be forgiven without an Atonement, but must be followed by penalty, borne by someone or other. When the guilty one has seen the Son of God bleeding to death in pangs unutterable in consequence of his sin, he has learned that sin is an enormous and crushing burden! If even the Son of God cries out beneath it! If His death agony rends the heavens and shakes earth, what an awful evil sin must be! What must it involve upon my soul if in my own person I shall be doomed to bear its consequences? Thus the sinner rightly argues and thus is he aroused to a sense of guilt.

But Paul wanted, also, to awaken in the minds of the guilty that humble hope which is the great instrument of leading men to Jesus. He desired to make them hope that forgiveness might be given consistently with justice. Oh, Brethren, Christ crucified is the one ray of light that can penetrate the thick darkness of despair and make a penitent heart hope for pardon from the righteous Judge! Need a sinner ever doubt when he has once seen Jesus crucified? When he understands that there is pardon for every transgression through the bleeding wounds of Jesus, is not the best form of hope at once kindled in his bosom and is he not led to say, “I will arise and go unto my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned”?

Paul longed, yet further, to lead men to actual faith in Jesus Christ. Now, faith in Jesus Christ can only come by *preaching* Jesus Christ. Faith comes by hearing, but the hearing must be upon the subject concerning which the faith is to deal. Would you make believers in Christ, preach Christ! The things of Christ, applied by the Spirit, lead men to put their reliance upon Christ. Nor was that all. Paul wanted men to forsake their sins and what should lead them to hate evil as much as seeing the sufferings of Jesus on account of it? You and I know the power of a bleeding Savior to make us take revenge upon sin. What indignation, what searching of heart, what stern resolve, what bitterness of regret, what deep repentance have we felt when we have seen that our sins became the nails, the hammer, the spear, yes, the executioners of the Well-Beloved?

And Paul longed to train up in Corinth a Church of consecrated men, full of love, full of self-denial, a holy people, zealous for good works. And let me ask you, what is more necessary to preach to any man to promote his sanctification and his consecration than Jesus Christ who has redeemed us and so made us forever His servants? What argument is stronger than the fact that we are not our own, for we are bought with a price? I say that Paul had, in Christ crucified, a subject equal to his objective! He had a Subject that would meet the case of every man, however degraded or however cultured, and a subject which would be useful to men in the first hours of the new birth and equally useful when they were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He had a subject for today and tomorrow, and a subject for next year, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!

He had in the crucified Jesus a subject for the prince’s palace and a subject for the peasant’s hut, a subject for the market place and a subject for the academy, for the heathen temple and for the synagogue! Wherever he might go, Christ would be both to Jew and Gentile, to bond and free, the wisdom of God and the power of God—and that not to one form of beneficial influence, alone—but unto full salvation to everyone that believes.

**III.**But I must pass on to a third remark, that THE APOSTLE’S CONFINING HIMSELF TO THIS SUBJECT COULD NOT POSSIBLY DO HARM. You know, Brothers and Sisters, that when men dwell exclusively upon one thing they get pretty strong, there, but they generally become very weak in other points. Hence a man of one thought, only, is generally described as riding a hobby. Well, this was Paul’s hobby, but it was a sort of hobby which a man may ride without any injury to himself or his neighbor! He will be, none the less, a complete man if he surrenders himself wholly and only to this one theme.

But let me remark that Christ crucified is the only subject of which this can be said. Let me show you that it is so. You know a class of ministers who preach doctrine—and doctrine only. Their mode of preaching resembles the counting of your fingers—“one, two, three, four, five,” and for a variety, “five, four, three, two, one”—always a certain set of great Truths of God and no others. What is the effect of this ministry? Well, generally to breed a generation of men who think they know everything, but really do not know much—very decided and so far, so good—but very narrow, very exclusive, very bigoted and, so far, so bad! You cannot preach doctrine, alone, without contracting your own mind and that of your hearers.

There are others who preach experience only. They are very good people. I am not condemning either them or their doctrinal friends, but they, also, fall into mischief. Some of them take the lower scale of experience and they tell us that nobody can be a child of God unless he feels the horrible character of his inbred sin and groans daily. We used to hear a good deal of that some years ago, there is less of it now. Am I wrong in saying that this teaching trains up a race of men who show their humility by sitting in judgement upon all who cannot groan down to as deep a note as they can? Another class has lately arisen who preach experience, but theirs is always upon the high key.

They soar aloft, as I think, a little in the balloon line. They own only the bright side of experience. They have nothing to do with its darkness and death. For them there are no nights and they sing through perpetual summer days. They have conquered sin and they have ignored themselves. *So they sa*y, but we should not have thought so if they had not told us so! On the contrary, we might have fancied that they had a very vivid idea of themselves and their own attainments. I hope I am mistaken, but it has appeared to some of us poor fallible beings that in some beloved Brethren, self has grown marvelously big of late! Certainly their conversations and preaching largely consist of very wonderful declarations of their

own admirable condition.

I should be pleased to learn of their progress in Grace *if it is real*. But I had sooner have made the discovery myself, or have heard it from somebody besides themselves, for there is an Inspired Proverb which says, “Let another praise you, and not your own lips,” and, for my part, if any other man thought it right to praise me, I would rather that he held his tongue, for man-magnifying is a poor business. Let the Lord, alone, be magnified! I think it is clear that grave faults arise from exclusively preaching an inner life instead of preaching Christ, who is Life itself!

Another class of ministers have preached the precepts and little else. We need these men as we need the others—they are all useful and act as antidotes to each other—but their ministries are not complete. If you hear preaching about duty and command, it is very proper. But if it is the *only* theme, the teaching becomes very legal in the long run. And after a while the true Gospel, which has the power to make us keep the precepts gets flung into the background—and the precepts are not kept, after all! Do, do, do, generally ends in nothing being done! If a Brother were to undertake to preach the ordinances only, like those who are always extolling what they are pleased to call the *holy sacraments*—well, you know where *that* teaching goes—it has a tendency towards the southeast—and its chosen line runs across the city of Rome.

Moreover, beloved Brother, even if you preach Jesus Christ, you must not keep to any other phase of Him but that which Paul took, namely, “Him crucified,” for under no other aspect may you exclusively regard Him. For instance, the preaching of the Second Advent, which, in its place and proportion, is admirable, has been, by some, taken out of its place, and made the end-all and be-all of their ministry. That, you see, is not what Paul had selected and it is not a safe selection. In many cases sheer fanaticism has been the result of exclusively dwelling upon prophecy and probably more men have gone mad on that subject than on any other religious question! Whether any man could ever become fanatical about Christ crucified I cannot say, I have never heard of such an instance. Whether a man ever went insane with love to the crucified Redeemer I do not know, but I have never met such a case.

If I should ever go crazy, I should like it to be in that direction, and I should like to incite a great many more, for what a blessed subject it would be for one to be carried away with—to become unreasonably absorbed in Christ crucified—to have gone out of your senses with faith in Jesus! The fact is, it never can injure the mind, it is a doctrine which may be heard forever and will be always fresh, new and suitable to the whole of our manhood. I say that the keeping to this doctrine cannot do hurt and the reason is this—it contains all that is vital within itself. Keep within the limits of Christ, and Him crucified, and you have brought before men all the essentials for this life and for the life to come! You have given them the root out of which may grow both branch and flower and fruit of holy thought, word and deed.

Let a man know Christ crucified, and he knows Him who to know is Life Eternal! This is a subject which does not awaken one part of the man and send the other part to sleep. It does not kindle his imagination and leave his judgement uninstructed, nor feed his intellect and starve his heart. There is not a faculty of our nature but what Christ crucified affects for good! The perfect Manhood of Christ crucified affects mind, heart, memory, imagination, thought, everything! As in milk there are all the ingredients necessary for sustaining life, so in Christ crucified there is everything that is needed to nurture the soul. Even as the hand of David’s chief minstrel touched every chord of his ten-stringed harp, so Jesus brings sweet music out of our entire manhood.

There is also this to be said about preaching Christ exclusively, that it will never produce animosities. It will not impregnate men’s minds with questions and contentions as those nice points do which some are so fond of dealing with. When certain questions are settled by my judgement and by your judgement, and by a third and a fourth man’s judgement, a contest is sure to ensue. But he who stands at Christ’s Cross and *stays* there. He stands where he may embrace the whole brotherhood of true Christians, for we are perfectly joined together in one mind and judgement there! There is no vaunting of man’s judgement at the Cross. “I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Christ,” comes from not keeping to Jesus crucified! But if we keep to the Cross as guilty sinners needing cleansing through the precious blood and finding all our salvation there, we shall not have time to set ourselves up as religious leaders and to cause divisions in the Church of Christ.

Was there ever, yet, a sect created in Christendom by the preaching of Christ crucified? No, my Brothers and Sisters, sects are created by the preaching of something over and above this, but this is the soul and marrow of Christianity and, consequently, the perfect bond of love which holds Christians together!

**IV.**I shall not say more, but pass on to my last reflection, which is this—Because, then, Paul made this his one sole subject among the Corinthians and he did no hurt by doing so, which cannot be said of any other subject, I COMMEND TO YOU THAT WE SHOULD, ALL OF US, MAKE THIS THE MAIN SUBJECT OF OUR THOUGHTS, PREACHING AND EFFORTS. Unconverted men and women, to you I speak first. To you I have nothing else to preach but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Paul knew there were great sinners at Corinth, for it was common all over the then world to call a licentious man a Corinthian. They were a people who pushed laxity and lasciviousness of manners to the greatest possible excess, yet among them Paul knew nothing but Christ and Him crucified, because all that the greatest sinner can possibly need is to be found there! You have nothing in yourself, Sinner, and you need not wish for anything to carry to Jesus. You tell me you know nothing about the profound doctrines of the Gospel—you need not know them when coming to Christ. The one thing you need to know is this—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners and whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life!

I shall be glad for you to be further instructed in the faith and to know the heights and depths of that love which passes knowledge, but just now the *one thing* you need to know is Jesus Christ crucified! If you never get beyond that. If your mind should be of so feeble a cast that anything deeper than this you would never be able to grasp, I, for one, shall feel no distress whatever—for you will have found that which will deliver you from the power of sin and from the punishment of it—and that which will take you up to Heaven to dwell where that same Jesus who was crucified sits enthroned at the right band of God! Oh, dear broken Heart, if you will ever find healing, it is in those wounds! If you ever find rest, you must have it from those pierced hands! If you ever hear absolution, it must be spoken from those same lips which said so sweetly, “It is finished.” God forbid that we should know anything among sinners except Christ and Him crucified! Look to Him and Him only, and you shall find rest unto your souls!

As for you, my Brothers and Sisters who know Christ, I have this to say to you—keep this to the front and nothing else but this, for it is against this that the enemy rages. That part of the line of battle which is most fiercely assailed by the enemy is sure to be that which he knows to be most important to carry. Men hate those they fear. The antagonism of the enemies of the Gospel is mainly against the Cross. From the very first it was so. They cried, “Let Him come down from the Cross and we will believe in Him.” They will write us pretty lines of Christ and tell us what an excellent man He was, and do our Lord such homage as their Judas’ lips can afford Him. They will also take His Sermon on the Mount and say what a wonderful insight He had into the human heart, and what a splendid code of morals He taught, and so on. “We will be Christians” they say, “but the dogma of Atonement we utterly reject.”

Our answer is, we do not care one farthing what they have to say about our Master if they deny His substitutionary sacrifice! Whether they give Him wine or vinegar is a small question so long as they reject the claims of the Crucified. The praises of unbelievers are sickening! Who needs to hear polluted lips lauding Him? Such sugared words are very like those which came out of the mouth of the devil when he said, “You Son of the Highest,” and Jesus rebuked him and said “Hold your peace and come out of him.” Even thus would we say to unbelievers who extol Christ’s life— “Hold your peace! We know your enmity, disguise it as you may! Jesus is the Savior of men or He is nothing. If you will not have Christ crucified you cannot have Him at all.”

My Brothers and Sisters in Jesus, let us glory in the blood of Jesus! Let it be conspicuous as though it were sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side posts of our doors! And let the world know that redemption by blood is written upon the innermost tablets of our hearts! Brethren, this is the test point of every teacher. When a fish goes bad they say it first stinks at the head and, certainly when a preacher becomes heretical it is always about Christ. If he is not clear about Jesus crucified and you hear one sermon from him—that is your misfortune. But if you go and hear him again, and hear another like the first, it will be your *fault.* Go a third time, and it will be your *crime*! If any man is doubtful about Christ crucified, recollect Hart’s couplet, for it is a truth—

***“You cannot be right in the rest.  
Unless you think rightly of Him.”***

I do not need to examine men upon all the doctrines of the Westminster Assembly’s Confession. I begin here, “What do you think of Christ?” If you cannot answer that question, go and publish your own views where you like, but you and I are wide as the poles asunder! Neither do I wish to have fellowship with you. We must have plain speaking here. It is “Christ crucified” which God blesses to conversion. God blessed William Huntingdon to the conversion of souls—I am sure of that, though I am no Huntingdonian. He blessed John Wesley to the conversion of souls. I am quite as clear about that, though I am not a Wesleyan. The point upon which the Lord blessed them, both, was that in which they bore testimony to Christ—and you shall find that in proportion as Jesus Christ’s Atonement is in a sermon, it is the lifeblood of that sermon—and is that which God sanctifies to the conversion of the souls of men. Therefore keep it always prominent!

And I ask you now, my Brethren, one thing more. Is not Christ and Him crucified the thing to live on and the thing to die on? Worldlings can live upon their flimsies. They can delight themselves under their Jonah’s gourds while they last. But when a man is depressed in spirit and tortured in body, where does he look? If he is a Christian, where does he fly? Where, indeed, but to Jesus crucified? How often have I been glad to creep into the temple and stand in the poor publican’s shoes and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” looking only to that Mercy Seat which Jesus sprinkled with His precious blood? This will do to *die*with! I do not believe we shall die seeking consolation from our peculiar Church organizations. Nor shall we die grasping with a dying clutch either ordinance or doctrine by itself. Our soul must live and die on Jesus crucified!

Notice all the saints, when they die, whether they do not get back to Calvary’s great Sacrifice. They believed a great many things. Some of them had many crotchets and whims and oddities, but the main point comes uppermost in death. “Jesus died for me, Jesus died for me”—they all come to that! Well, where they get at last, do you not think it would be well to go at first? And if that is the bottom of it all and it certainly is, would it not be as well for us to keep to that? While some are glorying in this and some in that, some have this form of worship and some that, let us say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world.”

Brethren, I commend to you more and more the bringing of the Cross of Christ into prominence, because it is this which will weld us more and more closely to one another and will keep us in blessed unity. We cannot all understand those peculiar Truths which depend, very much, upon nice points and shades of meaning in the Greek which only critics can bring out. If you are going in for these pretty things, Brother, you must leave behind many of us poor fools, for we cannot go in for these things—they puzzle us. I know you have got that dainty point very beautifully in your own mind and you think a great deal of it, and I do not wonder, for it has

cost you a good deal of thinking and it shows your powerful discernment. At the same time, do you not think you ought to condescend to some of us who never will, as long as ever we live, take up with these knotty points?

Some of our brains are of an ordinary sort. We have to earn our bread and we mingle with ordinary people. We know that two times two will make four, but we are not acquainted with all the ambiguous principles which lie concealed in the lofty philosophy to which you have climbed. I do not know much about it. I do not climb to such elevations, myself, and I shall never get up there along with you—might it not be better for the unity of the faith that you would kindly leave some of these things alone, agree better with your friends at home, show more love to your fellow Christians and attend a little more to commonplace duties? I do not know but what it might do you good, and bring a little of your humility to the front, if you get down there with Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Personally I might know a host of things—I specially might, for everybody tries to teach me something! I get advice by the wagonload—one pulls this ear and one pulls that. Well, I might know a great deal, but I find I should have to leave some of you behind if I went off to these things—and I love you too well for that. I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If any man will keep to that, I will say, “Give me your hand, my Brother! Jesus washed it with His blood as He did mine. Come, Brother, let us look up together at the same Cross. What do you make of it?”

There are tears in your eyes and in mine, but yet there is a flush of joy upon both our faces because of the dear love that nailed Jesus there. “What shall we do in the sight of this Cross?” My Brother says, “I will go and win souls,” and I say, “So will I.” He says, “I have one way of speaking,” and I reply, “I have another, for our gifts differ, but we will never clash, for we are serving one Lord and one Master and we will not be divided, either in this world or in that which is to come.” Let Apollos say what he likes, or Paul or Peter—we will learn from them all and be very glad to do so—but still, from the Cross we will not move, but stand fast there—for Jesus is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 2.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—425, 483, 433.**  
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CHRIST CRUCIFIED  
NO. 2673

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 6, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1858.~~***

***~~“For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”  
1 Corinthians 2:2.~~***

CORINTH was situated in the midst of a people who admired eloquence and wisdom. This Epistle was written in the age of orators and philosophers. The Apostle Paul was a man of profound learning—he had been educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the wisdom of the East. We are quite sure he was a man of a very capacious mind, for, although his writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit chose as His instrument a man evidently possessing the capacity for strong and vigorous thought and argument and, as for his oratorical powers, I believe that if he had chosen to cultivate them, they would have been of the very first order, for we have in some of his Epistles eloquence more sublime than ever fell from the lips of Cicero or Demosthenes.

The temptation would exist, in the mind of any ordinary man entering into such a city as Corinth, to say within himself, “I will endeavor to excel in all the graces of oratory. I have a blessed Gospel to preach that is worthy of the highest talents that ever can be consecrated to it. I am,” Paul might have said to himself, “largely gifted in the matter of eloquence. I must now endeavor to carefully polish my periods and so to fashion my address as to excel all the orators who now attract the Corinthians to listen to them. This I may do very laudably, for I will still keep in view my intention of preaching Jesus Christ—and I will preach Jesus Christ with such a flow of noble language that I shall be able to win my audience to consider the subject.”

But the Apostle resolved to do no such thing. “No,” he said, “before I enter the gates of Corinth, this is my firm determination—if any good is to be done there, if any are led to believe in Christ the Messiah, their belief shall be the result of hearing*the Gospel*—not of my eloquence! It shall never be said, ‘Oh, no wonder that Christianity spreads, see what an able advocate it has.’ Rather, it shall be said, ‘How mighty must be the Grace of God which has convinced these persons by such simple preaching, and brought them to know the Lord Jesus Christ by such humble instrumentality as that of the Apostle Paul!’” He resolved to put a curb upon his fiery tongue. He determined that he would be slow in speech in the midst of them and, instead of magnifying himself, he would magnify his office and magnify the Grace of God by denying himself the full use of those powers which, had they been dedicated to God—as indeed they were, but had they been fully employed, as some would have used them—might have achieved for him the reputation of being the most eloquent preacher upon the face of the earth!

Again, he might have said, “These philosophers are very wise men. If I would be a match for them, I must be very wise, too. These Corinthians are a very noble race of people—they have, for a long time, been under the tutorage of these talented men. I must speak as they speak, in enigmas and with many sophisms. I must always be propounding some dark problem. I need not live in the tub of Diogenes, but if I take his lantern, I may do something with it. I must try and borrow some of his wisdom. I have a profound philosophy to preach to these clever people and if I liked to preach that philosophy, I should dash in pieces all their theories concerning mental and moral science. I have found out a wondrous secret and I might stand in the midst of the market and cry, ‘Eureka, Eureka, I have found it!’ But I do not care to build my Gospel upon the foundation of human wisdom. No, if any are brought to believe in Christ, it shall be from the simple unadorned Gospel, plainly preached in unpolished language. The faith of my hearers, if they are converted to God, shall not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Can you not see, dear Friends, that the Apostle had very good reasons for coming to this determination? When a man says that he is determined to do a certain thing, it looks as if he knew that it was a difficult thing to do. So, I think it must have been a hard thing for the Apostle to determine to keep to this one subject—“Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” I am sure that nine-tenths of the ministers of this age could not have done it. Fancy Paul going through the streets of Corinth and hearing a philosopher explain the current theory of creation. He is telling the people something about the world springing out of certain things that previously existed and the Apostle Paul thinks, “I could easily correct that man’s mistakes. I could tell him that the Lord created all things in six days and rested on the seventh, and show him in the Book of Genesis the Inspired account of the creation. But, no,” he says to himself, “I have a more important message than that to deliver.” Still, he must have felt as if he would have liked to set him right, for, you know, when you hear a man uttering a gross lie, you feel as if you would like to go in and do battle with him. But instead of that, the Apostle just thinks, “It is not my business to set the people right about their theory of the creation of the world. All that I have to do is to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Besides, in Corinth, there was now and then sure to be a political struggle, and I have no doubt that the Apostle Paul felt for his people, the Jews, and he would have liked to see all his Jewish kindred have the privilege of citizenship. Sometimes the Corinthians would hold a public meeting in which they would support the opinion that the Jews ought not to have citizenship in Corinth—might not the Apostle have made a speech at such a gathering? If he had been asked to do so, he would have said, “I know nothing about such matters! All I know is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” They had political lectures, no doubt, in Corinth, and one man delivered a lecture upon this subject, and another upon that. In fact, all kinds of wonderful themes taken from the ancient poets were descanted upon by different men. Did not the Apostle Paul take one of the lectures? Did he not say, “I may throw a little Gospel into it and so do some good ?” No, he said, “I come here as Christ’s minister and I will never be anything else but Christ’s minister. I will never address the Corinthians in any other character than that of Christ’s ambassador. For one thing, only, have I determined to know, and that is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Would to God that all the ministers of this age had determined to do the same!

Do you not sometimes find a minister who takes a prominent part in an election, who thinks it his business to stand forth on the political platform of the nation? And did it ever strike you that he was out of his place, that it was his business to know nothing among men except Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Do we not see, at every corner of our streets, a lecture advertised to be delivered on this and that and the other subject, by this minister and that, who leave their pulpits in order that they may be enabled to deliver lectures upon all kinds of subjects? “No,” Paul would have said, “if I cannot spread the Gospel of Christ legitimately, by preaching it openly, I will not do it by taking an absurd title for my sermon! The Gospel shall stand or fall on its own merits, and with no enticing words of man’s wisdom will I preach it. Let anyone say to me, ‘Come and give able advocacy for this or that reform,’ and my answer would be, ‘I do not know anything about that subject, for I have determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.’”

As Albert Barnes very well says, “This should be the resolution of every minister of the Gospel. This is his business—not to be a politician; not to engage in the strifes and controversies of men; not to be merely a good farmer, or scholar; not to mingle with his people in festive circles and enjoyments; not to be a man of taste and philosophy or distinguished mainly for refinement of manners; not to be a profound philosopher or metaphysician, but to make Christ crucified the grand Object of his attention and to seek always and everywhere to make Him known. He is not to be ashamed anywhere of the humbling doctrine that Christ was crucified. In this, he is to glory! Though the world may ridicule, though philosophers may sneer, though the rich and the gay may deride it, yet this is to be the grand object of interest to him and at no time, and in no society, is to be ashamed of it!

“It matters not what are the amusements of society around him—what fields of science, or gain, or ambition, are open before him—the minister of Christ is to know only Christ and Him crucified. If he cultivates science, it is to be that he may the more successfully explain and vindicate the Gospel. If he becomes in any manner familiar with the works of art and of taste, it is that he may more successfully show to those who cultivate them the superior beauty and excellence of the Cross. If he studies the plans and the employments of men, it is that he may more successfully meet them in those plans and more successfully speak to them of the great plan of redemption! The preaching of the Cross is the only kind of preaching that will be attended with success! That which has in it much respecting the Divine mission, the dignity, the works, the Doctrines, the Person and the Atonement of Christ will be successful.

“So it was in the time of the Apostles! So it was in the Reformation! So it was in the Moravian missions! So it has been in all revivals of religion! There is a power about that kind of preaching which philosophy and human reason have not. ‘Christ is God’s great ordinance’ for the salvation of the world and we meet the crimes and alleviate the woes of the world just in proportion as we hold the Cross up as appointed to overcome the one and to pour the balm of consolation into the other.”

Would that all ministers would keep this mind, that they would do nothing outside the office of the ministry, that to once be a minister is to be a minister forever and never to be a politician, never to be a lecturer! That to once be a preacher is to be a preacher of Christ’s holy Gospel until Christ takes us to Himself to begin to sing the new song before the Throne of God!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, I have discharged my duty in saying these things. If they apply to any ministers whom you admire, I cannot help it. There is the text and what do we learn from it but this, that the Apostle Paul determined to do everything as a minister of Christ! And, my dear Brothers and Sisters, it is your duty to do this as *hearers*. As Christians, it is your duty and privilege to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

**I.**And first, with regard to THE DOCTRINES WHICH YOU BELIEVE, I beseech you, do not know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

You are told by one person that such-and-such a system of theology is based upon the most sound principles of reason. You are told by another that the old doctrines which you have believed are not consistent with these advanced times. You will now and then be met by smart young gentlemen who will tell you that to be what is called a Calvinist is to be a long way behind this progressive age, “for you know,” they say, “that intellectual preachers are rising up and that it would be well if you would become a little more intellectual in the matter of preaching and hearing.” When such a remark as that is made to any one of you, I beseech you to give this answer, “I know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you can tell me more about Christ than I know, I will thank you. If you can instruct me as to how I may become more like Christ, how I may live nearer in fellowship with Him, how my faith in Him may become stronger and my belief in His holy Gospel may become more firm, then I will thank you. But if you have nothing to tell me except some intellectual lore which you have with great pains accumulated, I will tell you that although it may be a very good thing for you to preach, and for others who are intellectual to hear, I do not belong to your class, nor do I wish to belong to it—I belong to that sect spoken against everywhere, who after the way that men call heresy worship the Lord God of their fathers—believing all things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I belong to a race of people who believe that it is not the pride of intellect, nor the pomp of knowledge that can ever teach men spiritual things. I belong to those who think that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has ordained strength, and I do not believe that out of your mouth God has ordained any strength at all! I belong to the men who like to sit, with Mary, at the feet of Jesus, and to receive just what Christ said, as Christ said it, and because Christ said it. I want no truth but what He says is the Truth of God, and no other ground for believing it but that He says it, and no better proof that it is true than that I feel and know it to be true as applied to my own heart.”

Now, dear Friend, if you can do that, I will trust you anywhere—even among the wisest heretics of the age! You may go where false doctrines are rife, but you will never catch the plague of heresy while you have this golden preservative of the Truth of God and can say, “I know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” As for myself, I can truly say that Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the sum of all knowledge to me. He is the highest intellectualism! He is the grandest philosophy to which my mind can attain! He is the pinnacle that rises loftier than my highest aspirations and deeper than this great Truth of God I wish never to fathom! Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the sum total of all I want to know and of all the Doctrines which I profess and preach!

**II.**Next, it must be just the same in YOUR EXPERIENCE. Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, in your experience know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

You may go out tomorrow not merely into the outside world, but into the church, the nominal church, and you will meet with a class of persons who take you by the ear and who invite you into their houses. And the moment you are there, they begin to talk to you about the Doctrines of the Gospel. They say nothing about Christ Jesus, but they begin at once to talk of the eternal decrees of God, of election and of the high mysteries of the Covenant of Grace. While they are talking to you, you say in your hearts, “What they are saying is true, but there is one lamentable defect in it all—their teaching is the truth apart from Christ.” Conscience whispers, “The election that I believe is election in Christ. These men do not talk anything about that, but only of election. The redemption that I believe always has a very special reference to the Cross of Christ. These men do not mention Christ—they talk of redemption as a commercial transaction and say nothing about Jesus. With regard to final perseverance, I believe all that these men say, but I have been taught that the saints only persevere in consequence of their relation to Christ— these men say nothing about that.” This minister, they say, is not sound, and that other minister is not sound, and let me tell you that if you get among this class of persons, you will learn to rue the day that you ever looked them in the face!

If you must come into contact with them, I beseech you to say to them, “I love all truths that you hold, but my love of them can never overpower and supersede my love to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I tell you plainly, while I could not sit to hear erroneous doctrine, I could just as soon do that as sit to hear the truthful doctrine apart from the Lord Jesus Christ! I could not go to a place where I saw a man dressed in gorgeous robes, who pretended to be Christ, and was not. And, on the other hand, I could not go to a place where I saw Christ’s real robes, but the Master, Himself, was absent—what I need is not His robe—I need the Master, Himself. And if you preach to me dry doctrine without Jesus Christ, I tell you it will not suit my experience, for my experience is just this—that while I know my election, I can never know it unless I know my union with the Lamb. I tell you plainly that I know I am redeemed, but I cannot bear think of redemption without thinking of the Savior who redeemed me. It is my boast that I shall endure to the end, but I know— each hour makes me know—that my endurance depends upon my standing in Christ. I must have that Truth preached in connection with the Cross of Christ.”

Oh, have nothing to do with these people, unless it is to set them right, for you will find that they are full of the gall of bitterness and the poison of asps is under their tongue! Instead of giving you things whereon your soul can feed, they will make you full of all manner of bitterness, malice and evil speaking against those who truly love the Lord Jesus, but who differ from them in some slight matter.

You may meet with another class of persons who will take you by the other ear, and say to you, “We, too, love Christ’s doctrines, but we believe that our friends on the other side of the road are wrong. They do not preach enough experience.” And you say, “Well, I think I have got among the people who will suit me, now,” and you hear the minister insisting that the most precious experience in the world is to know your own corruption, to feel the evil of the human heart, to have that filthy dunghill turned over and over in all its reeking noisomeness and exposed before the sun! And after hearing the sermon, which is full of pretended humility, you rise from your seats more proud than you ever were in your lives, determined now that you will begin to glory in that very thing which you once counted as dross! The things which you were ashamed, once, to speak of, you now think should be your boast! That deep experience which was your disgrace shall now become the crown of your rejoicing! You speak to the dear Brothers and Sisters who imbibe this view and they tell you to seek first, *not* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, but the hidden things of the prison, the discovery of the unrighteousness and unholiness of the soul.

O my dear Friends, if you wish to have your lives made miserable! If you want to be led back to the bondage of Egypt. If you want to have Pharaoh’s rope put round your necks once again, take their motto for your motto. But if you wish to live as I believe Christ would have you live, I would entreat you to say, “No, it does me good, sometimes, to hear of the evil heart, but I have made a determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and you do not tell me anything about Him.” These men preach one Sunday upon the leper, but do they preach, the next Sunday, upon the leper healed! These men tell all about the filthy state of the human heart, but they say little or nothing about that river that is to cleanse and purify it! They say much about the disease, but not so much about the Physician! And if you attend their ministry very long, you will be obliged to say, “I shall get into such a doleful condition that I shall be tempted to imitate Judas and go out and hang myself! So, good morning to you, for I have determined to know nothing in my experience but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

I must be very earnest in trying to warn you about this matter, for there is a growing tendency, among a certain order of professing Christians, to set up something in experience beside Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Tell me that your experience is all concerned with the Lord Jesus Christ, and I will rejoice in it. The more of Christ there is in it, the more precious it is. Tell me that your experience is full of the knowledge of your own corruptions, and I answer, “If there is not in it a mixture of the knowledge of Christ, and unless the knowledge of Christ predominates to a large degree, your experience is wood, hay and stubble and must be consumed—and you must suffer loss.”

By the way, let me tell you a little story about Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress.* I am a great lover of John Bunyan, but I do not believe him Infallible. The other day I met with a story about him which I think a very good one. There was a young man in Edinburgh who wished to be a missionary. He was a wise young man. So he thought, “If I am to be a missionary, there is no need for me to transport myself far away from home. I may as well be a missionary in Edinburgh.” There’s a hint to some of you ladies who give away tracts in your district, but never give your servant Mary one. Well, this young man started and he was determined to speak to the first person he met. He met one of those old fishwives—those of us who have seen them can never forget them—they are extraordinary women, indeed! So, stepping up to her, he said, “Here you are, coming along with your burden on your back. Let me ask you if you have got another burden, a spiritual burden.” “What?” she asked. “Do you mean that burden in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress?*Because if you do, young man, I got rid of that many years ago, probably before you were born.

“But I went a better way to work than the pilgrim did. The evangelist that John Bunyan talks about was one of your parsons that do not preach the Gospel, for he said, ‘Keep that light in your eye and run to the wicket-gate.’ Why, man alive! That was not the place for him to run to! He should have said, ‘Do you see that Cross? Run there at once!’ But, instead of that, he sent the poor pilgrim to the wicket-gate first—and much good he got by going there! He got tumbling into the slough and was like to have been killed by it.”

“But did not you,” the young man asked, “go through any Slough of Despond?” “Yes, I did. But I found it a great deal easier going through with my burden off than with it on my back.” The old woman was quite right! John Bunyan put the getting rid of the burden too far off from the commencement of the pilgrimage. If he meant to show what usually happens, he was right, but if he meant to show what *ought to have happened*, he was wrong. We must not say to the sinner, “Now, Sinner, if you will be saved, go to the baptismal pool, go to the wicket-gate, go to the church—do this or that.” No, the Cross should be right in front of the wicket-gate and we should say to the sinner, “Throw yourself down there and you are safe. But you are not safe till you can cast off your burden and lie at the foot of the Cross and find peace in Jesus.”

**III.**Let me conclude by saying, Brothers and Sisters, determine, from this hour, that IN YOUR FAITH you will know nothing but Jesus and Him crucified.

I am perfectly certain that I have not a grain of my own merit to trust in and not so much as an atom of creature strength to rely upon, but I often find myself, during the seven days of the week, relying upon merit of my own that does not exist, and depending upon strength of my own which I, at the same time, confess has no existence at all. You and I often call the “Pope,” the antichrist, but do we not, ourselves, often play the antichrist, too? The “Pope” sets himself as the head of the Church, but do not we go further by setting ourselves up, sometimes, to be our own saviors? We do not say so, except in a sort of still small voice, like the mutterings of the old wizards. It is not a loud, out-spoken lie, because we would know, then, how to answer it. “But now,” whispers the devil, “how well you did that!” And then we begin to rely upon our works, and Satan says, “You prayed so well yesterday, you will never be cold in your prayers again. And you will be so strong in your faith that you will never doubt your God again.”

It is the old golden calf that is set up once more, for, although it was ground to powder, it seems to have the art of coming together again! After we have been told, ten times over, that we cannot have any merit of our own, we begin to act as if we had! And the man who tells you, in his doctrine, that all his fresh springs are in Christ, yet thinks and acts just as if he had fresh springs of his own—he mourns as if all his dependence were upon himself and groans as if his salvation depended upon his own merits! We often get to talking, in our own souls, as if we did not believe the Gospel at all, but were hoping to be saved by our own works and our own creature performances. Oh, for a stronger determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified! I would to God that I could make that resolution, myself, and that you would all make it with me!

I heard once of a countryman who was preaching, one day, and he preached very nicely the first half of his sermon, but towards the end he entirely broke down and his brother said to him, “Tom, I can tell you why you did not preach well at the end of your sermon. It was because you got on so nicely at first that devil whispered, ‘Well done, Tom, you are getting on very well.’ And as soon as the devil said that, you thought, ‘Tom is a very fine fellow,’ and then the Lord left you.” Happy would it have been for Tom if he could have determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified—and not to have known Tom at all!

That is what I desire to know myself, for if I know nothing but the power which comes from on high. I can never be less powerful at one time than at another and I can glory in my infirmity because it makes room for Christ’s power to rest upon me—

***“I glory in infirmity,  
That Christ’s own power may rest on me: When I am weak, then am I strong,  
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.”***

It would be a good resolution for you, Brothers, and for myself, to determine to know nothing about ourselves and nothing about our own doings. Now friend John, begin to think nothing about yourself and to know nothing but Jesus Christ. Let John go where he likes and be you relying not upon John’s strength, but upon Christ’s. And you, Peter, know nothing about Peter at all, and do not boast, “Though all men should deny You, yet will I never deny You,” but know that Peter’s Lord Jesus is living inside Peter—and then you may go on comfortably enough.

Determine, Christian, that, by the Grace of God, it shall be your endeavor to keep your eye single, to keep your faith fixed only on the Lord Jesus, without any addition of your own works, or your own strength— and determining *that—*you may go on your way rejoicing, singing of the Cross of Christ as your boast, your glory and your all! We are now coming to the Table of our Master, and I hope that this will be our determination there—to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And may the Lord give us His blessing! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Psalm 22.***

This Psalm is headed, “To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar”— or, as the margin renders it, “the hind of the morning”—“A Psalm of David.” It begins in the very depths of the Master’s sorrow, when this great and bitter cry escaped His lips—

**Verse 1** ***.****My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* Every word is emphatic. *“My*God, My*God,*why have *You*forsaken Me?” “All others may forsake Me, and I need not be greatly troubled at their absence, but ‘why have You forsaken Me?’” “Why have You *forsaken* Me?’ I understand why You smite Me, for I am the Shepherd predestined to be smitten for the flock, but ‘why have You *forsaken*Me?’” “Why have you forsaken *Me*?—Your only-begotten, Your well-beloved Son—‘why have You forsaken *Me?’”*

**1** ***.****Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?* “Why have I no inflowing of Your love—no enjoyment of Your Presence—no whispers from Your heart? I am left alone—left utterly—left on the Cross—left in My direst need.” God’s adapted children do not usually talk like this. Such a lament as this has not often come even from the martyrs for the faith, for, as a rule, they have had God with them in their hour of deepest agony. But here was One who was far greater than they, who had to yet endure suffering from which they were exempted—the only perfect One was forsaken by God! You know that if was because He stood in our place that the Savior had this pre-eminence in suffering and sorrow.

**2** ***.****O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* Think of what a weight that unanswered prayer was upon the soul of the Well-Beloved. Have you ever felt such a burden as that? Then, you are not alone in that experience, for He who is infinitely better than you had to think over His day prayers and His night prayers which, for a while, were not answered.

**3.***But You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel.* Follow the example of your Lord, poor troubled soul. Find no fault with your God, even though He should forsake you. Call Him holy even though He should leave you. And when He seems not to hear your prayers, yet do not forget His praises.

**4-6.***Our fathers trusted in You: they trusted, and You did deliver them. They cried unto You, and were delivered: they trusted in You, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*Think of our Divine Lord thus taking the very lowest place and becoming, as it were, something less than man—just that little crimson worm which has simply a life made up of blood. Christ likens Himself to it as He says, “I am a worm, and no man.”

**7, 8** ***.****All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.* Oh, these were cruel and cutting words! Like a sharp razor, they cut to the very heart of our Divine Master as He heard His enemies exulting even over His faith, as though it had come to nothing, for now Jehovah, Himself, had forsaken Him and left Him to die alone upon the tree!

**9, 10.***But You are He that took Me out of the womb: You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from the womb: You are My God from My mother’s belly.*Sometimes, we also may derive great comfort from this Truth of God to which our Savior here refers. When we could not help ourselves in the least degree, the Lord preserved us, so will He not again help us when we are at our worst? You who have reached your second childhood may reflect with gratitude and hope upon the way in which God took care of you in your first childhood. Then, you certainly were entirely dependent upon Him, yet you fared well and so you shall if each sense shall fail you—if the power of moving shall be taken away, and the power of sight, and the power of hearing—yet the Lord, who blessed you when you were just born, will still preserve you right to the end. You remember how the Lord puts this Truth in Isaiah 46:4—“Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” Our Savior, having comforted Himself thus, falls to praying again.

**11, 12.***Be not far from Me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed Me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round.*These were the Pharisees, the chief priests and the strong Roman soldiers that compassed our Savior when He was upon the Cross.

**13, 14.***They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels.*Can you not see your Savior hanging on the accursed tree—every particle of Him, as it were, loosened from its fellow by the fever raging in His whole being and the anguish and deep depression of His spirit?

**15.***My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaves to My jaws.*Such was the intensity of His anguish that the fever within Him turned His mouth into an oven and His tongue was so dried up that it could scarcely stir.

**15.***And You have brought Me into the dust of death.*As if His whole body were prepared to go back into its primary elements. He feels in Himself the sentence pronounced upon the first Adam, “Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return,”

**16.***For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me.*These were the common people, the rabble, the multitude that thronged around, barking at Him like a pack of hungry hounds.

**16.***They pierced My hands and My feet.*This little sentence shows that this Psalm must relate to the Lord Jesus. Truly did David see Him in vision! It happened not to David to have his hands and feet pierced, but this was the portion of David’s Master and Lord. He could, indeed, say, “They pierced My hands and My feet.”

**17.***I may count all My bones: they look and stare upon Me.*He is emaciated through His fasting and all the agony He has endured. And His bones seem to break through His skin by reason of the cruel scourging to which He had been subjected.

**18, 19.***They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture. But be not You far from Me, O LORD: O My Strength.*That is, El— the name He gave to God in the first verse—“O My Strong One.”

**19-21.***Hasten You to help Me. Deliver My soul from the sword; My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen. You have heard Me.*Did You notice that flash of light gleaming through the darkness, “You have heard Me”? Perhaps it was at that moment that the sun again shone forth; at any rate, it is clear that the lost light had returned to our suffering Lord, for the rest of this Divine soliloquy is full of comfort and confidence.

**22.***I will declare Your name unto My brethren.*His first thought, even in His agony on the Cross, was about them. And He seemed to say, “When I have risen from the dead, I will tell them all about this time of trial. And through the ages to come, I will tell My people how You did help Me—the greatest of all Sufferers—and that You will help them, also. I was left for a time, and yet I was not finally left. I cried, ‘Lama Sabachthani,’ and yet I triumphed, even then, and so shall they. They shall do as I have done—confide and conquer.”

**22.***In the midst of the congregation will I praise You.* And you know that He did so. He stood in the midst of His people and told them what God had done! And, spiritually, He stands in our midst at this moment and He leads our songs of praise unto Jehovah.

**23, 24.***You that fear the LORD, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him, He heard.*What a change of note! If men could hear us speak when we are in the depths of sorrow, they might conclude that God had forsaken us. But when we get out, again, how quickly we eat our words and how soon we begin to tell the goodness of the Lord! Then we lift up the joyous strain, “O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.”

**25.***My praise shall be of You in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him.* Christ still praises God in the great congregation. On my way to this evening’s service, I called to see one of our dear brethren who is very ill, and I was much refreshed with a sweet thing that he said—“When we all get to Heaven, we shall feel quite at home there, for you know, Sir, we have worshipped in a great congregation for these many years.” And so we shall. There is something most exhilarating and refreshing in going with a multitude to keep holy day—the more, the merrier! But what shall be the joy in Heaven, where the number of the redeemed cannot be counted, and all shall be continually praising God? This was one of the joys that was set before Christ, for which “He endured the Cross, despising the shame.”

**26.***The meek shall eat and be satisfied.*Even in the time of His great agony, our Lord was thinking of you hidden ones, you little ones who think yourselves worth nothing. Christ says that He was finding bread for you, for He gives us His flesh to eat, that flesh which is meat, indeed.

**26.***They shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your heart shall live forever.*Because He died, all who trust in Him shall live forever. Oh, how sweetly does He die, with the thought of their eternal bliss upon His mind!

**27.***All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.* He sees the result of His death. He beholds the fruit of His soul-travail and His heart is glad within Him!

**28-31.***For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and He is the Governor among the nations. All they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He has done this.* The Psalm really ends with almost the last cry of our Lord upon the Cross—“It is finished.” So the whole Psalm is a window through which we can see into the inmost heart of Christ when it was being torn upon the Cross.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #56 New Park Street Pulpit 1

HEAVEN  
NO. 56

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 16, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“As it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all  
things, yes, the deep things of God.”  
1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.~~***

How very frequently verses of Scripture are misquoted! Instead of turning to the Bible, to see how it is written and saying, “How do you read it?” we quote from one another. And thus a passage of Scripture is handed down misquoted, by a kind of tradition—from father to son and passes as current among a great number of Christians! How very frequently at our Prayer Meetings do we hear our Brethren describing Heaven as a place of which we cannot conceive! They say, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” And there they stop, not seeing that the very marrow of the whole passage lies in this—“But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” So that the joys of Heaven (if this passage alludes to Heaven, which, I take it is not quite as clear as some would suppose), are, after all, not things of which we cannot conceive, for “God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

I have hinted that this passage is most commonly applied to Heaven and I shall, myself, also apply it in some measure this morning. But anyone who reads the connection will discover that the Apostle is not talking about Heaven at all. He is only speaking of this—that the wisdom of this world is not able to discover the things of God—that the merely carnal mind is not able to know the deep spiritual things of our most holy religion. He says, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” And then he goes on lower down to say, “But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” I take it that this text is a great general fact, capable of specific application to certain cases. And that the great fact is this—that the things of God cannot be perceived by eye, ear, or heart—but must be revealed by the Spirit of God, as they are unto all true Believers. We shall take that thought and endeavor to expand it, this morning, explaining it concerning Heaven, as well as regards other heavenly matters.

Every Prophet who has stood upon the borders of a new dispensation might have uttered these words with peculiar force. He might have said, as he looked forward to the future, God having touched his eyes with the anointing eye slave of the Holy Spirit, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” We will divide the economy of Free Grace into different dispensations. We commence with the *Patriarchal*. A Patriarch, who like Abraham was gifted with foresight, might have looked forward to the Levitical dispensation, glorious with its tabernacle, its Shekinah, its gorgeous veil, its blazing altars! He might have caught a glimpse of Solomon’s magnificent Temple and even by anticipation heard the sacred song ascending from the assembled thousands of Jerusalem. He might have seen King Solomon upon his throne, surrounded with all his riches and the people resting in peace and tranquility in the promised land. And he might have turned to his Brethren who lived in the Patriarchal age and said, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” in the next dispensation. You know not how clearly God will reveal Himself in the Paschal Lamb—how sweetly the people will be led, fed, guided and directed all the way through the wilderness—what a sweet and fair country it is that they shall inhabit! Eye has not seen the brooks that gush with milk, nor the rivers that run with honey. Ear has not heard the melodious voices of the daughters of Shiloh, nor have entered into the heart of man the joys of the men of Zion, “but God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

And so, moreover, at the close of the Levitical dispensation, the *Prophets* might have thus foretold the coming glories. Old Isaiah, standing in the midst of the Temple, beholding its sacrifices and the dim smoke that went up from them, when his eye were opened by the Spirit of God, might have said—“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” He saw by faith, Christ crucified upon the Cross. He beheld Him soaking in His own blood in Gethsemane’s garden. He saw the disciples going out of Jerusalem, to preach everywhere the Word of God. He marked the progress of Messiah’s Kingdom and he looked down to these latter days, when every man under his own vine and fig tree worships God, none daring to make him afraid. And he could well have cheered the captives in Babylon in words like these—“Now you sit down and weep and you will not sing, in a strange land, the songs of Zion. But lift up your heads, for your salvation draws near—your eye has not seen, nor your ear heard the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But he has revealed them unto me by His Spirit.” And now, Beloved, we stand on the borders of a new era. The mediatorial dispensation is almost finished. In a few more years, if prophecy is not thoroughly misinterpreted, we shall enter upon another condition. This poor earth of ours, which has been swathed in darkness, shall put on her garments of light! She has toiled a long while in travail and sorrow. Soon shall her groaning end. Her surface, which has been stained with blood, is soon to be purified by love and a religion of peace is to be established! The hour is coming when storms shall be hushed, when tempests shall be unknown, when whirlwind and hurricane shall stay their mighty force and when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.” But you ask me what sort of kingdom that is to be and whether I can show you any likeness thereof. I answer no! “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him,” in the next, the Millennial dispensation—“but God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Sometimes, when we climb upwards, there are moments of contemplation when we can understand that verse, “From where we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be revealed from Heaven.” Then we can anticipate that thrice blessed hour when the King of kings shall put on His head the crown of the universe! When He shall gather up sheaves of scepters and put them beneath his arm—when He shall take the crowns from the heads of all monarchs and welding them into one, shall put them on His own head, amidst the shouts of ten thousands times ten thousands who shall chant His high praises! But it is little enough that we can guess of its wonders.

But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the Millennial one is to be. Will the Temple, they ask, be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? Will the different nations all speak one language? Will they all resort to one Temple? And ten thousand other questions. Beloved, we cannot answer you! “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” We do not profess to understand the minutiae of these things. It is enough for us to believe that a latter-day Glory is approaching. Our eyes glisten with joy in the full belief that it is coming and our hearts swell big at the thought that our Master is to reign over the wide, wide world and to win it for Himself. But if you begin questioning us, we tell you that we cannot explain it. Just as under the Legal dispensation there were types and shadows but the mass of the people never saw Christ in them, so there are a great many different things in this dispensation which are types of the next which will never be explained till we have more wisdom, more light and more instruction! Just as the enlightened Jew partially foresaw what the Gospel was to be by the Law, so may we guess the Millennium by the present. But we have not light enough—there are few who are taught enough in the deep things of God to explain them fully. Therefore we still say of the mass of mankind—“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them *unto us* by His Spirit” in some measure—and He will do so, more and more, by-and-by!

And this brings us to make the application of the subject to *Heaven, itself*. You see, while it does not expressly mean Heaven, here, you may very easily bring it to bear upon it. For concerning Heaven, unto which Believers are all fast going, we may say, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”

Now, Beloved, I am about to talk of Heaven for this reason—you know I never preach any funeral sermons for anybody and never intend to. I have passed by many persons who have died in our Church without having made any parade of funeral sermons. But, nevertheless, three or four of our friends having departed recently. I think I may speak a little to you about Heaven in order to cheer you and God may thus bless their departure. It is to be no funeral sermon, however—no eulogy for the dead and no oration pronounced over the departed! Frequent funeral sermons I utterly abhor and I believe they are not under God’s sanction and approval. Of the dead we should say nothing but that which is good—and in the pulpit we should say very little of that, except, perhaps, in the case of some very eminent saint—and then we should say very little of the man, but let the “honor be unto Him that sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb forever.”

Heaven—then, what is it? First what is it not? *It is not a Heaven of the*SENSES—“Eye has not seen it.” What glorious things the eye has seen! Have we not seen the gaudy pageantry of pomp crowding the happy streets? We have seen the procession of kings and princes! Our eyes have been feasted with the display of glittering uniforms, of lavished gold and jewels, of chariots and of horses. And we have, perhaps, thought that the procession of the saints of God may be dimly shadowed forth thereby. But oh, it was but the *thought* of our poor infant mind—and far enough from the great reality! We may hear of the magnificence of the old Persian princes, of palaces covered with gold and silver and floors inlaid with jewels—but we cannot, from there, gather a thought of Heaven, for, “Eye has not seen” it. We have thought, however, when we have come to the works of God and our eyes have rested on them—surely we can get some glimpse of what Heaven is, here! By night we have turned our eyes up to the blue sky and we have seen the stars—those golden-fleeced sheep of God feeding on the blue meadow of the sky and we have said, “Look! Those are the nails in the floor of Heaven up yonder.” And if this earth has such a glorious covering, what must that of the Kingdom of Heaven be? And when our eyes have wandered from star to star, we have thought, “Now I can tell what Heaven is by the beauty of its floor.” But it is all a mistake! All that we can see can never help us to understand Heaven! At another time we have seen some glorious landscape. We have seen the white river winding among the verdant fields like a stream of silver, covered on either side with emerald. We have seen the mountain towering to the sky, the mist rising on it, or the golden sunrise covering all the east with glory. Or we have seen the west, again, reddened with the light of the sun as it departed! And we have said, “Surely, these grandeurs must be something like Heaven!” We have clapped our hands and exclaimed—

***“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,***

***Stand dressed in living green.”***  
We have imagined that there really were fields in Heaven and that things of earth were patterns of things in Heaven. It was all a mistake—“Eye has not seen” it!

Equally does our text assert that “the ear has not heard” it. Oh, have we not on the Sabbath, sometimes, heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God, when he has, by the Spirit, spoken to our souls? We knew something of Heaven then, we thought. At other times we have been entranced with the voice of the preacher and with the remarkable sayings which he has uttered. We have been charmed by his eloquence—some of us have known what it is to sit and alternately weep and smile—under the power of some mighty man who played with us as skillfully as David could have played on his harp and we have said, “How sweet to hear those sounds! How glorious his eloquence! How wonderful his power of oratory! Now I think I know something of what Heaven is, for my mind is so carried away, my passions are so excited, my imagination is so elevated! All the powers of my mind are stirred up so that I can think of nothing but of what the preacher is speaking about!” But the ear is not the medium by which you can guess anything of Heaven. The “ear has not heard” it. At other times, perhaps, you have heard sweet music and has not music charmed even savage breasts like some of ours? We have heard music, whether poured from the lungs of man—that noblest instrument in the world—or from some manufacture of harmony and we have thought, “Oh, how glorious this is!” And we have fancied, “This is what John meant in the Revelation—‘I heard a voice like many waters and like exceeding great thunders and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps’—and this must he something like Heaven, something like the hallelujahs of the glorified.” But ah, Beloved, we made a mistake! “Ear has not heard” it.

Here has been the very ground of that error into which many persons have fallen concerning Heaven. They have said that they would like to go to Heaven. What for? For this reason—*they looked upon it as a place where they should be free from bodily pain*. They should not have a headache or a toothache, there, nor any of those diseases which flesh is heir to. And whenever God laid His hand upon them, they began to wish themselves in Heaven because they regarded it as a Heaven of the *senses*—a Heaven which the eyes have seen or the ears heard. A great mistake! For although we shall have a body free from pain, yet it is not a Heaven where our senses shall indulge themselves. The laborer will have it, that Heaven is a place—

***“Where on a green and flowery mount***

***His weary soul shall sit.”***  
Another will have it that Heaven is a place where he shall *eat to the full and his body shall be satisfied*. We may use these as figures, but we are so degenerate that we are apt to build a fine Muslim heaven and to think that there we shall have all the delights of the flesh! There shall we drink from bowls of nectared red wine! There shall we lavishly indulge ourselves and our body shall enjoy every delight of which it is capable! What a mistake for us to conceive such a thing! Heaven is not a place for the delight of mere *sense*—we shall be raised not a *sensual* body—but a *spiritual* body. We can get no conceptions of Heaven through the senses! They must always come through the Spirit. That is our first thought. It is not a Heaven to be grasped by the senses.

But, secondly, *it is not a Heaven of the*IMAGINATION. Poets let their imaginations fly with loosened wings when they commence speaking of Heaven. And how glorious are their descriptions of it! When we have read them, we say, “And is that Heaven? I wish I were there.” And we think we have some idea of Heaven by reading books of poetry. Perhaps the preacher weaves the filigree work of fancy and builds up in a moment, by his words, charming palaces, the tops of which are covered with gold and the walls are ivory. He pictures to you lights brighter than the sun, a place where spirits flap their bright wings, where comets flash through the sky! He tells you of fields where you may feed on ambrosia, where no henbane grows, but where sweet flowers cover the meadows. And then you think you have some idea of Heaven—and you sit down and say, “It is sweet to hear that man speak, he carried me so away. He made me think I was there! He gave me such conceptions as I never heard before, he worked on my imagination.” And do you know, there is not a greater power than imagination? I would not give a farthing for a man who has no imagination. He is of no use if he wishes to move the multitude. If you were to take away my imagination, I would die! It is a little Heaven below, to imagine sweet things. But never think that imagination can picture Heaven. When it is most sublime, when it is most free from the dust of earth, when it is carried up by the greatest knowledge and kept steady by the most extreme caution, imagination cannot picture Heaven! “It has not entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” Imagination is good, but not to picture Heaven! Your imaginary Heaven you will find, by-and-by, to be all a mistake. Though you may have piled up fine castles, you will find them to be castles in the air and they will vanish like thin clouds before the gale. For imagination cannot make a Heaven. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered the heart of man to conceive” it.

Our next point is that *it is not a Heaven of the* INTELLECT. Men who take to themselves the title of intelligent and who very humbly and modestly call themselves, philosophers, generally describe Heaven as a place where we shall know all things. And their grandest idea of Heaven is that they shall discover all secrets there. There the brook which would not tell its origin shall bubble forth its history. There the star which would not tell its date and could not be made to whisper of its inhabitants shall at once unravel all its secrets! There the animal, the fashion of which could scarcely be guessed, so long had it been buried among other fossils in the earth, shall start up again and it shall be seen of what form and shape it really was. There the rocky secrets of this, our earth, that they never could discover, will be opened to them. And they conceive that they shall travel from one star to another star, from planet to planet and fill their ennobled intellect, as they now delight to call it, with all kinds of human knowledge! They reckon that Heaven will be to understand the works of the Creator! And concerning such men as Bacon and other great philosophers, of whose piety we generally have very little evidence, we read at the end of their biographies—“He has now departed, that noble spirit which taught us such glorious things, here, to sip at the fountain of knowledge and have all his mistakes rectified and his doubts cleared up.” But we do not believe anything of the kind! Intellect? You know it not! “It has not entered into the heart of man.” It is high. What can you know? It is deep. What can you understand? It is only the Spirit that can give you a guess of Heaven!

Now we come to the point—“He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit.” I think this means that it was revealed unto the Apostles by the Spirit, so that they wrote something of it in the Holy Word. But as you all believe that, we will only hint at it and pass on. We also think that it refers to every Believer and that every Believer does have glimpses of Heaven below. And that God does reveal Heaven to him, even while on earth, so that he understands what Heaven is, in some measure. I love to talk of the Spirit’s influence on man. I am a firm believer in the Doctrine of impulse, in the Doctrine of influence, in the Doctrine of direction, in the Doctrine of instruction by the Holy Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit to be an Interpreter who reveals unto men his own sinfulness and afterwards teaches him his righteousness in Christ Jesus. I know there are some who abuse that Doctrine and ascribe every text that comes into their heart as given by the Spirit. We have heard of a man who, passing by his neighbor’s firewood and having none in his own house, fancied he should like to take some. The text crossed his mind—“In all those things Job sinned not.” He said, “*There* is an influence from the Spirit. I must take that man’s wood.” Presently, however, conscience whispered, “You shall not steal,” and he remembered, then, that no text could have been put into his heart by the Spirit if it excused sin or led him into it! However we do not discard the Doctrine of impulse because some people make a mistake. And we shall have a little of it this morning—a little of the teaching of God’s gracious Spirit, whereby He reveals unto us what Heaven is.

First of all, we think a Christian gets a gaze of what Heaven is, *when in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord*, because He cares for him. When waves of distress and billows of affliction pass over the Christian, there are times when his faith is so strong that he lies down and sleeps, though the hurricane is thundering in his ears and though billows are rocking him like a child in its cradle! Though the earth is removed and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he says, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Famine and desolation come, but he says, “Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit on the vine. Though the labor of the olive shall fail and the field shall yield no increase, yet will I trust in the Lord and stay myself on the God of Jacob.” Affliction smites him to the ground. He looks up and says, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him.” The blows that are given to him are like the lashing of a whip upon the water, covered up immediately—but he seems to feel nothing. It is not stoicism. It is the peculiar sleep of the Beloved. “So He gives His Beloved sleep.” Persecution surrounds him. But he is unmoved. Heaven is something like that—a place of holy calm and trust—

***“That holy calm, that sweet repose  
Which none but he who feels it knows.  
This heavenly calm within the breast  
Is the dear pledge of glorious rest  
Which for the Church of God remains,  
The end of cares, the end of pains.”***

But there is another season in which the Christian has Heaven revealed to him. And that is *the season of quiet contemplation*. There are precious hours, blessed be God, when we forget the world—times and seasons when we get quite away from it, when our weary spirit wings its way far, far, from scenes of toil and strife! There are precious moments when the angel of contemplation gives us a vision. He comes and puts his finger on the lips of the noisy world. He bids the wheels that are continually rattling in our ears be still. And we sit down and there is a solemn silence of the mind. We find our Heaven and our God! We engage ourselves in contemplating the glories of Jesus, or mounting upwards towards the bliss of Heaven—in going backward to the great secrets of electing love, in considering the immutability of the blessed Covenant, in thinking of that wind which “blows where it wishes”—in remembering our own participation of that life which comes from God, in thinking of our blood-bought union with the Lamb, of the consummation of our marriage with Him in realms of light and bliss—or any such kindred topics! Then it is that we know a little about Heaven! Have you never found, O you sons and daughters of gaiety, a holy calm come over you at times, in reading the thoughts of your fellow men? But oh, how blessed to come and read the thoughts of God—and work and weave them out in contemplation! Then we have a web of contemplation that we wrap around us like an enchanted garment and we open our eyes and see Heaven. Christian! When you are enabled by the Spirit to hold a season of sweet contemplation, then you can say—“But He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” For the joys of Heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation and the joys of a holy calm in God! There are times with me—I dare say there may be with some of you—when we do something more than contemplate—when we arise by meditation above thought, itself, and when our soul, after having touched the Pisgah of contemplation by the way, flies positively into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! There are seasons when our spirit not only stands and flaps his wings over the gulf, but positively crosses the Jordan and dwells with Christ, holds fellowship with angels and talks with spirits—gets up there with Jesus, clasps Him in his arms and cries, “My Beloved is mine and I am His! I will hold Him and will not let Him go!” I know what it is at times to lay my beating head on the bosom of Christ with something more than faith—actually and positively to get hold of Him. Not only to take Him by faith, but actually and positively to feed on Him—to feel a vital union with Him—to grasp His arm and feel His very pulse beating! You say. “Tell it not to unbelievers. They will laugh!” Laugh they may. But when we are there, we care not for your laughter, if you should laugh as loud as devils—for one moment’s fellowship with Jesus would recompense us for it all! Picture not fairy lands. This is Heaven, this is bliss. “He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit.”

And let not the Christian who says he has very little of this enjoyment, be discouraged. Do not think you cannot have Heaven revealed to you by the Spirit. I tell you, you can, if you are one of the Lord’s people! And let me tell some of you, that one of the places where you may most of all expect to see Heaven is at the Lord’s Table. There are some of you, my dearly Beloved, who absent yourselves from the Supper of the Lord on earth. Let me tell you, in God’s name, that you are not only sinning against God but robbing yourselves of a most inestimable privilege! If there is one season in which the soul gets into closer communion with Christ than another, it is at the Lord’s Table. How often have we sang there—

***“Can I Gethsemane forget?  
Or there Your conflicts see,  
Your agony and bloody sweat, And not remember Thee?  
Remember You and all your pains, And all your love to me,  
Yes, while a pulse, or breath remains, I will remember Thee.”***

And then you see what an easy transition it is to Heaven— ***“And when these failing lips grow dumb, And thought and memory flee.  
When You shall in Your kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me!”***

O my erring Brethren, you who live on, unbaptized and who receive not this sacred Supper, I tell you not that they will *save* you—most assuredly they *will not*—and if you are not saved before you receive, them they will be an injury to you. But if you are the Lord’s people, why need you stay away? I tell you, the Lord’s Table is so high a place that you can see Heaven from it very often! You get so near the Cross, there, you breathe so near the Cross that your sight becomes clearer and the air brighter and you see more of Heaven there than anywhere else! Christian, do not neglect the Supper of your Lord. For if you do, He will, in a measure, hide Heaven from you.

Again, how sweetly do we realize Heaven *when we assemble in our meetings for prayer.* I do not know how my Brethren feel at Prayer Meetings. But they are so much akin to what Heaven is, as a place of devotion, that I really think we get more ideas of Heaven by the Spirit, there, than in hearing a sermon preached because the sermon, necessarily, appeals somewhat to the intellect and the imagination. But if we enter into the vitality of prayer at our Prayer Meetings, then it is the Spirit who reveals Heaven to us! I remember two texts that I preached from, lately, at our Monday evening meeting, which were very sweet to some of our souls. “Abide with us, for the day is far spent.” And another, “By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loves—I sought Him and found Him.” Then, indeed, we had some foretaste of Heaven! Master Thomas would not believe that His Lord was risen. Why? Because he was not at the last Prayer Meeting—for we are told that Thomas was not there. And those who are often away from devotional meetings are very apt to have doubting frames. They do not get sights of Heaven, for they get their eyesight spoiled by staying away!

Another time when we get sights of Heaven is in *extraordinary closet seasons*. Ordinary closet prayer will only make ordinary Christians of us. It is in *extraordinary* seasons, when we are led by God to devote, say an hour, to earnest prayer—when we feel an impulse, we scarcely know why, to cut off a portion of our time during the day to go alone. Then, Beloved, we kneel down and begin to pray in earnest. It may be that we are attacked by the devil. For when the enemy knows we are going to have a great blessing, he always makes a great noise to drive us away! But if we keep at it, we shall soon get into a quiet frame of mind and hear him roaring at a distance. Presently you get hold of the Angel and say, “Lord, I will not let You go, except You bless me.” He asks your name. You begin to tell Him what your name was—

***“Once a sinner, near despair,  
Sought Your mercy seat by prayer—  
Mercy heard and set him free.  
Lord, that mercy came to me!”***

You say, “What is Your name, Lord?” He will not tell you. You hold Him fast. At last He deigns to bless you. That is certainly some foretaste of Heaven, when you feel alone with Jesus! Let no man know your prayers—they are between God and yourselves! But if you want to know much of Heaven, spend some extra time in prayer. For God then reveals it to us by His Spirit!

“Behold, you despisers, wonder and perish.” You have been saying in your hearts, “The prophet is a fool and this spiritual man is mad.” Go away and say these things. But be it known unto you that what you style, madness, is to us, wisdom, and what you count, folly “is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom.” And if there is a poor penitent here this morning, saying, “Ah, Sir, I get visions enough of Hell, but I do not get visions of Heaven.” Poor penitent Sinner, you can not have any visions of Heaven unless you look through the hands of Christ! The only glass through which a poor Sinner can see bliss is that formed by the holes in Jesus’ hands! Do you not know that all Grace and Mercy was put into the hands of Christ and that it never could have run out to you unless His hands had been bored through in Crucifixion? He cannot hold it from you, for it will run through! And He cannot hold it in His heart, for He has got a tear in it made by the spear! Go and confess your sin to Him and He will wash you and make you whiter than snow! If you feel you cannot repent, go to Him and tell Him so, for He is exalted to give repentance as well as remission of sins! Oh, that the spirit of God might give you true repentance and true faith! And then saint and sinner shall meet together and both shall not only know what “eye has not seen, nor ear heard” but—

***“Then shall we see and hear and know  
All we desired or wished below!  
And every power find sweet employ  
In that eternal world of joy!”***

Till that time we can only have these things revealed to us by the Spirit. And we will seek more of that, by His Grace, each day we live.  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2087 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GRACE FOR GRACE  
NO. 2087

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 19, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:12.~~***

THE course of our fallen race has been a succession of failures. Whenever there has been an apparent rise, it has been followed by a real fall. Into ever-increasing darkness the human mind seems resolved to plunge itself in its struggles after a false light. When men have been fools, they have danced in a delirium of sin. When they have been sober, they have given themselves up to a phantom wisdom of their own, which has revealed their folly more than ever. It is a sad story, the story of mankind! Read it in the light of God’s Word and it will bring tears from your very heart.

The only hope for man was that God should interpose. And He has interposed, as though He began a new creation, or worked a resurrection out of the kingdom of death. God has come into human history and here the bright lights begin. Where God is at work in Divine Grace, abounding sin is conquered, hope begins and good becomes perceptible. This better state is always markedly the effect of a break in the natural course of things—a supernatural product which would never have been seen in this poor world had it been let alone. See yonder avalanche rushing down the steep mountainside—such is humanity left to itself.

Lo, God in Christ Jesus throws Himself in the way. He so interposes as to be crushed beneath the descending rocks. But, Beloved, He rises from the dreadful burial. He stops the avalanche in its terrible path. He hurls back the tremendous mass and changes the whole aspect of history. In this Divine interposition, of which the Bible gives us the best record—to which, I trust, our experience has added a happy appendix—we behold and adore the almighty Grace of God. In the interposition of Omnipotent Grace we note that the Lord so works as to preserve His own glory. He takes care that no flesh shall glory in His Presence.

He might have used the power of the great but He has not. He might have instructed man by man’s own wisdom but He has not. He might have declared His Gospel with the excellency of human speech but He has not. He has taken for His tools not the armor of a king but the song of a shepherd. And He has placed His treasure of Truth, not in the golden vase of talent, but in the earthen vessels of lowly minds. He has not made men speak for Him under the spell of genius but as they have been moved by His Holy Spirit. The Lord of Hosts will save men but He will not give men a yard of space for boasting. He will grant them a salvation which shall humble them in the dust and lead them to know that He is God and beside Him there is none else.  
“The Lord of Hosts has purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory and to

bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.” God’s gracious interposition reveals His sovereignty, His wisdom, His power, His love, His Grace. But it reveals *nothing* in men which can admit a boastful *thought*.

The Lord our God has worked in a way parallel with His central interposition which is seen at the Cross where Jesus unveiled Jehovah’s way of revealing power in weakness. It is in such a connection that Paul says, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” He knew that there was nothing else to know. The plan of the Cross is to conquer death by death, to remove sin by the endurance of the penalty, to work mightily by suffering terribly and to glorify Himself by shame. The gibbet whereon Christ died was the abyss of reproach and the climax of suffering. But it was also the focus of God’s interposing Grace. He there glorified Himself in connection, not with honor and power but with shame and death.

The great self-sacrifice of God is the great victory of Divine Grace. Beloved, it is most sweet to think that all the ways of God to men are in harmony with this way of the Cross and that the Cross is the pattern of the Lord’s constant method of accomplishing His designs of Grace rather by weakness than by strength, by suffering rather than by the splendor of His majesty. Let me also add that this way which God has taken, by which He saves men and glorifies Himself, is entirely suitable to the condition of those whom He saves. If salvation had been by human excellence I could never have been saved. If the plan of salvation had required that in which a man might rightly glory, how could it have come to sinners without strength or goodness?

Such a Gospel would have been no Gospel to us, for it would have been far out of our reach. God’s plans are workable plans, suitable to the weakness of our fallen race. In Christ He comes to the wounded man where he is and does not ask him, in his fainting condition, to come a certain part of the way. Grace does not begin half-way down the alphabet, but it is the Alpha of our hope.

It is my delightful task, though in much weakness, to set forth the exceeding freeness of the Grace of God and thus to set before you an open door—that you who have never entered may boldly do so. And that you who have already entered may sit within and sing to the praise of the glory of His Grace wherein He has made you “accepted in the Beloved.” My text speaks of the gifts of God freely given to us and of the way by which we may receive them and come to know their excellence and value—in all these three things it shows us that everything is of Divine Grace—it is given of Grace, it is received through Grace, it is understood by Grace. “Grace reigns,” and Grace alone.

This morning I shall speak, first, of the things which are freely given to us by God. Secondly, of the power to receive them, which is also given, since it is spoken of as “received.” And, thirdly, of the knowledge of them, which is also given through the Spirit. When we have set forth these three things, we shall have ranged through a wide domain of Sovereign Grace.

**I.**First, then, THE THINGS OF GOD ARE FREELY GIVEN. All the blessings of salvation are a gift. All the inheritance of the Covenant is a gift. All that which comes by our Lord Jesus to save and sanctify men is a gift. A gift is not a return for purchase money. We are not asked, in any sense, to bring a price to God in order to purchase pardon, justification, or eternal life. Where the notion of purchase is for an instant hinted at, it is only to show more plainly how free is the blessing—“Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” God freely gives His Grace, expecting nothing in return but that we do as freely receive as He does freely bestow.

And even that free reception is a part of the gift which He bestows upon us. Be not feeling in your purse—money is useless as to purchasing salvation. Be not searching in your character, or in your resolutions to find some little recommendation—neither the coins of the merchant nor of the self-righteous are good here. The Free Grace of God would be insulted by being put up for auction, or set forth for sale. “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is a gift and not a prize. There are heavenly prizes to be run for, to be fought for and to be obtained by Divine help. There is a recompense of reward to which we are to look and a crown for which we are to strive— but the Divine Grace that forgives sin and works faith is no prize for exertion but rather a *gift* for those without strength. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but of God that shows mercy.” Jehovah will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, according to the good pleasure of His own will. Salvation is not granted to men as the result of anything they are, or do, or resolve to be—it is the undeserved gift of Heaven. If it were of works, it would not be of Divine Grace. But it is of *faith—*that it might be of Divine Grace alone.

The blessings of salvation are freely given us of God, therefore they are not a loan, handed to us for a time and to be one day recalled. Our heavenly heritage is not held on lease, upon terms of annual payment—it is an unencumbered freehold to every man that has by faith put his foot upon it. To give a thing and take a thing is for little children in their play. And even among*them* it is the subject of ridicule. But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance on His part. When He has given it, the deed is done outright and can never be reversed. O Believer, if your sin is blotted out, it can never be written in again! God has declared that He has forgiven our transgressions. And then He adds, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

There is no playing fast and loose in connection with the everlasting love of God and its glorious acts. If you have God, you have Him by an eternal holding of which none can deprive you. “This God is our God forever and ever.” The better part which Jesus gives to His beloved shall not be taken away from us. The things of God are all of them free gifts, with no legal condition appended to them which would make their tenure one of payment rather than of absolute gift. We may not say that the blessings of salvation, such as pardon, justification and eternal life are gifts with an “if” in the core of them, rendering them uncertain. No, the gift of God is not temporary life but, “eternal life.”

We will dwell for a minute upon the fact that saving blessings are the gifts of God. Some despise the work of salvation and the blessings which accompany it. But surely, they know not what they despise. Every part of salvation, from its Alpha to its Omega, is to the highest degree precious— for it is of God. It is the gift of the heavenly King, the gift of the Almighty Sovereign whose hand makes the gift priceless. If the Lord Himself has given you this or that blessing, you should prize the gift as coming from such a hand! That which your father gave you, preserve. For there is a sanctity in the gift of love. That which your choice friend has given you, wear it, and for his sake value it as the token of friendship. But that which your *God* has given you, prize above all things else—His touch has perfumed it with unutterable fragrance.

Value every part of the work of Divine Grace because it came from God and leads to God. God’s gifts are always worthy of the Giver. God gives not trinkets and counterfeits—His gifts are solid gold and lasting treasure. The gifts of Divine Grace have a quality of divinity about them—they are all God-like. The Lord gives upon a God-like style. His Grace is like the rest of His Nature. How are you blest if you are divinely pardoned and divinely justified! “It is God that justifies.” Who is he that condemns?” Jehovah is your strength and your song. He also has become your salvation.

I like to think of every blessing of Divine Grace that I have received as coming from God. Because each mercy then becomes prophetic of more. God is unchangeable, and therefore what He has given He will give again. “Still there’s more to follow,” is a popular way of putting a great truth. The stream which has begun to flow will never cease flowing. The more the Lord gives, the more we may expect. Every blessing is not only in itself a mercy but it is a note for more mercies. When we get the most of God’s mercy that we can hold, we are, by its greatness, enlarged to receive still more. Realization begets expectation and expectation increases realization. Each mercy, as it comes, makes room for another larger than itself, even as the narrow end of the wedge opens the way for its wider portion.

Every mercy bears a thousand mercies in its heart. John Bunyan said that God’s flowers bloom double—not only do they bloom double but they bloom sevenfold. And out of every one of those flowers there comes a seed which will yield seventy times seven. Therefore be encouraged. The least of the things which are freely given to us by God draws behind it an endless chain of more than golden links of love. The seed of salvation, glory, and eternal life, is small as a grain of mustard seed. But he that has it has received what neither earth nor Heaven can fully contain. What a mercy is a single mercy! I cannot talk to you about the gifts of God. You must think over the subject. That which comes from God’s own hand should be much on our mind.

I am going to dwell for a minute or two upon that word “freely.” “The things that are freely given to us of God.” Hearken, you that have never found Divine Grace yet. Sing while you listen, you that have found it and are now enjoying it. “Freely given.” “Well,” you say, “the word ‘given’ is enough to express the meaning, is it not?” Yes, it would be enough, if men were willing to understand. But the additional word “freely” is meant to make the meaning doubly plain. When we say “Grace,” there is no need to say *Free Grace*, is there? Yet there are some people who will be conveniently deaf, if they can. We wish to speak so that they not only can understand us but cannot *misunderstand*, even if they try. The text is very expressive—“Freely given to us of God.”

How is salvation “freely given”? It comes from God without compulsion. If a man is stopped on the road with, “Your money or your life,” he gives his money. But it is not *freely* given. Now none can force mercy from God, blessed be His name—there is no need to think of such a thing. God gives freely, that is, even without persuasion. God was never persuaded to be gracious. He is ready to pardon and His Grace persuades us to accept mercy. Our praying does not turn the heart of God to love us but proves that we are turning to love Him. It is because He is gracious that He sets us praying. You have not, poor Sinner, to convert an unwilling God to be willing to forgive—the conversion is in *your* will, not in His will—“He delights in mercy.”

He persuades Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, but Japheth does not need to persuade Jehovah to receive him. The fountain of Divine Love pours forth its streams of grace at all seasons without pressure. There is no need to tread the grapes of mercy to force forth their cheering juice. The paths of the Lord drop fatness, distilling spontaneously as the dew and the rain.

Yes, the Grace of God is so free in its gifts that they come without suggestion. A man may be generous of heart and yet he may need a hint to put it into his mind to relieve the needy. Mention a charity to him and inform him that it is in need and his guineas are forthcoming. But he needs a prompter. No one has prompted the Grace of God. No one ever suggested any deed of bounty to God—out of His own heart the thought has come of itself. The gifts of His Grace were in His eternal purpose from of old and there of His own good pleasure. He freely instructs us how to pray for those gifts which He has of old purposed to bestow. Our prayer does not instruct the Lord. It only shows that He has, in a measure, instructed us.

He gives freely in the sense of absolute spontaneity. He also gives without grudging. We have known men to say, “Well, I suppose I must give *something*. But these claims come terribly often. My purse is always being drawn upon. But I suppose I cannot get out of it without a subscription.” He gives as if he were parting with his blood. His fingers tremble and linger long over the shilling, which has to be extracted as forcibly as if it were a tooth. One wonders that the Queen’s image is left upon it when it has been held with such pressure.

But the Lord gives out of the greatness of His heart, without so much as a trace of unwillingness. Even when the gift was His own Son, He freely delivered Him up. There is never a grudge in the Lord’s mind towards those who draw upon Him the most largely or the most frequently. “He upbraids not.” Many who give, take the opportunity to upbraid, saying, “I do not think you ought to have been in this plight. You must have been wasteful and not so industrious as you ought to have been or you would not be drawing upon me.” And so on, until they have taken full

compensation for their shilling out of the poor creature who feels bound to endure the chastisement.

God gives liberally and adds no sorrow to those who humbly seek wisdom at His hands. Oh, the splendor of the generosity of God! He is ready to save—waiting to deliver. It delights Him to bestow His goodness. The cost was paid long ago on Calvary’s Cross and that is over. Since the great Sacrifice has been presented, all the blessings of Divine Grace are freely given to us by God with a willingness which shows that His heart goes with them.

Once more—you know that we use the word “freely” in the sense of bountifully. We say of such-and-such a person, “His banquet was spread with a free hand,” or we say, “He helps his poor neighbors very freely.” That is to say, his gifts are without stint. The benefits bestowed by some are like the provisions of a workhouse, weighed out by ounces. But Free Grace does not limit itself by calculations, nor does it bind the applicant by estimates. As a free-handed housekeeper makes liberal provision, so does the Lord provide more than need demands. The mere crumbs from the Lord’s Table would suffice to feed multitudes. The Lord gives not His Spirit by narrow measure—we are not straitened in Him. Come along with you, you needy saint or sinner—the more you can take in, the better pleased will the Lord be with you. And if, sitting at His table, you feel as if you could eat all that is upon it, hesitate not to make the trial, for you shall be heartily welcome.

Your capacity will fail long before the provision. The Lord desires you to open your mouth wide and He will fill it—it is easier for Him to give than for you to open your mouth. He encourages and requests you to bring large petitions with you when you come before His Mercy Seat. Come and receive “the things that are freely given to us of God.”

I do not know whether I have made my intent quite so plain as I wanted to do. But this I would set before you—God gives His Grace freely in the most emphatic sense. His Sovereign Grace is of Himself—“It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but of God that shows mercy.” He is not compelled to be gracious by the force of our importunity but He often gives to those who have never asked of Him, as it is written—“I am found of those who sought Me not.” He calls by His Divine power those who before were unwilling to come to Him. A good example is Saul of Tarsus who received light and Divine Grace when he was in the act of persecuting the saints!

God gives His Grace as freely as the sun, which, as soon as it rises from its chambers in the east “sows the earth with orient pearl.” See how freely it visits the tiny flower which holds up its cup to have it filled with sunshine! How it peers into the glade of the forest, where, by the brook, the fern loves the shade. Whether the lark flies up to meet it or the mole burrows in the earth to escape its light, the sun shines all the same. It fills the heavens and floods the earth with the brilliance which is its nature to diffuse. The Lord comes by promise to those who seek Him. But He comes also in Sovereign Grace to those who seek Him not.

He is coming this morning to some of you who look not for Him. For He is like the dew which waits not for man, neither tarries for the sons of man. You came from the country and you said that you would go and hear Spurgeon this morning. But you did not know that the Lord was about to save you. Give yourself up to the writ of Divine Grace of which I am the officer this morning. Surrender your hearts to almighty love. And when you do so, you will perceive many of “the things that are freely given to us of God.”

Now, let us talk about what these things are. They are altogether immeasurable, these “things that are freely given to us of God.” Shall I tell you what they are in one word? GOD. God gives us God. God the Father gives Himself to the unworthy sons of men. He becomes their Father and their Friend. He gives them His wisdom, His power, His love, His immutability. He gives Himself to men to be their possession forever. In adoption He gives His fatherhood and grants them sonship, so that they may cry, “Our Father, which are in Heaven.” He gives them pardon and acceptance. He grants them answers to their prayers in ten thousand ways. He gives them His Providence to guide and lead them. He gives them all they need for this life, and then He gives them an inheritance with Himself forever in the world to come. He who gave us Jesus, with Him also freely gives us all things.

Beloved, the Son of God also gives Himself. “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” “He His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Jesus gives His people His blood to wash out their sins, His righteousness to cover them with beauty, His intercession to plead their cause and His enthronement to secure their victory. He gives His loving care to prepare a place for them in the sky. He gives His resurrection to bring them up from the grave and His union with them to preserve them through the perils of life. We are married to Him and so He freely gives His heart’s love to us. Even His crown, His Throne and His Heaven He freely gives to His chosen. Oh, what a gift of Grace this is that is freely given to us of God! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He is God’s unspeakable Gift. Nobody can speak it, for nobody can compass it within the range of thought.

The Holy Spirit also freely gives Himself to us. He is the “free Spirit,” and never freer than when He gives Himself to enlighten, quicken, convert, comfort and sanctify His people. He leads us to repentance and to faith. He conducts us to knowledge and holiness. He preserves and perfectly conforms us to the image of Christ. Thus see a summary of the things which are freely given to us of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All things are yours, the free gifts of God. Now if Paul, when he was writing as an Apostle, spoke of these things not as what he had *won* or *deserved* but as FREE GIFTS to him, you and I, poor sinners that we are, may well be glad to accept these priceless gifts on the same terms. We are happy to think that these gifts are laid at our door—with nothing to pay and nothing to do but simply accept them as the “things that are freely given to us of God.” I have used simple language but my theme is sublime. The Lord bless it!  
**II.**Our second head is—THE POWER TO RECEIVE THESE GIFTS IS

ALSO FREELY GIVEN. Some of you are saying, “I see very clearly that salvation is the gift of God but how can I get it? How can I apprehend these blessings and make them my own?” Dear Friend, the text says, “We have received the spirit which is of God.” The power with which we receive these gifts, which God freely gives, is the power of the Holy Spirit. And this, also, we do not purchase or deserve but we freely receive it.

The power to grasp Christ does not lie in our nature—in its own strength or goodness. Our state is that of death, and death cannot grasp life. God the Holy Spirit must breathe life into us before we can rise from the grave of our natural depravity and lay hold upon Christ, who is our Life. It is not in unrenewed human nature even to *see* the kingdom of God, much less to enter it. “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.” The power to receive the things of God lies not in high gifts or attainments. We may not think that a Homer, or a Socrates, or a Plato would be able to obtain the things of God more readily than common men. Genius is no help towards Divine Grace.

Indeed, great talent and great learning often miss the way where lowliness travels with ease. Do not sit down and say, “I am a poor stupid and cannot be taught of God.” Or, “I am a humble countryman, or a poor woman keeping house for others. I cannot know these precious things.” It is not so. Read the words of Paul in the first chapter of this Epistle—“You see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” The power to receive the blessings of God does not lie in *talent* at all but it lies in the *Spirit of God*.

You think that if you had a long hand you could reach the Grace of God? No—but if you have a withered hand, that Divine Grace can reach you. You suppose that if you had a clear eye you could see the Lord? Yes—but if you have no eye but a blind one, the Lord can open it and give you sight. Grace is not tied to the rare gifts of genius, nor to the precious acquirements of experience, nor to the high attainments of learning. No young child may say, “I cannot receive the things of God, for I am too young.” Out of the mouth of babes and children He has perfected praise. Persons who have had a long and instructive experience are often as far from Divine Grace as if they had never suffered anything. Persons who have taken degrees at the university may be still as ignorant as Hottentots concerning heavenly things.

The power to *receive* is still of the *Holy Spirit* and the Holy Spirit does not find good in us but *brings it to us*. “Well,” says one, “but surely we must pass through a period of great anguish and distress before we can receive the things of God.” Very often men do suffer greatly from a sense of guilt and the fear of punishment before they lay hold on Christ. But they do not lay hold on Christ by this *experience*. The wounded man is not restored by his pains, the famishing man is not fed by his hunger. The power to lay hold on Christ is a *spiritual power*, which must be *given* from above. It lies not concealed within, but is implanted by the Lord from without. No process of discipline, or education, or evolution can enable a man to lay hold on the things of God. He must be born again from above and his heart must be opened to receive the Grace of God. A man can receive nothing unless it is*given* him to receive it and that gift is the Holy Spirit.

The receptive power is not bestowed by human excitement, nor by the oratorical power of the preacher to whom the man listens. Possibly some have thought, “If I could hear So-and-So preach, I should then be able to believe.” Put that thought away—you will believe in Jesus Christ when the Holy Spirit leads you to see how worthy your Savior is of your confidence. You will never believe in Him if you are looking to yourself for the power to believe, rather than to the Truth itself and to that Spirit who can make the Truth clear to you and work in you to will and to do of God’s good pleasure.

Come, then, dear Hearts, you that feel so dull and dead and so void of strength that you cannot do anything—remember right confidently that the Holy Spirit can enable you to receive all the gifts of God. May He at this time bless the Truth to you and you will feel the soft, sweet influence of repentance melting you to tears on account of sin—you will feel a something telling you that in Christ there is just what you want and you will feel a resolve forming in your heart, “I will have it if it may be had.” Then you will come to a solemn decision for the present hour, “I will have it now. I will even now rest in Jesus, who died for the ungodly. Once and for all I will turn my eyes to the Cross and look to Him that did hang upon it and trust my soul’s weight on Him.”

That is how the work is done. You may not know at the time that the moving power is the Spirit of God but no one else works us to this thing but the Holy Spirit. We do not see the Spirit nor hear His voice, nor recognize His Person at the time. But being emptied of self, by the Grace of God, and led to accept the things that are freely given to us of God, we are *spiritually enriched* and then we perceive that it was all of Divine Grace by the free gift of the Spirit of God.

One thing I should like to say before leaving this point—remember there are two spirits—there is the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world. This last is everywhere active and Believers feel it to be their foe—it works evil and only evil. Only the Spirit of God can save you—the spirit of the world will ruin all who yield to it. I warn you against the spirit of this age—the spirit of the world. Do not lay yourselves under the influence of the spirit of the world. For even if you are truly saved, its pestilential influence will injure you.

Are you seeking salvation? Keep clear of the spirit of the world as much as possible. And you will have no easy task, for its contagion will be found in men professing religion but cunningly undermining it. And it is prevalent in books which pretend to reverence our Lord while they betray Him. The religious world is more dangerous, by far, than the sensual world. It wears the sheepskin but it has all the fierceness of the wolf. You cannot expect the Spirit of God to bless you if you yield to the spirit of the world. Do not meddle with that which is doubtful. There are works of fiction nowadays in abundance whose tendency is polluting—the world is drenched with them. Avoid them as you would a bath of acid.

If you would find eternal life, go where the Spirit of God works—search the Scriptures and hear the Truth of God through which the Spirit of God usually operates. And associate with those in whom the Spirit of God

dwells. Hear that preaching which comes from God—for that alone will lead you to Him. You can soon tell what sort the preaching is—I do not think you need stay ten minutes before you will find out whether it is according to the spirit of the world, or is in the power of the Spirit of God. Those two opposite spirits are waging a fierce battle at this hour. And I grieve to say it—many who profess godliness are tainted with the spirit of the world. Take heed that you follow the right Spirit, for in so doing you will find the things which are freely given us of God and with them glory and immortality and eternal life.

Now, I have done what I wanted to do, if I have made you feel how free salvation is. I would have you know that not only are the gifts of Divine Grace most free, but that the very hand with which we take the gift is nerved to do so by God’s Grace. Undeserved bounty bestows not only the money but the purse in which we carry it home. God gives not only the blessing to the heart but the heart to receive the blessing. Hallelujah!

**III.**My last head is this—THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE GIFTS IS FREELY GIVEN.  
This is so in the lowest and most ordinary sense, since a knowledge of the things freely given of God is communicated to our minds by the Revelation contained in the inspired Scriptures. These Sacred Writings are open to all and all are invited to search them. Read the Word of God and you will know to the letter what are the free gifts of God to men. But this form of knowledge suffices not—we cannot *savingly* know the things of God by mere reading—neither can they be taught to us by a book. The head learns by nature but the heart must learn by Divine Grace. The way to know the things of God is for that which is written *in* the Word of God to be also written*upon*the heart by the same Spirit who wrote the book.  
I heard about repentance but I never knew repentance until I repented. I heard of faith, but I never knew faith until I believed. I heard of pardon but I never knew pardon until I was washed in the blood of the Lamb. I read about justification by faith but I was never justified till, by faith, I received the Lord Jesus to be my Righteousness. Appropriation by faith gives an apprehension by the understanding—experimental enjoyment creates true acquaintance. Beloved, go to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to enable you to take the things which God freely gives and when you possess them, you will “know” them.  
If you still desire to know more of the infinite preciousness of the gifts of God, it is a wise ambition. And it will be fully and freely satisfied by the Holy Spirit. Resort to Him, for He is the great Teacher. There is no instructor like He is. His knowledge surpasses all others, for He knows the mind of God. No man can communicate to you what he does not know and no man knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit knows the infinite and the unsearchable. And therefore He is able to teach you what you cannot learn elsewhere. The mind and meaning of God in every gift of Grace the Spirit can unfold to you. There is no being taught effectually except you are taught by the Spirit of God. All other teaching is superficial and therefore temporary and vain. But the Holy Spirit speaks to the soul and writes the lines of Truth on the fleshy tablets of the heart, so that they can never be erased. If you would know the things freely given us of God, the Holy Spirit must lead you into the inner secret of the sacred treasure house.  
By the same Divine aid you must be enabled to feed upon these choice things and have a full enjoyment of them. The things of God, as I have said before, are best known by a personal enjoyment of them. Who can know meat and drink except by living upon them? When you can feed upon a Scripture, when you can suck out the marrow of a doctrine, when you can extract the juice from a Divine Promise, when you are made fat and flourishing by inspired teaching—*then* has the Lord made you freely to know the blessings of His Covenant. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may be to you as the seven-branched lamp gladdening your eyes with His light and as the loaves of the show bread nourishing your heart! And then may He lead you within the veil and make you to see the Mercy Seat and all the glory of the Lord your God!  
Oh, to realize that blessing, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord”! May we be taught by actual enjoyment and heavenly communion so that we may come into holy familiarity with the choice things that are freely given to us of God. I do not know that I want to hear any lecture on bread. I know all that I want to know about that form of food, because I eat it every day. Even so, we need little talk about Covenant blessings, because they are the continual portion of our souls—our strength in every stage of our heavenward pilgrimage and our song in anticipation of the eternal rest.  
My dear Brothers and Sisters, go to this university of Heaven. The terms are “nothing to pay,” though the education is beyond all other. Blessed school, wherein sinners are made saints and saints are made to grow into the likeness of Jesus! Everything is as free in this university as in the first school of humble faith where the sinner learns repentance and ventures to trust His Savior. Eternal life is the gift of God in its first breathing. And it is still the gift of God in its highest development. When you stand before the Throne of the Most High, you will stand there through Divine Grace alone. All along, from sin’s pit to Heaven’s gate, without a break the whole road is paved with Divine Grace.  
We do not begin with grace and then go on to trust in works—we do not at first receive freely and then afterwards have to live upon a hard-earned wage. No! Still, still, still He works in us to will and to do and we lovingly work under His Divine guidance as we are strengthened by His Divine power. Grace lays the foundation and—  
***“Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”***  
What of all this? Listen to me for a very few minutes more. I speak to those of you who know the things that are freely given to you by God. Learn from these things to be humble. If you know anything—you have been taught it. If you possess anything—it has been given to you. You are a charity child. The clothes on your back are furnished by the Lord’s favor. The bread in your mouth is the provision of His love. A proud saint is a contradiction in terms. “What have you which you have not received?” In the next place, be generous. I cannot believe in a stingy saint. Here again there is a contradiction in terms. All things are freely given you—are you going to hoard them? “Freely you have received, freely give.” He who turns over the coin in his pocket to make it as small as ever he can before he gives it is a poor creature. He gets the smallest change on Saturday that he may give it on Sunday. He is a saint, is he? Let those believe in his saintship who can. The child of God should be free-hearted. He should give *himself* away because Jesus gave Himself for us. You should be of a large heart, for you serve a large-hearted Christ who has given you all things freely to enjoy.  
Next, be ready to impart what you know. If the Spirit of God has made you to know the things freely given of God, try to tell somebody else. Don’t act as if you had a patent, or a monopoly and wanted Divine Grace to be a secret. You have not the gift of God yourself if you have no desire that others should have it. The first instinct of a converted man is to try to convert others. If you have no wish to bring others to Heaven, you are not going there yourself.  
Try and impart this knowledge in the way in which you received it. You received it by the Holy Spirit. Then go and teach it—not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches—but in the power of the Spirit of God. Last night I felt so sickly that I thought I should not be able to preach today. But I cheered myself with this reflection—if you cannot give wealth of illustration, if you can display no beauty of style, never mind—you can tell out the soul-saving Truth of God in plain words and God will own it. Holy Spirit, bless my feeble words this morning! You can do it and You shall have all the praise.  
Go to your Sunday school class this afternoon, dear Friends, and say, “Lord, put words into my mouth and teach me, that I may teach others. Enable me to labor, not in the power of *my* knowledge, eloquence, or experience but under the guidance of Your Spirit.” Better five words in the Spirit than a long oration in your own power.  
Lastly, if the Lord has given us all these things freely, let us praise Him. I did not mind hearing our Brother over there cry out “Amen.” He may do it again, if he likes. Sometimes it is well to let the living water of praise to God burst the pipes and flood the streets. What a dumb set we are! The Lord has to pull hard at the rope before our bell speaks at all. Let us praise Him for what He has done for us and make this vow this morning— ***“I will praise Him in life, I will praise Him in death, And praise Him as long as he lends me breath; And say, when the death-claw lies cold on my brow, ‘If ever I loved you, my Jesus, ‘tis now.’”***  
The Lord Himself bless you all, according to the riches of His Grace. Amen.

***Portions Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 2*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—386, 491, 236.**Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #407 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NATURAL OR SPIRITUAL?  
NO. 407

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know then because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14.~~***

THE Apostle Paul knows of only two classes of men—natural and spiritual. Before his eye all other distinctions are extinguished. Barbarian or Scythian, bond or friar, male or female, circumcision or uncircumcision— all these varieties among men are mere accidents in his esteem. He does not stay to divide men according to the symptoms of their nature. They may be devout men, such as make a profession of godliness, men of morality, men who have commenced sin, or men who have become adept in it. He knows better than merely to judge men by their symptoms. He takes either their diseased state or their healthy state and so divides them. He lays the axe at the root of the tree and doing so he perceives only two classes of men—the natural and the spiritual.

Under the term “natural,” the Apostle includes all those persons who are not partakers of the Spirit of God. It matters not how excellent, how estimable, how intelligent, how instructed they may be. If the Spirit of God has not given to them a new and higher nature than they ever possessed by their creature birth, he puts them all down at once in the list of natural men. They are what they are by nature. They never professed to have received the Spirit of God. He puts them down, therefore, as natural men.

On the other hand, all into whom the Spirit of God has come— breathing into them a new and divine life—he puts down under the other head of spiritual men. They may be as yet but babes in grace. Their faith may be weak. Their love may be but in its early bud. As yet their spiritual senses may be little exercised, perhaps their faults may be in excess of their virtues. But inasmuch as the root of the matter is in them and they have passed from death unto life, out of the region of nature into that which is beyond nature—the kingdom of grace—he puts them down also, all of them in one list—as spiritual men.

And then he goes on to affirm concerning natural men—those who are not partakers of the Spirit—that the Truths of God, which are spiritual, they do not and cannot receive. He teaches that it is utterly impossible that they ever should receive then unless lifted out of that class of natural men and transformed by the Spirit’s work into spiritual men. This change, however, being effected, they will not only receive the things of the Spirit but embrace them with delight, feed upon them with intense satisfaction and rise eventually into that state of Glory which is next beyond the state of grace.

This morning I propose—and O that God the Holy Spirit may bear witness in our hearts!—I propose, first of all, to dwell a little while upon the great Truth that *natural men do not receive the things of the Spirit of God,*

*but count them foolishness.*In the second place, I shall show, for a moment only, that the reason of the rejection of the things of God cannot be because they*are really foolish, for they are not so.* Thirdly, we shall come to the inference that *the reason why the natural man redeems the things of God, is to be found in himself.* And then, fourthly, we shall consider *the practical lessons which the whole subject teaches*.

**I.**First, then, it is a well-known fact and one which can be proved by everyday observation, that THE NATURAL MAN RECEIVES NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

Mark, we lay this down as a *rule*. We do not say that the drunken or debauched natural man receives not the things of God. That is true. But we also insist upon it that the delicate and the refined natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God. I do not pick out some one case and say the uneducated, illiterate, coarse, low-minded natural man cannot comprehend spiritual things. But all alike—the most intelligent, enlightened and trained natural men—do not and cannot and will not comprehend the things of the Spirit of God.

Like our Apostle, we take a wide range and do not leave out one. However amiable in natural temperament, however well trained by the best parental associations, however kept in check by the most excellent position in Providence, however patriotic, however self-denying, however benevolent, however estimable in all other respects—the natural man does not and *cannot* receive the things of the Spirit of God.

Now—look around and search for the facts which prove the truth of this. How many natural men there are and such as you would call good men, too, in some ways, who *oppose violently*the things of the Spirit of God? They do not believe them. No, they say they are a lie. They cannot understand how men should be simpletons enough to believe such ridiculous things. Honestly do they imagine that they shall be snapping the chains of priestcraft and unrivetting the fetters of superstition if they should come forward and attempt to prove that these spiritual things are a mere delusion.

There, Gentlemen, we have lived to see you, under a profession of religion, actually oppose those spiritual things which this religion teaches. We have lived to see what we scarcely ever dreamed to be possible—clergymen of the Church of England themselves denying the Truths which they swore they would defend and in their “Essays and Reviews” seeking to cast down those spiritual things which once they professed to have understood when they claimed to have received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of their bishop. We have not only in these times opened and avowed infidel lecturers who, like honest men deny everything openly, but we have the hypocritical Christian infidel who, like a dishonest thief and wolf in sheep’s clothing, willing always to take the gain of godliness, denies godliness itself!

Perhaps it was left for this age to permit wickedness to culminate to the highest and to see the growth of the vilest hypocrisy that ever appeared among the sons of men. We have had abundant proof that men of the most scientific minds—persons who have been exceedingly inquiring, men who have trod the realms of knowledge and gone even to the seventh heaven of wisdom—that these have nevertheless proved that they could not receive the things of the kingdom of God by their determined opposition and enmity against anything like the Truth as it is in Jesus. When you hear them blaspheming the holy name of Christ, when you hear them bringing what they call “scientific facts” against the Truth of Revelation, be not amazed as though it were some new thing. Write this down in your memorandum book—the Holy Spirit said of old—“The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God” and these men live to prove that what the Spirit of God said was very Truth.

A greater proportion of persons there are who do not so much oppose violently as more*secretly* despise and condemn. Well, they tell us, they dare say that the Christian religion is a very good thing for some people and especially for old women and for persons that are on the borders of the grave. But they say no rational being would endorse full all the doctrines of the Gospel and especially that particular form of them which John Calvin taught. For if there are any doctrines that excite more the spleen of these wise men than any other—it is the doctrines of grace—the doctrine of discriminating, distinguishing love, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine of God being really God and not man.

Against these they have no words too bitter. “Oh,” they say, “it is an exploded theory. It has had its day and it has become effete.” And so, without actually persecuting those who hold the Truth, or without even setting themselves up by active efforts to put it down—they do secretly with a sneer and with a jest, pass it by as a thing utterly unworthy of a rational persons. A thing that is not for a moment to be thought of as being onehalf so important as the wing of a beetle, or as the particular flight of a sparrow, or the period of the migration of a swallow. All the facts of natural history they think valuable and important but these grander Truths which have to do with the kingdom of God they despise utterly and think they are but the dream of simpletons.

Again—I say, my Brethren, marvel not at this. Let this be to you another argument that the Spirit of God knew what was in man and rightly judged of the human heart when He said, “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.”

Probably in this assembly there are very few of either of these two classes, but a far more numerous company now claims our attention. The great mass of mankind says, “We dare say it is all well and good and true and it is a proper thing for ministers to think about. And the deacons of churches and so on, no doubt they should see to it—it is very proper that there should be a right creed. And that the articles of the Church should be defended. And of course the Bible Society should spread the Bible. But then, of course, nobody ought to be importuned to read it—it is of no particular importance.”

Better read the almanac than read the Bible, according to some. And as to the doctrines, “Oh,” they say—  
***“For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight, He can’t be wrong whose life is in the light.”***

“O yes, no doubt,” they say, when they see some zealous Brother vindicating a Truth, “you are all right and so is your friend opposite who believes the very reverse. You are both right as far as you go. And as far as I am

concerned, I should never interfere with you, for I do not consider the things to be worth the turning of a hair. I never trouble my head at all about it. I have so much to do with the rise and fall of stocks in the market, of attending to my cattle, or seeing after my shop, that it would not do for me to attempt to be a theologian.

“The Bible is an excellent book. I have nothing to say against that, certainly. But, at the same time, for a farmer a book on practical chemistry is more useful. And no doubt, for a person who holds some office in the parish, he had better buy a handy book of common law than a book on the Law of God.” I only just give you a sketch of what many say and of what many more think. I know there are many of you here present today who say, “O yes, it is a good thing for us to go somewhere on Sunday. We do not think the Sabbath should be broken. We like to hear a minister and we like to see him in earnest—but it is of no importance to us—it is not a matter of concern to us.”

Ah, you, too, have proven that, “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned.” These things which are so important that you should neglect everything else to attend to them, are by you, thought folly. These eternal realities compared with which the world’s highest interests are but as unsubstantial shadows, you pass by as being idle dreams and doubtless they *are* dreams to you—because you, still being in your natural estate—do not, *cannot*, will not receive the things of the Spirit of God.

We are not without those persons, also, who even go farther. They say, “Well these things are of no importance to *me*.” And they think that those are fools who feel that there is any importance in them to them *personally*. “Oh,” says one, “for a man to sit down and think the doctrine of election and believe himself to be elect—why the man must be of a very debased intellect.” “Oh,” says another, “to be always meditating upon the atonement of Christ—why there are other themes more expansive to think than this.” “Yes,” says a third, “to be turning over a mere system of divinity and professing to be able to revel in certain mysterious truths—such persons must be of a weak mind—or else very fanatical or enthusiastic.” And so you will often hear persons say, if a man is a little more earnest than usual, “Surely that man is going wild. Certainly he is attaching an undue importance to these matters.”

They will put him down as a Sectarian, perhaps which is one of the most honorable names by which a true Christian is known in these times. “Ah,” they will say, “a zealot, a bigot!” because a man happens to be honest in what he professes to believe and thinks that if religion is anything, it would be *everything* and if it is worth any of our thoughts, it is worth *all* our thoughts. That if it has any Truth in it, it ought to be the master and ruler of all other truths and governor of all the thoughts and the acts of life. Now, Christian men and women, when you see any who turn upon their heel and despise you, because with earnestness you would seek the Lord your God and strive to honor Him—think it not some new display of human depravity—think not that you have made a fresh discovery in the awful deep of human departure from God. But say, “I know and once more am I confirmed in the fact that the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.”

It is a great wonder that there is one Christian upon the face of the earth. Some religions teach doctrines palatable to human nature but the doctrines of Christ are the most unpalatable that could have been suggested. Some religions find that nature echoes their voice but Christ comes and brings a sword upon the earth to slay the fondest darlings of our fancy and put to death the proudest favorites of our ambition. Oh, had the religion of Christ taught us that man was a noble being, only a *little* fallen—had the religion of Christ taught that Christ had taken away by His blood, sin from every man and that every man by his own free will, without Divine Grace, might be saved—it were indeed a most acceptable religion to the mass of men!

It would just suit their taste—and as the ox drinks down water—so would they drink it down. But such a religion as that of Christ, so diametrically opposed as it is to all the evil propensities of man, owes its very existence to the might of God—that it has not long ago died from the earth through the death of its last admirer, is only due to that supreme power of the Holy Spirit which goes with the preaching of the Gospel wherever Christ is faithfully lifted up.

**II.**Now, briefly on my second point—THE NATURAL MAN COUNTS THE THINGS OF GOD TO BE FOOLISH. But there is nothing whatever in the things themselves to justify such an estimation.

Sir, you do not know what you say when you declare that the Gospel of Christ is absurd. I am certain you do not understand it and that you are talking of something you have never studied. You are generally pretty safe with a man who rails at the Bible, by asking, “Have you ever read it?” You are not often wrong, when you hear a minister of Christ found fault with, by asking the man, “Did you ever hear him? Did you ever read his sermons?” In nine cases out of ten it is, “No, I do not know anything about him, yet I do not like him. I do not know anything about Christ, but I do not like Him. I do not know anything about His doctrines and I do not wish to know.”

I have heard persons rail at Calvinistic doctrine, who never in their lives have read a word that Calvin wrote. If you were to offer them a small treatise in which that noble system of divinity should be vindicated, they would say, “Oh, it is no doubt so dry, I should not be able to read it.” Yet these learned gentlemen know what is inside a book without opening it! They are like some critics of whom I have heard, who, when they meet with a new volume, take the knife and cut the first page, smell it and then condemn or praise the whole book! Many there are who do just the same with the Bible. They have heard some verses of it once or twice, they have got some idea of it and straightway they are wise. They take to themselves their own degree of Doctor of Divinity and they have much boldness in their unbelief.

Now, of any man who should denounce the system of Truth which is taught in Scripture as ridiculous and foolish, I can only say he has never taken the trouble to search it out for himself. Have not the mightiest intellects confessed that the Truths of this Book were infinitely above their highest flights? Even Newton, who could thread the spheres and map the

march of what else had seemed discordant planets—even *he* said there were depths here which no mortal could fathom. “O the depths of the wisdom of God!” This has been the exclamation of some of the most glorious minds that have ever enlightened the world. And I can say and I know it to be a Truth—that every man who reads the Word of God and studies the divinity therein revealed—if he at first thinks that he understands it, when he reads again he finds that he has only begun to know.

And when he shall have searched year after year and have become more than usually prescient in the study of the things of God, he will still say, “Now I begin to know my folly. Now I began to discover that God is above me and beneath me, but I cannot grasp Him, I cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. His Words, His works, His ways herein revealed to the sons of men are past finding out.” You wise fellows who turn upon your heels and sneer at things which have astonished minds infinitely more vast than yours prove your own folly when you call the things of God folly.

With regard to that particular form of divine Truth which we hold so dear, currently called Calvinistic doctrines—there is no philosophy propounded by any sage so profound as that philosophy. There are no Truths that were ever taught so wonderful, so worthy of the most profound research of the most expanded minds as those doctrines of the eternal love, the discriminating grace and the infinite power of God, co-working to produce the results which His wisdom has decreed. When every other science shall have been exhausted, when astronomy shall have no wonders left, when geology shall have no secrets to unravel, when natural history and philosophy shall have given up all their infinite treasures—there will still remain a mine without a bottom, there will still remain a sea of wisdom without a shore—in the doctrines of the Gospel of the grace of God. The folly, therefore, cannot be in the doctrines themselves.

And as on the one hand these things of the Spirit of God are wise and profound, so on the other hand they are most important and most imperatively necessary to be understood—so that if they are not received it is not because they are uncongenial with our necessities. There are some speculations which a man need not enter upon. I receive constantly questions upon speculations which never struck my mind before and certainly never will again. Persons want to know what is the origin of sin. They ask ten thousand questions which, if they could be answered, would not make them a whit the better. But the things of the Gospel of God which are as important as life and death depending upon them, men are content to slur over without making any earnest enquiry, or setting themselves to ascertain their Truth.

O Sirs, the doctrines of God teach you your relationship to your Maker—is not that worth understanding? They teach you your condition before the Most High God—should you not know that? Ought you not to have clear ideas of it? They show you how God can be just to man and yet be gracious—is not that a riddle that is worthy to have an answer? They reveal to you how you can approach God and become His child—how you may be conformed to His image and made a partaker of His glory—is not *that* worth understanding? They reveal to you the world to come. They put to your short-sighted eye a telescope which enables you to pierce the darkness and to see the unseen.

The doctrines of grace put into your hands the keys of Heaven and unveil the secrets of death and Hell—are not these things worth grasping? Are not the secrets of these places worth knowing? The doctrines of grace put inside your hands powers infinitely greater than any wizard was conceived to have wielded when he used his magic rod. By their might you can destroy your troubles. You can see your sins swallowed up. You can behold your enemies defeated. You can see death destroyed, the grave swallowed up and life and immortality brought to light. If you, then, as a natural man, say that the things that are written in this Book are foolish, it is not because they are trivial, unimportant and despicable—for no man can ever over-estimate their value and no soul can solemnly enough weigh them and understand how important they are.

It argues a high excess of impiety when a man shall say that that which came from God is foolish. Perhaps blasphemy itself cannot outlive that and yet how many have been guilty of this constructive blasphemy! Let my finger run around these galleries and along these seats beneath—are there not many of you who have said the Bible was a dull and uninteresting book? And yet God wrote it! And what have you said? Have you not impugned your Maker? Have you not said, perhaps, that the doctrines of the Gospel were very unimportant? Can you believe that your Maker sat down to write an unimportant Book, or that the Holy Spirit inspired men of old to write that which, if not nonsense, is certainly of no importance whatever?

Come, bow your head and repent of this grave sin—for a sin it is—since it is not within the compass of any modest reason to imagine that any Word which God has written can be foolish, or unimportant or unworthy to be understood. I suppose it is granted by all who love the Word of God and to those mainly I must appeal, that the reason why the natural man rejects the doctrines of God is not because they are foolish. Then there must be some other reason.

**III.**Thirdly, I propose to speak of THE REASON FOR THE REJECTION OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL BY NATURAL MEN.  
The reasons are to be found in *themselves*. And what are those reasons? The Apostle tells us they cannot receive them for they are foolishness unto them. I think he means they cannot receive them, first of all, *for want of taste*. You have sometimes seen a man standing before a splendid picture. It was painted by Raphael, or Rubens, or Titiens and he stands and admires it. “What a noble countenance!” he says, “How well the coloring has been placed! How excellently he understands his lights and shadows! What a fine conception! I could stand a week and admire that splendid picture.” Some country bumpkin who is walking through the gallery, hears what our friend, the artist, is saying and he says, “I should not like to stand a week and look at it, it looks to me to be an old decayed piece of canvas that wants cleaning. I do not think the world would be much the worse if it should all get cleaned off.”  
He walks through the gallery and notices that on the wall outside there is a great daub—a picture of an elephant standing on its head and a clown or two performing in some circus and he says, “*That’s* beautiful— that’s just my taste.” Now you blame our country friend because he cannot admire that which is really excellent, but finds a great deal more satisfaction in a common daub plastered on the wall. It would be quite correct to say of him that he cannot receive the beauties of refinement and taste because he has never been in any way instructed in the matter. He has a want of taste for such things.  
Just so is it with the natural man. Give him some work of fiction—a daub upon the wall. Give him some fine piece of imagination, (and what is that when compared with the Word of Him that spoke from Heaven?), and he is satisfied. But before the Book of God, before the Revelation of the Most High, of the All-Wise, he stands and he sees *nothing*. Nothing to admire. Nothing to enchant his heart. Nothing to kindle his imagination. Nothing to enlist his faith. Nothing to arouse his powers. Nothing to excite his hopes. Surely there is a sad want of taste here and the natural man, for want of taste for such things, loves not the things of God.  
But it is not merely for want of taste. It is for want of organs by which to appreciates the third. Here is a blind man and we have taken him upon a pilgrimage to the summit of a mountain. What a landscape, my Friend! What a landscape! What do you think of it? “Not much,” says he. Why, look at those lakes there melting into one! Do you not see the mountain yonder across the valley? What a variety of colors upon its sides! Did ever you see such a blending of colors as that which is here produced by the Great Artist? And *there*, cannot you see yonder clouds how nobly they sail along? Look downward. What a pleasant sight is that village which seems to have diminished till it looks like a few children’s toys put together there in sport.  
And now turn yonder and see that winding river like a thread of silver going through the emerald fields—what a magnificent view! What do you think of it, my Friend? “I do not think much of it,” he says. You are astonished. At last you say, “Well, if you do not think something of this, you must be blind.” “That is just what I am,” he says, “and of course I can not think much of this when I am blind.”  
Now the natural man is blind. The eye of the Christian is his faith. But the natural man, being destitute of a living faith in our living Savior is like a man without eyes. He says it is foolish. It is nothing to him. Do you think you could get a blind man to pay hundreds of pounds for a single picture? It is of no use to him. What would a deaf man give to go where you hear the sweetest singing that ever trilled from human lips? “Oh, no,” he thinks, “it is foolish.” He can hardly understand why men should spend their money and give the time to listen to the numerous combinations of sound produced by a Handel. Or if blind, he cannot comprehend why men should build long galleries and hang their fortunes out in pictures, or why they should travel to the Alps, or wish to cross the sea to view the mighty wonders of other lands.  
“No,” he says, “it is foolish and trivial—better stop at home. There is nothing in it.” So is it with the natural man. He lacks the organs—he has no ear of faith, no eye of faith and he cannot, therefore, receive the things of God. They are foolishness to him.  
But more than this—not only does he lack taste and lack organs, *but he actually lacks the nature which could appreciate these thing*s. I will tell you a fable. There was a certain swine exceedingly learned among its class. It had studied the flavor of all manners of seeds and fruits and acorns and knew right well, by long calculations and experience, the right time when the trough would be full and when it would be time for it to come forth from its resting place. Greatly respected was this aged swine and considered by its fellows to be one of the great dignitaries of the sty. And one day it enlightened its fellows by a speech to this effect—“I saw,” he said, “the other night, by the light of the moon, a man—poor simple man he was, looking through a long tube at the stars.  
“Now I thought within myself that surely he was mad. If he had been scraping up acorns, there would have been some common sense in it. If he had been getting together husks, why there would have been something practical in it—but for a man with two feet and two hands—to be letting them be still and only using his eyes to look up at the stars—ah, he must be a fanatic and an enthusiast. He is not as sensible and practical as you and I are, who are content so long as we get our barley meal regularly and can creep back and lie down again in our straw.”  
And all his audience grunted their approbation. They said at once that this human being was far inferior to the swine in the matter of practical wisdom. Do not smile—perhaps you belong to these gentry yourselves. I heard a human swine say the other day—mark, a *human swine*—it was one who sometimes could look through a telescope and this human swine said, “Ah, there you are! You are going to your chapel on Thursday night and to your prayer meeting on Monday and you spend hours in praying and reading your Bible. It is fanaticism. Now, I am the man for common sense. I stick to my business, I do. I say, ‘Leave these things to take care of themselves.’ I am looking out for the present. I am practical, I am.”  
And those that were by, grunted their approval, like human swine, as they were and if a really spiritual man had been present he would not have wondered, but he would have said, “Every being to its taste. These are natural men and they set up their own nature. It is a swinish nature and they act up to their swinish spirit.” He would not have been angry with them, but he would have pitied them. Poor things, “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God.” “What a degrading simile!” says one. It is, Sir, but not more degrading than human nature is. “Why you make us out to be inferior to Christians then!” Of course you are. As much as the brute is inferior to a man so is a mere *natural man* inferior to a *spiritually-minded man*, because we rise by three steps of the ladder.  
There is the animal, he lacks intellect. God gives intellect and then comes the man. God gives His Spirit and then comes the Christian—but the Christian is a higher and nobler creature than the mere offspring of Adam. Just as much as the second Adam, who is the Lord from Heaven, exceeds the first Adam, who was but made of the dust of the earth, so do the seed of the second Adam exceed all the offspring of the first Adam— rising to a higher life, to greater dignities and to a nobler destiny than they.  
**IV.**And now, lastly, I come to THE PRACTICAL TRUTHS WHICH FLOW FROM THIS GREAT, THOUGH SORROWFUL, FACT.  
Do you not perceive, Brothers and Sisters, that if what I have stated is true there is *absolute necessity for regeneration, or the work of the Spirit*? An absolute necessity, I say, because in no one single instance can it be dispensed with. You may educate a nature till it should attain the highest point, but you cannot educate an old nature into a new one. You may educate a horse, but you cannot educate it into a man. You shall train the bird that sits upon your finger but you cannot train a sparrow into an eagle—nor is it possible for you to train by the best instruction the natural man into a spiritual man.  
Between the two there is still a great gulf fixed. But cannot the natural man, by great efforts at last come to be spiritual? No, he cannot. Let the fish in the water wish as much as ever it likes and despite Dr. Darwin’s hypothesis, I declare that no pike by all its wishing ever wished itself into an ostrich and that no single minnow was ever known to make itself into a lark. It may get as high as its own nature can get it but not beyond. It is a transformation which only the Divine Being can effect. So you may by your own efforts make yourselves the best of *natural men*. You may become the most patriotic of statesmen, you may become the most sober and discreet of moralists, you may become the kindest and most benevolent of philanthropists—but into a *spiritual man* you cannot bring yourself.  
Do what you will and still at your very best there is a division wide as eternity between you and the regenerate man. But cannot another man help us out of such a nature into a state of grace? No, by no means. As man is powerless for himself, so is he powerless for his fellow. The priest may dip his pretentious fingers into the water which he professes to have sanctified and may put the drops upon the infant’s brow but that the child is regenerate is a lie. He may take the child in late life into the baptismal pool if he will and there bury him agreeably to the Apostle’s metaphor—but that by immersion any more than by sprinkling a soul can be regenerate is a gross and infamous lie. He may put his hand upon his head and bless him in God’s name. He may perform many enchantments over him and conclude at last with the final sacred greasing and dispatch his spirit with extreme unction into another world—but to regenerate another man is as impossible to our fellow men as to create a world or to make another Heaven and rival the majesty of Deity.  
How, then, is it to be done? The Spirit of God alone can do it. O Sirs, this is a great mystery, but you must know it if you would be saved. It is a solemn secret, but it is one which must be known in your consciences, or else shut out from Heaven you must be. The Spirit of God must make you new—you must be born again. “If a man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.” The same power which raised Christ Jesus from the dead must be exerted in raising us from the dead. The very same omnipotence, without which angels or worms could not have had a being, must again step forth out of its privy-chamber and do as great a work as it did at the first creation in making us anew in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
There have been attempts at all times to get rid of this unpleasant necessity. Constantly the Christian Church itself tries to forget it—but as often as ever this old doctrine of regeneration is brought forward pointedly— God is pleased to favor His Church with a revival. The doctrine which looks at first as though it would hush every exertion with indolence and make men sit down with listlessness and despair, is really like the trumpet of God to awake the dead. And where it is fully and faithfully preached—though it grate upon the carnal ear, though it excite enmity in many against the man who dares to proclaim it—yet it is owned of God.  
Because it honors God, God will honor it. This was the staple preaching of Whitfield and it was by the preaching of this that he was made as the mighty angel flying through the midst of Heaven preaching the everlasting Gospel to every creature. He was always great upon that which he called the great R—Regeneration. Whenever you heard him, the three Rs came out clearly—Ruin, Regeneration and Redemption! Man*ruined*, wholly ruined, hopelessly helplessly, eternally ruined! Man *regenerated* by the Spirit of God and by the Spirit of God alone wholly made a new creature in Christ! Man *redeemed*, redeemed by precious blood from all his sins—not by works of righteousness, not by deeds of the Law, not by ceremonies, prayers, or resolutions—but by the precious blood of Christ! Oh, we must be very pointed and very plain about regeneration, for this is the very pith and marrow of the matter—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”  
Another practical inference. If you and I, or any of us, have received the things of the Spirit of God, we ought to look upon that as comfortable evidence that we have been born again. What do you say, my Hearer? Does your faith lay her hand this morning upon the head of Christ and take Him to be your Savior, your Teacher and your All? If so, blessed are you, for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you. Or does your spirit this morning not only agree to the Truth of divine election, of assured redemption and of the finished work and immutable love of Christ—but do you love the Truth in your heart as well as agree to it in the head? If so— the natural man receives not these things—therefore you are no natural man.  
The Spirit of God has brought you into His kingdom because He has enabled you to receive His Truth. Precious is faith indeed because it assuredly evidences to us what is beyond the reach of our senses. You can’t tell whether you are born again or not except by your faith. There will be no difference in your face. There will be no difference in your flesh—nor even in your mental characteristics. You may remain to a great extent the same man as far as mind and body are concerned. But *faith*—that which was not there before—*faith* is the grand symptom which betokens returning health. It is the flag hung out upon the castle of the soul showing that the King is the secret tenant in the state-room of the soul. It is the light which shows that the sun has risen. It is the morning star which heralds the full illumination and meridian sunlight of eternal glory. Prize your faith—ask for more of it—and look upon it as being an evidence that you have passed from death unto life.  
And, lastly, my dear Hearers—how this text shows you the necessity of accompanying all your efforts to do good with earnest prayer to God! “Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon.” When we first begin to preach we think that the doctrines that are so sweet to us will be sure to be sweet to other people. And when persons begin to abuse and find fault we are astonished. Oh, if we had begun to learn the Truth a little better, we should not be astonished at all—except when any receive the Truth—for *that* we should always think to be the greatest miracle of all.  
You have been trying to teach your child and it is not converted yet. Ah, don’t marvel, but take your child in the arms of your prayer to the spirit of God and say, “O Lord, I cannot put the Truth into this child, for it cannot receive it—if You renew its heart, then it shall receive the Truth indeed!” And specially may I ask your continued and earnest prayers for me. What is the minister of Christ to do? He has to speak to a mountain and bid it be removed. Can his words remove it? He has to speak to fire and bid it change its nature into water. He has to speak to the dead and say, “You dry bones, live!” Is not his ministry a foolish and a futile thing unless the Spirit of God is with him?  
I pray you then, be instant in your prayers to God. Strive earnestly at the Throne of Grace for all the ministers of the New Testament—that power may be bestowed upon them—for we are better at home than here if the Spirit of God is not with us.  
In vain, O you Unbelievers, you sound your trumpets! In vain, O you Gideons, you break your pitchers that the light may shine! In vain, you Jonahs, you cry through the midst of the wretched city! In vain, you Peters, you preach even to peoples of many nations! If the Spirit come not down from on high like tongues of fire—if God sends not life and energy and light with the Word—you shall go back without your sheaves—you shall return without success, wearied by disappointment, damaged by fear and ready to lay down and die.  
But oh, if you come forth, O Spirit of God, there is not a preacher in the corner of the streets who shall not win his souls! There is not a minister today in the humblest conventicle, in the lowest of back streets which shall not be made like Peter on the day of Pentecost. There is not one feeble man or woman teaching children in the Sabbath-School who shall not become a winner of souls when the Spirit of God is with him!  
Of all that I have taught this morning, this is the sum—Man is *dead* in sin and spiritual life is a *gift* of God. You who have received it should plead with God that that gift should be bestowed on others. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.”

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1602 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FARM LABORERS  
NO. 1602

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 5, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, neither he who waters, but God that gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are  
laborers together with God: you~~***

***~~are God’s husbandry.”  
1 Corinthians 3:6-9.~~***

IN all ages since the Fall there has been a tendency in the human heart to forget God and get away from Him. Idolatry has been the sin of all nations, including God’s favored people, the Jews, and including certain persons who call themselves Christians who still make idols out of crosses and images. This vicious principle of ignoring God and setting up something between our minds and our Creator crops up everywhere and in every department of thought. When men study the works of God in Nature, they often hang up a veil to hide the great Worker. Because God acts in a certain way they call His method of action a Law and straightway they speak of these Laws as if they were forces and powers in and of themselves and thus God is banished out of His own universe and His place is taken up in the scientific world by idols called, “natural laws.”

Take the region of Providence and here you find persons, instead of seeing the hand of God everywhere, looking to second causes. They are seeking *causes* of prosperity and becoming very despondent if they do not appear to exist; or viewing the agents of affliction and becoming angry against them, instead of bowing before the God who has used them for correction. It is easy to make idols out of second causes and to forget the God who is everywhere present, causing all things to work together for good. That this evil principle should intrude into the Church is very sad and yet it is with difficulty excluded.

You may bar all your doors as fast as you please, but the idol-makers will come in with their shrines. In the instance of the Church at Corinth, Paul found the Brethren forgetting their God and Savior in their high esteem for certain preachers. Instead of all saying, “We are Christ’s disciples,” and uniting together to promote the common cause, they established parties and one said, “Paul, who founded this Church, is to be had in the greatest reverence and we are of Paul.” Others replied, “But Apollos is more eloquent than the Apostle Paul and by him we have been edified till we have gone beyond Paul and, therefore, we are of Apollos.” But a third party declared that they were of no sect whatever, for they were “Brethren” and were “of Christ.”

These last, I suspect, either ignored or denounced the other two parties and would not commune with them, in order to testify against their sectarianism and to promote unity. I only surmise this from the conduct of those “Brethren” who in our day take the Corinthians to be their model and cut off everybody else, being more exclusive than any other sect in Christendom! The Apostle warns the saints in Corinth against this—he brings the Lord before their minds and bids them remember that if Paul plants and Apollos waters, still, it is *God* that gives the increase. Since they think so highly of men, he will have it that “neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters anything” but *God* that gives the increase is *everything*.

See to it, dear Friends, that you set the Lord always before you in this Church and in all your Churches! Know them that labor among you and esteem them highly in love for their work’s sake, but do not make them your dependence. Remember that the ablest ministers, the most successful evangelists, the most profound teachers are, after all, nothing but laborers on God’s farm—“laborers together with God.” Let your mind be set upon the Master and not upon the servants! Do not say, “We are for this man because he plants,” or, “we are for the other because he waters,” or, “we”—a third party—“are for nobody at all.” But let us join in ascribing all honor and praise unto God who works all our works in us, since every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights, to whom be glory world without end!

I shall begin at the end of my text because I find it to be the easiest way of mapping out my discourse. We shall first remark that the Church is God’s farm—“You are God’s husbandry.” In the margin of the revised version we read, “You are God’s tilled ground,” and that is the very expression for me. “You are God’s tilled ground,” or farm. After we have spoken of the farm, we will next say a little upon the fact that He employs laborers on the farm. And when we have looked at the laborers—such poor fellows as they are—we will remember that God Himself is the great Worker— “We are laborers together with God.”

**I.**We begin by considering that THE CHURCH IS GOD’S FARM. The Lord has made the Church of His sovereign choice to be His own by *purchase*, having paid an immense price for it. “The Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” Because the Lord’s portion was under mortgage, therefore the Only-Begotten Son laid down His life as the purchase price and redeemed His people to be the Lord’s portion forever and ever. Henceforth it is said to all Believers, “You are not your own; you are bought with a price.” Every acre of God’s farm cost the Savior bloody sweat—yes, the blood of His heart! He loved us and gave Himself for us— that is the price He paid!

What a ransom! The death of Jesus has sometimes almost seemed too high a price to pay for such poor land as we are, but the Lord, having set His eyes and heart upon His people, would not draw back, but completed the Redemption of the purchased possession! Therefore the Church is God’s freehold and He has the title deeds of it, yes, of you and of me, for we belong only to Him and we are glad to acknowledge the fact—“I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.” The Church is God’s farm by choice and purchase.

And now He has made it His by enclosure. It lay exposed, for a time, as part of an open common, bare and barren, covered with thorns and thistles and the haunt of every wild beast, for we were, “by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” We were part of the dreary desert till Divine foreknowledge surveyed the waste and electing love marked out its portion with a full line of Grace and thus set us apart to be the Lord’s own estate forever. In due time *effectual* Grace came forth with power and separated us from the rest of mankind, as fields are hedged and ditched to part them from the open heath.

Has not the Lord declared that He has chosen His vineyard and fenced it? Has He not said, “I will be a wall of fire round about you and a Glory in the midst”?—

***“We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground.  
A little spot, enclosed by Grace  
Out of the world’s wide wilderness.”***

The Lord has also made this farm evidently His own by cultivation. What more could He have done for His farm? He has totally changed the nature of the soil—from being barren, He has made it a fruitful land! He has plowed it, dug it, fattened it, watered it and planted it with all manner of flowers and fruits. It has already brought forth to Him many a pleasant fruit and there are brighter times to come when angels shall shout the harvest home and Christ “shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

This farm is *kept* what it is, as well as *made* what it is, by God’s continual protection. Not only did He enclose it and work upon it by His miraculous power to make it His own farm, but He continually maintains possession of it. “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day.” If it were not for God’s continual power, her hedges would soon be thrown down and wild beasts would devour her fields. Wicked hands are always trying to break down her walls and lay her waste, again, so that there should be no true Church in the world, but the Lord is jealous for His land and will not allow it to be destroyed. If God were to leave the Church, she would become a howling wilderness, but she shall not come to such an end.

A Church would not long remain a Church if God did not preserve it unto Himself. What if God should say, “I will take away the hedge and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall, and it shall be trod down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor tilled; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it”? What a wilderness it would become! What does He say? “Go you now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.” Go you to Jerusalem, where of old was the city of His Glory and the shrine of His dwelling—and what is left there today? Go you to Rome, where once Paul preached the Gospel with power—what is it, now, but the center of idolatry?

The Lord may remove the candlestick and leave a place that was bright as day to become black as darkness itself! But God’s farm remains a farm because He is always in it to prevent its returning to its former wildness. Omnipotent power is as necessary to keep the fields of the Church under cultivation as to reclaim them at the first. Inasmuch as the Church is God’s own farm, He expects to receive a harvest from it. He comes to us looking for sheaves where He has sowed so plentifully. The world is a wasteland and He looks for nothing from it—but *we* are tilled land and, therefore, a harvest is due from us!

Barrenness suits the moorland, but to a farm it would be a great discredit. Love looks for returns of love. Divine Grace given demands gracious fruit. Watered with the drops of the Savior’s bloody sweat, shall we not bring forth a hundred-fold to His praise? Kept by the eternal Spirit of God, shall there not be produced in us fruits to His Glory? The Lord’s husbandry upon us has shown a great expenditure of cost, labor and thought—ought there not to be a proportionate return? Ought not the Lord to have a harvest of obedience, a harvest of holiness, a harvest of usefulness, a harvest of praise? Shall it not be so?

I think some churches forget that an increase is expected from every field of the Lord’s farm, for they never have a harvest or even look for one. The people come together and take their seats on Sunday and listen to sermons—that is, when they do not go to sleep—the sacraments are celebrated, a little money is contributed, a few poor folk are relieved and affairs crawl along at a snail’s pace. As to affecting the whole village, or endeavoring to bring the surrounding population to Christ, I do not think it has occurred to some churches to attempt it and when certain warmer spirits seek to bring sinners to Jesus, the older and more prudent folks fetch wet blankets and use them with very great effect so that every sign of enthusiasm is damped down.

Brethren, such things ought not to be! I conceive that if there were no Christians in England but the members of our baptized Churches, these would suffice for God’s great designs of mercy if they were once awakened to real labor. Alas, the loiterers are many, but the laborers are few. Look, my Brethren, at the number of Non-conforming Churches in this land and at the earnest ministers remaining in the Establishment—if these were more fully quickened into spiritual life, would there not be workmen enough on the home farm? If all churches felt that they did not exist for mere existence’s sake, nor mere enjoyment’s sake, would they not act differently?

Farmers do not plow their lands or sow their fields for amusement— they mean business and plow and sow because they desire a harvest! If this fact could but enter into the heads of some professors, surely they would look at things in a different light! But of late it has seemed as if we thought that God’s Church was not expected to produce anything, but existed for her own comfort and personal benefit. Brothers and Sisters, it must not be so! The great Husbandman must have some reward for His husbandry! Every field must yield its increase and the whole estate must bring forth to His praise! We join with the bride in the Song in saying, “My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: you, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.”

But I come back to the place from which I started. This farm is, by choice, by purchase, by enclosure, by cultivation, by preservation entirely the Lord’s. See, then, the injustice of allowing any of the laborers to call even a *part* of the estate his own! When a great man has a large farm of his own, what would he think if Hodge, the plowman, should say, “Look here, I plow this farm and, therefore, it is mine! I shall call this field, Hodge’s Acres”? “And,” says Hobbs, “I reaped *that* land last harvest and, therefore, it is mine and I shall call it Hobbs’s Field.” What if all the other laborers became Hodgeites and Hobbsites and so parceled out the farm among them? I think the landlord would soon eject the lot of them! The farm belongs to its owner and let it be called by*his* name. It is absurd to call it by the names of the bumpkins who labor upon it. Is that a disrespectful title to apply to laborers? Why, I meant it for anybody and everybody whose name is used as the head of a party in the Church!

I meant Luther, Calvin, Wesley and other great men, for at their best, as compared with their Master, they are only farm laborers and we ought not to call parts of the farm by their names! Remember how Paul put it, “Who, then, is Paul and who is Apollos?” “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?” The entire Church belongs to Him who has*chosen* it in His Sovereignty, *bought* it with His blood, *fenced* it by His Grace, *cultivated* it by His wisdom and *preserved* it by His power! There is still but one Church on the face of the earth and those who love the Lord should keep this Truth of God in mind.

Paul is a laborer, Apollos is a laborer, Cephas is a laborer, but the farm is not Paul’s, not so much as a foot of it, nor does a single parcel of land belong to Apollos, or the smallest allotment to Cephas—“You are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” The fact is that in this case the laborers belong to the land and not the land to the laborers—“For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.” We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake!

**II.**We now have to notice, as our second head, that THE GREAT HUSBANDMAN EMPLOYS LABORERS. By human agency God ordinarily works out His designs. He can, if He pleases, by His Holy Spirit, get directly at the hearts of men, but that is His business and not ours. We have to do with such words as these—“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” The Master’s commission is not, “Sit still and see the Spirit of God convert the nations,” but, “Go you into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” This is God’s method in supplying the race with food.

In answer to the prayer, “give us this day our daily bread,” He might have bid the clouds drop manna, morning by morning, at each man’s door, but He sees that it is for our good to work and so He uses the hands of the plowman and the sower for our supply. God might plow and sow His chosen farm, the Church, by miracle, or by angels, but it is a great instance of His condescension towards His Church that He blesses her through her own sons and daughters. He employs us for our own good, for we who are laborers in His fields receive much more good for ourselves than we bestow. Labor develops our spiritual muscle and keeps us in health. “Unto me,” says Paul, “who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

It is a Divine Grace, then. We find it to be a means of Grace to our souls to preach the Gospel. I have heard it said and I believe there is some truth in it, that those who have to preach are under the temptation of getting so familiar with sacred things that they cease to feel their power. If this is true, it is an awful proof of our total depravity, for the more familiar we are with holy things the more we ought to be affected by them. And this I know, it has been the greatest means of Grace to me to be bound by my office to study the Scriptures and wait upon God for help in expounding them.

Some of you who do not grow in Grace by hearing other people might possibly get on better if you were, yourselves, to try and preach. At any rate, you might not be quite so faultfinding with other folks! When I hear a person say, “I cannot hear my minister,” I suggest to him to buy a horn. “Oh,” he says, “I do not mean *that*. I mean that I cannot enjoy his preaching.” Then I say to him, “Preach yourself.” “I cannot do that.” Then do not find fault with those who are doing their best.” Instead of blaming the plowman, just try a turn in the furrow, yourself! Why grumble at the weeds? Take a hoe and work at them like a man!

Do you think the hedges untidy? Put on the leather gloves and help us trim them! Our great Master means that every laborer on His farm should receive some benefit from it, for He never muzzles the ox which treads out the corn. The laborer’s daily bread comes out of the soil. Though he works not for himself, but for his Master, yet he still has his portion of food. In the Lord’s granary there is seed for the sower, but there is also bread for the eater. However disinterestedly we may serve God in the husbandry of His Church, we are, ourselves, partakers of the fruit. It is a great condescension on God’s part that He uses us at all, for we are poor tools, at the best, and more hindrance than help.

The laborers employed by God are all occupied upon necessary work. Notice, “I have planted, Apollos watered.” Who beat the big drum, or blew his own trumpet? Nobody! On God’s farm none are kept for ornamental purposes. I have read some sermons which could only have been meant for show, for there was not a grain of Gospel in them. They were plows with the share left out, drills with no wheat in the box, clod-crushers made of butter! I do not believe that our God will ever pay wages to men who only walk about His grounds to show themselves. Fine orators who display their eloquence are more like Gypsies who stray on the farm to pick up chickens than honest laborers who work to bring forth a crop for their master.

Why, many of the members of our Churches live as if their only business on the farm was to pluck blackberries or gather wild flowers! They are great at finding fault with other people’s plowing and mowing, but not a hand’s turn will they do themselves. Come on, my good fellows! Why do you stand all the day idle? The harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few. You who think yourselves more cultivated than ordinary people, if you are, indeed, Christians, must not strut about and despise those who are hard at work. If you do, I shall say, “That person has mistaken his master. He may probably be in the employ of some gentleman farmer who cares more for show than profit, but our great Lord is practical—and on His estate His laborers attend to necessary labor.”

When you and I preach or teach it will be well if we say to ourselves, “What will be the use of what I am going to do? I am about to teach a difficult subject—will it do any good? I have chosen an abstruse point of theology—will it serve any purpose?” Brothers, a laborer may work very hard at a whim of his own and waste his labor, but this is folly! Some discourses do little more than show the difference between a tweedle-dum and a tweedle-dee—and what is the use of that? Suppose we sow the fields with sawdust, or sprinkle them with rosewater, what of that? Will God bless our moral essays and fine compositions and pretty passages?

Brothers, we must aim at *usefulness*—we must, as laborers together with God, be occupied with something that is worth doing. “I,” says one, “have planted.” It is well, for planting must be done. “I,” answers another, “have watered.” That is also good and necessary. See to it that you can each bring in a solid report, but let no man be content with the mere child’s play of oratory, or the getting up of entertainments and such like! On the Lord’s farm there is a division of labor. Even Paul did not say, “I have planted *and* watered.” No, Paul planted. And Apollos certainly could not say, “I have planted as well as watered.” No, it was enough for him to attend to the watering. No one man has all gifts. How foolish, then, are they who say, “I enjoy So-and-So’s ministry because he edifies the saints in doctrine, but when he was away the other Sunday I could not profit by the preacher because he was all for the conversion of sinners”?

Yes, he was planting! You have been planted a good while and do not need planting again, but you ought to be thankful that others were made partakers of the benefit! One sows and another reaps and, therefore, instead of grumbling at the honest plowman because he did not bring a sickle with him, you ought to have prayed for him that he might have strength to plow deep and break up hard hearts. Let us do all that we can and try to do more, for the more work we can turn our hands to, the better. “You must not have too many irons in the fire,” said somebody. But I say, “Put all your irons into the fire and if you have not fire enough, cry to God till you have! Set your whole soul on fire and keep all your irons hot.” Yet you may find it wise to direct your strength into one line of things which you understand so that, by practice, you may come to be skillful in it. Each man should find out his own work and do it with all his might.

Observe that, on God’s farm, there is unity of purpose among the laborers. Read the text. “Now he that plants and he that waters are one.” One Master has employed them and though He may send them out at different times and to different parts of the farm, yet they are all one in being used for one end—to work for one harvest. In England we do not understand what is meant by watering, because the farmer could not water all his farm—but in the East a farmer waters almost every inch of ground. He would have no crop if he did not use all means for irrigating the fields. If you have ever been in Italy, Egypt, or Palestine, you will have seen a complete system of wells, pumps, wheels, buckets, channels, little streamlets, pipes and so on, by which the water is carried all over the garden to every plant—otherwise in the extreme heat of the sun it would be dried up.

Planting needs wisdom and watering needs quite as much—and the piecing of these two works together needs that the laborers should be of one mind. It is a bad thing when laborers are at cross purposes and work against each other. And this evil is worse in the Church than anywhere else. How can I plant with success if my helper will not water what I have planted? Or what is the use of my watering if nothing is planted? Farming is spoiled when foolish people undertake it and quarrel over it, for from sowing to reaping the work is one and all must be done to one end. O for unity! Let as pull together all our days, even as we have done in this Church to now.

We are called upon to notice in our text that all the laborers put together are *nothing*. “Neither he who plants is anything, neither he who waters.” The workmen are nothing at all without their master! All the laborers on a farm could not manage it if they had no one at their head and all the preachers and Christian workers in the world can do nothing unless God is with them! Remember that every laborer on God’s farm has derived all his qualifications from God! No man knows how to plant or water souls unless God teaches him from day to day. All these holy gifts are the grants of free Grace. All the laborers work under God’s direction and arrangement or they work in vain. They would not know when or how to do their work if their Master did not guide them by His Spirit, without whose help they cannot even think a good thought!

All God’s laborers must go to Him for their Seed or else they will scatter tares. All good Seed comes out of God’s granary. If we preach, it must be the true Word of God or nothing can come of it. More than that, all the strength that is in the laborer’s arms to sow the heavenly Seed must be given by his Master. We cannot preach unless God is with us. A sermon is vain talk and dreary word-spinning unless the Holy Spirit enlivens it. He mast give us both the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue, or we shall be as men who sow the wind. When the good Seed is sown, the whole success of it rests with God. If He withholds the dew and the rain, the Seed will never rise from the ground—and unless He shall shine upon it, the green ear will never ripen.

The human heart will remain barren, even though Paul himself should preach, unless God the Holy Spirit shall work with Paul and bless the Word to those who hear it. Therefore, since the increase is of God alone, put the laborers into their place. Do not make too much of us, for when we have done, we are all unprofitable servants. Yet, though Inspiration calls the laborers *nothing*, it makes a great deal of them, for it says, “Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor.” They are nothing and yet they shall be rewarded as if they were something! God works our good works in us and then rewards us for them!

Here we have mention of a personal service and a personal reward— “Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” The reward is proportionate, not to the success, but to *labor*! Many discouraged workers may be comforted with that expression. You are not to be paid by results, but by *endeavors*. You may have a stiff bit of clay to plow, or a dreary plot of land to sow where stones, birds, thorns, travelers and a burning sun may all be leagued against the Seed— but you are not accountable for these things—your reward shall be according to your labor! Some put a great deal of labor into a little field and make much out of it. Others use a great deal of labor throughout a long life and yet they see but small results, for it is written, “one sows and another reaps.” But the reaping man will not get all the reward—the sowing man shall receive his portion of the joy. The laborers are nobodies, but they shall enter into the joy of their Lord!

Unitedly, according to the text, the workers have been successful and that is a great part of their reward. “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” Frequently Brethren say in their prayers, “A Paul may plant, an Apollos may water, but it is all in vain unless God gives the increase.” This is quite true, but another Truth of God is too much overlooked, namely, that when Paul plants and Apollos waters, God *does* give the increase! We do not labor in vain! There would be no increase without God, but then we are not without God! When such men as Paul and Apollos plant and water, there is sure to be an increase! They are the right kind of laborers. They work in a right spirit and God is certain to bless them.

This is a great part of the laborers’ wages. I am rich, I am increased in goods, I have need of nothing when I see souls converted—my heart leaps for joy, my spirit is glad and I am ready to sing, “My soul does magnify the Lord”—but if it were ever to come to this, that I stood here Sunday after Sunday and saw no conversions but the Church rather going down than increasing, I should take it as an intimation that I had better take my plow somewhere else and scatter the Seed on other soil. I would break my heart over non-success, or cry to God to break it, for he that works and gets no fruit is disheartened in his labor.

What would you farmers do? You are half inclined to give up, now, because you have had two or three bad years. But what would you do if you never saw a harvest at all? Why, you would clear out and be off to the western prairies or to the bush of the southern continent to see if the soil somewhere else would repay your labor! Do the same, Brother ministers! If you have been at work in one spot for years and have not led souls to Jesus, pack up your traps and go somewhere else! Do not forever break your plow upon rocks. It is a big world and there is plenty of good ground somewhere—let us seek it! If they persecute you in one city, flee to another and let the Word of God be published all the more widely by your moving about!

**III.**So much upon the laborers. Now for the main point again. GOD HIMSELF IS THE GREAT WORKER. He may use what laborers He pleases, but the increase comes only from Him. Brothers, you know it is so in natural things—the most skillful farmer cannot make the wheat germinate, grow and ripen. He cannot even preserve a single field till harvest time, for the farmer’s enemies are many and mighty. In farming there’s many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip and when the farmer thinks he shall reap his crop, often there are blights and mildews lingering about to rob him of his gains. God must give the increase. If any man is dependent on God, it is the farmer and as he, we are, all of us, dependent upon God from year to year for the food by which we live. Even the king must live by the increase of the field.

God gives the increase in the barn and the hayrack—and in the *spiritual* farm it is even more so, for what can man do in this business? If any of you think that it is an easy thing to win a soul, I would like you to try. Suppose that without Divine aid you should try to save a soul—you might as well attempt to make a world! Why, you cannot create a fly! How can you create a new heart and a right spirit? Regeneration is a great mystery—it is out of your reach. “The wind blows where it will and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.”

What can you and I do in this matter? It is out of our pale and beyond our line. We can tell out the Truth of God, but to apply that Truth to the heart and conscience is quite another thing. I have stood here and preached Jesus Christ—preached my whole heart out—and yet I know that I have never produced any saving effect upon a single unregenerate man unless the spirit of God has taken the Truth of God and opened the heart and placed the living Seed within it! Experience teaches us this. Equally is it the Lord’s work to keep the Seed alive when it springs up. We think we have converts but it is not long before we are disappointed in them. Many are like blossoms on our fruit trees—they are fair to look upon, but they do not come to anything! And others are like the many little fruits which fall off long before they have come to any size—a cold night or a blight will come and away go our hopes of a crop—it is just so with hopeful converts.

He who presides over a great Church and feels an agony for the souls of men will soon be convinced that if God does not work, there will be no work done. We shall see no conversion, no sanctification, no final perseverance, no glory brought to God, no satisfaction for the passion of the Savior unless He gives the increase! Well said our Lord, “Without Me you can do nothing.” What is the effect of all this upon your minds? Briefly I would draw certain practical lessons out of this important Truth of God— the first is, if the whole farm of the Church belongs exclusively to the great Master Worker and the laborers are worth nothing without Him, let this promote unity among all whom He employs!

If we are all under one Master, do not let us quarrel. It is a great pity when ministers harshly criticize one another and when Sunday school teachers do the same. It is a miserable business when we cannot bear to see good being done by those of a different denomination who work in ways of their own. If a new laborer comes on the farm and he wears a coat of a new cut and uses a hoe of a new shape, shall I become his enemy? If he does his work better than I do mine, shall I be jealous? Do you not remember reading in the Scriptures that upon one occasion the disciples could not cast out a devil? This ought to have made them humble, but to our surprise we read a few verses farther on that John and others saw one casting out devils in Christ’s name and John said, “We forbade him, because he follows not with us.”

They could not cast out the devil, themselves, and they forbade those who could! A certain band of people are going about winning souls, but because they are not doing it in *our* fashion, we do not like it. It is true they use all sorts of strange devices and wild excitements—but they *do* save souls—and that is the main point. Yet there are gentlemen who never converted half a soul in their lives who cry, “This is fanaticism!” Go and do better before you find fault! Instead of caviling, let us encourage all on Christ’s side. Wisdom is justified of her children. The laborers ought to be satisfied with the new plowman if his Master is. Brother, if the great Lord has employed you, it is no business of mine to question His right. I do not like the looks of you and cannot think how He can have such a fellow upon the farm, but as He has employed you, I have no right to judge you, for I dare say I look as odd in your eyes as you do in mine!

Can I lend you a hand? Can I show you how to work better? Or can you tell me something so that I may do my work better? May not the Master employ whom He pleases? If a new hoe or a new rake comes out and you that have been doing work steadily for years open your eyes and say, “I shall not use *that* new-fangled thing”—are you wise? Do not use the new invention if you have not tried it and can work better in your own way, but let the other man use it who finds it a handier tool. If new methods of getting a hearing for the Gospel are invented by the ingenuity of earnestness, let the Brothers use them. And if we cannot imitate them, let us at least feel that we are still one, because, “One is our Master, even Christ.”

This Truth of God, however, ought to keep all the laborers very dependent. Are you going to preach, young man? “Yes, I am going to do a great deal of good.” Are you? Have you forgotten that you are *nothing*? “Neither is he who plants anything.” A great preacher is coming full of the Gospel to comfort the saints. If he is not coming in strict dependence upon God, he, too, is nothing. “Neither is he who waters anything.” Power belongs to God! Man is vanity and his words are wind—to God alone belongs power and wisdom. If we keep our places in all lowliness, our Lord will use us. But when we exalt ourselves, He will leave us to our nothingness.

Next, notice that this fact ennobles everybody who labors in God’s husbandry. This passage makes my heart leap as I read it! My very soul is lifted up with joy when I mark these words, “For we are laborers together with God”! We are God’s fellow workers—mere laborers on His farm—but laborers *with* Him! Does the Lord work with us? Yes. “The Lord works with them with signs following.” “My Father works hitherto, and I work,” is language for all the sons of God as well as for the great First-Born! God is with you, Brother! God is with you, Sister, when you are serving Him with all your heart. Speaking to your class concerning Jesus, it is God that speaks through you! Picking up that stranger on the way and telling him of salvation by faith, Christ is speaking with you even as He spoke with the woman at the well!

Addressing the rough crowd in the open air, young man, if you are preaching of pardon through the atoning blood, it is the God of Peter who is testifying of His Son even as He did on the day of Pentecost! O Brother laborers, ours is a high honor, since the Father is with us and works by us! As Mr. Wesley said, “The best of all is, God is with us.” The Lord of Hosts is with us and, therefore, we cannot fail! If we could, in working with God, be defeated, then God’s own honor would be compromised and that cannot be!

But, lastly, how this should drive us to our knees! Since we are nothing without God, let us cry mightily unto Him for help in this, our holy service! Let both sower and reaper pray together, or they will never rejoice together! As a Church, God has blessed us so richly that in generations to come it will be spoken of as a wonder that God should so greatly favor a congregation for so many years—but it has been wholly and only in answer to PRAYER. So far from supposing that our union and prosperity are in any measure due to *me*, I declare that the only cause of all the soulwinning that has been done in this place is to be found in the prayers of the saints! God in great mercy has given the spirit of prayer to you and to others who love me and, therefore, I am highly favored. I am terribly afraid lest this prayerfulness should be dampened—I am jealous lest you should begin to think the preacher is something and so should fail to pray for him!

There is a thinner congregation when I am away and, therefore, I am afraid that you have some reliance upon me and do not expect a blessing if I am absent. Is it so? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh? Have you begun to be of Spurgeon? This will never do! Brothers and Sisters, this will never do! We must get rid of the tendency before it grows upon us! God can bless one man as well as another. I do not know that He always does so, but He can and, perhaps if you expected Him to do so, He would do so. If you came up to this house with the same prayerfulness for others as you apportion me, you would get the same blessing! I am weakest of the weak apart from God, therefore pray for me, but others are weak, too, and, therefore, pray for them, also.

Do let us pray mightily for a blessing! Pray always! Pray in your bedchambers, at your family altars, at your work, in your leisure and also in this place! Come in larger numbers to pray for a blessing! We have many appointed Prayer Meetings—keep them all flourishing! The windows of Heaven are easily opened if our mouths and hearts are opened in prayer. If the blessing is withheld, it is because we do not cry for it and *expect* it! O, Brother laborers, come to the Mercy Seat and you shall see God’s farm watered from on high and tilled with Divine skill—and the reapers shall soon return from the folds bringing their sheaves with them, though, perhaps, they went forth weeping to the sowing. To our Father, who is the Husbandman, be all Glory, forever and ever! Amen.

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THE ONE FOUNDATION  
NO. 1494

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 14, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For no other Foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”  
1 Corinthians 3:11.~~***

BUILDING is very important, but the first question must always concern the foundation. However quickly, however cleverly a man may build, if the foundation is unsound, he is a foolish builder. And however slowly, however laboriously a man may proceed, his building will not put him to shame if he has set his walls erect upon a firm basis. This is emphatically true in *spiritual* things, for there, the foundation is of the utmost importance. The hearer of the Word of God who is not a *doer,* also, comes to a fatal end because, as the Savior says, he has built upon sand and, therefore, his fabric in the day of storm and flood is swept away. But he who hears the Word and does it is secure because he digs deep and lays his foundation upon a rock and, therefore, his building survives the rains of trial from above, the floods of persecution from without and the mysterious winds of Satanic temptation which howl from every quarter.

The best masonry must crack and fall if the groundwork is unstable— the higher the pinnacle, the speedier its fall if the base is insecure. As to what the foundation is in the religion of Jesus Christ, there is no question. This verse declares it to be decided beyond controversy. A man may build the superstructure, in some measure, according to his own tastes and judgment, but it must be based upon the one Foundation. There may be room for varieties of style in the upper building, but there can be no variety in the groundwork. That is fixed forever by the unchanging God, who says, “Behold, *I lay* in Zion a foundation stone.”

It must be acknowledged that all Christian minds and lives do not take exactly the same form and fashion—there are among the best of Christian builders certain grades of excellencies—one man builds with gold, another with silver and a third with precious stones. But as to the *foundation*, all are on a level, Christ is all and in all! Whether the gracious life is rich as a golden palace, or pure as a temple of silver, or substantial as a tower of marble. Whether it is public or obscure, wide or narrow, it must, in every case, be built upon the same basement of eternal Rock—“for no other Foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid.”

You may say, “we will agree to differ” about matters which concern the superstructure, but we must agree to agree as to the Foundation, for if we are not at one with the plain statement of the text, we are in the wrong. The Apostle is dogmatic to the very last degree—“No other Foundation can anyone lay.” “But,” says one, “various teachers did lay other foundations.” The Apostle will not admit that they were foundations—they were not worthy of the name—the imposture was too shallow to succeed. No

builder, if he looked upon a heap of sand poured into an excavation, would admit that it was a foundation. If he saw a mass of decayed vegetation and garden rubbish heaped together, no architect would for one moment allow it to be spoken of as foundation!

Paul declares that there is but one Foundation, and that there is none beside it, or beyond it— and that the one only, unalterable, immovable, everlasting Foundation is Jesus Christ! It is not to be imagined that there are other foundations somewhat differing and only a little inferior to the Lord Jesus—there is no other and no other can be laid. It is not a question of comparison, but of monopoly! All other groundworks and principles, whatever may be said in their praise, are mere lies if they are set forth as foundations, for the Lord Jesus has exclusive possession of that title and in Him, alone, all that is fundamental is summed up— “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

And truly, when you think that God, from all eternity, has made His only-begotten Son to be the Foundation and Cornerstone, it will be seen that this Rock goes deep into the very nature of things, yes, deep as infinity itself and, therefore, there cannot be two of the kind, for of whom else is it written that verily He was foreordained before the foundation of the world? Of whom else is it said, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was”? When you think that this Foundation is nothing less than Divine, for Christ is very God of very God, it is as impossible that there should be two foundations as that there should be two Gods!

You must imagine two redemptions before you can conceive of two groundworks for our confidence. Who will dream of two atonements, two Saviors, two Christs? Yet must such a thing be before there can be two foundations! None but Jesus, the Divine Savior, could sustain the weight of a single soul with all its sins, much less of *all* the souls, which are built up into the Temple of God! Jesus alone can sustain our eternal interest, deliver us from eternal wrath, or lift us into eternal bliss. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus.” His own words in prophecy are very positive—“I, even I, am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Savior.” And equally expressive is His personal declaration—“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.”

I will sketch out my discourse with these four lines which I may not always be able to keep from intersecting, but they shall each be marked deeply and broadly so that none can help seeing them. First*, there is no Church but what is built on Christ.* Secondly, there is *no Gospel but what is built on Christ*. Thirdly, there is *no hope of salvation but what is built on Christ.* And fourthl*y, there is no Christian but what is built on Christ*.

**I.**First, there is NO CHURCH BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON CHRIST, I mean, of course, no true, no *real* Church. There are many churches in the world, so called, but this may be laid down as a first principle that there is but one Church and that this one Church is built upon Christ, alone. Whatever community, congregation, hierarchy, sect, or corporation may call itself a Church, or even *the* Church, if it is not built upon Christ, is not a Church at all. No matter how great in numbers, nor how ancient, nor how wealthy, nor how learned, nor how pretentious, bigoted, dominant, or exclusive it may be—it is not Christ’s Church if it is not built upon Christ!

To begin with, a *foundation is the first portion*of a building and so is the Lord Jesus first and foremost with His Church, for His people were chosen in Him. God has always had in His purpose and decrees a chosen people, but He has had no such people apart from Christ. The Apostle says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.” We were chosen in Christ Jesus! He is “the First Born among many brethren” and the Lord has “predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.” The first setting apart of the Church and making it to be the peculiar inheritance of God was in connection with Christ—

***“‘Christ is My first elect,’ He said,  
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head.”***

We were never otherwise chosen, nor otherwise beloved, nor otherwise appointed to eternal life than as regarded in Christ Jesus and one with Him. No single soul can be said to be elect otherwise than as it is considered in connection with Christ. Much less, then, is there a Church of God apart from the eternal purpose concerning Christ Jesus, the Covenant Head and federal Representative of His people. The foundation must be laid first and so was our Lord Jesus Christ first appointed. “Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.” Jesus is called by the Father, “My elect in whom My soul delights,” and there are none elect except such as are in Him in the eternal purpose of Divine Grace.

But next, *a foundation is the support of all* and there is no Church but that which derives all its support from Christ Jesus. If there is any company of people calling themselves a Church who depend for salvation and eternal life upon anything *besides*, or *beyond* the merit of Christ’s atoning blood, they are not a Church! That all things are of God and that He has reconciled us unto Himself by Christ Jesus is a Truth of God never to be doubted. The atoning Savior is the Cornerstone of the Church. He is the one Rock of our salvation, the one pillar of our strength. As living stones, we are built up into a spiritual house, but we, one and all, rest and depend upon Him and upon no other.

To us the Word of the Lord has come with power, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” The great atoning Sacrifice of Christ must be the sole reliance of the whole Church as well as of each individual. And this must be set forth with great clearness and distinction as its first and greatest doctrine of salvation by Christ Jesus, in whom we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of

sins according to the riches of His Grace.

The Atonement taken away, no Church remains. Call the community a religious club if you like, but it is no Church when once the Atonement made by the Lord Jesus, through His death in the place of His people, is denied or ignored. Nor do we judge a community to be worthy of the name of a Church which places its dependence for its present power and future progress anywhere but in the almighty Savior. Jesus says, “Because I live you shall also live,” and the Church must draw its daily life from the immortality of her glorious Head. He that loved us and died for us and rose again is pledged to keep His own and on that pledge let them repose their faith. Because all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth, therefore we go forth to teach the nations.

He has said, “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” therefore we have strength to go forth for the conquest of the world. But if we depend upon an arm of flesh, upon the secular power, upon carnal wisdom, upon education, or eloquence, or prestige, or upon our own zeal and ardor and not upon Christ, we are leaving the Rock for sand! We cannot thus build up Christ’s Church, nor ought we to attempt it. The strength of a living Church is the living Christ. We must be very careful on this point, that when we are zealous in building, we build only upon Christ and by Christ, for edifices otherwise erected will fall in heaps. We must, as a Church, not only rely upon the Christ that died, but upon the Christ who is gone into Glory and sits at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning on our behalf—who also shall shortly come to gather together the scattered and to reign among His own.

The true Church, like a vine, derives its life sap for its branches from Jesus and from no other source. She can say of her glorious Redeemer, “My Soul, wait only upon the Lord, for my expectation is from Him.” Other communities may lean on princes, but she comes up from the wilderness leaning on her Beloved. Other congregations may look to human greatness for support, but her eyes are towards the hills where comes her help—her help comes from the Lord which made Heaven and earth!

Furthermore, *a foundation has the shaping of the building* and the true Church shapes and forms itself upon the Lord Jesus as its ground plan and outline. The shape of a building must, to a very large extent, be determined by its foundation. If you have ever traced the foundations of an ancient abbey or castle, as they have appeared on a level with the soil, you have proceeded to infer the form of the building from the run of the ground line. Here was a sharp angle; there was a circular tower; there was a buttress and there was a recess. The building must have followed the ground line and so must every true Church be built upon Christ in the sense of following His Word and ordinances to the best of its knowledge and understanding.

The law of Christ is the law of the Church. All the decrees of popes and councils. All the resolutions of assemblies, synods, presbyteries and associations. And all the ordinances of men as individuals, however great they are, when they are all put together, if they at all differ from the Law of Christ, they are mere wind and waste paper! No, they are worse—they are treasonable insults to the majesty of King Jesus! Those who build apart from the authority of Christ build off of the Foundation and their fabric will fall. There is no Law and no authority in a true Church but that of Christ Himself. We who are His ministers are His servants and the servants of the Church—not lords or lawmakers. To His Law a faithful Church brings all things as to the sure test.

As churches we are not legislators, but subjects. It is not for us to frame constitutions, invent offices and decree rites and ceremonies—but we are to take everything out of the mouth of Christ and to do *what* He bids us, *as* He bids us and *when* He bids us. Parliaments and kings have no authority whatever in the Church—Christ alone rules! If any portion of a Church is not based upon Christ, it is a mere deforming addition to the plan of the great Architect and mars the temple which God has built. What a blessed thing it is to feel that you belong to a Church which has the Rock under it because it is constituted by Christ’s authority! We feel safe in following an ordinance which is of His commanding, but we should tremble if we had only custom and human authority for it.

How secure we feel in believing a doctrine which is of our Lord’s teaching, for we can say, “this is not mere *opinion;* this is not the judgment of a wise man; this is not the decree of councils, but this is the Master’s own declaration.” Not one of His Words shall ever fall to the ground. There is in His authority no change—His Word is forever settled in Heaven and He is, in Himself, the same yesterday, today and forever. Steadfast is that Church which carefully follows His guiding line, but that which departs from His fixed rule and authority has left the Foundation and therein ceased to be a Church.

A *foundation is indispensable* to a building and so Christ is indispensable to a true Church. In a house you could do without certain of the windows. You might close in a door and you might remove parts of the roof and it might still be a house, but you cannot have a house at all if you take away the foundation! And so you cannot have a Church of Christ if Jesus Christ is not there as the Foundation and Cornerstone. When sermons are preached without so much as the mention of Christ’s name, it takes more than charity—it requires you to tell a lie to say, “That was a Christian sermon.” And if any people find their joy in a teaching which casts the Lord Jesus into the background, they are not His Church, or else such teaching would be an abomination to them.

Yet I have heard it said that from some ministries you may go away like Mary Magdalene from the sepulcher, exclaiming, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” One told me the other day that he had heard a discourse from a Christian pulpit which would have been applauded by Jews and Muslims, for there was not a trace of Christ in it. Another declared that in another place he heard priests, clergy and sacraments so much puffed up that as for faith in the Lord Jesus it seemed to be a very small matter. Brothers and Sisters, this is not so in the Church of Christ! There the Lord Jesus is Alpha and

Omega—first and last—beginning and end! True Christians make much of Christ! Indeed, they make *all* of Him!

And as for priests and preachers we say, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man”? O Brothers and Sisters, let us see to this! If anything is put into Christ’s place we make it an Antichrist and we are not Christians, but anti-Christians! The true Church says, “Give us what learning and eloquence you will, but we cannot be content unless Christ is glorified! Preach us what you may, we will never be satisfied unless He who is the express Image of the Father shall be set forth in our midst.” Then, I say, she speaks like the true bride of Christ, but if she can be content to see her Lord dishonored she is no chaste spouse of Christ!

Let us put this, our first point, in a few sentences. It is not the union of men with men that makes a Church if Jesus Christ is not the center and the bond of the union. The best of men may come into bonds of amity and they may form a league, or a federation for good and useful purposes—but they are not a Church unless Jesus Christ is the basis upon which they rest. He must be the ground and Foundation of the hope of each and of all. Neither can a Church be created by a mere union to a minister. It is most good and pleasant to see Brethren dwelling together in unity—it is most advantageous that between the pastor and his flock there should be perfect love, but the relationship must not be exaggerated beyond due bounds.

Brethren, there must be no glorying in *men*, nor blind following of them! A body formed of individuals whose religion lies in drinking in the theories and opinions of a religious teacher falls short of being a Church of God. The Church is not built on Paul, nor upon Apollos, nor upon Cephas, but upon the sole authority of Jesus Christ! We are not to be believers in Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Whitefield, but in Christ! Of such believers a true Church must be composed. Neither is a Church made by the following of any particular form or rite. We have one Lord, one faith, one Baptism—and we are bound to be loyal to Christ in His ordinances as in all else—but it is not the practice of an*ordinance* which constitutes a Church!

It is well to be united and bound together in loyalty to the faith once delivered to the saints, but unless there is vital, *personal* union with the Person of Christ on the part of the members of the Church, their association may constitute a league for the defense of orthodoxy, or a confederation for the maintenance of a form of religious thought, but it is not a Church! No, most blessed Lord, You must be there, or nothing is there! Pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, evangelists—these are courses of precious stones in the heavenly temple—but without You they are no Church, for the Foundation is needed—You, my Lord, are needed!

All Your saints come to You and rest on You, O Christ, and in You all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto an holy Temple in the Lord. You are the Stem from which it branches, the Head in which it lives, the Shepherd by whom it is fed, the Captain by whom it is marshaled, the Husband to whom it is married! You are, indeed, the All in All of the Church which You have redeemed with Your own blood—

***“God has a sure Foundation given,  
Fixed as the firm decrees of Heaven!  
The changeless everlasting Rock,  
That braves the storm, and bides the shock. There build the gates of Hell in vain  
Against that Rock their war maintain.  
Christ is the Rock, the Cornerstone,  
God rears His beauteous house thereon.”***

Thus far, then, we have declared that there is no Church except that which is built on Jesus Christ. This Truth of God we assert in the face of all men—let them make what they will of it.

**II.**Secondly, we assert that there is NO GOSPEL BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. There are many pretended gospels in the world. Paul said once, “another Gospel,” and then he corrected himself and said, “which is not another,” for strictly speaking there is only one Gospel and there cannot be two! The good news, God’s Good News to men, is one. There never were two gospels, for there never were two Savior’s or two redemptions and there never will be! But a Savior and a redemption are necessary to a Gospel and, therefore, there can be only one. The Foundation of the Gospel is one, namely Jesus Christ, and there is no other possible foundation.

For, first, *there is but one Mediator, by whom God speaks* W*ords of Grace*. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus.” If then, Beloved, any man shall come to you and say, “God has spoken to me and bid me say to you somewhat other and above what Jesus has said,” receive him not! If any man says to you, “I have a revelation from Heaven and God bids me speak,” if he speaks not according to the Words of Christ Jesus, he is a false prophet and comes not from God at all. Yes, moreover, if bishop, or council, or Church speak otherwise than Christ has spoken, the Truth of God is not in any of them!

All that ever spoke from God, both before Christ and after Christ, have spoken after their manner and measure in the same fashion as Christ Jesus, the Lord, for the voice of God is not two, but one, and the Word of God is not two or three, but one. And now, at this day, you may rest quite certain that if God has anything to say to us, He has, in these last days, spoken to us by His Son and His own hand has closed and sealed the Revelation of God. Woe unto us if we hear Him not and woe unto us if we listen to other voices! Indeed, if we are the sheep of Christ, we shall not regard new voices, for our Lord has said it, “A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” The true Gospel comes through Christ as the Mediator and through Him alone—and that which comes otherwise is not the Gospel.

The *true Gospel has Christ’s Divine Person as its glory* and there can be no Gospel without this. Christ is God and in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In the Person of Christ the Divinity has come down to us to heal our diseases and remove our griefs. Now, if you hear of a Gospel which begins by saying that Christ is not the Only-Begotten of the

Father, or that He is not the Son of God, close your ears to it, for it is not the Gospel of God! Unless Jesus is extolled as God over all, blessed forever, the preaching is not the Gospel!

*Jesus Christ is the essence of the Gospel—* He is the Good News, as well as the medium of it. The good news is that God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Eternal redemption has been obtained for us by the life, death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus—this is the Gospel. There is pardon through His blood, justification through His righteousness and sanctification through His Spirit. Complete salvation is freely provided for Believers in Him and the Grace of God through Him is abundantly displayed to the very chief of sinners! God has made Him to be unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption—in fact, all the blessings that are needed to lift man up into the favor of God—and keep him there forever, are stored up in the Person of Jesus, in whom God’s love has displayed itself to the fullest degree.

Jesus is the sum and substance, crown and glory of the Gospel. If then, you hear a gospel in which the freewill of man is spoken of as the main agent. If you hear a gospel in which the works of man, or the forms and ceremonies practiced by priests are set up as being fundamental things, reject such teaching, for it is not the good news from Heaven! The only Good News is this, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Let others preach what they please, as for us, “we preach Christ Crucified.” Jesus Himself preached the very Gospel of the Gospel when He cried, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”  
Now then, Brothers and Sisters, for I speak to many of you who teach the Gospel, I beseech you to remember my simple text of today and, from now on, teach nothing apart from Christ. The teaching of doctrines is not the teaching of the Gospel if those doctrines are held in a dry, didactic style apart from Christ. Suppose I preach the doctrine of election. That is one thing—but unless I preach that we are chosen*in Christ* I have left out the Foundation and my teaching crumbles to the ground as a bowing wall or as a tottering fence! Suppose I preach final perseverance, it is well. But I have not preached the Gospel unless I show that it is because *Jesus* lives, we shall also live and that the preservation of the saints depends on their union with Him!  
Suppose I am teaching justification—it is not the true justification unless it is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus which I hold forth! Here I commend to you the example of the earlier preachers of the Church. From such of their writings as remain, we gather that they dwelt much upon the actual events of the Redeemer’s *life*. They are not always so clear as one could wish upon the great doctrines as Paul gives them to us, but there is one point in which they excel. You may not hear enough from them about *justification by faith*, but you hear a great deal concerning the *precious blood* of Christ! They do not always speak so clearly upon regeneration as we would desire, but they speak much of the Resurrection of Christ and of the newness of life which His saints enjoy because of it!  
Pardon to them is a washing in the blood of Christ. Conversion is being called by Christ. Resurrection is a risen Christ. Everything is brought out as a matter of fact arising from the actual life and death of the Savior and I am free to confess that I greatly admire this way of preaching the Gospel. How does Paul put it? What was the Gospel to him? Hear him—“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.”  
Thus, you see, Paul’s body of Divinity was the life and death of that only embodied Divinity, the Lord Jesus. My Brothers and Sisters, always set forth the Gospel in close connection with your Lord, fetching it, as it were, out of Him. The juice of the grape is pleasant, but if you would know what it is in all its purity keep the grapes near you and press them in the vineyard where they grow. So the Gospel is the wine of Christ, but it is sweetest when it flows fresh from the cluster. Preach Jesus Christ when you preach His doctrine, or else you may make the doctrine to be like the stone at the door of His sepulcher, whereas it ought to be like a throne of ivory on which, like another Solomon, your Lord sits resplendent! Some preach experience and they do well—but they should be exceedingly careful to keep Jesus very prominent.  
We have a school of Brothers who preach little else than experience and I do not condemn them. But what is the experience of a poor fellow sinner to me? How does it help me to hear that he groans as I do, or sings as I do? It may be of some small service to me, but there are more excellent things! I need to know how Jesus felt and what Christ can do for my Brother and for me. Experience is admirable when Jesus Christ is set forth in it, but if you take up an experimental vein of things, whether of human corruption, or have human perfection and Jesus Christ in the background, you are marring the Gospel! Jesus is the one Foundation and there is no Gospel apart from Him!  
So, too, with practice. By all means let us have practical preaching and plenty of it! And let it come down sternly and faithfully on the vices of the times. But merely to preach against this and that vice and extol this and that virtue is a mission fit enough for Socrates or Plato, but does not well become a minister of Jesus Christ! Set Jesus forth, my practical Brother! His example shames vice and encourages virtue! Set Him up as the mirror of all perfection and in Him men will see what they ought to be and learn how to come at it. Jesus Christ, then, is the only Gospel! We leave that point, being abundantly sure that you are persuaded of it.  
**III.**Thirdly. THERE IS NO HOPE OF SALVATION BUT THAT WHICH IS BUILT UPON CHRIST. This is another point upon which I need not speak much. I will only spend a few minutes in talking upon certain other hopes. No doubt some think it must be well with them because they were brought up from their childhood most respectably. Their parents were excellent Christian people and they believe that they, themselves, having never done anything very wrong, are no doubt safe.  
Ah, my dear Hearers, if this is your only hope, you are lost, for you are dead in sin! That which is born of the flesh, the best of flesh that ever was is flesh and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God! You must be born again! You must have a far better hope than any which can spring out of your birth and your relations. “Yes, but,” says someone, “I had all the ceremonies of the Church performed upon me.” Yes, and it makes no difference to me what Church it was. If you are building, even, upon rites which God has given, they will not suffice you—they cannot bear the weight of your soul. Baptism, the Lord Supper, or 50,000 sacraments, if men were to make so many, would not help you one solitary inch! The only Foundation for your soul’s hope must be Christ and none of these outward things.  
“Ah,” says another, “but I have diligently performed a great many good works.” I would to God you had 10 times as many good works, but if you have committed one single sin, no works can save you! All the good works of the best men that ever lived would make but a rotten foundation for them if they were to place reliance on them. Abound in good works, but do not trust them! Human merit is a foundation of sand. “But I have had special spiritual feelings,” says one. “I have been broken down, I have been lifted up.” Yes, you may have been crushed down to Hell’s door and lifted up to Heaven’s gate—but there is nothing in feelings and excitements which can be a ground of hope.  
“Why,” says one, “it has troubled me that I have not had these feelings.” Do not let it trouble you, but go to Jesus Christ and rest in Him! Feelings or no feelings! High frames and low frames are all delusions if they are trusted in. We can no more be saved by our *feelings* than by our*works*. “Oh, but,” says another, “I have confidence that I am saved, for I have had a wonderful dream and, moreover, I heard a voice and saw a vision!” Rubbish all! Dreams, visions, voices? Throw them all away! There is not the slightest reliance to be placed upon them. “What, not if I saw *Christ*?” No, certainly not, for vast multitudes saw Him in the days of His flesh— and died and perished, after all! “But surely a dream will save me.” It will give you a dreamy hope and when you awake in the next world your dream will be gone!  
The one thing to rest upon is the sure Word of testimony—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and whoever believes in Him is not condemned. I believe in Him and, therefore, I am not condemned! Why do I believe my sin to be forgiven? Because Jesus died to put away the sins of Believers and there is no condemnation to those who are in Him! Why do I believe myself to be justified? Because he that believes is justified—the Word of God says so. How do I know that I am saved? Because Jesus Christ has declared that whoever believes in Him is not condemned! To believe in Him is to trust in Him, to make Him my Foundation! I trust in Him. He is my Foundation and I am saved, or else His Word is not true.  
I know that His Word is true and, therefore, I am at rest. It is written, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” I believe in Him, therefore I have everlasting life! I have His promise that I shall never perish, neither shall any pluck me out of His hands, therefore I shall never perish, neither shall any separate me from His love. You see, then, there is no hope of salvation but what is fixed upon Christ alone! And I invite and entreat you, if any of you have any hope which goes beyond Christ or besides Christ, get rid of it! Throw it on a dunghill and loathe it as an insult to God! Do as the man did with the bad bank note. When he found it was a forgery he buried it and ran away as fast as he could, for fear anybody should think the note had ever been in his possession!  
So, if you are trusting in anything that is not of Christ, bury your faith and run away from it, for it is a false confidence and will work ill to your soul! Let your faith cry, “None but Christ!” All-saving faith delights in that cry. For eternal salvation, “no other Foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid.”  
**IV.**Our last point is this—THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN BUT THE MAN BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. Here is a Christian and of one thing in him I am sure—I cannot tell whether he holds Arminian views or Calvinistic views, but if he is a Christian he has no Foundation but Christ. Here is a person who reverences the Pope. Here is another who glories in the name of Protestant. Here is a third who is a Baptist—which is the Christian out of these? I answer, he is the Christian that is built on Christ, whoever he may be. But if he can do without Christ, he is not worthy of the name of Christian!  
What do we mean? Why this. I mean first, every man to be a Christian must *rest His whole soul upon Christ* as to eternal salvation. There must be no stuttering or stammering over that! There must be no mixing up the merits of Jesus with priests or ceremonies. No, it must be a clear—a straight line—Christ for me! Christ *everything* for me—my one and only hope! Any deviation here is fatal. On the Cross is written, *Spes unica* and it remains the one and only hope of a burdened soul.  
Next, if you are to be a Christian, *Christ must be your model*. By the aid of His Holy Spirit, you must try to do what He would have done in your position and under your circumstances. You are not to say, “I cannot follow Christ in this.” You are never to renounce His leadership. If you do, you must give up being a Christian because you are bound to take up His Cross and follow Him. He claims to be your King when He becomes your Savior. A true Christian is a man who builds upon Christ, as his Model, as walls are built on a foundation. A true Christian is one whose growing up is in Christ, for, strange to say, the Temple of God grows. Nor need we wonder, for it is a *living* temple. I have seen magnificent pieces of architecture masterpieces and it has struck me, when I looked at them, that they must have grown.  
An ordinary, clumsy bit of work displays the mason and the carpenter, but perfect architecture looks as if it grew! And Christ’s Church does grow, for Christ’s people grow. But all our growing up must come out of Christ. When a man says, “Years ago I used to worship with these Christian people and I felt very happy with them, but I have now more education and have got beyond them,” he is guided by his pride and not by Divine Grace. No true Christian talks so! The higher he grows, the more he grows into Christ! The wiser he is, the more he shows the wisdom of Christ. If he has begun aright, he may advance as far as he can, but he never can advance beyond Christ. He will get to be less and Christ will be more and more to him, for he is not a Christian who does not stick to this—that the Foundation goes as far as he means to go and he builds never beyond that—but builds upward *upon* that and upon that alone.  
And he, again, is the true Christian who *lives for Christ*, to whom Christ’s Glory is the great object of his being. He is a Christian who reckons that time wasted which is not used for Jesus—that substance wasted which is not used in obedience to Jesus—who considers that he does not live except as Christ lives in him. Brothers and Sisters, I pray that you may all be Christians of this sort—only let it be with you forevermore Jesus Christ. I do not like to preach a sermon without feeling the presence of my Master. I have done so, but never to my own comfort. I cannot bear to come away from the Monday evening Prayer Meeting without feeling that the Lord has been there and He generally is.  
The true heart does not like to engage in any kind of enterprise without first consulting Him and doing it in His sight. We are a very busy Church and I want you, as a busy Church, doing a great deal to always keep the Master near you. The most holy work gets to be mere routine—to be done mechanically—unless we enjoy His dear love and sweet Presence and blessed smile in the doing of His will. Sit at Jesus’ feet with Mary as well as work for Him like Martha. May He be the Foundation of everything, not only of the Church, but of our hope, of our character, of every little thing we do!  
When you are laying the first stone of a new enterprise, lay it upon Christ with fair colors. Set it in the vermilion of His precious blood! Perfume it with the oil of gratitude and lay it upon Him alone! And so shall you, by His Grace, build for eternity and glorify His precious name! Amen.

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THE CHRISTIAN’S GLORIOUS INVENTORY  
NO. 2589

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1898.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY MORNING, IN THE YEAR 1856.~~***

***~~“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—  
all are yours. And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.~~***

IT appears, from this Epistle, that the Christians at Corinth were very much divided on account of certain ministers who had, at different times, preached the Word of God among them. Some of them felt a deep attachment to Paul and they said, “We are of Paul.” Others preferred Cephas and they cried, “We are of Cephas,” while another portion followed after Apollos and declared, “We are of Apollos.” So that the Church, which ought to have been one body, was sadly torn and divided by several parties who followed different leaders. Paul wrote this first Epistle to the Corinthians in order to remove their strifes and, if possible, to bind them, again, in the bonds of love and unity—to make of them one Church, serving one Master, striving together for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Now, Beloved, the same thing that occurred in Corinth has happened in London and elsewhere many a time. It is but right that persons should feel an attachment to those who preach the Gospel to them. But when this grows to an overwhelming adoration—when it becomes almost a worship and persons are led to despise all other ministers and will hear none besides that one man whom they believe to be sent from God— then, indeed, they need a solemn reproof as did these Corinthians—and it is requisite to say to them, “Therefore, let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.” To love the man by whose means we are brought to know the Truth of God, to have respect to him who speaks wondrous words, as God makes utterance by him is, indeed, nothing but natural and just. But if we at any time exalt that man above the level he ought to stand, or put him above all others, so that we despise them and say, “I am of Paul and will not hear Apollos,” or, “I am of Apollos and, therefore, cannot hear Cephas”—then it becomes a sin and iniquity, a transgression against God, against His Church and against His ministers. And the Apostle’s solemn reproof comes home with an emphasis—“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.”

Paul was a wise reprover and he did not reprove too sharply. After he had said, “Let no man glory in men,” mark how he reproved them—“For all things are yours.” He used no hard words. We have heard of ministers who are perpetually whipping and scolding their hearers. It is an old saying of those who understood horses as well as men, “The best way is to put the whip in the manger.” Feed people well and they will work well. Give them plenty of sound Doctrine and it will make them practical It is not the way to make a practical people to be always talking about practice. Feed them with the manna that comes down from Heaven—and with some of the honey out of the rock—and they will always be willing to strive for their Master and to labor for His cause.

Now, Christian, rise and walk through the length and breadth of the land, this morning, and view your possessions! Nothing will tend so much to lessen your undue reverence for men, or to check your glorying in them, as a vision of what you are, yourselves, worth! If you see your own property, your own possessions, you will not, then, be so much inclined to place too high a value upon one certain thing, though it may be, in itself, exceedingly precious.

First of all, we have before us *an inventory of the Christian’s possessions.* “All things are yours.” Secondly, we have *the title deed.*“You are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” And, thirdly, we have *the conduct expected from a man who is so exceedingly rich.*“Let no man glory in men.”

**I.**First, I said, we have AN INVENTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN’S POSSESSIONS. The Apostle sets down at the top the total of the whole, and then he proceeds to mention the possessions one by one. The sum total is “all things,” but as these two words are said very quickly and are very general in their meaning, he particularizes, and gives each of the things in its proper place. First he says, “all things,” and then he gives us a list which includes “all things.”

And, first, he says that *all ministers are yours.* As a Christian, all kinds of ministers are yours, “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.” All preachers are not Pauls. All are not like Apollos and all cannot speak like Cephas. But ministers of all kinds are yours—they are not their own, they belong to the Church at large. There is Paul. He has a clear, logical mind. He preaches good doctrine and proclaims it powerfully. He is yours, go and hear him! There is Apollos who preaches with eloquence. He is not so much a logician as an orator. He cannot reason, perhaps, but he puts his thoughts into beautiful shapes and delivers them well. Go and hear Apollos! There is rough Cephas, a plain, blunt, honest, outspoken man. He never minces matters. What he says, he says out of his heart, “*con amore*”—his whole soul goes with every word. Do not despise him. You may like Paul, better, and Apollos may be more to your taste, but Cephas has his work to do as well—and all are yours—their talents, their station, whatever they possess—all are yours!

You sometimes speak of “my minister.” Yes, you have a particular minister, but then all ministers are yours—not only that special one, but all who are called of God! Whatever may be their peculiar mode of preaching, they are yours to profit by, if, indeed, they are God’s servants. There is Boanerges—he preaches in a thundering manner of the wrath to come. His sermons alarm you. He drags a harrow across your soul. He speaks as if he had just come from the top of Sinai where the thunders of God were pealing and the lightning flashing beneath his feet! He speaks like a man impressed with solemn awe, as if he had, for a while, traversed the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and had descended into the abyss of Hell and seen the horrid pits where the wicked lie and bite their bonds. Hear him, *he is yours.*

Here is another, a Barnabas who speaks words of gentle comfort. You seldom hear thunder from him. His preaching is like the soft evening breeze. He is like the sun that has healing beneath its wings, gently he speaks to the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. You love to hear him. He is quite as useful as Boanerges and Boanerges is as useful as Barnabas—*and they are both yours.* One is a loving John, sweet in his disposition. You can read love in his eyes. He has leaned his head on the bosom of Jesus and when he speaks, he says, “I beseech you, love one another.” Another is like Peter. He speaks terribly of the last days wherein shall come scoffers—and of the fire which shall consume the ungodly. Both Peter and John have their special province—*and they are both yours.*

When God has blessed a man, when there is an unction from the Holy One resting on him, when he can trace his descent from the Apostles by being a follower of the Apostles and preaching Apostolic Doctrine in an Apostolic manner, then, indeed, you may say he is yours, for, “all are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.” “Then how little and narrow-minded I am,” perhaps the Christian will say, “that I have not cared for this or that man because he was not exactly after my mode!” O dear Creatures, would you have the making of God’s ministers? A sorry lot they would be if you had! God makes them as He pleases, and sends them into the world after His own fashion, each with his own work to do in his own manner—but they are all yours! There is a minister who preaches very sweetly. Well, he is yours, he is your servant, your waitingman! He is not a lord and master over you, but your servant. “Ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” Whoever he is, if he is a true minister of God, he will profess himself to be the servant of the Church, your positive property. Make all the use you can of him, then. Try and remember all the good things he may say—whatever choice utterances, whatever golden sentences and silver words come from his lips, treasure them up—for they are all yours, whether they are the words of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. This is the first entry in the inventory.

And, next, *“the world”*is ours. This great world, considered naturally, the home wherein we live, is all ours. Men have carved it out for themselves. Worldlings have said, “So much is mine, and so much is yours. Yonder fields belong to that rich man. And the houses there and that park belong to such another.” They may call it theirs if they like, but the world is yours! It is yours as much as if you had a legal title to it here below. It is yours, not in imagination, or conception, but in reality. Do you ask me how it is? I tell you, the world only exists for you! If you and all your fellow Christians were gone out of it. If the righteous were departed, the world would at once be a desert. “You are the salt of the earth”—the conservers, the preservers of it—it abides for your sake! Take *you*away and the world would be turned into rottenness and perish! The world is but the scaffold of your soul’s salvation—it is but the place where you prepare yourselves to enter into the world above. This world would have been consumed by fire long ago if it had not been for the righteous. God bids the flames tarry till He has taken all His children Home! He only keeps the world in existence for the sake of His elect! It is a debased world, the trail of the serpent is all over it. It is spoiled, its beauty is marred, it is a fair world but a false one, its glory is departed. God would utterly destroy it but that He intends His Church to be fostered in the wilderness and He will not sweep the wilderness away till He has carried His people through it. This world is yours—there is not a speck of it which is not yours! The whole of it is yours, from the East to the West, and from the North to the South. The lands of virgin snows are yours. The wide, expansive ocean is yours. Yon blue sky with all its gems of stars is yours. “All things are yours.” One man says of a certain part, “That is mine!” He knows not what he says—it is yours! It is let to him for a little while. He occupies it as a tenant. He is only the man who takes care of your house for you. It is your house, though he lives in it and enjoys the comfort of it. He stretches himself on the couch, but the house is yours—and it shall be yours, by-and-by, when Jesus Christ shall come a second time, without sin unto salvation, and shall reign gloriously upon the earth with His ancients! Then shall you wear a crown and shall be made a king and a priest unto your God, and shall reign with Christ upon the earth for a thousand years!

This world is yours *now*. “No, but,” you say, “I am poor and have but little of it.” It is yours, notwithstanding, only you are not yet come of age. The son, before he is of full age, is as truly the heir of all the property as he will be when he comes into full possession of it. He has enough for his necessities, but not more, but still, he says, “It is mine. And when the day shall come that I am twenty-one, I shall have it all.” So, Christian, you are at present only a child, and it would not do to give you all your property at once. You are not come of age, but when you have passed through your time of probation, you shall say, “It is mine.” But did I hear you say that you have not enough of this world’s necessities? Hush, be silent, or else the promise is broken, “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” I know you have enough. Or, if you have not enough at present, yet it is coming to you. God will not leave you! If He brings you ever so low in poverty, still trust Him, for His promise is engaged to supply your needs. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Try your Lord by faith. If you have no employment, no means of providing for yourself, yet ask Him and He will give you all you need. If you have no place to lay your head, God will provide it for you. However deep your distresses may be, He will never let you perish. His honor is engaged on your behalf and He will take care of you. Poor as you are, this world is yours! Draw, then, on your Heavenly Banker—go and ask your God for what you need—and as truly as He is God, He will hear the cry of the destitute and will not despise your prayer.

And next, “life” is ours. Have you ever heard a person say, “Oh, if I might but die, and depart, and be with Jesus”? And you have heard him, sometimes, repeat the Psalmist’s wish, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove!” Now, if he had wings like a dove, what would he do with them? Where would he put them? “Oh,” he says, “that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.” No, you would not be at rest, for if you were to fly away before your work was done, you could not rest even then! But when your work is done, then you will be at rest without needing the wings of a dove. Therefore do not make such a silly request any more, but be content to wait and tarry the Lord’s time. Moreover, look not upon life as an evil thing—it is one of the good things we possess. It is a glorious life, after all, when a man knows how to enjoy it and how to improve it. What? Be ashamed to live here when you have such means of doing good and glorifying God, and such pleasant seasons of communion with Jesus, and such preparations for eternity? What? Count life nothing? It is one of the greatest blessings we possess! And to stay here till our portion of labor shall be done is a blessing—nor would we wish to have our lives shortened by a single hour, for God has predestinated the time for its end.

I think that man who does not reckon life a blessing has morbid views. With all its trials and sorrows, it is still a precious gem—it may be set in a ring of iron—but it is still a gem! Life may be hidden in the depths, like a rare pearl, but he that, by faith, can act the part of a diver, will fetch the pearl up and see its value. I think an angel in Heaven might be glad to live on earth for the good he might do. If I may be the means of saving souls from Hell. If I can wipe away the mourner’s tears. If God shall help me to bind up the broken in heart and to set free the prisoner. If my fellow man, by my means, can be led in the paths of righteousness. If souls can be snatched from Hell and heirs of earth be made heirs of Heaven by my staying here, then, O God, let me live! I think the life of Methuselah were well purchased, and that we might well tolerate even such a long delay from Heaven if we could serve God better by staying here. Do not look upon life as a curse, Christian! Count it a blessing and seek to make it so. It will be full of weeds and thistles to you if you do not plow it. But if you plow life with persevering industry and earnestness, you will make it like a garden of the Lord. You can make the wilderness blossom like Eden and the desert shall be a very Carmel for joy, so that the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands! Yes, Paul was right when he wrote of life as a blessing, for a blessing it certainly is.

The next thing does not seem to be of any value at all— *“or death.”*But, Beloved, what would life be worth if it were not for death? There are some books that have only plain black letters till you come to the, “Finis,” which is illuminated. So it is often with life—it is printed in black letters till you come to the last leaf—but that page is lit up with glory, for that page is death! O Life, I would call you a curse if I could not see Death behind you! To live here always—who would wish it? To walk perpetually upon this earth and to dwell here absent from the Lord, and present in the body—*that* were, indeed, a curse! But life is a blessing because after life comes death. Yes, death, itself, is a blessing to the Christian! Usually, we look at death, not so much as what it is, as what it appears to be. Death is an angel, the fairest in creation! But Death sometimes dresses itself in terrible garments. It *appears* to be terrible, but it is not. Moreover, we think death to be dreadful because we do not see the whole of death. You know why Belshazzar trembled when he saw the handwriting on the wall—it was because he could see nothing but the hand—he could not see the body. That is why we are afraid of the hand of death, because we see nothing but the hand. If we could see the whole of death, we would count it a cherub! Death, indeed, is not a dreary thing to those who believe in Jesus—those who know how to commune with death from day to day will never be afraid of talking or thinking of it. It is the gate to endless joy—and do we dread to enter there? What is it? The grave is a bath where my body shall, like Esther, bathe itself in spices until its Lord shall say, “Awake!” And I shall rise from my grave, clothed in immortality and glory, to dwell with Him forever!

Death, I have often trembled at you! In midnight hours I have thought it must be terrible to die, and I have shaken at your pale apparition. O Death, your ghastly appearance has sometimes frightened me! I have tried to run away from you, but you are now my slave and I will not tremble at you any more. Death, you are mine! I write you down among my goods and chattels, a part of my property. Take heed how you try to make your master tremble—you are not my master, Death—I am yours! Come here, give me your hand, O Death! Be it mine to talk with myself every day and to talk with you, too. It does us good to see the crossbones and skull and to note in the graveyard the remnants of mortality. It is beneficial to our spirits to look down and see that, however high our powers, our heads must be laid low. However lofty our appearance, we must bend down and our body must become a carnival for worms and must be scattered like the dust of the highway to the four winds of Heaven! It is good to think of that and then to think, with all its gloom, with all that is dismal about it—death is ours!

Oh, it is pleasant to think well of death! I have heard of a good Christian who was asked if she was afraid to die. She replied, “I have dipped my foot in the river Jordan every morning before breakfast for these 40 years and I am not afraid of the current.” It is good to die, at last, when we know what it is to die every day. Paul said, “I die daily.” Well, if we die every day, it will not be hard to die in our last day. You will not be afraid of death if you love the Lord. If you knew death, Believer, you would not be afraid of it, but you would feel it to be a joyous thing. You are thinking of that lonely chamber where the friends stand by your side when you bid them all adieu—you are thinking of the pains and groans and strife— and the dread solemnity of that last hour. But think not of such things! Think, instead, that the Lord will come to meet you, for He will come and your soul will stretch its wings in haste and fly away to Heaven! Would you be afraid to die with Jesus? You would not be afraid if you stood where I sometimes stand, by the bedside of the dying saint. I have taken the hand of such an one and he has said to me, “Brother, this is the place to prove that the Lord is gracious. I am going to be with Jesus! My heart and strength fail me, but He is the strength of my life and my portion forever.” And his eyes have flashed with the very fire of Glory! His lips have breathed sonnets, his looks spoke volumes, his heart seemed overflowing with the bliss of eternity—and his whole soul radiant with immortality! Oh, it is a cheering thing to stand by when a Christian dies, to see him stand on the precipice of life, clapping his wings before he takes his flight, not into a vast unknown, but into a sea of light and love in which he floats until he reaches the gates of Paradise! It is doubly sweet and blessed to witness such a spectacle of joy. Death is ours, then, so we will not fear it, for it is, indeed, a privilege to die one day!

Then, next, *“things present” are*ours. Come, Beloved, let us see what are our “things present” today. One says, “Prosperity is one of my things present. The Lord is blessing me in this world and I have many joys, many comforts, nothing to complain of, everything to be thankful for.” Well, that is yours, but take care, my Brother, that you make it yours to profit by. Alas, prosperity has something of the same effect upon the soul which the holidays of Capua had upon the Roman soldiers—it weakens the soul and takes away its power. Do not let it be so with you! It need not be so, for if, by the working of God’s Spirit, you are sanctified, prosperity may be of use to you, for it is one of the things present that is yours.

“Ah,” says another, *“adversity* is present with me. I am suffering excruciating pain in my body and my circumstances are not what I wish them to be. I am exceedingly pained and driven to and fro. I am like a poor seabird, lost in the wide ocean, tossed up and down from the base of the waves to the billows’ crown.” Adversity is yours. It will do you good, Brother—it will help to gird up your loins and brace your nerves and sinews—it will strengthen you for labor. God has put you in the furnace, “your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.” Look on adversity as a blessing. In everything give God thanks, as much for your trials as for your joys, as much for your temptations as for your deliverances, as much for the bitters in your cup as for the sweets, for the same loving hand that put the one there, mingled the other! All “things present” are yours.

Then there is *Providence.*That is always present and it is yours. “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Then there is *justification.* That is a present mercy—“Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is yours. Then here is *the Bible,* that is a present thing, and it is yours. There is not a precious promise in it, from Genesis to Revelation, but it is yours— there is not a single choice sentence in it, but it is yours. All “things present” belong to you. What else is there? Why, there is *adoption,* for you are now children of God. That is yours. There is *final perseverance,* which God promises even now. He will keep His children and preserve them to the end. That is yours, and whatever you can conceive that is glorious, which is present with you now, is yours!

But now comes the climax— *“things to come.”*These are also yours! What? Are you trembling at the “things to come”? Are you saying, “I dread the future. My poor ship has borne so many storms, I fear to go forward”? Oh, tremble not, the future is yours and, if it should be a future of storms and hurricanes, and tempests and rocks, and quicksand and shoals, it is yours, but your Captain will steer you through! Let *death*be in the future, with its shade and gloom, it is yours. It is one of the “things to come.” Then, after death, the lying in the grave for a time is yours. The *resurrection,* when you shall arise from the grave, is yours. The awful trumpet blast that shall startle the world, the books that are to be opened, the blazing lightning, the terrific thunders are yours. The trembling universe, with all the dread accompaniments *of judgment,*is yours. The Judge, Himself, is yours—your Brother, your Friend!

And the great conflagration, the flying away of Heaven and of earth, the falling of the stars from Heaven like withered fig leaves from the tree—all these are yours, too. The rocking of creation, the tossing to and fro of matter, the earthquake, the trembling spheres, the shaking universe, the dissolving orbs—all these are yours—all that is terrible, majestic, sublime, terrific! All is yours. Let your imagination gather around it all the dread things which are to come. All these are yours. Your soul, enshrined in immortality, shall say, “It is all mine.” The great dread drama which shall receive its terrible consummation after death is yours. If there is a Hell that is horrible to the wicked—as there most assuredly is—it is *not* for you! But if there is a Heaven, glorious and great as it is, it is for you! There is a harp in Heaven which is yours. A crown in Heaven which is yours. Think of the streets of gold, they are yours, for they are “things to come.” Think of the Most High God, Himself—He is yours! And you shall feel Him to be so. O Christian! Heaven is yours! Try, Beloved, to picture Heaven to yourself. I think I hear you say, “Is this Heaven, and am I there? Have I a crown upon my head? Am I clad in white? O glorious world! I never conceived Heaven to be like this! I had pictures, I had dreams, I had imaginations, but this far outshines all that I ever conceived! O wondrous Heaven, how glorious you are! And there is my Christ!”

I know not what you will say of Him—it were almost blasphemy to try to utter words about Him—but when you are with Him, lying on His breast forever, feeling His heart palpitating against yours and knowing that the God-Man has loved you with an everlasting love, and feeling that His heart is forever yours by the sweetest tie of blessed relationship— then you will find that “things to come” are yours, for Heaven has become your actual possession! This, then, is the Christian’s glorious inventory! He is rich, indeed, who owns all these things and who can take up this language—“all things are mine whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.”

**II.**Now, we come to THE TITLE DEEDS. They are drawn up in the name of Christ—“you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”  
As I am, by nature, apart from Christ, none of those things are mine— they are all against me. Death would not be mine without Christ—it would be, indeed, a terrible doom! Life is not mine without Christ—that were dangerous, indeed, to live here without Him. All I have comes to me through Jesus. Come, then, let me look at the title deeds and see if I am interested in them. They consist of two parts. First, “you are Christ’s,” and secondly, “Christ is God’s.”  
*“You are Christ’s.”* Come, Christian, soliloquize thus with yourself— “My Soul, are you Christ’s? Can you say that you are His in a threefold sense? Are you Christ’s by the Father’s donation of you to Christ? Are you Christ’s by the purchase of His blood? And are you Christ’s by your own consecration of yourself to Him? Am I Christ’s *by eternal donation* because God the Father gave me to the Son? Can I look back and see my name written in life’s fair book? Can I, with holy faith, look back and see the roll of destiny and read my name therein? Have I a humble, holy faith that I was given to the Lord long before the foundations of the earth were laid, or the pillars thereof were piled? Am I His? Can I say, “This Covenant, made of old, stands forever fast”? Can I say that I was given to Him? Do I rejoice in that sovereign electing love which gave me to the Savior for no reason whatever in *me*, but simply of His own Grace? If so, that is one proof that I am Christ’s!  
“But again, my Soul, can you look back and see yourself to be Christ’s *by the purchase of His blood?*When you go to Gethsemane, do those drops of gore fall upon the ground for you? When you go to Gabbatha, can you think that ignominy and plucking of the hair was for you? And at Calvary, can you feel that all its agonies and terrors were for you?  
Do *you*feel, dear Friends, that you are Christ’s by the purchase of His blood? At a Primitive Methodist prayer meeting, a Brother was not able to pray and somebody else, further down in the meeting, according to their rather disorderly manner, called out, “Brother plead the blood, plead the blood! Then you will be able to pray!” The Brother understood well enough—he began pleading the blood of Jesus and then he could, indeed, pray! O my Soul, can you plead the blood? My hearer, can you plead the blood? My Brother, my Sister, can you say that the Sacrifice of Jesus was for you? Do you feel that He bought you and paid for you, that His Sacrifice was made for your guilt, that He died especially for your sins? Can you appropriate Jesus to yourself? If so, you can appropriate *everything*, since “you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”  
But, further, we are Christ’s *by consecration.*Beloved, are *you*thus Christ’s? “Do know the place, the plot of ground, where you met Jesus?” Ah, some of us can look back and tell to an inch, the spot where we first gave our hearts to Jesus! Many of the Lord’s people cannot do it and it is not necessary that they should, but yet they can, each one, say, “I am my Lord’s and He is mine.” Do you feel, this morning, that you have given yourself to the Lord Jesus. That you are not your own, but, being bought with a price, you have willingly given yourself to Him? Have you taken Christ for your All-in-All and have you given up all to Christ? If Christ were to walk up this aisle and come to each one of you, and say, “Sinner, do you love Me?” What answer would you give Him? If He were now to step from pew to pew and look at each of you, showing you His scarred hands with the print of the nails, and asking, “Will you give yourself to Me?” What would your answer be? Do you wish to give yourselves up wholly to Christ? Have you done so? Then, “all things are yours” because you are Christ’s! By consecration you have given yourselves to Him.  
If you consecrate yourselves to Jesus, you will never find Him a hard Master. I have known Him some little while and He has been exceedingly kind to His unworthy servant. I have nothing in which to find fault with Him, but much with myself. He is a blessed Master. O youth, or maiden, if you would love Him, you would find Him worthy of your love in all respects! Why, I think His very name is enough to make you love Him! “My Master! How sweetly does ‘my Master’ sound! Yes, He is my Master and your Master if you have become His servant and have given yourselves to Him. But, if you are not Christ’s, you have nothing—you are a poor miserable creature! How can you live if you are not Christ’s? How will you face grim death? How will you stand before Christ when He shall sit on His Throne? Do you think that you shall be able to hear His thundering voice say, “Depart, you cursed”? Are your ribs of steel, and bones of brass? If they are, they will be broken when He speaks in His wrath! O then, Beloved, “Kiss the Son, lest He is angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”  
I must only hint at the other portion. In order to link us thoroughly with God, there is something else besides our being Christ’s, and that is, “Christ is *God’s.”*With one hand Christ links Himself to men, with the other He is joined to God. And thus God and men are united. Oh, think of this! There is a link between you and the Godhead! The God that you cannot conceive of—the hem of whose garments are dark with ineffable light, too splendid for man to view—that mighty God, filling immensity, the Infinite, the All Things in One, is linked with you! Christ gives you His hand—He is your Brother, flesh and blood like yourself—and He gives God His hand, for He is the equal of the Eternal, the infinite God, very God of very God, and yet, very Man of very Man! Oh, what a glorious thought, that my deed is stamped by the Father and by the Son! It has the seal of Them both! “You are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” And having Christ and being Christ’s, I have all things in Him. “All things are yours. For you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”  
Before I come to the third point, let me ask you, dear Friends, to put this question to your conscience. *Are you Christ’s?* Oh, how many there are who attend God’s House and never feel any personal application of the Truth of God! How many are there of you who sit Sunday after Sunday, and weekday after weekday hearing sermons and never getting any profit from them? O Sirs, preaching is not child’s play! Some persons say, “I will go and hear Mr. So-and-So,” and they go—just to amuse themselves! Do you think that a true minister will preach to amuse you? Is it his business to do so? Oh, believe me, it is solemn work to stand and speak for God and in His name! Did you ever think what it is to preach God’s Word? Oh, if at the Last Great Day it shall be shown that we have not preached faithfully to you, if we have not declared the whole counsel of God, you, indeed, must perish, but your blood will be required at our hands!  
And then, do you know what solemn work it is to hear? Oh, if the damned spirits in Hell could come to earth, they would let you know what solemn work it is to hear the Gospel! Think not that you can hear the Gospel without having your salvation or damnation affected—there is not a Word of the Gospel that ever enters into man’s ear for which he shall not be brought to account! I beseech you, as you believe in the Bible, as you believe that there is no salvation out of Christ, to lay these things to heart! They are not trifles, they are not imaginary things, they are not that which concerns your body—they concern your eternal existence! You are rich, or else you are poor. You are Christ’s or the devil’s! You are on the road to Heaven or to Hell—which is it? Oh, let the question ring through your *ears—which is it, Heaven or Hell? Which is it?* HEAVEN OR HELL? Oh, let not that question, if it is ever so harshly spoken, be rejected by you! Answer the question to your soul and if you are honestly obliged to say, “I fear I am on the road to Hell,” then remember, if you feel *that—*if you confess your sin, Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Not everybody, but, “sinners”—all those who will acknowledge and confess that title shall be saved by Divine Grace! If you are a sinner and you trust Him, He will most assuredly and certainly save you!  
**III.**Now, lastly, WHAT IS THE DUTY OF A MAN WHO HAS SUCH LARGE POSSESSIONS? “Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.”  
If a man has everything, he has no need to glory in some one little thing. If a man has only one gold ring, you will see him wearing it on his finger every day—and putting his hand in such a position that everybody may see it. But he who has far more, need not be particular about just one ring being seen! Does the Queen care that other people know what plate and jewels she has at Windsor? Everybody knows that she is rich, that she has an abundance and, therefore, it is not necessary that she should display a portion of it. Whenever you find a person glorying in some little thing, you may be sure he is acting contrary to what he should be. I cannot conceive how a Christian man, who has everything, can be proud because he has a little talent, or a little wealth, or position, or station! Do not be proud of that, but say, “That is one stone in my estate—it is one little pebble that lies in one of the brooks in my large domains. True, it is mine, but it is nothing to boast of.” “Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours.” Do not be boasting, then, about one thing when all things are yours! The little child, when it has a present, shows it to every person who comes into the house, but when the child becomes a man, he shows not everything that he has, yet he has more possessions than he had before. Thus the worldling may glory in his riches and boast of his strength, but, Christians, you are too far advanced for this—you are too wise, “for all things are yours”—and surely you will not attach undue importance to one.  
Now, what does this subject say practically to you? One of you has lost a friend. You are weeping and saying, “I have lost everything.” No, you have not—“for all things are yours.” He may have been a precious friend, a most loving one that you have lost. It may be a deep trial, but *think what you have.*You have God! Your sins are forgiven! You have the righteousness of Christ! You have not lost that. It is only some pennies which are gone—your gold is safe, your jewels are not taken away. “But I have lost my jewels,” you say. Have you? Ah, then, you do not know Christ, for you would not venture to call anything a jewel except the precious Lord Jesus! Is it not wrong for you to bemoan and weep so perpetually when “all things are yours”? Another one is expecting such-andsuch a relative to be taken away and is weeping over an expected loss. Now you have no promise to help you, for you weep before your trouble comes! God does not promise that He will help you who manufacture your own troubles. Remember, you cannot lose the title deeds of your possessions. If you have lost your copy, you can get another, for the old deed is up in the ark in Heaven!  
Now, by way of a practical hint, I might say, if “all things are yours,” *how willing you ought to be to give something to the cause of God!* A man who is poor and has nothing is never expected to give. But a man who has “all things,” should give like a prince! There are many princes in Israel who have all things in their possession and I am sure I may ask them to give something for the Lord’s cause.  
But I again come back to this all-important question—we must not put it away. We must give an answer to it, either now, or at God’s bar— *Are we Christ’s?*Some of you, I fear, are not Christ’s. You are none of His because your conversation is carnal, your actions are worldly, your behavior is inconsistent and your lives are reproachable. Then, you are not Christ’s. Some of you are not Christ’s because you are trusting in your own righteousness and not leaning on the blood and righteousness of Christ alone. But we hope that there are some of you who have stripped yourselves of everything and have taken Christ for your All-in-All. If, devoid of all goodness, you make Christ your goodness—if, devoid of everything, you take Christ for all, then He is yours. Hence, you may revel in delights and let your heart leap for joy! Let your melancholy be dissipated and your tears be all dried up! You may rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, for this world is yours, the world to come is yours and Heaven shall be your happy home forever!  
The Lord grant that it may be so with all of you when He shall make up His jewels! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #870 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THINGS PRESENT  
NO. 870

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Things present, all are yours.” 1 Corinthians 3:22.~~***

SOME of the Corinthians had attached themselves to one great religious teacher and others to another. There was a disposition among them to set up rival leaders of opposing parties—a band would follow Paul, another company admired Apollos—and a third extolled Peter. The Apostle, in order to take the minds of Believers off estimating any one of their blessings at too high a rate, leads them to contemplate the exceeding length and breadth of the treasures which God had given to them. Why should they glory in *man* when *all things* were theirs? It is the part of a poor man to set a great value upon the one thing in which he delights.

As in the parable of Nathan, the poor man had but one ewe lamb. This lay in his bosom, and was fed from his own table. He who was possessor of 10,000 sheep in the valley of Jezreel thought but little of any one lamb. Even so, if Believers were poor and God had given them but one mercy and that one mercy were either Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, it were but according to nature that they should exalt the gift and prize it at the highest conceivable rate. But when the bounteous Lord has given to His people *all* ministries and *countless* spiritual blessings, it becomes unseemly in those who are so rich, to glory in any one part of their portion.

Even as it has been said—  
***“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,  
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring,”***

so the sense of possession exercised upon a little will contract and hamper the soul, but a sense of great, yes, *infinite* possession, will enlarge and ennoble us. If our mind, enlarged and stimulated by faith, can stretch its arms like seas and grasp the whole shore of the present and of the future—and seize upon all things as given us by the bounty of Heaven—we shall be cured of the tendency to exaggerate the value of our merely temporal mercies. And all shall so be delivered from covetousness.

How shall they thirst who swim in the cool clear stream? How shall they hunger who sit down at banquets where the provision is beyond all measure? Happy are they who are too rich to care for gold, too happy to hunt after joy, too exalted to be proud, too high to be lifted up! Among the matters which Paul catalogs as belonging to Believers, he enters this item, which contains a mass of mercy, “things present.” This is a *huge* nugget of virgin gold and one which the mind is ever ready to appreciate. We reckon present things at the highest rate—as the old proverb has it—“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

Things present—though in very truth they may be far inferior to things to come, or even in certain respects less precious than the things of the past—yet usually exercise the greatest influence over us from their nearness. It is so even as the moon, though far less than the sun, has the greater power over the earth because she is so much nearer to it. A *present* mercy rates higher in the market than a great blessing which was received years ago and now only lives in our memory. A crust for present hunger is better than the festival of last year, and a small inconvenience, if pressing upon us at this present moment, will distress us far more than the great trial which is threatened, or the still greater affliction which has passed over us.

A slight shower of rain today will more inconvenience you than the heavy snowstorm which overtook you on the Alps seven years ago. The little present, to our apprehension, eclipses the great past or the greater future. Since, then, from the constitution of our nature, we are so out of all proportion affected by *present* things, it is well for us to look at them until we can see them in the bright light which this text casts upon them. Then we shall be all the happier and, being the happier, all the stronger for good. Present things, then, Believer, be they bright or dark, present things—through the Covenant of Grace—are yours today!

**I.**Subdividing this great and comprehensive term, we shall first observe that in the ease of the true Christian, HIS TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS are his own. You will say that this is a most trite remark. So be it. Yet, as a brown husk may hide a golden seed, so may there be important truths within a plain sentence. The ungodly man for awhile engrosses the good things of this life, but they are sent to him oftentimes in anger. They bring a curse with them and are taken away again in wrath. They are not his in the same cheering sense in which they belong to the children of God.

As for you, O true Believer, whatever of earthly good the Lord has apportioned you is in a peculiar sense and in a most blessed manner, your own. I grant you that all our worldly goods belong to God and that we are but stewards of whatever He bestows upon us. Yet, for all that, the good things of this life are ours by a deed of gift far more valid than the titledeeds of noble families or the charters of kings! God gives us all things richly to enjoy, and rights established upon Divine gift are beyond dispute.

When the Lord makes our lines to fall in pleasant places, we are not to receive the gifts of Providence with fear and trembling, as if they were not lawful to be held by Christians. Nor are we to look at them with shy suspicion, as if they could not be consecrated to noblest ends. The temporal gifts of Heaven are ours, as the text declares, and we are bound to regard them as love gifts of our Covenant God. It is a great comfort when a man knows in his conscience, “What I have, be it little or much, is mine, at least in this sense, that I have honestly come by it.” The Christian owns no stolen property or unrighteous gain.

A thief may secure his goodly Babylonian garment and his wedge of gold, but when he has gotten it, though no other man claims it, yet it is not his—he must bury it in the earth, it is a stolen thing—a thing accursed and bringing evil with it. How can men live in peace with fraudulent property about them? David, when he gets the water from the well at Bethlehem, acts towards it as every honest spirit would act towards gold and silver accumulated in unjustifiable speculations, or coined out of the savings of the defrauded poor, or gathered by adulteration and trickery— David would not drink the water, but poured it out! And some men’s riches might well be poured out even into Hell itself, where devils might rue the draught if they dared to drink there.

Ill-gotten substance will rot the belly which is filled with it. Dishonest persons may be purse-proud and live in great style, but none of their riches are, in truth, their own. Like the jackdaw in the fable, they wear borrowed plumes. Though no man may get back his own from the man of fraud and no court of law may make him disgorge, yet his gettings are not his, or only his so as to sting him in the end as does a viper. But what *you* have, Believer, is your own! In the getting of it you remembered your Master’s word and abstained from covetousness. You strained not after it with an unhallowed greed and now, when it comes to you, though it is not your god and you do not value it in comparison with *spiritual* blessings, yet it comes with this satisfaction—that you have not gathered it with unrighteous hands.

The Believer’s possessions are his own because *acknowledged to the great Giver with becoming gratitude.*Gratitude is, as it were, the quit rent to the great superior Owner and until we discharge the claim, our goods are not lawfully ours in the court of Heaven. Some lands are held upon the tenure of a peppercorn—so are our daily mercies. At each meal there should be this payment of the peppercorn in the giving of thanks, which is peculiarly a Christian custom to be carefully observed. On our anniversary occasions—our birthdays and times of memorial—there should be special seasons for blessing the name of the Lord, and, indeed, whenever any great blessing is brought home (and what if I say *any* blessing, for, to such as we are, all blessings are great?), there should be the payment of hearty gratitude, for then only, the mercy becomes legitimately ours!

Wealth is not truly ours till we thank the Lord for it. We have not paid the royal dues upon it—it is contraband and we are illegally using it. Beloved, as you have not failed to give unto the Lord your loving thanks, your mercies are now yours to enjoy as in His sight. I hope, too, that the most of my Brethren can feel that their temporal possessions are theirs because they have *conscientiously consecrated the due portion*which belongs to God. From the loaf there should be cut the crust for the hungry. From the purse there should come the help for the Lord’s work. The tithing of the substance is the true title to the substance. It is not altogether yours till you have proved your gratitude by your proportionate gift to the cause of the Master.

Cheerfully may we look upon the heap which remains when of the gold and the silver a portion has been given to God to conserve the rest from the rust and the canker. You may eat of your harvest with gladness when the Lord’s sheaf has been waved and your increase shall be sweet when the first fruits have been laid on the altar. All things are yours in a special manner when dedicated in tithe and sanctified by gratitude. Our mercies are our own, too, because we seek to be*graciously guided in the use of them.* We dare not spend them on our lusts—they are not ours for such a purpose. They are not bestowed upon us so absolutely that we may set them up and cry, “These are your gods, O Israel.” They are ours within the lines of Law and Gospel—ours within bounds of sobriety and holiness— ours not as gods, but as gourds. Ours not as masters, but as mercies.

We eat and drink feeling that God, even our own God, has blessed our basket and our store. And therefore whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to His Glory! We put on our raiment with joy because the Lord thus clothes us. That which we possess the Lord has cleansed and therefore we count it no longer common or unclean. The benediction of Heaven sweetens the lawful use of earthly goods. The nether springs are the more delightful because drops from the upper springs fall into them. To see God’s hand in every temporal mercy is to enjoy life! But, alas, some men will not so see the hand of God, but only see the bare mercy and fall in love with the creature to the neglect of the Creator. Their worldly goods are perverted into stumbling-stones and are no longer as they should be, a ladder to lift us nearer to God.

Beloved in Christ Jesus, whatever God has given you in this life, upon the conditions which I have already mentioned, are yours, ceded to you by Divine love! Need I say it is not required of you to play the ascetic? John came neither eating nor drinking—you are not John’s disciple! The Son of Man, who is your Master, came both eating and drinking. There is no piety whatever in your accounting the gifts of Providence as necessarily temptations. You can make them so, but that is your folly and no fault of theirs. If God has blessed you with wealth or competence, use your substance with joy for His Glory and the good of your fellow men and see upon all that you have the smile of Heaven! Sit not down sullenly to hoard up your gold as though it were a thing of darkness to be concealed, but arise and use the gifts of God in the light and in gladness!

Vain are those who sneer at Nature and the lavish bounty thereof. To me the sunshine is Jehovah’s smile and the grass which grows beneath my feet is beaming with 10,000 flowers, all speaking out my Father’s thoughts of kindness towards me. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” This planet is no Pandemonium or Topher! It is no sin to gaze with delight upon verdant valleys and majestic mountains! It is no crime to enjoy the beauties of Nature, but a sign of idiocy to be unaffected thereby! Fair scenes, sweet sounds, balmy odors and fresh gales—your Father sends them to you—take them and be thankful!

If there are any men in this world to whom Nature belongs, these men are the children of the living God! I count it squeamish, sickly sentimentalism and not manly piety, which leads certain excellent men to depreciate their Maker’s works and speak of river and forest and lake and ocean as if evil spirits haunted every scene and the whole earth were a temple of Satan! My Brothers and Sisters, it is true that the creation has been made subject to vanity, but not willingly! And that unwillingness of God causes a sunlight upon Nature which Mercy would have her children perceive and rejoice in—

***“The earth with its store  
Of wonders untold, almighty!  
Your power has founded of old;  
Has stablish’d it fast  
By a changeless decree,  
And round it has cast,  
Like a mantle, the sea.  
Your bountiful care  
What tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air,  
It shines in the light,  
It streams from the hills,  
It descends to the plain,  
And sweetly distils  
In the dew and the rain.  
O measureless might!  
Ineffable love!  
While angels delight  
To hymn You above  
The humbler Creation,  
Though feeble there lays,  
With true adoration  
Shall lisp to Your praise.”***

There is no sin in trees and winds, brooks and lakes and oceans! And in towering mountains, virgin snows and silent glaciers there are no promptings to evil. The sin is in *ourselves* and if we will but be righthearted and ask God to enable us to behold His works with clear and anointed eyes, we may see God Himself mirrored in Creation. At all events, all these present things are ours, neither shall any man rob me of my right to rejoice in the works of God’s hands. Let us note well before we leave this point, that any of God’s saints who are in straits and have but little of this world’s goods—and these are generally the majority of the Church and the holiest and the best—may yet remember that all things are theirs, so that up to the measure of their necessities God will be quite sure to afford them sustenance.

The Lord is your Shepherd and you shall not want. You may be pinched, but you shall not perish. Your strength shall be equal to your day. Your bread shall be given you, your water shall be sure. And, Brother or Sister, remember that a man’s life is not to be judged of by what he *has* or has *not*, but by the contentment of his heart—for there lies all true treasure. Are you content, and can you cast your cares upon God? Then you are richer than a thousand anxious misers and wealthier, far, than 10,000 who eat the bread of carefulness. Are you satisfied to sing***—***

***“Father, I wait Your daily will.  
You shall divide my portion still—  
Give me on earth what seems You best,  
Till death and Heaven reveal the rest”?***

Then you are truly rich! Envy makes men poor—this it is that strips the purple from the prince and dashes the goblet with gall.

Strange is it and yet most true, that covetousness which seems to be the common sin of professors nowadays, is never attributed in God’s Word to any one child of God. They had many faults, but never covetousness! No heir of Heaven was charged with that in the Word of God—that is the vice of Judas, the Son of Perdition and not of Peter, or David, or Lot, or Samson! This evil touches not the saints. Into the deep ditch of greed the saints shall not fall. My poor, but believing Brother, you will thank God that you have but little, believing that it is all that would be good for you. You do ask the Lord to give you, day by day, your daily bread and you have it in answer to prayer and in proof of Divine faithfulness.

Your heavenly Friend may suffer you to be brought very low, but He will not utterly leave you, nor suffer your soul to famish. I pray God the Holy Spirit to enable my dear Brothers and Sisters in their poverty to believe that their need is overruled for their true riches. Whereas an abundance of possessions may bring a blessing, the lack of that abundance is far more constantly a source of good. Our present circumstances, whether prosperous or painful, are Covenant blessings from the God of Grace—

***“If peace and plenty crown my days,  
They help me, Lord, to speak Your praise. If bread of sorrows is my food,  
Those sorrows work my real good.”***

**II.**In the long list of things present we must include TEMPORAL TRIALS. Tribulations are treasures, and if we were wise, we should reckon our afflictions among our rarest jewels. The caverns of sorrow are mines of diamonds. Our earthly possessions may be silver, but temporal trials are, to the saints, invariably gold. We may grow in Divine Grace through what we enjoy, but we probably make the greatest progress through what we *suffer*. Soft gales may be pleasant for Heaven-bound vessels, but rough winds are better. The calm is our way, but God has His way in the whirlwind and He rides on the wings of the wind.

Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Health comes out of their sicknesses and wealth flows out of their poverties. Heir of Heaven, your present trials are yours in the sense of medicine. You need that your soul, like your body, should be dealt with by the beloved Physician. A thousand diseases have sown their seeds within you—one evil will often bring on another and the cure of one too frequently engenders another. You need, therefore, oftentimes to gather the produce of the garden of herbs which is included in your inheritance—a garden which God will be sure to keep well stocked with wormwood and bitters.

From these bitter herbs a potion shall be brewed, as precious as it is pungent, as curative as it is distasteful. Would you root up that herb garden? Would you lay those healing beds all to waste? Ah, then, when next a disease attacks you, how could you expect help? I know the good Physician can heal without the lancet if He wills and restore us without the balm, but for all that, He does not choose to do so, but will use the means of *affliction*—for by these things men live and in all these is the life of their spirit. Be thankful, therefore, for your trials and count them among your treasures.

Our present afflictions also strengthen us greatly. No man becomes a veteran except by practice in arms. We shall not man our fleet with ablebodied seamen at home, on the boisterous deep and in the thundering battle, if we search among mere landsmen and gentlemen whose boldest voyage was on the glassy Thames! Experience works patience and patience brings with it a train of virtues—and all these make the man a man, and cause him to be mighty among his peers! Be grateful, then, for that without which probably you would be always children—apart from which you must remain always untried and consequently unskillful. Be grateful for your present trials and count them the choicest of your goods.

Brothers and Sisters, our trials ought to be greatly valued by us as windows of agates and gates of carbuncle through which we get the clearest views of our Lord Jesus Christ. Trial is the telescope through which we gaze upon the blessed Star of Bethlehem more clearly. Christ says to us, “Come, My Beloved, let us go forth into the field; there will I give you My loves.” When there fails a blight on creature comforts and the withering blast goes out against terrestrial joys, oh, then how bright is the Rose of Sharon and how fair the Lily of the Valley in the esteem of His people! “Come up with Me to My Cross,” says Christ—and the mystic invitation, though it involves so deep an anguish, is not to be rejected!

Do you understand what it is to come up to Christ’s Cross and to be conformed unto His death? It is only as you do this that you will have fellowship with Jesus and understand what His love is towards you. The sufferings of Christ are not learned by the hearing of the ear—though we set them forth constantly to you, yet you will not really comprehend them—it is in the drinking of His cup and being baptized with His baptism, that by sympathy you will comprehend what your Lord really endured for you. Thus will you be more effectually planted with Him in the likeness of His death, that you may be planted in the likeness of His Resurrection.

Brothers and Sisters, you who are cross-bearers this morning! I would remind you for your comfort that you have to bear *the cross, but not the curse*. Your Lord endured both Cross and curse, but to you there is not so much as a drop of Divine anger in all that you are suffering! There may be much vinegar, but no venom! There may be anguish, but there is no anger! Christ has exhausted the penal result of sin—He endured it all and now the cross that comes to you is garlanded with *love.* All over it is inscribed with lines of affection. I know that this is hard to be believed, especially while you are carrying a green cross, new to your shoulder, for this always frets the soul. It is when you become accustomed to sorrow by having borne the yoke in your youth that you fret not and mourn not, as though some strange thing had happened to you.

I cannot speak so favorably of some men’s crosses as I can of the crosses of Believers who patiently wait upon their God, for some make their own crosses in wantonness of discontent. There are crosses made of crab tree, put together by our own wicked temper! And these we ought to burn at once. I can promise you no cures for crosses which you make for yourself. If you plait your own crown of thorns and find your own nails, your own vinegar and sponge, it is your own crucifixion and you may find your own comfort. But when it is Christ’s Cross, a cross that Christ sends, a cross that Providence ordains—remember it is a thing of mercy to be rejoiced in as a blessing of Heaven!

So too, Believer, remember that your Lord sends you *a cross but not a crush.*It is meant to bear you down, but not to break you and grind you in the dust. Your cross is proportioned to your strength. In all the potion there is not one chance atom—the medicine has been compounded by no ordinary skill! Infinite Wisdom, which balanced the clouds and fixed the cornerstone of the world, has been employed to compound the ingredients of your present trial. Your affliction shall not be too much for you—it shall be just such a trial as you require. There shall be no more and no less of weight in it.

It may help to comfort you if you remember that *your cross is not a loss.* It may look like a loss, but it shall only be a putting out to interest that which is taken from you that it may be returned soon with usury. Weep not because the vessel of your present comfort has gone out to sea and you have lost sight of the white sails. It shall come back again to you laden with nobler treasure. Weep not because the sun has gone done, for it descends that the dews may be brought forth and the earth may be watered and the flowers may drip with perfume. Wait awhile and the sun shall come back to you again and the morn shall be the brighter because of the gloom of the night.

O sorrow not, Heir of Heaven, because the skies are clouded—the clouds are big with mercy and each cloud is the mother of 10,000 blossoms and harvests He concealed in yonder darkness! O be confident that among all your jewels, all your precious ornaments and tokens of love that God has given you, you have nothing brighter than the jet jewels of affliction! No diamonds of a finer water than those of trouble! May we understand by faith, then, the great Truth of God that our present trials are our treasures, to be looked upon with thankfulness.

**III.**In the third place, all our CIRCUMSTANTIAL SURROUNDINGS ought to be regarded by us as ours. I have already touched upon a branch of this subject, namely, that all our outward circumstances are meant to be conducive to our perfection. I have already said that our trials and troubles are, by God’s Grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, really made to promote our growth. So ought all, whether of brightness or darkness in our present lot, to be helpful in preparing us for the better land and the mansions of Glory.

I shall also insist upon another point—all our circumstances are ours as subservient to our usefulness. Has this ever struck you? You wish to win souls? Before you enter upon the actual service, you say to yourself, “I wish I were a minister,” but very probably you have not the gift of utterance. You have a family round about you and you are evidently tied to something far other than a pulpit. You have to keep to that farm, to manage the shop. Now the temptation with you will be to say, “These plows and harrows, these bullocks and horses—I do not see how I am to serve God with all these! These scales and yard measures, these groceries and draperies—I cannot see how these can be instruments with which I may serve God.”

Now, my dear Friend, begin by correcting that mistake! All these things are yours and you are, therefore, to look upon them as being not detriments, but *assistants* to the discharge of your peculiar life-work. You are to consider that the position which you occupy is, all things considered, the most advantageous that you could possibly have occupied for doing the utmost that you are capable of doing for the Glory of God! Suppose the mole should cry, “How I could have honored the great Creator if I could have been allowed to fly”? It would have been very foolish, for a mole flying would be a very ridiculous object—while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere.

The fish of the sea might say, “How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree, like a bird!” But you know fish in a tree would be a very grotesque affair and there would be no wisdom of God to admire in fishes climbing trees! But when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat—how exactly its every bone is fitted for its mode of life! Brother, it is just so with you. If you begin to say, “I cannot glorify God where I am, and as I am,” I answer, neither could you anywhere if not where you are! Providence, which arranged your surroundings, appointed them so that, all things being considered, you are in the position in which you can best display the wisdom and the Grace of God.

Now, if you can once accept this as being a fact, it will make a man of you. My Christian Brother, or my dear Sister, it will enable you to serve God with a force which you have not yet obtained, for then, instead of panting for spheres to which you will never reach, you will enquire for immediate duty, asking, “What does my hand find to do?” You need not use your feet to traverse half a nation to find work—it lies close at hand. Your calling is near at home—your vocation lies at the door, and within it. What your hands find to do, do at once and with all your might and you will find such earnest service the best method in which you can glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

“A large family,” says one, “what can I do?” Train them in the fear of God—these children are yours to serve the Lord with! What nobler service can a mother render to the republic upon earth and to the kingdom in Heaven, than to educate her children for Christ? “Working in a large factory with ungodly men, what can I do?” Needless enquiry! What *cannot* the salt do when it is cast among the meat? You, as a piece of salt, are just where you should be! Confine Christians in monasteries and nunneries— why it is like putting salt into a strong iron box and burying it in the ground! No, but the salt of the earth must be cast all over that which is to be conserved by it and each of us must be put in a position where our influence as a Christian will be felt.

“I am sick,” says another, “I am chained to the bed of languishing.” But, my Friend, your patience will magnify the power of Divine Grace and your words of experience will enrich those who listen to you! Your experience will yield a richer wine than ever could have come from you had you not been cast into the winepress and trod by the foot of affliction. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, I cannot go into instances and details, but it is a most certain fact that all about you, though it is a blind eye, a disabled arm, a stammering tongue, a flagging memory, poverty in the house, or sickness in the chamber—though it is derision and scorn and contempt— everything about you is yours! And if you know how to use it rightly, you will turn these disadvantages into advantages and prosper by them.

Look at the seaman when he finds himself out at sea! Does he sit down and fret because the wind will not blow from the quarter that he would most prefer? No, but he tacks about and catches every cupful of wind that can be of use to him and so reaches the haven at last. You are not to expect that God would ordain everything just as *you* would like to have it— spoon feed you with pabulum like babes upon the lap! But He will train and try you and you must make use of all that He sends for the promotion of His Glory. Look at a good commander, he not only selects a good position for his troops, but if he occupies a bad position, he turns that to account and often makes the worse become the better!

To use a very homely illustration, look at yon miller on the village hill. How does he grind his grist? Does he bargain that he will only grind in the west wind, because that is so full of health? No, but the east wind, which searches joints and marrow, makes the millstones revolve and the north and the south are all yoked to service. Even so with Believers—all your ups and your downs, your successes and your defeats are all yours that you may turn them to the Glory of God! Standing here now, and taking a somewhat broader range than our own individualities, let me remind you, Brethren, that on the great and broad scale of Providence all things belong to the Church of God.

There are great changes in politics just now—there will be greater changes still. Fancy not that anything is stable that is of merely human appointing. Imagine not that any form of government can eternally survive the waves of change which break at its base. The ensign of this age is, “Overturn, overturn, overturn, till he shall come whose right it is, and *he* shall have the kingdom.” But there shall be no crumbling columns. There shall be no bowing wall or tottering fence but what shall minister to the solidity of the Church of God! All changes, however radical! All catastrophes, however horrible, shall all happen to the advantage of the cause of Christ!

All things are yours. Earthquakes of popular opinions may make dynasties shake and reel and at last be prone in ruin. Opinions, institutions and customs, which we would gladly conserve at the peril of our lives may be rolled up and cast aside like worn out vestures! Heaven and earth may shake and stars may fall like fig leaves from the tree, but everything must subserve the progress of the conquering kingdom of Christ! His Glory *shall*fill the earth! All flesh *shall*see it together! From land and sea there must yet go up the universal hallelujah unto the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. All things then, O Church of God, are yours!

**IV.**I have somewhat outstripped my time and therefore I must only give a hint or two on the last point. SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES, which are many of them present things, belong to Believers. Now what are they? The favor of God is not for Heaven only—it is ours today. Adoption into His family is not for eternity only—it is for this present time. We are today heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Today to be instructed, to be fed, to be clothed, to be housed, to have the Father’s kiss and live in the Father’s heart! All things are ours! God Himself is ours, our eternal inheritance! Lift up your eyes, O heir of Grace and see what a treasure is opened up to you!

Again, Christ is present and He is ours. There is today a “fountain filled with blood,” which puts away all sin. It is ours! There is a Mercy Seat where all prayer is prevalent—it is open today. It is ours—come to it boldly. There is an Intercessor who takes our prayers and offers them. He is ours, and all His mighty pleas and Divine authority, which makes Him so successful an Advocate, are all at our service today! Not were ours *yesterday*, nor *shall be* ours in some happier hour, but they are ours now!

Are any of you depressed, do you feel yourselves great sinners? Then the fountain is yours as sinners, the Intercessor is yours while you are yet guilty, for it is written, “If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father.” O lay hold upon these present things and rejoice! The Holy Spirit, too, is a present blessing to you! The Comforter comes to you as a present blessing from Christ and He brings you present enlightenment, present guidance, present strength, present consolation! All these are yours—all beams of the seven-branched golden candlestick and all the oil that is treasured up for the lamps. The light and the Source of the light are alike yours and yours, now.

And if, Beloved, there is any promise today written in the Word of God—if there is any blessing today guaranteed to the elect family. If there is any mindfulness of Providence, or any abundance of Divine Grace—all these are yours, and yours, now. Come, then! Why do you pine, you Saints? Why do you mourn and lie upon your dunghills till the dogs of Hell lick your sores? Come, wrap yourselves in your scarlet and fine linen, you Heirs of Heaven! Live according to your portion! Fare according to the banquet! All things are yours! Let those harps be taken from the willows and let that sackcloth and ashes be laid aside. Put on the beautiful apparel of gratitude and sing the song of thankfulness unto the Shepherd who has promised that you shall not want, and whose all-sufficiency will fill your heart, till like a cup it runs over!

May God bless these words and especially bless them to the unconverted, that while they look over the hedge, as it were, and see the fruit that grows from God’s people, they may wish that they had right to enter. If any of you do so wish, let me remind you that there is a door to enter by and that door is Christ! Whoever trusts in Him shall have every mercy of the Covenant to be his present and eternal portion. May you be led so to trust in Jesus and unto God shall be the Glory, world without end. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 23 and John 14.***  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #875 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THINGS TO COME”  
NO. 875

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Things to come, all are yours.” 1 Corinthians 3:22.~~***

A SHORT time ago we meditated upon the former words of this verse, “Things present, all are yours.” [“Things Present,” #870, Vol. 15.] Friends have asserted that it was a pleasant and profitable meditation—may we have more than equal of the blessing of God’s Spirit this morning. The waters are deeper in the things to come than in the things present, but they are, every drop of them, as sweet. The horizon is wider in the future than in the present, but it its equally clear. If the clouds which threaten us in the future are darker than any we have up to now experienced, the Covenant rainbow shall span them all. And if the glories which are to be revealed are more sublime than any we have yet beheld, they are as certainly ours as those of less bewildering luster, for there are no hesitations here, but plainly and boldly does the text assert, “Things to come, all are yours.”

Without further preface let us advance at once to consider the cheering truth of the text. First, let us view *the general future as ours.* Then let us rejoice that *the brightest of all the future is ours.* And lastly, *if ours, what light does the future cast upon the present*?

**I.**First, THE BROAD FUTURE IS OURS. We are very apt to wish to pry into it by vain forebodings and vainer prognostications, but Divine Grace forbids us to indulge such impertinence and foolish curiosity. The leaves of the book of destiny are folded. The volume is sealed as with seven seals—you need not desire to read a single line, however—for the Lord tells you that whatever may be recorded in it, it is all yours! It must all work for your good. It must all promote your highest happiness.

Why should you wish to see the mystic writing for yourself? Your faith is sure of the issue—let that content you. In the dark days of superstition, the pretended magician would hold up a crystal globe and bid his dupe look in it, and when he saw nothing, he would tell him that he had an untaught, unaccustomed eye. But when the soothsayer stared into that ball himself, he pretended that he saw the future. My text is a crystal ball which does *not* tell you what the future shall be as to facts and minutiae, but it assures you concerning all coming events what it is far better for you to know—that all things are yours, if you are Christ’s—all future things are vested in your name, to be your possession by a Covenant of salt to minister to your comfort and to increase your highest wealth.

Let that content you. Gaze not through the telescope to see the future, lest you breathe upon the glass and then mistake the haze of your own breath for thick clouds and overshadowing tempests. Be content to quiet vain curiosity by leaving the future in His hands to whom it is even now present. The Lord your God will surely bear your burdens, therefore be quiet as a weaning child. We may expect in the future, Brethren, such a degree of joy as may be fitting this side Canaan. Albeit that the mention of the word, “future,” inevitably suggests to anxious mind’s dreams of dread, yet we have no reason to expect that the rest of our life will be more unhappy than the years which are passed already with the years beyond the flood.

As Christians, we dare not and would not murmur at Providential appointments. Life to us has had its sorrows, but goodness and mercy have followed us up to now and they shall, with equal certainty, follow us all the days of our life. Though this is not our rest and we are strangers and foreigners, as all our fathers were, yet for all this, “He makes us to lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside still waters.” “The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage.” We will not speak ill of God’s name who daily loads us with benefits, but we will sing, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

We have reason to expect that in the future our lot will include a fair measure of joy, even as the past has done. Summers will bring their flowers and autumns their mellow fruits. Days shall be bright with sunlight and nights gorgeous with moon and stars. Whatever is beautiful shall still give its rill of joy. Whatever is tender shall yield its ray of comfort. Perhaps to sorrowful hearts the brightest part of their mortal existence is yet to come—they shall pass from Bochim to Beulah. Lay hold on this hope, poor Weeper! You who are in the heyday of your youth, looking to the joys of the future, reckon not too surely upon them—but still you have a right to expect a measure of joy even here below. You who are struggling in the service of your Divine Master, you may reckon up the joy or success, or at least of acceptance at His hands. You who are contending against sin may anticipate the joy of conquest. You who are planning how you can serve God on a wider scale and in a wiser manner may expect the joy of His guidance.

The Truth of God which I desire to bring before your minds is this— these joys which God may allot to you in the future are yours. Start not back from them as though the golden goblet of Divine love must necessarily be filled with a poisoned wine. Mercy may be abused into sin, but in itself the bounty of Providence is pure. No, Sirs, when God gives pleasure it is safe, pure and elevating—you need not suspect its character. There is a joy of the Lord which is the strength of godly souls. There is a rejoicing in Christ Jesus which makes fat the bones and causes the soul to sing! And it purifies the nature by the Divinity of its power, making us live above the inferior joys of sin because we possess higher and nobler delights.

Believer in Christ Jesus, be not afraid of future comfort—it is yours! All things are yours and in the things to come, if there is anything that is bright, anything that is sparkling, anything that is precious, anything that can make you glad, anything that can make your tongue sing loud hallelujahs, accept it right cheerfully from the hand of your Covenant-keeping God and say, “It is mine.” Still, though we touch that string, we have to return to the old paths and remind you that in the future, without any foolish forebodings, you may expect troubles. Necessarily and unavoidably, if you and I shall be spared to live to an old age, there are certain trials that must happen to us.

Changes in circumstances may arise. Poverty may supplant wealth and slander replace fame. Where barns were filled to bursting, there may arise a famine. And those whose broad acres could scarcely be traversed in a day, may come to a scanty plot of ground, or none at all. But if that does not happen to you, yet at any rate your friends must die, if you do not. Those who, in your younger days were your familiar acquaintances and companions, must pass away and if you survive, you shall gradually find yourself like a lone tree of the forest when the woodman, month after month has exercised his craft.

They that knew you shall have departed and the generation that has followed shall not know Joseph. During the lapse of years your children, one by one, may die. Your spouse so dear to your soul may be taken from you. Brothers and Sisters may also leave the vale of tears. It must be so. Can you hope that the arrows of death will forever turn aside from your family? Are you of an immortal race and your children and your sires and all you love—are these immortal, too? No, they must depart, so Nature has decreed. We must expect, sooner or later, that infirmities of body will set in. To some they come, alas, too soon, but to all they must come in their time. The windows, little by little are darkened. The pillars of the house tremble. The grinders fail because they are few and the strong man finds the grasshopper to be a burden.

These things must come. To all men are such trials measured out. And there must come temptations and inward conflicts and outward afflictions, in all which we shall have need to possess our souls in patience lest we be overcome by evil. Trials will arise from our own household, even more severe than if our Absalom had been cut off by death. Alas, how often is the living cross far more heavy and galling than if it had been dead. And certainly to us all there must come (unless Christ shall soon appear) the valley of death-shade, the passage of the black river, the clammy sweat and the mortal anguish of the last dread hour, “for it is appointed unto men once to die.”

Alas, our fears find it an easy task to paint a very terrible picture out of these gloomy materials. The pains and groans of our dying strife frighten us. The giants, the hills of difficulty and the valleys of humiliation alarm us. We picture the path of the heavenly pilgrimage as a valley of the shadow of death—throughout full of confusion, dark with adversities, beset with snares—watched over by dragons and blocked up by Apollyons. Let our text *encourage* us, for it declares to us that all these things are ours! There is not in the whole area of our future life a single plot of stony ground which shall not yield us fertile harvests of joy.

As Midas of old touched even the most valueless objects and turned them into gold, so does the hand of Divine Love transmute every trial and affliction into everlasting joy for His people. Two seeds lie before us—the one is warmed in the sun—the other falls from the sower’s hand into the cold dark earth and there it lies buried beneath the soil. That seed which suns itself in the noontide beam may rejoice in the light in which it basks, but it is liable to be devoured by the birds, and certainly nothing can come of it, however long it may linger above ground. But the other seed, hidden beneath the clods in a damp, dark sepulcher, soon swells, germinates, bursts its sheath, upheaves the mold, springs up a green blade, buds, blossoms, becomes a flower, exhales perfume and loads the wings of every wind!

Better far for the seed to pass into the earth and die, than to lie in the sunshine and produce no fruit—and even thus for you the future, in its sorrow, shall be as a sowing in a fertile land—tears shall moisten you, Divine Grace shall increase within you—and you shall grow up in the likeness of your Lord unto perfection of holiness, to be such a flower of God’s own planting as even angels shall delight to gaze upon in the day of your transplanting to celestial soil! All the future is yours! I trust the Holy Spirit will make this Truth of God full of comfort to you, for to my own soul it is as balm to a bleeding wound, or a cool wind to a fevered cheek.

If I can but be persuaded that every occurrence of the future will most surely work for my good and is by God’s decree ordained to be a *blessing* to me and an honor to Himself, then, it seems to me, I can have no choice—for no evil can happen to me and seeming ill is but another form of benediction. If all events shall aid me, what matters in what dress they come, whether of scarlet and fine linen, or sackcloth and ashes? Trial may be very hard to bear for a time, but since in the very hardness of the endurance lies the *blessing*, the bitter is sweet and the medicine is food. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, you shall meet nothing but friends between this and the pearly gates, or, if you meet an enemy, it shall be a conquered one who shall crouch at your feet and you shall put your foot on his neck and win a brighter victory and a heavier crown because of the encounter!

Courage, Brothers and Sisters, the winds which toss the waves of the Atlantic of your life are all sworn to bring your boat safely into the desired haven! Every wind that rises, whether soft or fierce, is a Divine monsoon, hurrying in the same direction as your soul’s desires is aiming. God walks the tempest and rules the storm! Order reigns supreme in the uproars of elements or men, for the Divine hand compels the most rebellious creatures to obey without fail the Divine and all-wise decree. What cheer is this for the saints of God!

Passing on a little further in the Word of God, we have certain dark hints as to the grand events of the future which concern the Church and the world. I must confess myself to be, in the presence of the writings of Ezekiel and Jeremiah and John of Patmos, as a little child wandering through the museum, marveling at the Egyptian hieroglyphs and the Assyrian cuneiform characters, but quite unable to spell them out. I fancy, sometimes, that I have the key of the mysteries and soon discover some new form of Divine symbology which quite confuses me and makes me confess that I am but of yesterday and know nothing.

Yet does it appear that we are to expect the overturning of many things which now we regard as permanent. The rule of the coming ages is to be, “overturn, overturn,” till He shall come whose right it is. Heaving and convulsions there will be till all the things which can be shaken will be removed in the general conflagration when the earth and all the works that are in it shall be burned up and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. I am not putting these events in order, for I do not even*know* their order—and am neither a prophet nor an expounder of prophecy—but it is clear we are to look for the establishment of the Jews in their own land and the conversion of Israel with the fullness of the nations.

We are to expect the literal advent of Jesus Christ, for He Himself, by His angel told us, “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven,” which must mean literally and in Person. We expect a reigning Christ on earth—that seems to us to be very plain and to be put so literally that we dare not spiritualize it. We anticipate a first and a second resurrection—a first resurrection of the righteous and a second resurrection of the ungodly who shall be judged, condemned and punished forever by the sentence of the great King.

We foresee from the Word, despite its obscurity, that strange and wonderful events will happen such as are depicted by vials and warriors with avenging swords and falling stars and a shriveled sky and a reeling earth and I know not what beside. But when we have put all together and have been sorely amazed at the visions that flit before us like dreams of the night, we rejoice to learn at the end of them all, “All these things are ours, whatever they may be.”

In the present political crisis there is much alarm and trepidation felt by some as to what may become of a movement which is very dear to most of us, and to accomplish which we would almost be prepared to die. But I foresee in the distance no adversary who can long withstand us and the brief opposition which may be offered will increase the ultimate victory. All things that shall happen, be they ever so cross to your thoughts and counter to your wishes, will, nevertheless, come up, like Blucher at Waterloo, at the exact moment when they shall help on the grand old cause! Justice must reign! The Church of God must be free from her adulterous connection with the State.

God orders everything in Providence—neither the good by excess of zeal, nor the bad by their malice shall mar His work. Through the thick darkness I hear the tramp of another host marching to battle and though I cannot see their plumes, yet I am assured that whether friend or foe, they must, before the battle is over, have yielded no mean service to our holy cause. Homage must be done, even by the powers of darkness, to the great King, the Lord of Hosts. Therefore, by the Cross and by the crown of Jesus, you lovers of truth and justice, you children of a free Church and a just God, charge home against the foes of God and man, who, under pretense of religion would continue to oppress the sister isle!

You that love the Lord, hate evil, abhor the doing of evil that good may come. Believe in the true and the just, but have no faith in wrong. Jesus your Lord would not worship Satan though all nations were showed him as a bribe, neither must we be guilty of injustice, though we anticipated from it the happiest results. Let right be done, come what may. Consequences are with God—duty alone is ours. Sever the Church from the State let it cost what it may. Even if for the moment advantage should seem to be given to the enemies of our faith, it is but so in appearance, or if it were real we can afford to give it to them and yet defeat them!

We can hurl down, this day, the gauntlet of our God and of His Christ in the presence of earth and Hell and let those take it up who dare! With all the deadliest odds against us we shall triumph yet, for the Lord is in the midst of His Church and therefore is she invincible. We will give Goliath his leg armor of brass, his spear, his armor and his shield, for what are these? The Lord’s power and a stone from His servant’s sling shall lay the monster in the dust! Let every Christian, then, look forward to future events, on the largest scale, with complete complacency. Let empires shake. Let crowns fall from anointed heads. Let the great ones of the earth put their hands upon their loins like women in travail. Let those that were full hire themselves out for bread and let the rulers be astonished. But as surely as God is God, the day comes when the Lord will maintain the right and avenge the oppressed and set up His Great White Throne from which He will “judge the poor,” and “save the children of the needy,” and “break in pieces the oppressor.” So be it, good Lord, and we will bless Your name!

Once more, among the things to come, we mainly consider the Heaven of God and the eternal blessedness which are ordained for the righteous. Now, whatever Heaven is and wherever Heaven may be, this one thing the text declares, that it is *ours*. The Heaven of the separate spirit *before* the resurrection, the place where disembodied souls dwell with Christ—this is ours. The perfect Heaven of the saints, after the body shall be raised in the likeness of Christ, when soul and body in one man shall sit down at the right hand of God—all this is *ours*. To attempt to describe Heaven as some have sought to do is to prove our folly. It shall suffice us to wait till we enjoy it! And meanwhile we will comfort ourselves with this thought— that all its delights are ours!

**II.**I shall beg your special attention, in the second place, to THE BRIGHT ETERNAL FUTURE as being ours. Come with me, dear Hearers, again to the text. Come with me and let down the bucket and draw the water fresh and living from the ever-springing well. “Things to come, all are yours.” Notice that the text is not in the subjunctive mood—it reads not “all *may*be yours.” According to the doctrine of certain esteemed Brethren, a Christian may have a *hope* of Heaven, but he can never have a *certainty* of it, for a child of God may go back into perdition and an heir of the promises may miss the inheritance.

Alas, there must be scant store of food when the doctrine that the saints may perish everlastingly is not only accepted for a Truth of God but actually regarded as a theme for song! Samaria was shut up when the coarsest offal sold at a high price for food—and men must be thoroughly famished when they desire benefit from words like these—

***“O Lord, with trembling I confess,  
An heir of God may fall from grace.”***  
If it is indeed so, the text ought to run, “It is *possible* that all things to

come may be yours.” “Things to come *may* be yours,” if—if—if—with ifs in a long line, such as *if* you are faithful to Divine Grace. *If* you do this and that. It is premature, I think, on Paul’s part, on our friends’ theory, to say that things to come *are* ours. The Apostle should have waited awhile to see how we hold on. Those angels in Heaven are exceedingly impudent on this theory, for they rejoice in the very bud of Grace “over one sinner that repents.”

Why they should do so if that repentant sinner may, after all, fall back and be damned I can hardly see! Their songs would be more appropriate when the battle is *won*, than when the young knight buckles on his harness. Wise men shout at harvest home and not at seed-sowing. If penitents do not, by God’s Grace, become dwellers in Glory, there is small cause of angelic joy! Ah, the angels believe the Truth of God and doubt not His infallible love—how I wish the saints on earth were all equally sound on a matter of such importance! The angels know full well that such as Jesus has redeemed, such as God has called, such as unfeignedly believe, such as have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit shall be saved!

All things, you faithful in Christ, are yours—not as the Pope gave England to the Spanish king—if he could get it! But all things are laid up, prepared and ordained for you and the grant which Christ has made to you stands good and entails the blessing upon you world without end. “All things to come are yours.” Please notice, too, that the text is not in the future tense—“Things to come *shall be*yours.” If it were so written, it would read most grammatically and according to the strictest requirements of language! “Things to come *shall* be yours” is not enough. How can they be ours till they have come?

The text speaks in the *present* tense. And Brothers and Sisters, all the bliss of the future and the Heaven of God as yet unrevealed are ours at this very moment, for we have a title to them, clear and good. And though, like young nobles who are under age, we come not into our estates until a little time has passed and we have reached our majority, yet those estates are as much ours by indisputable right as if we did possess and enjoy them at this moment. When one of our English kings demanded of his barons where were their title deeds to their lands, a hundred swords flashed from the scabbards, as every man swore to maintain his right by his good sword! We take no sword from its scabbard, but we point to the Person of our blessed Lord in whom we trust, for He is both our God and our right and we are persuaded that as our Surety and our Representative, He will preserve our inheritance for us! The heritage which He claims as Son of God, the devil shall not defraud Him of and since all that He has He has made over to us, our title is good and valid and we are not afraid to claim this day that “things to come *are* ours.”

Notice, again, that in the text there is no exception—“Things to come, *all* are yours.” All! Then there is nothing excepted. Whatever may be the future glory of the saints, it belongs, according to this text, to them all— “All are yours.” And as there is no exception of things, so there is no exception of persons. Not, “All future glories belong to a few of you and only a portion to others,” but all the blessings that are to come belong to all the people to whom Paul was speaking—that is, to all who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called by the Spirit. I mention this because there is a new doctrine springing up (and there is generally a new doctrine every week nowadays)—a new doctrine that some of us who may not hold certain views of the millennium, or who may not be so readily duped as others are with fanatical views of the future—we are not to have a share in the kingdom and to be shut out from many Divine favors.

There is not a word of Scripture to back such an idea, and my text, if there were nothing else, puts its foot upon so wretched a notion and crushes it outright! All that is promised in Scripture. All that Heaven will disclose belongs to every child of God. “All are yours and you are Christ’s.” We shall have them next affirming that some of the saints are not Christ’s. We shall have them claiming to be of a higher caste than we poor Pariah’s who are destitute of their elevated knowledge! Indeed, the one assembly of Jesus Christ, as a certain sect delights to call itself— when it does not utterly excommunicate all who differ from it—when it is in its more charitable mood, promulgates a theory of a sort of aristocracy and democracy of saints! On their theory we may expect to see a gradation of principalities and powers, they themselves occupying places at the right hand of the Lord in His kingdom, while poor benighted Believers like ourselves may charitably be permitted to pick up the crumbs that fall from the rich man’s table!

It is ours to believe that all God’s people are *equally* regenerated, *equally* adopted,*equally* washed in blood, *equally* justified and *equally* made to be inheritors of the possessions which belong to us by the Covenant of Grace. Oh, trouble not your heads with these whimsies of modern fanaticism! “All things to come are yours” if you are Christ’s! Whoever you may be, there is not one mercy excepted from you, nor are you excepted from one of them. Let this be your comfort and delight! The text speaks without a grain of contingency as to the things to come. It does not say Heaven is ours *if* there is a Heaven and glory is ours *if* it shall indeed be revealed—but the blessings are spoken of as though they must come— “Things to come.”

And so, Beloved, our future Glory is ordained by Divine decree. It is hastened on by every event of Providence. It is prepared by the ascension of our blessed Lord and His sitting at the right hand of God. It is existing even now. In measure, beatified saints are already partakers of it and we may rest assured that by no means shall we be defrauded of the bliss which God has promised. To introduce you a moment into this Glory, let me remind you of a choice text, which like a golden gate, leads us into the city. It is in the 16th Psalm, just at the close of it—“You will show me the path of life: in Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand *there are* pleasures forevermore.” Here is as brief and yet complete a description of Heaven as I can well give you.

The things to come thus mentioned belong to all the saints. Life is yours—not mere existence, but life filled with happiness and bliss. Life and the path of it—that mysterious secret which only Jesus could reveal. That narrow path the eagle’s eyes have not seen and the lion’s whelps have not trod. It is the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him. And that path of life is yours today! Think of it! Christ in you is that path of life—He is yours! The life eternal is in you now. The life of Heaven is none other than the life of Believers developed. “I give unto My sheep eternal life.” They have it *now*, the same life that sums itself in the Presence of God is the life which reveals itself this day in prayer, which groans in desire and which sings with holy joy in gratitude to the Most High.

You have already, then, as yours, the life and the path of life which constitute Heaven. “In your Presence,” says the Psalmist—the Divine Presence *is* Heaven! To see the face of God, to be consciously and acceptably near to God—no longer set afar off by sin or divided by frailty, or anything besides—this is our glorious rest! But, Beloved, ours is this Divine Presence *today—*according as we are able to bear it, we behold the face of our Father *now*. Though, by reason of our mortality, we could not endure to behold His unclouded splendor, yet, in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Mediator, we perceive the brightness of the Father’s Glory. Heaven, in the text, is described as nearness to God, in the words, “At Your right hand.”

How near the glorified are in Heaven, only they themselves know, but we are near, also. And though not always near as to our own perception, yet faith rejoices that the justified are a people near unto God—as near, indeed, as Christ Himself is. The right hand is also the place of honor. Kings seat their favorites at their right hand. The inhabitants of Heaven are an honored company, but we, also, though sojourning below, are at God’s right hand this day in a certain respect. Though it does not yet appear what we shall be, yet today are we the sons of God, His chosen and His beloved. The right hand of God is a place of safety, and though immunity from every peril is a thing to come, in a certain sense, yet is it ours to enjoy today—for the Lord covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust. His Truth has become our shield and buckler.

The Psalmist speaks of fullness—“At Your right hand there is fullness of joy.” This bliss, Believer, will fill all your powers to the brim! This exceeding weight of Glory will be more than your heart can conceive! This joy is more than your ear has ever heard men tell of and yet it is all yours and yours today. Though you have not yet reached the everlasting fullness, yet you have tasted some of the spray of its joyous waves and these have made your heart dream of what immortal joys must be. Fullness of *joy* is spoken of by David—here is the suitability of Heaven for us. It is such as to be *really* joy to us, not a banqueting place for angels only, but a festival for men. Our joy shall be the joy of our Lord, the Man Christ Jesus—such joy as will suit our nature.

“At Your right hand there are pleasures.” Here is their *variety*. Heaven’s joys are not one bare delight, but *many* rich pleasures. I cannot stay to read into the catalog now, but heavenly joys shall be like the Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem which brings forth 12 manner of fruits and yields her fruit every month. Robert Hall used to cry, “O for the everlasting rest!” but Wilberforce would sigh to dwell in unbroken love. Hall was a man who suffered—he longed for rest. Wilberforce was a man of amiable spirit, loving society and fellowship—he looked for love.

Hall shall have his rest and Wilberforce shall have his love! There are joys at God’s right hand suitable for the spiritual tastes of all those who shall come there. Best of all, these pleasures are “forevermore!” Mark their continuance—they shall never cease. There shall be no pause in the hallelujahs of Heaven. No nights to eternal days. No winters to close celestial springs. Nor do the words alone declare continuance, they tell of *perpetuity*. “Forevermore.” There shall be no end to the rest which remains for the people of God.

The text says that all which David spoke of is ours and so, indeed, it is. Heaven is ours in the price—the blood of Jesus has opened the gates of Heaven to us. It is ours in the promise, for the Lord has promised eternal life to Believers, and Jesus wills that His people be with Him where He is, that they may behold His Glory. It is ours in the first principles—holiness in the heart is Heaven begun below. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling is the pledge and earnest of our inheritance. Once more, Heaven is ours in our Representative, for Jesus has taken possession on our behalf and its goodly land is seized and claimed by Him who is our Head, our Leader and our All.

Here let us close this part of our meditation and occupy one moment or so with practical truth, light shed upon the action of the present by the brightness of the future.

**III.**Very hurriedly then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, if things to come belong to all the saints, EXAMINE WELL YOUR TITLE-DEEDS, to see whether they belong to *you*. It will help you if you remember that the saints are Christ’s. Are you Christ’s? Do you trust Him? Do you love Him and serve Him? If so, your title is clear and all future things are yours. Next, set greatest store by your best treasure, and, as the best things are *to come*, let go of the present. The present is a shadow, a bubble that is dissolved—the future lasts forever. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be.

Rejoice even now, I pray you, in your inheritance. As you are thus rich, let your spending money be dealt out with a generous hand. You are on your way to the mansions of the blessed—rejoice as you make the pilgrimage. If you have no present reason for thankfulness, yet the future may yield you much. Break forth, therefore, into joy and singing and with songs and everlasting joy upon your head make your way towards Zion. If it is so, that all the future is yours, meditate much upon it—make Heaven the subject of your daily thoughts. Live not on this present, which is but food for swine, but live on the future, which is meat for angels!

How refined will be your communications if your meditations are sublime! Your life will be heavenly if your musings are heavenly. Take wings to your spirit and dwell among the angels. All these things are yours— then prepare for them. Day by day, in the all-cleansing blood of Jesus, which is the path of purity, wash your souls. By repentance cast off every sin. By a renewed application to Jesus and His Spirit, obtain fresh power against every evil. Stand ready for Heaven with your loins girt about and your lamp trimmed. Be waiting for the midnight cry, “Behold the Bridegroom comes!” Let your life be spent in the suburbs of the Celestial City, in a devout sanctity of thought and act. Live upon the doorstep of the pearl gate, always waiting for the time when the angelic messenger shall say, “Come up here.”

If, indeed, all things are yours day by day, gratefully bless God that though you deserve to descend into Hell, you have such a place reserved for you as Heaven. You might have been cast away—the damnation of Hell might have been your only outlook. It is Divine Grace, alone, that has made you to differ and given you a portion among them that are sanctified. Therefore bless God as long as you have any being and let none hinder you in your sacred joy. Praise Him night and day for what He has done for you.

And, lastly, if you have no title for these things to come. If they are none of them yours, be amazed and confounded, for it will be an awful thing for Christ to come and you to have no part in Him—for Heaven to come and you no entrance into it—for then there will remain for you nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation! Alas, for you, judgment shall summon you and the Judge shall condemn you and outer darkness and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth shall be your portion forever!

God grant, poor Soul, that you may lay hold on Christ this morning by an act of simple and humble faith, taking Him to be your only confidence. Thus, and thus only, the blessings of Christ shall become yours. But if you refuse to believe on Christ Jesus, then fearfulness and dismay will lay hold on you in the day when He shall come to judge the world in righteousness according to His Gospel. The Lord bless you richly, each one of you, for His name’s sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 21.***  
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“STEWARDS”  
NO. 3350

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1913.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS’ COLLEGE ASSOCIATION, 1887.~~***

***~~“Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.”  
1 Corinthians 4:1, 2.~~***

MY beloved Brothers—I might even say with Paul, “My dearly beloved and longed for”—it gives me intense delight to look into your faces once again, and yet I feel weighted with a solemn responsibility in having to direct your thoughts at this time so as to give the keynote to our solemn conference. I ask your continued prayers that I may speak aright, saying the right thing in the right way.

There is considerable advantage in the freedom of the usual inaugural address. It may take the methodical form of a sermon, or it may wear looser garments and come forth in the undress of a speech. Certain freedoms which are not usually accorded to a set sermon are allowed me in this rambling discourse. You shall call my talk by what name you choose, when I have done, but it will be a sermon—for I have a very definite and distinct text in my mind—and I shall keep to it with at least an average closeness.

I may as well announce the text, for it will furnish you with a clue to my intent. You will find the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the first verses of the fourth Chapter—*“Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.”*

The Apostle was anxious to be rightly considered and well he might be, for ministers are not often estimated rightly. As a rule, they are either gloried in, or else despised. At the commencement of our ministry, when our stores are fresh, and our energies are full—when we blaze and flash and spend much time in the firework factory—people are apt to think us wonderful beings! And then the Apostle’s word is needed, “Therefore let no man boast in men” (1 Cor 3:21). It is not true, as flatterers insinuate, that in our case the gods have come down in the likeness of men—and we shall be idiots if we think so! In due time foolish expectations will be cured by disappointment and then we shall hear unwelcome truth mingled with unrighteous censure. The idol of yesterday is the butt of today! Nine days, nine weeks, nine months, or nine years—be it more or less— time works disenchantment and changes our position in the world’s view. The primrose day is over, and the nettle months are come! After the time of the singing of birds has passed away, we come nearer to the season of fruit, but the children are not half as pleased with us as when they wandered in our luxuriant meadows and strung our daisies and buttercups into crowns and garlands. In our more autumnal years, the people miss our flowers and greenery. Perhaps we are becoming sensible that it is so. The old man is solid and slow, whereas the young man rode upon the wings of the wind! It is clear that some think too much of us, and some think too little of us—it would be far better if they considered of us soberly “as the ministers of Christ.” It would be for the advantage of the Church, for our own benefit and for the glory of God if we were put in our right places and kept there, being neither overrated, nor unduly censured, but viewed in our relation to our Lord, rather than in our own personalities. “Let a man so consider us, as of the ministers of Christ.”

We are *ministers.*The word has a very respectable sound. To be a minister is the aspiration of many a youth. Perhaps if the word were otherwise rendered, their ambition might cool. Ministers are *servants—*they are not guests, but waiters, not landlords, but laborers. The word has been rendered “under-rowers,” men who tug the oar on the lowest bench. It was hard work to row a galley—those rapid strokes consumed the life of the slaves. There were three banks of oars. Those on the upper bank of oars had the advantage of fresh air. Those who were beneath were more closely shut in and I suppose that the lowest bank of rowers would be faint with heat, as well as worn out with sore travail. Brothers, let us be content to wear out our lives even in the worst position, if by our labor we can speed the passage of our great Caesar and give speed to the ship of the Church in which He has embarked! We are willing to be chained to the oar and to work on through life to make His boat cleave the waves. We are not captains, nor owners of the galley, but only the oarsmen of Christ! The text, however, does not call us simply ministers or servants, but it adds, “*of Christ.”* We are not the servants of men, but of the Lord Jesus! Esteemed Sir, if you think because you subscribe to my support that I am bound to do your bidding, you are mistaken! Truly, we are “ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” But in the highest sense our sole responsibility is to Him whom we call Master and Lord. We obey superior orders, but we cannot yield to the dictation of our fellow servants, however influential they may be. Our service is glorious because it is the service of Christ—we feel honored in being permitted to wait upon Him whose shoe laces we are not worthy to unloose!

We are also said to be “stewards.” What are stewards? Let us consider—  
**I.**WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF STEWARD? What is required of stewards? This is our duty. We are not now speaking of anybody outside, but of you and myself, therefore, let us make personal application of all that is said.  
First, *a steward is a servant and nothing more.* Perhaps he does not always remember this—and it is a very pitiful business when the servant begins to think that he is “my lord.” It is a pity that servants, when honored by their master, should be so apt to give themselves airs. How ridiculous Jack-in-Office makes himself! I do not refer now to butlers and footmen, but to ourselves! If we magnify ourselves, we shall become contemptible—and we shall neither magnify our office nor our Lord. We are the servants of Christ, but not lords over His heritage.  
Ministers are for churches—not churches for minister. In our work among the churches we must not dare to view them as estates to be farmed for our own profit, or gardens to be trimmed to our own taste.  
A steward is a servant of a peculiar kind, for he has to superintend the other servants and that is a difficult thing to do. An old friend of mine, who is now with God, once said, “I have always been a shepherd. Forty years I was a shepherd of sheep and another forty years I was a shepherd of men—and the last flock was a deal more sheepish than the first.” This witness is true. I think I have heard that a sheep has as many diseases as there are days in the year, but I am sure that the other sort of sheep are liable to ten times as many! A pastor’s work is an anxious one. All sorts of difficulties occur with our fellow servants and, alas, unwise stewards make a great many more than there need be by expecting perfection in others, although they do not possess it themselves! Our fellow servants are, after all, wisely selected, for He who put them into His household knew what He was doing—at any rate, they are *His* choice and not ours. It is not our place to find fault with our Lord’s own election!  
The other servants will take their cue from us. A steward who is dull, inert and slow, will have a slow team of servants about him and the business of his lordship will fare badly. Those who travel will have noticed that the servants in a hotel are very much like the landlord—if the landlord is cheery, attentive, and obliging—all the maids and waiters partake of his geniality! But if he looks sourly at you and treats you with indifference, you will find that the whole establishment is of a disdainful order. Oh, that we may always be alive and earnest in the service of the Lord Jesus and that our people may also be alive! A minister must give himself wholly to his work. I have read of a Puritan divine, that he was so full of life that his people said he lived like one who fed on live things! Oh, for a life sustained by living bread! We shall not be good stewards in the management of our fellow servants unless we are, ourselves, filled with the Grace of God! We must set our fellow servants an example of zeal and tenderness, constancy, hopefulness, energy and *obedience*. We must ourselves practice constant self-denial and select as our own part of the work that which is the hardest and most humiliating. We are to rise above our fellows by superior self-forgetfulness. Be it ours to lead the forlorn hopes and bear the heaviest burdens. Archdeacon Hare was giving a lecture at Trinity College when a cry of, “Fire!” was raised. His pupils rushed away and formed themselves into a line to pass buckets of water from the river to the burning building. The tutor saw a consumptive student standing up to his waist in the water and cried to him, “What? *You* in the water, Sterling?” The reply was, “Somebody must be in it, and why not I as well as another?” Let us say to ourselves, “Some fellows must be doing the drudgery of the church and laboring in the hardest places—and why should not I take that post?”  
Next, remember that *stewards are servants under the more immediate command of the great Master.*We should be as the steward who daily goes into his lord’s private room to receive orders. John Ploughman was never in the squire’s parlor, but the steward is often there. If he neglected to consult the squire, he would soon be doing amiss and involving himself in heavy responsibility. How often ought you and I say, “Lord*,*show me what You would have me to do!” To cease to look up to God, so as to learn and practice His will, would be to quit our true position. A steward who never communicates with his master? Give him his wages and let him go! He who does his own will and not his master’s is of no value as a steward! Brothers, we must continually wait upon God. The habit of going for orders must be cultivated. How grateful should we be that our Master is always within call! He guides His servants with His eyes and with His guidance He also gives the necessary power. He will make our faces to shine before the eyes of our fellows if we commune with Him. Our example must encourage others to wait upon the Lord. As our business is to tell them the mind of God, let us study that mind very carefully.  
Again—*stewards are constantly giving account.* Their account is given as they go along. A business-like proprietor requires an account of outgoings and incomings from day to day. There is great truth in the old proverb that “short reckonings make long friends.” If we make short reckonings with God, we shall be long friends with Him. I wonder if any of you keep account of your faults and shortcomings. Perhaps the time will be better spent in constant efforts to serve your Master and increase His estate. We ought, each one, to ask himself, “What am I doing by my preaching? Is it of the right kind? Am I giving prominence to those Doctrines which my Lord would have me put in the forefront? Am I caring for souls as He would have me care for them?” It is a good thing thus to review one’s whole life and enquire, “Do I give sufficient time to private prayer? Do I study the Scriptures as intensely as I should? I hurry about to many meetings, but am I, in all this, fulfilling my Master’s orders? May I not be gratifying myself with the appearance of doing much, whereas I could really be doing more if I were more attentive to the quality than to the quantity of the work?” Oh, to go often to the Master and to be right and clear in our accounts with Him! This will be profitable both to our churches and to ourselves.  
To come to the main point—*a steward is a trustee of his master’s goods.* Whatever he has belongs to his Master and choice things are put into his custody, not that he may do as he likes with them, but that he may take care of them. The Lord has entrusted to each one of us certain talents—and these are not our own. Gifts of knowledge, thought, speech and influence are not ours to glory in, but ours in trust for the Lord alone! It is *His* pound that gains five pounds!  
We ought to increase our capital stock. Are all you young Brothers doing that? Are you increasing in gift and capacity? My Brothers, do not neglect yourselves! I observe that some Brothers grow and others stand still, dwarfed and stunted. Men, like horses, are very disappointing creatures—good colts drop suddenly lame, or develop a vice of which they were never before suspected. To be always giving out and never taking in tends to emptiness.  
Brothers, we are stewards of the mysteries of God—we are “put in trust with the Gospel.” Paul speaks of the Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to his trust. I hope none of you have ever had the misfortune to be made a trustee. It is a thankless office. In executing a trust, there is little scope for originality—we are bound to carry out a trust with literal exactness. One person wishes to receive more money and another desires to alter a clause in the deed—but the faithful trustee falls back upon the document and abides by its provisions. I hear him say, as they worry him, “Dear Friends, I did not make this trust. I am simply the administrator of it and I am bound to carry it out.” The Gospel of the Grace of God needs great improvement—at least, so I am informed—but I know it is no business of mine to improve it! My part is to act upon it. No doubt many would improve God, Himself, from off the face of the earth if they could. They would improve the Atonement until it vanished. Great alterations are demanded of us, in the name of the spirit of the age. And of course we are warned that the very notion of punishment for sin is a barbarous relic of mediaeval ages and must be given up! And with it the Doctrine of Substitution and many other old-fashioned dogmas! We have nothing to do with these demands—we have only to preach the Gospel as we find it. Stewards must keep to their orders and trustees must carry out the terms of their trust!  
My Brothers, we are at this present hour set for the *defense*of the Gospel. If ever men were called to this office, we are so called. These are times of drifting—men have pulled up their anchors and are driven to and fro with winds and tides of divers kinds. As for me, I have in this hour of danger not only let down the great bower anchor, but I have cast four anchors out of the stern! That may be quite the wrong place, but in these times we need anchoring both fore and aft. Now I am fixed! Skeptical reasoning might have moved me at one time, but not now! Do our enemies ask us to lay down our swords and cease to fight for the old faith? Like the Greeks to Xerxes, we answer, “Come and take them!” The other day the advanced thinkers were going to sweep the orthodox into limbo, but as yet, we survive their assaults. These boasters do not know the vitality of evangelical truth! No, glorious Gospel, you shall never perish! If we are to die, we will die fighting. If we shall personally pass away, fresh Evangelists will preach upon our graves. Evangelical truths are like the dragon’s teeth which Cadmus sowed—they breed men all armed for the fray. The Gospel lives by dying! Brothers, at any rate, in this contest, if we are not victorious, we will at least be faithful!  
*A steward’s business is to dispense his Master’s goods according to their design.* He is to bring forth things new and old—to provide milk for babes and strong meat for men, giving to each one his portion of meat in due season. At some tables I fear the strong men have been waiting a long time for the meat and there is small hope of its yet appearing—the milk and water is more plentiful by far! Someone went to hear a certain preacher last Sunday and complained that he did not preach Christ. Another remarked that perhaps it was not the due season, but my Brothers, the due season for preaching Christ is every time you preach! God’s children are always hungry and no bread will satisfy them but that which came down from Heaven.  
A wise steward will maintain the proportion of the Truths of God. He will bring forth things new and old—not always Doctrine, not always practice, and not always experience. He will not always preach conflict, nor always victory—not giving a one-sided view of the Truths of God, but a sort of stereoscopic view which shall make the Truth of God stand out *“evidently set forth*” before them. Much of the preparation of spiritual food lies in the correct proportion of the ingredients. Excess in one direction and failure in another may breed much mischief! Let us, therefore, use weight and measure—and *look up* for guidance!  
Brothers, take care that you use your talents for your Master, and only for your Master. It is disloyalty to our Master if we wish to be soulwinners in order to be thought to be so! It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we preach sound Doctrine with the view to be thought sound, or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our Lord’s Glory with a single eye and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord’s Gospel, our Lord’s people and our Lord’s talents for our Lord and for Him alone.  
*The steward should also be the guardian of his Master’s family.* Look to the interests of all who are in Christ Jesus, and let them all be as dear to you as your own children. Servants in the olden times were often so united to the family and so interested in their masters’ affairs, that they spoke of *our* house, *our*land, *our*carriage, *our*horses and *our*children. Our Lord would have us thus identify ourselves with His holy business and especially He would have us love His chosen. We, beyond all others, should lay down our lives for the Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Because they belong to Christ, we love them for His sake. I trust we can heartily say—  
***“There’s not a lamb in all Your flock  
I would disdain to feed.”***  
Brothers, let us heartily love all whom Jesus loves! Cherish the tried and suffering! Visit the fatherless and the widow! Care for the faint and the feeble! Bear with the melancholy and despondent! Be mindful of all parts of the household and thus shall you be a good steward.  
I shall cease from this picture when I have said that *the steward represents his master.*When the master is away, everybody comes to the steward for orders. He had need to behave himself well who represents such a Lord as ours! A steward should speak much more carefully and wisely when he speaks for his lord than when he speaks on his own account. Unless he is guarded in his utterances, his lord may be forced to say to him, “You had better speak for yourself. I cannot allow you thus to misrepresent me.” My beloved Brothers and fellow servants, the Lord Jesus is compromised by us if we do not keep His way, declare His Truth, and manifest His spirit. Men infer the master from the servant. Are they not to be excused if they do? Ought not the steward to act after his master’s manner? You cannot dissociate the squire from the steward—the lord from his representative. A Puritan was told that he was too precise, but replied, “I serve a precise God.”  
If urged to utter your own thoughts rather than revealed Truth of God, follow Jesus, who spoke not His own things, but those of the Father. In this you will be acting as a steward should do. Here lies your wisdom, your comfort, and your strength. It was a sufficient vindication for a steward, when one accused him of folly, that he could reply, “Say what you please of what I did, for therein I followed my master’s orders.” Caviler, do not blame the steward! The man has done according to the command of his superior—what else would you have him do? Our conscience is clear and our heart is restful when we feel that we have taken up our cross and have followed the footprints of the Crucified One! Wisdom is justified of her children.  
The second part of our study is—  
**II.**OUR OBLIGATIONS AS STEWARDS. “It is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*.” It is not required that a man be found brilliant, or that he be found pleasing to his associates, or even that he be found successful! All that is required is that he be found faithful—but truly this is no small matter! It will need that the Lord, Himself, be both our wisdom and our strength, or we shall surely fail. Many are the ways by which we may come short of this requirement, however simple it may seem to be.

We may fail to be faithful through *acting as if we were chiefs instead of servants.* A difficulty arises in the church which might readily be settled by loving forbearance, but we “stand upon our dignity” and then the servant grows out of his livery. We can be very high and mighty if we please—and the smaller we are, the more easily do we swell out. No cock is greater in fight than a bantam—and no minister is more ready to contend for his “dignity” than the man who has no dignity! How foolish we look when we play the grandee! The steward thinks he has not been treated with proper respect and he will “let the servants know who he is.” His master was roughly used the other day by an angry tenant—and he took no notice, for he had too much mind to be put out with so small a matter—but his steward passes by nothing and fires up at everything! Is this as it should be? I think I see the gentle Master lay His hand upon His furious servant’s shoulder, and I hear Him say, “Can you not bear it? I have borne far more than this.”

Brothers, our Master “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and shall we be weary and faint in our minds? How can we be stewards of the gentle Jesus if we behave ourselves haughtily? Let us never ride the high horse, nor attempt to be lords over God’s heritage, for He will not have it—and we cannot be faithful if we give way to pride.

We shall also fail in our duty as stewards if we begin speculating with our Master’s money. We may play ducks and drakes with our own, but not with our Lord’s money. We are not bidden to speculate, but to “occupy” till He comes. Honest trading with His goods is one thing, but to play a high game and run unlawful risks is quite another! I do not intend to speculate with my Master’s Gospel by dreaming that I can improve it by my own deep thinking, or by soaring aloft with the philosophers! We will not, even with the idea of saving souls, speak other than the Gospel! If I could create a great excitement by delivering novel doctrine, I would abhor the thought! To raise a revival by suppressing the Truth of God is dealing deceitfully—it is a pious fraud and our Lord wants no gain which might come by such a transaction! It is ours simply and honestly to trade with our Master’s pounds and bring Him such increase as they gain in fair dealing.

We may become false to our trust *by acting as men-pleasers.*When the steward studies the good pleasure of the plowman, or the whims of the maid, everything must go wrong, for everything is out of place. We are influenced by one another and we influence one another. The greatest are unconsciously influenced in some measure by the least. The minister must be overwhelmingly influenced by the Lord, his God, so that other influences may not warp him from his fidelity. We must resort continually to headquarters and receive the Word from the mouth of the Lord, Himself, so that we may be kept straight and true! Otherwise we shall soon be biased, although we may not be aware of it. There must be no holding back to please one person—no rushing forward to satisfy another—no moving an inch even to gratify the whole community! We must not harp upon a certain string to win the approval of this party. Neither must we be silent upon an important Doctrine to avoid offending that clique! What have we to do with idols, dead or alive? O Brothers, if you go in for pleasing everybody, you have indeed set yourselves a task! The toils of Sisyphus and the labors of Hercules are nothing to this! We must not flatter men. We must speak plain words—and words which conscience will approve. If we please men, we shall displease our Lord, so that success in our self-imposed task would be fatal to our eternal interests! In trying to please men, we shall not even succeed in pleasing ourselves! To please our Lord, though it may seem very difficult, is an easier task than pleasing men. O Steward, have your eyes only upon your Master!

We shall not be found faithful stewards *if we are idlers and triflers* Do you ever meet with lazy ministers? I have heard of them, but when my eyes sees them, my heart abhors them. If you plan to be lazy, there are plenty of avocations in which you will not be needed, but, above all, you are not needed in the Christian ministry! The man who finds the ministry an easy life will also find that it will bring a hard death. If we are not laborers, we are not true stewards, for we are to be examples of diligence to the household. I like Adam Clarke’s precept—“Kill yourselves with work and pray yourselves alive again.” We shall never do our duty either to God or man if we are sluggards.

Yet some who are always busy may yet be unfaithful, if all that they do is done in a jaunty, trifling manner. If we play at preaching, we have chosen an awful game. To shuffle texts like cards and make literary essays out of themes which move all Heaven and Hell is shameful work! We must be serious as death in this solemn work. There are boys and girls who are always giggling, but who never laugh—and they are the very image of certain always-jesting preachers. I like an honest laugh. True humor can be sanctified and those who can stir men to smile can also move them to weep. But even this has limits which the foolish soon exceed. Be seriously in earnest. Live like men who have something to live for and preach like men to whom preaching is the highest exercise of their being! Our work is the most important under Heaven, or else it is sheer imposture! If you are not earnest in carrying out His instructions, your Lord will give His vineyard to another, for He will not put up with those who turn His service into trifling.

When we *misuse our Master’s property,*we are false to our trust. We are entrusted with a certain amount of talent, strength and influence— and we have to use this trust money with a single purpose. Our purpose is to promote the Master’s honor and Glory. We are to seek God’s Glory and nothing else. By all means, let every man use his best influence on the right side in politics—but no minister has liberty to use his position in the Church to promote party ends! I do not censure workers for temperance, but even this admirable purpose must not push out the Gospel! I trust it never does. I hold that no minister has a right to use his ability or office to cater for the mere amusement of the multitude. The Master has sent us to win souls—all is within the compass of our commission which tends towards that—but that is chiefly our work which drives directly and distinctly at that end. The danger lies at this time in setting up theatricals, semi-theatricals, concerts, and so forth. Until I see that the Lord Jesus Christ has set up a theater, or planned a miracle play, I shall not think of emulating the stage or competing with the music hall! If I do my own business, by preaching the Gospel, I shall have enough to do. One objective is enough for most men—one such as ours is enough for any minister, however many his talents, however versatile his mind.

If we would be faithful as stewards, *we must not neglect any one of the family,* nor neglect any portion of the estate. I wonder whether we practice a personal observation of our hearers. Our beloved friend, Mr. Archibald Brown, is right when he says that London needs not only house-tohouse visitation, but room-to-room visitation! We must, in the case of our people, go further and practice man-to-man visitation. By personal contact, alone, can certain persons be reached. If I had a number of bottles before me, and were to play upon them with a fire-engine, how much of the water would be lost? If I want to make sure of filling them, I must take them up, one by one, and carefully pour the liquid into them. We must watch over our sheep, one by one. This is to be done not only by personal talk, but by personal prayer. Dr. Guthrie says that he called upon a sick man who greatly refreshed his soul, for he told him that he was known to accompany his minister in his visits. “While I lie here, I shall follow you in your visitation. I keep on *remembering* house after house in my prayer, and I pray for the man, his wife, his children and all who dwell with him.” Thus, without moving a step, the sick saint visited Macfarlane, and Douglas, and Duncan, and all the others whom his pastor called to see! We ought thus to beat the bounds of our parish and go round and round our congregations, forgetting none, despairing of none, bearing all upon our hearts before the Lord. Especially let us think of the poor, the crotchety, the desponding. Let our care, like the hurdles of a sheepfold, enclose all the flock!

Another thing must not be overlooked. In order to faithfulness *we must never connive at evil.*This injunction will be warmly commended by certain Brothers whose only notion of pruning a tree is to cut it down. A gardener comes to a gentleman’s house and when he is told that the shrubs are a little overgrown, he answers, “I will see to it.” In a few days you walk round the garden. He has seen to it with a vengeance! He has done the garden, and it is done for! Some persons cannot learn the balance of virtues—they cannot kill a mouse except by burning down the barn! Did I hear you say, “I was faithful, I never connived at evil”? So far so good! But may it not happen that by a bad temper you produced more evil than that which you destroyed? Yield in all things personal, but be firm where truth and holiness are concerned! We must be faithful, lest we incur the sin and penalty of Eli. Be honest to the rich and influential. Be firm with the wavering and unsteady, for the blood of these will be required at our hands. Brothers, you will need all the wisdom and Grace you can get in order to fulfill your duties as pastors! There is an adaptation to rule men which would seem to be quite absent from certain preachers—and the place of it is supplied by an adaptation to set a house on fire, for they scatter firebrands and burning coals wherever they go. Be you not like they! Strive not, and yet wink not at sin!

Some neglect their obligations as stewards by *forgetting that the Master is* coming. “He will not come yet,” whisper some. “There are so many prophecies to be fulfilled and it is even possible that He will not come at all, in the vulgar sense of the term. There is no particular need for us to make haste.” Ah, my Brothers, it is the unfaithful servant who says, “My Lord delays his coming.” This belief allows him to put off labor and travail. The servant will not clean the room by daily duty because the master is away—and she can have a great clean up, in the form of a revival, before her lord arrives. If we would each feel that each day may be our last day, we would be more intense in our work. While preaching the Gospel, we may someday be interrupted by the blast of the trumpet, and the cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go you out to meet Him!” This expectation will tend to quicken our pace. The time is short, our account is near—our Lord is at the door! We must work with all our might. We must not be eye-servants, except in this sense—that we labor in the Lord’s Presence since He is so near!

I am impressed with the rapid flight of time, the swift approach of the last great audit. These annual conferences return so speedily! To some of us it seems only a day or two since that of 1886—the last of them hastens on. I shall soon be giving in the account of my stewardship, or, if I should survive for a while, others of you may be summoned to meet your Lord. You will soon go home to your Lord if your Lord does not soon come to you! We must work on from hour to hour with our eyes upon the audit, that we may not be ashamed of the record which will be found in the volume of the book.

The *reward* of faithful stewards is exceedingly great—let us aspire to it. The Lord will make the man who was faithful in a few things to be ruler over many things. That is an extraordinary passage where our Lord says, “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meat, and He will come forth and serve them.” It is wonderful that our Lord has already served us, but how can we comprehend that He will serve us again? Think of Jesus rising up from His Throne to wait upon us! “Behold*,*” He cries, “here comes a man who served Me faithfully on earth! Make way for him, you angels, and principalities, and powers! This is the man whom the King delights to honor.” And to our surprise, the King girds Himself and waits upon us! We are ready to cry, “Not so, my Lord.” But He must and will keep His Word! This unspeakable honor He will pay to His true servants. Happy man to have been the poorest and most despised of ministers, to be now served by the King of kings!

Beloved Brothers, we are bound to go forward, cost us what it may, for we dare not go back—we have no armor for our backs. We believe ourselves to be called to this ministry and we cannot be false to the call. If I must be a lost soul, let me be lost as a thief, a blasphemer, or a murderer rather than as an unfaithful steward to the Lord Jesus! This is to be a Judas, a son of perdition, indeed! Remember, if any of you are unfaithful, you win for yourselves a superfluity of condemnation. You were not forced to be ministers. You were not forced to enter upon this sacred office. By your own choice you are here. In your youth you aspired to this holy thing and thought yourselves happy in attaining your desire. Brothers, if we meant to be untrue to Jesus, there was no necessity to have climbed this sacred rock in order to multiply the horrors of our final fall! We could have perished quite sufficiently in the ordinary ways of sin. What need to qualify ourselves for a greater condemnation? This will be a dreadful result if this is all that comes of our college studies and our burning of the midnight oil in acquiring knowledge. My heart and my flesh tremble while I contemplate the possibility of any of us being found guilty of treachery to our charge and treason to our King! May the good Lord so abide with us, that at the last we may be clear of the blood of all men! It will be seven heavens in one to hear our Master say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2440 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP  
NO. 2440

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 14, 1887.~~***

***~~“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2.~~***

IT is well that our dear Brothers and Sisters should make a right account of us. Paul says, in the verse preceding our text, “Let a man so think of us,” for there are some who make a wrong reckoning as to the ministers of the Gospel. Some go to an extreme, for they glory in men. One glories in Paul, who is so deep in doctrine, another in Cephas, who is so energetic and plainspoken, another in Apollos, who is so exceedingly eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. But Paul says, in the latter verses of the third chapter, “Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” You do not belong to your ministers, you must not put yourselves down as followers of *them*—you belong to Christ and Christ, Himself—and all His ministers belong to you.

But while some erred in thinking too much of their ministers, as no doubt they still do—God deliver them from such a delusion—there were, no doubt, others who erred in not thinking enough of them, not appreciating their position and condition so as to sympathize with them and *pray* for them. Had they known to what a responsible office they were called and what was required at their hands, they would lovingly have borne them upon their hearts, and gone with their names to the Mercy Seat in continual prayer. Hence, it is very important that men should so think of us as to judge us correctly, so that while they do not rely upon us in any wrong sense, they may, at the same time, feel an affectionate sympathy with us and constantly bear us up before the Throne of Grace.

Paul goes on to tell us how we ought to think of the ministers of Christ. The word should be, “servants,” of Christ. There is a great respectability about the word, “minister,” which really does not belong to it, for, if you take it to pieces, it means an under-rower, one of those men who had to take an oar on the lowest benches of the slave ships. There were three benches for the rowers and it was a hard task for all who were at the oars—but to the under-rowers, who had to bend to their work in the most trying position as they sent the galley flying through the water, it was stern toil, indeed! Now, God’s ministers, if they act as they should, are under-rowers of Christ. They are tugging away at a very heavy oar and they may well ask you to pray that as they use up their strength, fresh force may be imparted to them from the God of All Power, that they may not labor in vain, nor spend their strength for nothing!

We ask men, therefore, to think of us as servants, not as masters. The word, “bishop,” has come to have a wonderful significance about it which is not in the least degree Scriptural. We are simply to be shepherds of the sheep—and a shepherd is no great lord. He is the servant of all the sheep and though he leads them, it is by *going* first, taking the brunt of all that comes, and finding out the best places for them to feed and to rest. Let a man so think of us as servants, but not merely as servants to the Church, certainly not as servants to men, but as servants of Christ! That is our *honor* as ministers—we serve the Lord Jesus Christ—the best of Masters! But, as He deserves to have the best of servants, the responsibility of the position weighs down the honor attached to it. Oh, if they who serve men should serve them faithfully, how much more should they be found faithful who are the servants of Christ!

Then the Apostle adds that men are to think of us as stewards. And it is about*that* office that I am going to speak to you—“It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Although my text, no doubt, refers, in the first place, to those who labor in word and doctrine, to whom it is a life’s vocation, yet *all the people of God are stewards*, and each child of God, in his own way and in his own place, should reckon that whatever gift he has should be used for the Lord Jesus Christ, and laid out for Him. And he should also remember that he is *made* one of the Lord’s stewards and that it is required of him that he be found faithful. And I may even add that every *unconverted* man has a stewardship to fulfill. As God’s creature, he is bound to be God’s servant—and at the Last Great Day he will have to give an account of every opportunity and capacity for service which God has given to him! And woe unto him if he is found an unfaithful steward in the day of his Lord’s reckoning!

If I should seem to speak rather more about ministers than about anybody else, I will ask you kindly to pick out all that belongs to yourselves, you who are private Christians, and you who are not Christians at all. I pray the Lord to make use of what I say to myself and then to you who are His people—and to those, also, who *are* not His people—that they may be pricked to the heart and made to feel how ungenerously they have acted towards the great Lord of the house. To begin, then, I will first ask—*how are we stewards*? Secondly, if stewards, *how are we to behave*? Next, *how are we in danger of misbehaving*? And, lastly, *what will be the result of right behavior or of misbehavior in those who are stewards*?

**I.**First, then, HOW ARE WE STEWARDS?  
Well, God’s ministers are stewards, first, *as appointed to look after other servants*. You know, dear Friend, if you are a servant, you have enough to do to mind your own work. But if you happen to be an upper servant, such as a steward is, you have not only your own work to mind, but it is a part of your own work to look after the work of other people. There are some who are so foolish that they look only at the *honor* of this position, whereas, if they were wise, they would look more at the *responsibility* of it. Brothers and Sisters, if I had my choice, I would rather look after a horse than look after a man! The second is much the more difficult animal to manage! And to look after*many men*—oh, this is, indeed, a difficult task!  
I had an old friend, who was, for 40 years, a shepherd, and after that he became a minister—and he lived to be 40 years a shepherd in a spiritual sense. I asked him, once, “Which was the easier flock to manage?” “Oh!,” he replied, “the second flock of sheep was a deal more sheepish than the first.” I understood what he meant. They say that sheep have as many diseases as there are days in the year. Yes, but *men* have as many complaints as there are *minutes* in the year! It is not long that they are free from one malady or another! I mean, men and women—all those that belong to the spiritual flock of which the minister is the shepherd—there is a certain form of trouble arising out of each one. True, there is a certain amount of comfort and joy arising out of every Christian, but there is a measure of difficulty that must come to the steward from everyone of his fellow servants. It is by no means a position which any man who understands it might desire for himself! The real steward is one who has been*appointed* to the position—and if he is not appointed, why, he has no right to be a steward at all! It is the great Master of the house who calls this one or that one to look after the other servants—and it is from this calling that he has the right to interfere in any respect with them.  
Next, notice that the servants of God—whether called ministers or not—those who are really so, are stewards *because they are under the Master’s near command*. An ordinary servant in God’s house may take his orders from the steward, but the steward takes no orders from anybody but the Master and, therefore, he is in an evil case and the household is in an evil case, too, if he does not often resort to the Master—if he does not distinctly recognize his position as an underling of his Master— and if he does not so keep up his daily fellowship with the Master that he, himself, knows the Master’s mind and is able to communicate it to his fellow servants.  
There are many of you, dear Friends, who have around you your children, your servants, your fellow workers. Well, in that respect, you are a steward to them—they have to do a good deal that you tell them. Then do, I pray you—and I speak this to myself as well as to you—let us wait upon the Master! Let us come forth to speak to our fellow servants, not our own words, but the words of Him who is Master and Lord to the whole household! How beautifully Jesus, the greatest of all stewards, did this! How constantly He said, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works.” He was always referring those who were His brethren back to the great Head of the family—and He did not speak without His Father’s authority. Having taken up the position of a subordinate in order to work out our redemption, He continually declared that He was His Father’s servant.  
It is an ill day for us when we begin to think that our thoughts are to be given out in the house instead of the Master’s thoughts! It is not for us to deliver our own speculations, but to go straight away to the Word of God and, by the teaching of the indwelling Spirit, to come forth to the people with what we have *received*—not what we have *invented*! You shall find no power, my Brothers and Sisters, in doing Christian work unless you keep on doing it as receiving your mission and commission from the great Lord of All!  
I recollect how McCheyne says, “It is God’s Word that saves, not our comment on God’s Word.” And I am sure that it is so. It is God at the back of the steward who blesses all in the household. But when the steward does not go to the Master and get his orders from Him, he soon puts everything into confusion. He loses his own standing and he is apt to do desperate mischief to all who are round about him.  
Then, the true steward *is called upon to give an account—*and if he does it often, so much the better! I am persuaded that, in the things of God as well as between man and man, “short reckonings make long friends,” and if we will often go to our Master with our service and present it to Him, and overhaul it under His Divine Guidance, confessing our shortcomings and blessing Him for every particle of success that has attended it, we shall do much better than if we go on for a long stretch without a reference to Him. Brothers and Sisters, you who are teaching your classes of boys or girls, bring your Sunday work to the Lord at the end of the Sabbath! And when we have finished a sermon, those of us who stand up to preach, let us not be satisfied until we have brought that piece of our work under our Master’s eyes. I am sure that if the steward can get to the side of his Master every evening, or every morning say to Him, “We did such and such yesterday, and there is such and such which we propose to do today,” that is the way for the house to be well-ordered! Things go right when there is no absentee landlord, but when the great Master is always close at hand and the steward constantly goes to Him with an account of all his work!  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us constantly do this! We do not live near enough to God, do we? I know that some of you wait upon Him day and night and you abide under the shadow of the Almighty, but I fear that there are some workers who forget to do this. We should work with the hands of Martha, but yet keep near the Master with the heart of Mary! We need a combination of activity and meditation. When we get that— when we inwardly retire for consultation with our Lord and then come out actively to labor for our Lord—then shall we be good stewards in the little part of the great house with which He has entrusted us.  
Further, a steward is a man who *is put in trust with his master’s goods*. This is the main point of his stewardship— nothing is his own—it is all his master’s. When he begins to open an account of his own, it is wonderful how apt he is to mistake what is his master’s and to call it his own and, by-and-by, he gets into a muddle and cannot distinguish his master’s accounts from his own. Oh, it is a glorious thing when you have not any, “own”—when you do not live for yourself at all, but wholly for Christ! Then you will not make any blunders! There will not be any of Christ’s property getting into your cash account, so that you will have a difficulty in disentangling it. “No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life,” for he can say—  
***“‘Tis done, the great transaction’s done,  
I am my Lord’s,”***  
“and all the business I have here below is His. I have no sub-ends or secondary objectives, but all I have and am is for Him.” Then it is easy to keep our accounts and to make no mistakes in them.  
The true steward is put in trust with his master’s property, first, to protect it. Oh, with what earnestness ought we to guard the Gospel of Christ! With what holy valor ought we to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints! “Hold fast the form of sound words,” wrote Paul to Timothy—not only the words, but the particular *form* of them which the Apostle had delivered! Not merely sound doctrine, but the very words in which those doctrines had been made to take shape! The true steward is to defend his master’s treasure with his very life. The Lord has put us in trust with the Gospel—and all the people of God, in their measure—have also become trustees of those inestimably precious doctrines wherein will be found the Glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men! So we are to defend our Master’s property.  
And next, we are to dispense it. It is the steward who provides for the table of the household. He brings out of that treasury things new and old. He never forgets, when the table is spread, to put the bread and the salt on it. The bread is Christ, Himself, on which we feed. And the salt is the Grace of which we cannot have too much. The true steward does not starve the children, but he sees that each one is fed with convenient food. To one he brings milk, for he is a babe. To another, he gives strong meat, for he is a man who has had his senses exercised to discern between good and evil. The steward keeps his master’s stores and sees that they are not wasted—but he also takes care to magnify his master’s liberality by seeing that none of the household know any need.  
I have known some who pretended to be stewards of Christ who evidently did not understand the business. There was an old fable of a man who gave bones to the sheep and grass to the dogs, but neither of them did well on such fare. And some preaching seems to me just like that! The preacher assumes, in his opening prayer, that all his hearers are converted, and the whole service goes on as if everybody was a Christian! And yet, if you listen carefully, you will hear that there is an undertone implying that nobody is really saved and that everybody is saved in imagination. Brothers, if we cannot discern between the righteous and the wicked, we shall never be as God’s mouth to our hearers! If we have not a javelin for God’s foes, as well as butter in a lordly dish for His friends, He will never make use of us as stewards in His house. There is much Grace needed in the dispensing of our Master’s goods—the rightly dividing of the Word of God—and bringing out every Truth of God in due proportion and in due season,  
These are two parts of the steward’s business—to protect his master’s property and to dispense it.  
Besides this, he is to use his master’s property for his master’s benefit. The goods entrusted to him are to be put out to interest, or used in business to bring in profit for his master. I trust that there are many of us here present who are using the Gospel for the glory of Christ. What little we know, we try to proclaim, that sinners may be converted and that the Savior may be glorified. It is a wonderful thing for us to have the Bible, is it not? But oh, to use the Bible every day so as to bring Glory to God! It is a good thing even to be a tract-distributor, or to do the least service in the Kingdom of Christ, but the one point for us to aim at is to do it so that the profit of it may come, not to us, but to our Master! The steward must not get to trading on his own account. As I have said before, if he does that, there is apt to be a lot of mistakes made in the reckoning! Everything that the steward does is for his master.  
Abraham said, “The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus,” and Abraham trusted him to go and find a wife for Isaac. So does our Lord use us and trust us, as His stewards. Our great God trusts us to go and find a spouse for Christ—and our business is to go and discover her, to find her out and ask her to come with us that she may be joined to that blessed Lord of All, the Son of the Great Father, to whom He has left the inheritance. Happy are we, when, like the steward of Abraham, we can bring back the beloved one for our Master’s Son! This is a part of our work, to make use of everything that the Master entrusts to us for His own dear Son and to look upon the Church with which we have to deal as the bride we are to bring to Jesus, that she may be married to Him forever.  
I will say no more upon the first part of my subject except this—*a steward is charged with the general care of the family*. He has not merely to look after the stores, but he has to take care of *all* the family. The steward of the olden times used to reckon all that belonged to his master as if it were his own—and he got into the habit of talking of it in that way. His Lordship once asked his steward, “What is that coming up the drive?” “Oh,” he answered, “it is our horse and carriage, my Lord.” “*Our* horse and carriage?” exclaimed the nobleman, “and who may be in it?” “Oh, my Lord,” replied the faithful servant, “it is our wife and children!”  
Exactly so—the man had come to look upon everything that belonged to his master as belonging to himself—and that is the spirit which our Lord would have us cultivate! Those children of His, they are *our* children. Those that are newly converted to God, oh, they are especially ours and we love them dearly! And this great Church—well, it is a bride to us even as it is to Christ. Our whole life is given up to the blessed service to which Christ has given up Himself. Oh, that we could come anywhere near to this ideal of what a true steward should be! God help us to do so!  
**II.**Our second enquiry is “HOW ARE WE WHO ARE STEWARDS TO BEHAVE?” Our text supplies the answer—“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”  
Note, the Apostle does not say, “it is required in stewards, that a man be found brilliant.” No minister will be blamed if he does not prove to be brilliant, nor even if he should not be successful. We shall not be condemned even if the seed does not spring up, provided that we sow it. You are responsible, not for the *result* of what you do, but for doing it honestly, sincerely, devoutly, prayerfully, believingly. I do not think that in such a case you will be unsuccessful—certainly not as *God* judges success. Still, the Apostle’s point is that “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” What, then, should each one of us be with regard to faithfulness?  
First, *faithful to our Master*. Oh, whatever we do, let us not be

traitors to Him! Let us not be apparently doing His work, yet not really doing it. Let us not be preaching without praying. Let us not be talking about doing good without always trusting in Him without whom nothing *can* be good, or strong, or right! O God, may we, each of us, be able to say at the last, “I am clear of the blood of all men”! If we have dealt truly with our Master, if we can feel that we are sincerely seeking not our own glory, but His Glory, and working not for men, but for Him alone, it is well with us.  
Next, we must each one be *faithful to our office*, whatever that office may be. If you, as stewards of Christ, are called to be ministers, be faithful to your ministry. If you are called to have substance, and to give it away, give it with cheerfulness and be faithful in your office. If you are called to teach half-a-dozen children, and no more, it is quite enough to give an account for at the last—so be faithful to your office. Do not run about finding fault with your fellow servants and thinking that you could do their work better if you had it to do. But oh, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of His great Grace, do what you have to do with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Make full proof of your ministry, whatever that ministry is.  
Then, next, *be faithful to the goods committed to you*. I have already dwelt upon the necessity of earnestly defending the faith. Oh, do not, I pray you, tolerate in yourselves any quibbling at God’s Word, any picking and choosing out of the great Truths of Inspiration! Endeavor to know the Lord’s way, the Lord’s truth, the Lord’s life and in way, truth and life, follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Search the Scriptures and follow where the Scriptures lead you. Let no book composed by the wisest of men dictate your conscience. Remember that the Bible, and the Bible, alone, has the stamp of Infallibility upon it. Follow its guidance and so be faithful to the treasure that is entrusted to your hands. Had good men, in past ages, been but faithful to the Word of the Lord, there had not been so much of schism, heresy and false doctrine in the world. And if all professing Christians shall always be faithful to the pure Word of God, then will come the days of the true unity of the Church of Christ, and the conquest of the world by Christ!  
Next, we are bound to be *faithful to every person in the household*. This is a difficult work, but let us try to accomplish it. All of us, according as we are put into the stewardship, must labor for the good of all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We sang just now—  
***“Have You a lamb in all Your flock  
I would refuse to feed?”***  
and I hope that our answer is,” No, great Shepherd of Israel, there is not a single lamb in all Your flock which we do not reckon to be better than ourselves.” Do you not sometimes feel as if, if you could be as sure of being right as the very least of the Lord’s family, you would be perfectly content? We long to rise to the greatest heights of holiness and consecration, but yet, if we are allowed to wash the saints’ feet, it will be a great honor for us. To do *anything* for Jesus, to be a doormat at the Temple gate, is a high privilege for any of us! Let us try, then, to do all that we ought to do in love and kindness to all the members of our Master’s household.  
And then we must be *faithful to the outside world as well*. You see, a steward who looked to everything indoors, and then allowed people out of doors to cheat his master and run away with his goods, would not be a faithful steward! And you and I have much to do with the souls of men *outside* the Church of Christ. Oh, what a world this is! What a world it is! Shall we be clear of the blood of all these millions in London? Ride or walk from one end of this great city to another and see if you do not feel a mountain of granite pressing on your soul! O Lord, what can we do? “Who is sufficient for these things?” Living in such an age as this and in such a thronged city as this, oh, how shall we be faithful to all the people?  
When George Fox was dying, he said, “I am clear, I am clear.” I have envied him a thousand times, for I believe the Quaker *was* clear of the blood of men. He said many odd things and some things he had better not have said, but he never kept back anything that seemed to come from his soul. It mattered not to whom he spoke—whether it was to the king or to a beggar—he said what he believed, without fear of mortal man. Think of brave John Knox, of whom they could say when they buried him, “Here lies he who never feared the face of man.” O stewards of God—and I have already said that all you Christians are, in your measure, stewards of Christ—may this be said of you! “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” I have shown you what a wide field that one requirement covers—only the Grace of God can be sufficient for us that we may be found faithful.  
**III.**Now, very briefly, indeed, I want to answer the third question, HOW ARE WE, IN OUR STEWARDSHIP, IN DANGER OF MISBEHAVING? Well, we can very readily misbehave *by acting as if we were masters*. You know the tendency of Jack in office—let us avoid anything like that. Remember what our Lord said about the man who began to domineer over his fellow servants and to beat them. This is *not* the way for a steward to behave, for he is, himself, only a servant. He has to look after other servants but his master will look after him—and if he gives himself great airs, he must beware lest his master should dismiss him from his service, and say to him, “You shall no longer be steward.”  
Next, a great deal of misbehavior is caused by endeavoring to please men. If the steward begins to try to please his fellow servants and to curry favor with them that they may speak well of him, he will very soon be a traitor to his master. O dear Friends, seek to please men for their good to edification, but never forget that he who is the servant of men cannot be the servant of God, for “no man can serve two masters.” May the Lord help us to feel that we are not judged of men’s judgment, but that we are going to do our duty as under the great Taskmaster’s own eyes!  
Next, we can very much injure our stewardship *by idling, or trifling, or growing careless, or leaving our hearts out of our work*. We can do this in the Sunday school and we can do this in the pulpit! When a man’s heart is in his service, he does not need to tell you that it is, for you can soon see it. And I believe that there is more power in downright sincerity than in all the talent that God ever gave to men! A simple, humble, lowly speaker who only says what the Holy Spirit prompts him to say—and who is quite indifferent about how he says it so long as he can say it in a right spirit—he is the man who will reach the hearts of other men! Brothers, if we begin turning over our words, so as to find out comely syllables with which we may please and tickle human ears, we shall lose all power over our hearers! I think that the very best nosegay we can ever give to our friends may be made by plucking a handful of field flowers just as we find them, and then saying, “These grew in God’s garden. We have not arranged them very prettily, for their innate beauty is such that anything artificial would but injure them.” Oh, let us see to it that we live wholly and alone for this great work of winning souls and glorifying our Master—and let us always speak with the accent of conviction!  
If you do not believe the Gospel, do not tell it to others! But if you *do* believe it, say it as if you meant it! I read, the other day, the story of a minister, whose boys came to him and asked if they might go to a certain show, and he said, “Well my dear boys, I—I—I—I hardly like it. I will show you, by-and-by, the objections there are to it. I do not decidedly forbid you”—and the boys were out of the room in a minute! They ran off to their companion and said, “Jack, we may go.” Yes, their father’s hesitation was quite enough for them. He was going to say, “I do not decidedly forbid you, but, but, but”—only the boys did not care about his, “buts.” And there are some ministers who, in preaching, say that a false doctrine is true, to some extent, only there are certain objections, difficulties and so on. People do not wait to hear the objections and difficulties, but off they go at once with a bit of bad doctrine! It is often so, and it is a pity that it should be so. Ah, me, this trifling with Divine Truth, this playing with God’s Word will be sure to do an infinite deal of mischief and mar the stewardship of any man who yields to it!  
Next, we can prove ourselves unfaithful stewards *by misusing our Master’s goods*, employing what He entrusted to us for some other end than His Glory, or *by neglecting some of the household*. We may so preach that there is never any milk for babes and, on the other hand, we may so preach that there is never a morsel of meat for men—and the milk may be so watery that it is not good enough even for babes! It is a sin to neglect any one member of the household, for we must be found faithful to them all if we would be judged to be faithful at all.  
We can also misbehave ourselves as stewards *by conniving at whatever is wrong in our fellow servants*. “Anything for a peaceful life!” is the motto of the unfaithful steward. “Let men live as they like. We cannot rebuke them because then they might quarrel with us.” Ah, dear me, if we are not prepared to bear a little of that sort of reproach! Even if reproof of sin must bring unkindness in return, we must not withhold that reproof, but must administer it with all the more prayerfulness and kindness! It must be given lest, as it was with Eli, a curse shall come upon our house because our sons made themselves vile and we restrained them not.  
And, dear Friends, there is one other thing that any steward may do and, thereby, spoil his stewardship. That is, prove unfaithful *by forgetting that his Lord will soon come*. He may come before we begin our next piece of work. He may come while we are in the middle of it, or He may come just as we are closing it and, may then and there require an account at our hands! Oh, how earnestly we should live if we were sure that Christ would come tonight! What family prayer you would have tonight if you knew that before the morning dawned, Christ would come! Some of you, perhaps, would want to give something extra to His cause, if you knew that it would be the last opportunity you would have of doing so. Some of you would go and wake your children up and talk to them about Christ if you knew that He would come before the morning light.  
There is a great deal left undone by most of us—we are not all like Mr. Whitefield, who could say when he went to bed, “I have not left even a pair of gloves out of their place. If I were to die tonight, everything is right.” It is a beautiful thing to live, so, and that is how God’s stewards should live! “Ready, yes, ready,” to live or to die, to go on or to leave off, to stop here or to go to Heaven—whichever the Master appoints! This is good stewardship. But if we forget that He will come, we shall get into a loose and slovenly way of acting—and that will be to our own discredit and to our Master’s dishonor.  
**IV.**Now, finally, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF OUR STEWARDSHIP?  
Supposing we are good stewards, what will the result be? *A reward from our Master’s own lips.*In the Day of Account He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Now, after that, you do not need a crown, do you? You do not need any ruling over many cities! You will have all that, but I think that this utterance of our Master is quite enough for any steward of His, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Oh, if He should ever say that to us, there is enough in it to make a whole eternity of bliss!  
But suppose that, at the last, we are found unfaithful, what will the result be? Punishment from the Lord’s own hand! If it is so, that we have never washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. If it is so that our hearts have never been renewed by Divine Grace. If it is so that we have never been saved from our sin and, consequently, have never been saved from our unfaithfulness—if it should turn out that we have never been saved from living to ourselves, never been saved so as to live honestly and faithfully to God—then what will the result be? I mean, for you who profess to be Christians? Here are our Lord’s words. I am not going to enlarge on them any more than I did on the other words—“The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers”—as if that was the worst punishment that could be meted out to him! God grant that none of us may ever have that portion!  
But oh, you who are unbelievers—do you not see that *your* portion is that which God will appoint to these who are unfaithful and only worthy of condemnation? What is your *portion*? It is something truly terrible, for it will be that which God appoints as a *punishment* for the worst of sinners, the treacherous and the unfaithful! O unbelievers, I would not be in your place five minutes for all the world! As the Lord lives, there is but a step between you and Hell! Only a breath and you may be gone. If I were in your place, I would be afraid to eat a morsel of bread, tonight, lest a crumb should go the wrong way and, by causing my death, should land me in everlasting misery! One might be afraid to shut his eyes, tonight, as an unbeliever, lest, as he closed them on earth, he shut them forever to all light and hope, world without end—  
***“You sinners, seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross  
And find salvation there.”***  
Oh, fly to Jesus at once, for He has said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” God help you to trust to Christ, tonight, and to go out of this Tabernacle saved men and saved women, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *LUKE 12:35 -48.***

**Verses 35-37.***Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.* This is a wonderful passage. Christ has already had one turn as a Servitor. He was Master and Lord, yet He washed His disciples’ feet. But He says that if we are watchful and faithful, if we truly serve Him, the day shall come when, in all His robes of Glory, He shall gird Himself and serve us.

**38-40.***And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken into. Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of Man comes at an hour when you think not.* This is a warning to Christ’s own people, but it is still more a warning to those who do *not* know Him. Suppose He were to come tonight—where would you be, you who have, up to now, lived as if you were your own masters and were by no means the servants of Christ? Take heed unto yourselves, for you know not when your Lord shall come!

**41-44.***Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speak, then, this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has.*What rewards Christ has in store for His people! If we will but be His servants, now, and the servants of our Brothers and Sisters, He will make us rulers over all that He has! I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but I bless the Lord that they are absolutely true!

**45, 46.***But and if that servant says in his heart, My master delays his coming; and shall begin to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink, and to be drunk; the master of that servant will come on a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*Again let me say that I cannot attempt to explain all that these words mean, but, oh, what will be the horror, the terror, of the punishment which will fall upon the unfaithful steward, the minister who is untrue to his holy calling, the professor who says that he is a child of God and a steward of Christ, and yet is unfaithful to his trust? I will read our Lord’s words again. You know how we are sometimes accused of saying things too dreadful about the wrath of God in the world to come, but, Beloved, we never say anything dreadful enough! If you will carefully examine the Word of God, you will find there expressions such as even Dante or the mediaeval preachers, with all the horrors they depicted, never surpassed! We cannot exaggerate the awful depth of meaning which we find in the words of the loving Christ, Himself! Let me read this verse again—“The master of that servant will come on a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”

**47, 48.***And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and did not prepare himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomever much is given, of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*Judge you, then, Brothers and Sisters, how much of ability and talent your Lord has entrusted to you—and be not content to have rendered Him *some* service—but look for proportionate service and humble yourselves in His Presence if your service is not in proportion to the opportunities entrusted to you! Who among us can refrain from humbling himself before God when he thinks of this?

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1271 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRIDE CATECHIZED AND CONDEMNED  
NO. 1271

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 2, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”  
1 Corinthians 4:7.~~***

PRIDE grows apace like other ill weeds. It will live on any soil. In the natural heart it flourishes, springing up without sowing and growing without watering. And even in the renewed heart it all too readily takes root when Satan casts abroad a handful of its seed. Of all creatures in the world, the Christian is the last man who ought to be proud and yet, alas, we have had mournful evidence both in past history and in our own observation—and worst of all in our own personal experience—that Christian men may become lifted up to their own shame.

Paul set himself very earnestly to deal with this disease when he saw it raging among the Corinthians. He felt it necessary to do so, for it was leading to other mischiefs of the most disgraceful kind. Pride and selfconceit had led the members of the Church in Corinth to choose for themselves distinct leaders and to arrange themselves under separate banners—the followers of this man thinking themselves better than the followers of that. Thus the body of Christ was divided and all sorts of ill feeling, jealousy, emulation and envy sprang up in the Church of God where all ought to have been mutual helpfulness and loving unity.

Paul, earnestly and with great wisdom, assailed the spirit of pride. He was well aware of one fact, namely, that pride is shallow and superficial. It cannot endure honest questioning and so Paul tried it by the Socratic method and put it through a catechism. He puts three questions to it in this verse and these three all called upon his friends to go a little lower in their contemplation of themselves than their pride had, before, allowed them to go. Pride said, “I have such-and-such gifts,” but Paul replied, “What have you that you did not receive?” Thus he dug deeper and undermined Pride.

The receipt of those gifts from God, Pride had forgotten altogether, therefore, by bringing that fact to mind, the Apostle took Pride right under the root, and that is always the best way to destroy a weed. To cut off the green top and leave the crown of the root, so that it may spring up in the next shower, or the next sunshine, is of no use. But to go deep down and tear up the root is effective. This Paul did with Pride by reminding the vainglorious Corinthians that the gifts which they possessed were no ground of glory because they had received them as alms from the charity of God.

Another Truth of God is also illustrated by Paul’s procedure, namely, that pride is always inconsistent with the true doctrine of the Gospel. You may use this test concerning any preaching or teaching that you meet with—if it legitimately and logically leads a man to boast of himself, it is not true. Our chemists use litmus to discover the presence of acid in any liquid submitted to them, for the paper then takes a reddish tint. And you may use this as your test, that when a doctrine makes you red with pride it contains the acid of falsehood. That which puffs up is not of God, but that which lays a man low and exalts Jesus Christ has at least two of the tokens of the Truth of God.

That which glorifies man cannot have been revealed by God, for He has said that no flesh shall glory in His Presence. Such teaching may appear very lustrous with affected holiness and very fascinating with pretended spirituality—and there may be much in your fondest desires which inclines your heart towards it, as there always is in the novelties of the present day—but try it whether it is of God by the test which is here suggested. If, with a sleek hand it brushes your feathers the right way and makes you feel, “What a fine fellow I am,” you ought to flee from it at once! The very fact that it flatters you should be to you like a fog horn to warn you of danger. Say to every doctrine which fosters pride, “Get you behind me, Satan, for you smell not of the things that are of God and of Truth, or you would not speak so well of me.”

My objective this morning shall be to attempt to do with our own pride what Paul sought to do with that of the Corinthians, namely, to go a little deeper than we generally go when measuring our own abilities. And then I shall try to use the silver spade of the Doctrines of Grace, so that this hemlock of pride may be taken up by the roots. Looking at the text I notice, first, *a question to be answered with ease—*“Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive?” Secondly, *a question to be answered with shame—*“Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” And then, thirdly, I shall occupy your attention a few minutes with *other questions which these questions suggest*. May the Holy Spirit graciously bless the word.

**I.** In a two-fold form the Apostle gives us A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH EASE. There may be some who would be puzzled with these questions, but I do not suppose there are any such people present. At any rate, there are no such members in our Church. When we are asked, “Who makes you to differ from another?” our answer is immediately, “God, by His Grace has made us to differ.” And if we are asked, “What have you that you did not receive?” we reply, “We have nothing but our sin, for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights.”

We are all the more glad to hear Paul say this, because he was what is, nowadays, styled a “self-made” man! It very frequently happens that a man who makes himself has very great respect for his maker. Is it not natural that he should worship his creator? Paul was a man who, as far as the Christian Church is concerned, at any rate, had forced his way up without aid from others. He began in the Church with no respect and under very much suspicion. The Brethren had heard that he persecuted the saints, so that, at first, they would scarcely receive him! His name was a terror rather than a pleasure. But Paul, with that high spirit, that consecrated ardor, that indefatigable industry, that wondrous courage of his, backed, of course, by the Grace of God, came to the front until he could honestly claim, without egotism, that he was “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, though,” said he, “I am nothing.”

Paul was a man who had not been borne upon the crest of the wave into an eminent position. He did not wake up one morning and find himself famous. He put forth all his powers in the struggle of life and labored with persistent energy year after year. When he persecuted the saints of God he did it ignorantly, in unbelief, and thought he did God a service. And all his life long, for him to know a thing to be right, was to strive after it. He had been kept from self-seeking and deceit. He had been an intensely active, strong-minded, high-souled man and he had done a grand lifework by which the Church is still affected. And yet Paul, himself, had nothing of which to glory.

His testimony of his own indebtedness to God’s Grace is so plain and given so many times over that we cannot mistake it. He says distinctly, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” He counted his own righteousness as worthless and only desired that he might be found in Christ, arrayed in the righteousness which is of God by faith. Do we address today any selfmade man, as the world calls men who have risen from the ranks? Have you taken credit to yourself, dear Friend, for your success in life? Do you plume yourself upon your having risen by your own exertion? Then cease from such boasting! And in the spirit of the Apostle, ask yourself the question, “Who makes you to differ, and what have you that you did not receive?”

Our question is easy to answer, whether it is applied to natural gifts or to spiritual ones. There is a tendency to boast in *natural gifts*, but if questioned concerning them, we must give the self-evident answer that any natural gifts we possess are not to be set to *our* credit, but were bestowed on us by God. Some gifts come to us as the result of *birth* and, of course, in that matter we had no hand. It may be we were born of Christian parents and that pedigree is one for which we shall always be thankful—we had sooner number our parents with the saints of God than with the peers of the realm—but truly, Brothers and Sisters, we should be foolish to boast of godly ancestors, for we had not the choosing of them!

Children of pious parents, you cannot look with disdain even upon those who are basely born, for you did not cause yourselves to be born any more than they did. From their birth some derive physical strength. It always seems to me to be a very insane thing for a man to glory in his animal force, for there can be no merit in it. Yet there are some who do so. In the strength of those brawny limbs of theirs and those powerful muscles, some praise themselves abundantly. Though the Lord takes not pleasure in the legs of a man, yet some count it a very wonderful thing that they can out jump or outrun their fellows.

O athlete, though you are as strong as Samson, or swift as Asahel, what have you that you have not received? Had you been born with a tendency to consumption, or with some other hereditary *weakness*, could you have prevented it? And now that you are strong, are you to be praised for that, any more than a horse or a steam engine? The same is true of the beauty of a person, which too frequently is the cause of vanity. Beauty is often a snare on this account. What if your features are delicately chiseled. What if your eyes are bright as the morning and your countenance fair as the lily? What if there is a charm in your every glance? What have you in all these for which to praise yourself?

Jezebel, also, was fair to look upon and is she to be praised? Is not your beauty the gift of God? Bless your Creator for it, but do not despise those who are less beautiful, for in so doing you will despise their Maker. How often do we hear a laugh raised behind their backs against persons who are somewhat grotesque, or it may be, deformed? But God made them and who is he that shall dare to taunt the Maker with what He has done? What have you, O you fairest among women? What have you, O you most handsome among the sons of men, but what you have *received*? Cease, then, those mincing airs and tossing of the head.

The same is true with regard to the rank which comes of birth. Some men are born—according to heraldic arrangements—noble. In what way is a new-born *babe* noble? Can true nobility arise out of anything but personal character? They are, however, born with the reputation of nobility and are at once regarded with respect. Are they not our future rulers? Through no deed or desert, or talent or heroism of their own, some are, as it were, by accident, or rather by the sovereign ordinance of Providence, placed above others. Why, then, should they glory in what is so purely a matter of gift?

O you who are great and honorable among men, what have you but what you have received? Walk in lowly gentleness and live with true nobility of character—and so make your rank a blessing. Brothers and Sisters, how much all of us owe in the matter of birth for which we sometimes take to ourselves credit! We have never fallen, perhaps, into the grosser immoralities, but should we not readily have done so if we had been huddled together in chambers where decency struggles for existence, or been compelled to take our walks abroad where blasphemy and vice contend with law and order and are not to be subdued? If the worst of examples had been before us instead of the best, what might we not have become? We have sinned enough as it is, but very much of the fact that we have not sinned more must is laid to the account of our having commenced life under favorable circumstances than to any meritorious conduct of our own.

In this respect, what have we that we did not receive? You have been honest, thank God for it. But you might have been a thief if your father had been so. You have been chaste and modest, be glad of it—you might not have been so had you been encompassed with other surroundings. You are, at this time, respected and reputable, and you carry on business in an upright manner. Had you been as poor as some, you might have been tempted to do as dirty transactions as they are charged with. In these common matters of morality we cannot tell how much we owe to birth and how little to ourselves. Certainly self-applause ceases as we hear the question, “What have you that you did not receive?”

In the matter of *talent* there are very great differences. One man will very soon make his way in the world where others fail. Put him where we will, he will make his fortune—and his friends laughingly say that if he were transported to the desert of Sahara he would sell the sand at a profit! But who gave him that talent? What has he that he has not received? Another can study an art or a science and become proficient in it in a short time—as a boy he is a leader at school—and as a man he is eminent in his sphere. Still, are not his wisdom and insight gifts from Heaven?

Another man has the gift of eloquence and can speak well, while his fellow has the pen of a ready writer. In either of these gifts a man may take so much content as, by-and-by, to become vainglorious, but the Truth of God taught in our text ought always to prevent that folly. “What have you that you did not receive?” That which God gave to you He might have withheld and the man whom you despise might have had your gifts. He would have been foolish to despise you if you had been without them and you are foolish, now, to despise him.

What differences there are, too, as to what men are helped to make of themselves by *education*. Nowadays there is a better opportunity of education for all ranks and conditions of men, for which I am earnestly thankful, and hope that true religion will be connected with the advantage. But all boys trained in the same school do not leave it equally educated. One is quick and another dull. One manages to place himself foremost and another is doomed to be in the rear. Whether the difference is in the original conformation of the man, or is the result of different teaching, the result must, alike, be subject for thankfulness to God, for whether it is natural talent or excellent education, both are *received*.

Equally so is it with *wealth*. I may address someone to whom God has given large substance, but, my dear Friend, in the course of the accumulation of that substance you have had plenty of evidence that, “it is God that gives you power to get wealth.” There was a time when you had little enough and it was a singular Providence which put you in the way of rising. There have been times, too, when a little turn of the scale would have sent you into bankruptcy, but the markets went the other way and you were made. You have seen others who were ahead of you in the race of prosperity left far behind—and God has prospered you—I know there have been anxious moments when you have had to lift up your eyes to the Most High and beseech Him by His tenderness and mercy to help and deliver you.

Well, inasmuch as this wealth is a blessing if you know how to use it rightly, credit the possession of it to God, who has made you His steward. Do you tell me that you have had a keener eye and exercised more industry than others, as well as a better judgment? True, but who gave you the judgment and who gave you the health with which to be industrious? Many another man has been as industrious and yet has failed! Many another has been as willing to work, but he has been disabled by sickness.

Many another man has had as keen an eye, but alas, his judgment has been baffled by misfortune. Another man began life with as clear a brain as you, but now he is confined in the asylum and you still are in possession of all your faculties.

O Sirs, never sacrifice to your own net and drag and say, “We brought up these treasures from the deep,” but bless God who gave you all that you have of earthly things, for what have you that you have not received? I would that you felt more than you do that you are only stewards, that your possessions are *lent* to you to be used for God’s Glory and the good of others—and neither to be squandered nor hoarded for yourselves. But now, Brothers and Sisters, this is very emphatically true as to *our spiritual gifts*, and I invite you to consider this Truth—“What have you that you did not receive?”

There has long been a great doctrinal discussion between the Calvinists and the Arminians upon many important points. I am, myself, persuaded that the Calvinist, alone, is right upon some points and the Arminian, alone, is right upon others. There is a great deal of the Truth of God in the positive side of both systems and a great deal of error in the negative side of both. If I were asked, “Why is a man damned?” I should answer as an Arminian answers, “He destroys himself.” I should not dare to lay man’s ruin at the door of Divine Sovereignty. On the other hand, if I were asked, “Why is a man *saved*?” I could only give the Calvinistic answer, “He is saved through the Sovereign Grace of God and not at all of himself.”

I should not dream of ascribing the man’s salvation in any measure to himself. I have not found, as a matter of fact, that *any* Christian people dare, seriously, to quarrel with a ministry which contains these two Truths in fair proportions. I find them kicking at the inferences which are supposed to follow from one or the other of them, and sometimes needlessly crying to have them “reconciled,” but the two Truths together, as a rule, commend themselves to the conscience and I feel sure that if I could bring them both forward this morning with equal clearness I should win the assent of most Christian men.

At this time, however I have to confine myself to the statement that all the Grace we have is the gift of God to us and I trust none will, therefore, suppose that I deny the other side of the question. I believe assuredly that we have nothing good in us but what we have received. For instance, we were dead in trespasses and sin and we were quickened into spiritual life! My Brothers and Sisters, did that life spring out of the ribs of death? Did the worm of our corruption beget the living seed of regeneration? It were absurd to think so! God be praised for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, which led Him to quicken us by His Grace!

We have been forgiven our great sins—wholly forgiven—through the precious blood of Christ we have been made clean. Did we deserve it? Does any man who professes to be a Christian say, for a single moment, that he deserved the ransom paid by Christ and deserved the pardon of his sins? It would be monstrous blasphemy even to *imagine* such a thing! Oh no, “By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” God forgave us freely. There could not possibly have been any quality in sin which could have called forth forgiving love. He had mercy upon us because He would have mercy upon us—not because we could claim anything at His hand.

Everything, dear Friend, that makes you to *differ from the common sinner*is the gift of God’s Grace to you. You know it is. You have faith in Christ, yes, but did not the Holy Spirit work it in you? Do you not cheerfully subscribe to the doctrine that faith is of the operation of *God*? You have repentance of sin, but was the repentance natural to you? Did you not receive it from Him who is exalted on high to give repentance? Is not your repentance His gift? “Truly,” one will say, “but the same Gospel was preached to others as to us.” Precisely so. Perhaps the very sermon which was the means of your conversion left others as they were.

What made the difference, then? Do you reply, “We willed to believe in Jesus.” That is true—an unwilling faith would be no faith—but, who influenced your will? Was your will influenced by some betterness of nature in *you* so that you can claim credit for it? I, for one, reject with abhorrence any such an idea! Do you reply, “Our will was influenced by our understanding and we chose what we knew to be best.” But, then, who enlightened your *understanding*? Who gave you the light which illuminated your mind, so that you chose the way of Life? “Oh,” you say, “but our hearts were set towards salvation and the hearts of others were not.”

That, also, is true, but who set your hearts that way, who was the prime mover? Was it you or God? There is the question, and if, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, you dare affirm that in the matter of your own salvation *you* were the prime mover I am at a loss to understand you—and I hope there are few of your creed! Jesus is not Alpha to you. You do not love Him because He first loved you. You were evidently not converted, or turned at all—you turned yourself! You are not a new creature, but are your own new-creator! Do you look to see the same thing in others? Why, then, do you act as you do? Why do you pray the *Lord* to turn others if you believe that He did not turn *you*?

Do you pray the Lord to convert your children? Why do you do it? If it is left entirely to them to be the prime movers, why pray to God about them? “Ah,” says one, “God must treat all alike.” I ask again, why do *you* pray for your *children*? You ask God to do a wrong thing in blessing your children in preference to other people, if it is true that He is bound to treat all alike. When you go practically to work, these sentiments do not hold water! The man who knows that the Holy Spirit was first in his operations upon the mind, and who calls Christ Jesus the Alpha and the Omega of his salvation, is the man who can fairly go to the Lord and pray for the conversion of this man or that. And he, too, is sure to give God all the glory of his salvation and magnify and bless the Grace of the Most High.

Perhaps, my dear Brother, there is a difference *between you and other saints*. I am sure there is reason for some saints to eclipse others, for some professors are very poor things, indeed. Well, Brother, you have a great deal more faith than others—where did you get it? If you received it

from anywhere but from God, you had better get rid of it! Dear Brother, you have more joy than some and possibly you feel ashamed of your fellow Christians who are so doubting and sad—beware that you do not become vain of your joy! And remember, if your joy is *true* joy, you *received* it of the Lord. Are you more useful than others? You cannot help looking at certain professors who are idle and wishing that you could stir them up.

I know I do! I would put a sharp pin into their downy cushions if I could. But, for all that, who gives us activity, who gives us usefulness, who gives us zeal, who gives us courage, who gives us *everything*? If you, dear Friend, get into such a condition that you begin to whisper to yourself, “I have improved my gifts and Graces at a very noble rate and am getting on exceedingly well in spiritual things,” you will soon have to come down from your high places. If you register yourself A-1 at Lloyd’s, I will not sail with you, Brother, for I fear your proud ship will tempt the tempest! I would rather sail with some poor Christian man whose weatherbeaten vessel would go to the bottom if Jesus were not on board, for I am persuaded he is safe.

“Blessed is the man that fears always.” Blessed is the man who lies low at the foot of the Cross and who, concerning everything that he has, whether temporal or spiritual, ascribes *all* to the Giver of all Good! Now we must pass on, briefly, to think of the second point.

**II.** THERE IS A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED WITH SHAME. “If you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” If any of us have fallen into vainglory and we all have, more or less, done so, let us answer this question with confusion of face. Brother, Sister, have you gloried in anything you have received? Then think about how wrongly you have acted, for you have robbed God of His honor. To glory in man is altogether inconsistent with glorying in God. Depend upon it, every particle of praise we take to ourselves is so much stolen out of the revenues of the King of kings!

Will a man rob God? Will a *redeemed* man rob God? Will a poor sinner snatched from between the jaws of death and Hell by undeserved mercy, rob God? Lord have mercy upon us! When we boast, we also leave our truthful position and every Christian ought to be ashamed to stand anywhere but in the Truth of God. When I confess myself to be weak, helpless and ascribe all I have to Grace, then I stand in the Truth! But if I take even the remotest praise to myself, I stand in a lie. The Lord have mercy upon us if we have dared to act falsehood in His Presence. Let us remember, too, that whenever we prize ourselves highly we are sure to esteem our Lord less. Do you see any *spiritual* beauty in yourself? Then it is because you do not know what true beauty is?

Do you say, “I am rich and increased in goods”? Then you know nothing, or very little, of what true wealth is. You have mistaken gilt for gold and rags for raiment. I counsel you, buy of Jesus gold tried in the fire and fine linen with which you may be clothed. Depend upon it, our judgment is very much like a pair of scales—if Christ goes up, self goes down. And if self rises, Jesus falls in our esteem. No man ever sets a high price upon self and Christ at the same time—

***“The more Your glories strike my eyes***

***The humbler I shall be,”***  
is a rule without exception. Besides, if you and I have gloried in what we possess, we have undervalued our fellow Christians and that is a great sin. They are very dear to Jesus and He accounts even their deaths precious. “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones that believe in Me.”

But if we overestimate ourselves, the natural consequence is that we underestimate others. Have I ever thought, “I am a rich man and these poor people, though good Christians, are nobodies compared to me. I am of far more consequence to the Church”? Have I conceived, because I have a measure of talent, that those holy men and women who cannot speak for Christ are of no great account? Or have I, because I happened to be an old, experienced Christian, snuffed out the young ones and said, “They are only a pack of boys and girls”? Is this the way to speak of those who were bought with the blood of Christ and are members of Christ’s body? It will not do for us to despise the least saint!

I believe there are many who are now pushed into the background and shoved into any hole and corner, whom Christ looks upon with special delight and will place first when He comes. Verily I say unto you, “There are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall be first.” Besides, all this honoring of ourselves generally puts us off from the right course as to our gifts and makes us forget that these things are only lent to us, to be used for our Master. It is required of stewards that they are found faithful, not that they praise themselves and deck themselves in their Master’s goods. We have too much to do, to afford to boast!

Look at yonder young soldier who has just received his armor and his helmet. He has just entered the service. Look with what pleasure he sees his handsome face reflected in his breastplate! How much he admires his plume—he thinks how grand he shall look in such gear. My dear Fellow, all this while you have forgotten that to wear these things in the thick of the battle, where they will bear the dint of the sword, is what awaits you! And you better consider that, not your gallant appearance—your valor is what we want to see! When a man exalts himself because of what he *possesses* he does not act as a soldier of the Cross should do.

Here we will insert an illustration or two. There is a tendency in some to exalt themselves because God has placed them in *office*. They are ministers, deacons, elders, superintendents, or something. What mighty airs they give themselves! “Honor to whom honor is due”—they seem to have learned the text by heart and to have seen a *personal* reference in it. Have you ever seen the footmen of princes when they are playing the great man? What wonders of nature and art they often are! I was admiring one of them the other day with all the reverence due. The vision of his pomp quite staggered me, for he was so gorgeous to look upon. I feel sure that that nothing could compare to his royal master and certainly nothing could have been more pompous or aristocratic.  
While I was looking on with due wonder and reverence, somebody cruelly remarked, “What a flunky!”—a most irreverent observation and yet very natural. My Brothers, whenever you and I, because we have our best clothes on and are ministers, or deacons, or elders, act as if we were very great men, somebody or another is to call us flunkies, too! Not, perhaps, exactly in so many words, but in language to the same effect. Do not let us expose ourselves to such contempt! And if ever we have done so, let us be rebuked at once by the thought of what we have seen in others.

Some persist in boasting about their experience. This also is vanity. Suppose a man here, who is a great pedestrian, has been over the Alps and traversed Europe? Here is his walking stick and it boasts, “I am the most traveled walking stick in creation. I have climbed the craggy brows of the Alps and bathed myself in the Nile.” “Well,” says one, “but wherever you have gone, you have been carried by a power beyond yourself.” So let the man who boasts in experience remember that in the paths of peace he has gone nowhere except as the Lord’s hand has borne him onward! He has been nothing but a staff in God’s hands—and while he should be *grateful*—he should never be proud.

I was in a beautiful garden the other day, upon the rocks, where the choicest of flowers and tropical plants are growing, while all around the rocks are bare with scarcely a trace of vegetable life. Now, suppose that garden were proud and boasted of its fruitfulness? The answer would be, “Every basketful of earth had to be carried up to you and you would not bear fruit, now, if it were not for the stream of water that is turned on and tracked through many little mazes and brought to the root of each plant you bear. You would be a rock, again, in a few months if you were left to yourself. Therefore let the gardener of the garden rejoice in his work, but the garden, itself, may not glory.”

That is what the most fruitful Believer would be if God left him alone—a barren rock, a wilderness! Suppose I address some Christian who is happy, joyous and cheerful? And suppose he has such dainty bits sent home to him out of the promises, such precious Words from Scripture applied to his heart? Dear Friend, are you apt to think that there is something specially good about you because you get all these remarkable enjoyments? Then let me clear your mind. It is your *weakness* which gets you these favors! When you are living in a hotel you will remark that certain persons have their dinners sent upstairs. What for? Oh, that is because they are ill. If you are well you must go down to the *table d’hote* with the rest—but if you are ill they will send it upstairs—and pay you extra attention.

These very comforts that God gives you ought to make you enquire whether there is not something wrong with you and, instead of thinking you are strong and well, you should search and see if there is not some weakness which the Lord, in His mercy, intends to remove by the double comforts which He gives to you. Nothing in the world ought to be a cause of self-exaltation! Nothing that our God gives us ought to make us think highly of ourselves! Lower down, Brother, lower down, and so you will rise.

The way to Heaven is downhill, not uphill. As Christ went down to the grave that He might come up, again, and fill all things, so must you go to the Cross—and down to the grave of self and be buried with Christ—and learn the meaning of your Baptism and make it true that you are buried with Him to all the world, and to yourself, also, for so only can you rise into the fullness of the new life.

**III.** OTHER QUESTIONS WHICH THESE QUESTIONS SUGGEST shall now, in the third place, occupy our attention. What are they? The first is this. *Have I ever given to God His due place in the matter of my salvation*?—A question that I may very well put, for I remember when I was converted to God, and truly converted, too, but I did not know that it was the work of the Spirit in my heart. I did not understand that it was the result of special Grace. I had heard the Gospel generally preached, but I had not learned the peculiar doctrines of Grace.

And I remember very well sitting down and thinking to myself, “I am renewed in my mind, I am forgiven, I am saved. How came that about?” And I traced it to this, that I had heard the Gospel, but as I knew that many never had an opportunity of hearing it, I saw special Grace in my having had the opportunity to hear it. But then I said, “There are others who have heard it, but it was not blessed to them—how came it to be blessed to me?” And I thought for awhile whether it could be something good in me that made the Gospel useful to me, for if so, I deserved to have credit for it.

Somehow the Grace which God had given me made me fling that theory to the winds and I came to this conclusion, “It must be *God* that made the difference,” and having got that *one* thought into my mind, the Doctrines of Grace followed as a matter of course. Only by experimentally knowing that there has been a special work of Grace in your own soul will you be likely to place the Lord where He should be in your creed, for some provide a very inferior place for the Lord in the matter of their salvation. With them, man is very great, and God is made little. But true theology makes God the very sun of the system, the center, the head, the first and chief! Have you done so? If not, correct your views and get a clearer view of the Gospel of Grace. May the Holy Spirit help you to do it! To know the Doctrines of Grace will be much to your comfort, will tend to your stability and will also lead you to seek the glory of God.

The next question is this, Have I, this morning, the spirit of humble gratitude? How do I feel? Do I take God’s mercy as a matter of course and view my own gifts without thankfulness? Then I act like the brutes that perish! Let me pray, this morning, that humble, lowly gratitude may daily rule my spirit. Such gratitude will make you cheerful, it will make you earnest, it will, in fact, be an atmosphere in which all Christian Graces will grow by the blessing of God’s Spirit. Next, seeing I have been a *receiver*, what have I done towards giving out, again? It cannot have been intended that I should receive and never give out, for if that is the case, there is a sad lot for me.

You know they used to make and do still make in the North of England, earthenware saving boxes for children. You can put what you like in, but you cannot get it out until you break the box. And there are persons of

that sort among us. Some have died lately and their estates have been reported in the Probate Court. There was plenty put in to them, but you could never get anything out and, consequently, they had to be broken up. I only hope when they were broken up, the gold and silver went the right way. What a pity to be like money boxes—to be of no good until you are broken up!

One would like to get and give at the same time. We ought not to be as a stagnant pond, a Dead Sea which receives from rivers all the year round, but gives forth no stream in return and so becomes a stagnant, putrid lake. Let us be like the great lakes of America which receive the mighty rivers and pour them out again, and consequently remain fresh and clear. The next question is—Since what I have, I have received by God’s Grace, might I not receive more? Come, Brothers and Sisters, with regard to gracious things I want you to be covetous! Covet earnestly the best gifts! If you have had faith, why should you not have more? If God gave you hope, joy, experience, why not more? You are not straitened in Him—you can only be straitened in yourself. Try to remove those hindrances and ask the Lord to give you more Grace.

One other question—If all that Christians have, they have received, Sinner, why should *you* not receive as well as they? If it were true that Christians took these good things *out* of themselves, then you, poor Sinner, might despair, for you know you have no good thing in *you*! But if the best of saints, the best Christian in Heaven, has not *anything* but what he *received*, why shouldn’t you receive? To receive, you know, is never a difficult thing. I guarantee you that out of all the people in London, there is not a man but what could receive.

Try it on the present occasion. Let it be a thousand pounds and see how many among us would be unable to receive. If there is a person about who would not receive, I tell you who it is—it is the man who thinks himself so rich that he does not care to have any more. Even so the proud, self-righteous Pharisee cannot receive—but you poor, good-for-nothing, empty sinners can receive and here is the mercy—“to as many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.”

Open that empty hand! Open that empty heart! God grant they may be opened, now, by His own Divine Spirit, and may you receive, and then I know you will join with us in saying, “Of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace.”

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 103 and 1 Corinthians 4.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—108 (VERS. 1), 233, 235.**

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A CATECHISM FOR THE PROUD  
NO. 1392

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”  
1 Corinthians 4:7.~~***

THE Corinthian Church was exceedingly gifted. Perhaps no other Church of the period had in it so many persons of education and talent. The Apostle says of them, “In everything you are enriched, in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that you come behind in no gift.” Alas, its Divine Grace was not in proportion to its gifts and, consequently, a proud spirit was developed in the Church which manifested itself in divisions and contentions. Parties were formed. One said, “I am of Paul,” and probably prided himself on the depth of his thought. “I am of Apollos,” said another, and probably gloried in the brilliant eloquence of his language. “I am of Cephas,” cried a third, and boasted in the plain, unvarnished practicality of Peter’s teaching.

“You are all wrong,” exclaimed a fourth, “and I will have nothing to do with you. I am of no sect and no system, for I am of Christ and exclude you all because I wish to promote love and unity.” Party leaders are sure to be found where there is a party spirit—and party spirit is a fungus which grows upon the dunghill of conceit! The Apostle grieved greatly to see that the brethren had no discipline, could not keep rank and were not content to work under anybody or with one another. He lamented that each man wanted to be foremost and he was so ashamed of them that he thanked God that he had baptized none of them!

Probably the adherents of the various parties had only used their leaders’ names to make a sect in order that they, themselves, might be made the more prominent. They gloried in men that other men might glory in them. From all this may we, as a Church, be preserved! May God grant that whatever gifts and talents we may have, we may always be filled by His good Spirit so abundantly that we may walk in all lowliness of spirit and abide in hearty, loving union with each other. Our Apostle displayed great wisdom in his rebuke of the Corinthians. He did not cry down their talents. He did not say that it was altogether a thing of no value to be able to argue, to be able to preach, to be able to discern spirits, or to be able to speak with tongues.

This is a mode of procedure which suggests itself very readily, but it is not a good one. You very seldom lower a man’s opinion of himself by undervaluing his gifts. He knows that you are treating him unfairly and he, naturally, resents the injustice and becomes more proud than ever. He remembers the fable of the fox and the sour grapes and is fully persuaded

that you only decry his abilities because you do not possess them yourself! Pride is not to be cured by injustice! One devil will not drive out another! Pride often finds fuel for itself in that which was intended to dampen its flame. The man who is undervalued feels that if his gifts are despised by others. He knows their value, if nobody else does, and so he has another reason for considering himself to be a person of superior abilities.

The Apostle follows a far more sensible course—he does not deny the talent, but asks where it comes from! He does not irritate, but cuts deep while he asks one or two questions which strike at the very root of selfesteem. In effect these questions were as follows, “If you are a superior person and a man fit to be a teacher of others, from where did you obtain this superiority? If you are different from the common people, who makes you to differ? If you are a person of remarkable gifts, how did you come to possess them? If all your distinguishing abilities are gifts from God, why do you boast? Why do you exalt yourself? What have you which you have not received? If you received everything as the gift of Divine charity, why do you glory as if you had not received it?”

These questions may well hide pride from man and I pray that such may be the result upon our minds while at this time we pursue the train of thought suggested by the text. To this end we shall need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for nothing is more difficult than to overcome our selfconceit. Pride takes a thousand forms and hides itself under numberless disguises. Many talk of lowliness, but humility still remains among the rarest of jewels! Many take pride in what they call having no pride about them—it is very easy to be proud of not being proud—and perhaps some Brothers and Sisters here are in that condition. Perhaps we, ourselves, have said, “No, we are not such fools as to boast.” *That* is not boasting, I suppose?

“I could not be vainglorious,” says one. “I know too much of my unworthiness to give myself airs and ride the high horse,” says another. Quite so, my Friends, and yet at the bottom of such a speech there may lie a world of self-confidence! In fact, your humble confessions may be only another form of blowing your own trumpets. It is easy to be proud while sneering at pride and to glorify self while denouncing all self-exultation. There was great truth in Plato’s observation when Diogenes trampled on his valuable carpets and said, “I trample upon the pride of Plato?” “Yes,” said Plato, “and with greater pride.”

There are some who are never more ostentatious than when they cry down all display and never more insolent than when opposing insolence. Pride is a subtle serpent-like vice—it will insinuate itself into the most secret chamber and hide in the most unlikely places! It will speak like an angel of light and cringe and fawn and display a mock modesty which might almost deceive the very elect! It will blush and be diffident and hesitating, while all the while Lucifer himself is not more puffed up! To deal blows at this vice of vanity we shall meditate upon our text and pray God to bless it to us.

First, we shall note that the verse contains a great and comprehensive Truth of God. And secondly we shall observe, as God shall help us, the teaching which may be derived from it.

**I.**Our text contains within itself A GREAT AND COMPREHENSIVE TRUTH OF GOD—namely, that whatever advantages any of us possess over our fellow men we have received from God. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights.” “The living God gives us richly all things to enjoy.” “He gives to all life, breath and all things.” Everything that we are which is not sinful and everything that we have which is worth having, we owe to the bounty of our God.

And this is true, first, as to all sorts of temporal advantages. Begin at the very lowest—we owe our physical strength and personal comeliness to the Lord. Some persons are born with a fine frame, well knit, healthy, vigorous, strong, fitly proportioned. And others exhibit a beauty of person and countenance which gives them great influence and wins much admiration. One of the most common vices in the world and one of the most silly, is the propensity to boast in mere animal force or physical beauty, whereas the man had no hand in making one single bone or muscle or sinew of his frame! Nor has the fairest daughter of Eve been the creator of her own loveliness! No credit is due to the strong man for his strength nor to the beautiful for their beauty. Strength and beauty are *gifts*, not virtues.

There are some who consider the strongest man to be the best and measure themselves by their capacity to lift weights, or to inflict blows— forgetting that horses and elephants can bear greater loads—and lions and tigers can be fiercer in battle. Mere force belongs to beasts and to steam engines even more than to men! And a man of gigantic strength is outdone at every step by the most common machinery. As for beauty, one of its most potent charms lies in its modest unconsciousness—it is greatly marred when accompanied by vanity. It may seem natural that a peacock should expand its tail in self-admiration, for the bird knows no better. But for a man or woman possessed of reason to gaze in the glass and admire their own bright eyes, glossy hair and delicate features is contemptible vanity!

Lovely is the modesty which does not even *think* of itself, but like the sweetly perfumed violet hides itself among the leaves to be sought out by those who have pleasure in lowly worth. O fine lady, why so haughty? Did you make yourself? Then be proud of yourself! O strong athletic man, why so arrogant? Are you your own creator? Did you, O man, or woman, give yourself strength or comeliness? Those legs of a man so swift for running—has the runner fashioned them himself? Those eyes of woman, so bright for fascination—did she kindle their wondrous light herself? No, these personal advantages are evidently gifts distributed at the Divine pleasure.

The Lord has made one athletic while another is born a cripple—one is uncomely and another fair as beauty’s self. We meet with persons who are born blind, or deaf and dumb, or deformed in limb, or weak in spine and, therefore, we see that our vigor of physical frame is the gift of Providence. To each favored one we may say, “What have you that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” Position, too, in this world is a thing very commonly boasted of. This man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth—another man comes into the world with nothing silvery about him. The first man boasts because he is a gentleman and has come from a wealthy family—but what had he to do with it?

What determined the place of his birth? What but a Providential arrangement altogether apart from himself? And after all, in the matter of birth we are all pretty much upon a level if we trace our pedigrees to their common meeting-place in the father of all living. Among the numerous kinds of pride this is one of the most ridiculous—the boast of blood and vaunting of ancestry! What can there be of all inherited position and rank for which we can claim merit? However great the privilege, no credit is due to those who have it, for we may say to each one, “What have you which you have not received?”

Some men are vainglorious because they claim to have made their own position—we have even heard them say that they made themselves! I observe that persons who boast of being self-made usually worship their supposed maker with great fervency and endeavor to lead others to pay the same homage. But I would ask such, “Who gave you the opportunity to become what you have become? From where did you get that natural talent and force of character which have brought you to the front?” The “self-made man” can only be so called in a very restricted sense, or else the speech is false and blasphemous.

If a man has prospered, his prosperity has come of God’s kind permission—“The Lord makes poor and makes rich.” And if he has fought his way up from penury and obscurity to dignity and position among the sons of men, he owes it to the gentleness of God, who “raises up the poor out of the dust.” Education, the gift of prudent parents, opportunity, the gift of Providence—these have all united to make the man prosperous—what has he that he has not received? Some glory in their talent and knowledge. But here again, if a man commits himself to the nobler pursuits of science and learning and renounces the more groveling ambitions of mere wealth and station. If he endeavors to search out the secrets of Nature so as to become useful to his fellow men—if he should succeed and rise to be numbered with great master minds—has he not received it all?

From the beginning, were there not natural predilections and propensities and talents and capacities bestowed upon him which have been denied to others who have been equally industrious, but could not, in the nature of things, become equally eminent? From where, also, has come the health which has enabled the student to persevere in laborious research? Many have been slain by their devotion to their books. The brain is very sensitive and many, in burning the midnight oil, have consumed the oil of life at the same time! To whom, then, does the successful student owe his continued mental vigor? The greatest philosopher may wisely thank God that he is not a lunatic! It may be many a time, in the pursuit of knowledge, he has, in the straining of his faculties, come very near to the overstraining of them. “Great wits to madness often are allied” and frequently only the merciful interposition of Heaven has spared the deep student from the madman’s fate. What has he that he has not received?

As to wealth, where some are apt to indulge a vulgar vanity, what is there in it, after all? Certainly it is to a man’s credit that he did not, in the commencement of his life, squander his money in wanton waste and selfindulgence. It is to a man’s credit that he put his shoulder to the wheel and toiled on and did not consume his days in idleness, or fall into habits of drunkenness and dissipation which are the roots of nine-tenths of the poverty in the land. It is to his credit that he has been economical and so has kept the wolf from the door and risen to a competence. But still, what has he that he did not *receive*? These very habits and discretions may be traced to training, or to force of mind, or to happy example and they are, therefore, things *received*.

As for the man’s success—it is not only due to his industry, for sickness or accident might have made him unable to earn his bread, or lack of employment might have hampered him. An ill turn in trade would have swept away his little capital, or, trusting in others, he might have found himself robbed of all. Are there not many who are industrious and prudent and all that, and yet nothing seems to prosper with them, or if they do have a little season of prosperity it is soon over? They have not, perhaps, all the wit of some and, therefore, become the prey of hucksters— nor have they all the vigor of mind which is necessary in these days of competition. Alas, some have grown rich by wickedness and have heaped up curses for themselves—but as far as wealth is a blessing—no man possesses it apart from God’s goodness.

What do the Scriptures say? “You shall remember the Lord your God; for it is He that gives you power to get wealth.” If any man will sit down and trace his progress in life, he will say of each of his mercies, “This, also, comes to me from the goodness of the Lord. It is He who has prospered me. I might have exerted myself as I have done, but unless the Lord had built the house, they who built it would have labored in vain. Unless the Lord had kept the city, the watchmen had wakened in vain. Even if I have labored as in the very fire and risen early and sat up late, yet all would have come to nothing unless His good hand had been with me.”

Let us remember this and never indulge the pride which robs God of His praise. It would be a sad thing if we were to become as besotted as ungrateful Israel, of whom the Lord said, “She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.” Nor is it only for the power to *get* that we are indebted to the Lord, for the *retaining* of our substance is equally of His favor. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away—and the rich man may be, all of a sudden, stripped of all his treasure. Houses are soon plucked down unless the Lord keeps them. For

the continued supplies of our needs let us thank the Lord who daily loads us with benefits! O man of learning, it is the Lord that gives you power to acquire knowledge—otherwise all your efforts would be fruitless and your mind would prove to be a barren waste!

All faculty, capacity, attainment and influence come from Him. It is He that gives you power, if you are a member of the Christian Church, to take a high position in it and to become a leader of others. If you have any experience by which you can comfort the afflicted. If you have any knowledge of His Word by which you can instruct the ignorant. If you have the Spirit of God resting upon your utterance to convince and awaken, to confirm and to edify—if in *anything* you are favored to bless the Church or the world—you owe this to the great Giver of all good. Bless Him, therefore, and boast not! If any man is prepared to deny our doctrine, we may leave him to his own ungrateful pride—but let him tremble lest, like Nebuchadnezzar, he should be stripped of all power and made, in his fall, to acknowledge the hand of the Lord.

You shall always find that men upon their knees, if they are sincere, bless God for all they have. And the better a man grows and, I will venture to add, the more common sense he gains, the more ready is he to trace all that he *has* and*is* to the good hand of his God! Certainly the more Grace he has and the more he becomes like his God, the more earnestly does he refuse any credit for himself! And the more sweetly does he sing the Psalm, “Non nobis domine”—“Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Your name give glory.” Like Paul, he cries, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

We have thus set forth the great general Truth of God which holds good as to all temporal advantages. I believe it to be an equally sure Truth as to all gracious privileges. The Apostle says, “Who makes you to differ?” Now, my Brothers and Sisters, those of us who have been saved by Divine Grace *do* differ from others. We differ greatly from what *we* used to be! We differ sensibly from ourselves in our former state and we also differ greatly from others who are still unregenerate, for if the Grace of God did not make our character to be different from that of the ungodly, where would its value be? The Lord has taught us what others do not know! He has quickened us with a life which others do not feel! He has given us a sorrow which the world has never felt and, blessed be His name, He has endowed us with a joy with which worldlings cannot intermeddle.

There is a very great difference between him that fears God and him that fears Him not. “Now, who makes you to differ?” is the question to be thought of, this morning, by every saved one. I believe that the Doctrines of Grace would never be doubted if men would follow this question to its legitimate conclusions. Why am I different from other men if I am so? It has been by the hearing of the Gospel as the means, but I must ascribe it to Divine Grace and not to chance, that I was born where the Gospel was preached and not left under the influence of Popery or heathenism. There is distinguishing Sovereignty in the birth of one man in London and the birth of another in Timbuktu. Neither individual had anything to do with that most important item in his life.

You might have been born in a kraal of the Hottentot instead of in the midst of a family of believers in Christ. The very privilege of hearing the Word of God, you must thankfully acknowledge to be a gift from the hand of God! Others even in your own country may not have been equally favored, for they may not have had such earnest parents, nor have heard so earnest a minister. You were placed where many have been converted—it may be in the country or in London you were early carried to listen to a man whose way of putting the Gospel was warm-hearted, affectionate and likely to be used of God. There, again, is the Sovereignty of God to be seen—that one should be found under a cold, dead ministry and another should hear a soul-saving preacher.

Yet further, there were some who heard the same sermons as you did and were not converted and you were. How come? Will *you* take the glory for it? Were you better disposed? Was there something in your nature superior to that of others? It is true you paid more earnest attention, but why? What led you to do so? Was there some natural betterness about you? No, dear Friend, you will not dare to say so! At any rate, if you said so in the heat of controversy, you would not repeat it on your knees! No Christian will say, “ Lord, I was better than other people and, therefore, I am saved and they are not.” No, in prayer we are all Calvinists! In prayer we all agree to ascribe the whole of the praise to the Grace of God! “Who makes you to differ?” has but one answer from Christian people—it is the Grace of God that has done it.

The Apostle next acknowledges that we possess many blessings, but declares that we have received all of them from God. Is that true? Let us enlarge upon the question. I speak only to professed Believers in Christ. You had, at first, conviction of sin—did that arise spontaneously or did the Spirit convict you of sin? Repentance towards God—was that worked in you by the Holy Spirit, or was it the outgrowth of your own free will? You have faith—I venture to ask you if that faith is the gift of God? If it is not, I advise you to get rid of it, for it will never save you! The faith which saves the soul is always spoken of in Scripture as the *gift* of God! Since your conversion you have exhibited some measure of holiness, but was that worked in you by the Spirit or is it the fruit of your natural excellence? Who is to have the praise for it? You have grown in knowledge— have you been taught of God, or did you teach yourself? If you were your own teacher, I know what kind of scholar you are! They say that when a man is his own lawyer, he has a fool for his client and it is very much the same when a man is his own teacher in Divine things.

You have also gained experience. You have felt love to Christ. You have burned with zeal—were these good things the gifts of God to you—or do you claim credit for them as having sprung up in your heart as weeds grow in a garden without sowing or watering? Ah, dear Brothers and Sisters, I know there is no exception to this rule among the children of God— they all confess that their Divine Graces have been received of the Lord. Whatever their doctrinal views and sentiments, let them but speak with

God in prayer or praise and they will all say, “It was all Your work as far as it was good! And unto You be all the honor of it from the first to the last. You have worked all our works in us.”

Friend, if your Grace did not come from God, it is worthless! But if it did come from the Lord, let Him have the glory for it and do not boast as though you had not received it! I need to call your attention to the way in which the text is worded. It is not said, “Who made you to differ?” but, “Who *makes* you to differ?” Who distinguishes you *now*? It was God who made you to differ at the first—that we all admit. Who makes you to differ now? Suppose you were left to yourself—could you continue in your state of Divine Grace? Suppose the Grace of God were gone—what would become of you? Is there one man among us who could keep his own soul alive as long as it takes for the eye to blink if God’s upholding Spirit were withdrawn?

Is there any folly, is there any fault, is there any *crime* into which the best saint here would not soon plunge if it were not for the restraining Grace of God? Who dares trust himself? What is it that makes us continue to differ from the very worst but the Grace of God? And who shall make us to differ in days to come? To whom do you look for your future preservation? Are you your own keepers? Do you hope that you yourselves, unaided, shall persevere in the road to Heaven? You are not, I trust, so presumptuous! Between this spot and yonder golden gates there will be battles in which we shall surely be slain unless Jehovah shall cover our heads! There are wilderness places into which we shall be sure to wander and lose ourselves forever unless the Shepherd of Israel shall lead us like a flock.

We know that it is so from past experience and present consciousness. The longer I live—and I think it is so with most Christians—the more I feel that everything must be of Grace from first to the last if I am to be saved. Grace chose us and Grace redeemed us! Grace calls us! Grace renews us! Grace preserves us and Grace must perfect us, or else nothing will come of all our hopes and desires! Our religion will all be a flash in the pan, a disappointment at the last and a failure forever. Today I stand here to say that if I have served the Lord from my youth up, He led me into His ways. If I have preached His Gospel faithfully to the utmost of my knowledge, it has been because His grace has urged me to. If any souls have been won to Christ. If a Church has been built up. If young preachers have been encouraged. If the savor of the Gospel has been spread abroad—for these things and all else that has been done I disclaim even the *shadow* of credit!

I loathe the thought! Unto God, alone, be the honor! He has worked in me to will and to do of His own good pleasure. When I bear this personal testimony I feel quite sure that every Brother and Sister here, according to his position and condition, will agree with me in his own case. If there is any virtue. If there is any praise. If there is *anything* that is honest or of good repute—unto the Lord and unto the Lord, alone, be the praise! If we are without these things the fault is our own—if we have no Grace, if we have not obtained mercy, if we are still unbelievers and disobedient—on our own heads must rest the responsibility and the sin!

But this by no means contradicts the present Truth of God that if there is any goodness in us it is the workmanship of Him who began to save us and will not cease from His work till He has finished it. Thus I have spoken of the great general Truth.

**II.**Now we come to ITS TEACHINGS. The first teaching of this great Truth of God is that which we have already enlarged upon. It is useful as a rebuke to *pride*. If any Brother is filled with vanity, let him answer the question, “Who makes you to differ?” True, you are no more a drunkard, but why should you boast of your sobriety? Is it not your *duty*? True, you are no more the companion of evildoers, but who was it that took you out of their company and gave you a new heart and a right spirit? What is it that keeps you out of the ways of the wicked at this moment?

It is true you know something of the things of God, whereas others are blinded and the world lies in the Wicked One. But who opened your eyes? What do you say? You were born blind as they were—who opened your eyes? Did you bring light to your own soul? Think of what you used to be. Let any of us look back to our first estate and we shall surely be compelled to lay our finger on our mouth and silence every boast forever! Think of what we would be if Divine Grace were to leave us—how a hasty temper would soon ruin some of us, how natural levity would carry others of us off our feet—how depression of spirit would lead some to despair and carelessness would draw others to presume. Think of how in many ways our besetting sin would overthrow us if it were not for the preserving Grace of God!

Brothers and Sisters, if we say, concerning anything in us that is good, “This is mine and I congratulate myself upon having produced it,” we are robbers and liars! Acknowledge that what you have is received from God! Admit that it belongs to the great Giver and that you, yourself, belong to Christ, and you may take the comfort of every good gift you have—but once say, “This is no gift, it is my own”—and you are uttering a lie and you are acting a knavish part in defrauding the great King of His lawful revenue of praise! Yes, and you are also acting the part of an idolater, making *yourself* into an idol and lavishing incense to please your own foolish vanity. God grant that from a sense of being beggars and nothing but beggars, daily receiving alms at the gate of Mercy, we may be led to behave ourselves in His Presence and among our fellow men with all lowliness of spirit. “Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?”

Secondly, this great Truth becomes an excitement to gratitude. If all I possess I have *received* and if all I am is due to the distinguishing Grace of God, then let me bless the Lord in the depths of my soul! Silence is often the noblest form of worship. I delight to sit before the Lord and feel that unspeakable mercy can only be acknowledged by unspeakable thankfulness. O God, if You had left me where I was. If You had left me to go on in sin, what might I have been by now? What a servant of the devil!

What a well-tutored tempter of others should I have grown to be! Into what shame and disgrace might I have fallen! By what frightful habits might I have been enthralled! Some of you, my dear Hearers, would have been dead long ago if it had not been for the Grace of God—for you were killing yourselves in sin!

Some of you would have been damned long ago if Divine Grace had not stopped you, for you were riding headlong into Hell and did not go at a common prudent pace, as many do, along the broad road. Oh, I say again, what might not some of us have been by now if the Lord had not stepped in with His preventing and converting mercy! Let us, therefore, while we bless Him quietly in the deeps of our own soul, yet oftentimes overflow with praise, such as men may *hear*. Let our hearts flow over, for surely they are full! It is a good thing to spill a bowl of gratitude on an ungrateful man’s floor—to make him feel that if he does not bless God, others will do so and will not be ashamed to do it to his face!

This gratitude should take the shape of continual obedience. Nothing which Jesus bids us do should be too hard for us and nothing that He has bid should be forgotten. When we were in bondage under sin we thought if the Lord did but forgive us we should become the most warmhearted and loving servants in His employ. When I had the irons on my wrists and when I sat in sackcloth and ashes in the thick darkness of despair, if anyone had said to me, “The Lord will have mercy upon you and make a minister of you,” I would have replied, “Then I will preach with all my heart and soul.” I should have hoped to preach a hundred times better than I have ever done!

If it had been put to any one of you, do you not think you would have said, “I will serve Him with my whole being. Redeemed by His blood, pressed to His bosom as a dear, returning child—clothed in the best robe, with a ring on my finger and shoes on my feet—I will live to my Father’s praise, yes, live with such intensity that even Apostles and martyrs shall not excel me.” You have not done so, my Friend, but the text calls you and me to do it and suggests to us a gratitude which shall manifest itself in effort and glow in every action of our daily life.

Again, my text has another lesson. It is a reminder of *responsibilities*. God has made a great difference between you and others in many respects. He has given you a great many blessings—remember that where much is given, much will be required. If you have 10 talents, have you brought in the proportionate interest? If you possess five talents, have you brought in a five-fold return? It is to be deeply regretted that some of those who have the most ability to do good are doing the least. There are men with large wealth who do not give half as much as many with meager means. I know persons of great attainments in spiritual knowledge who do not teach one half as much as newly converted lads and girls who occupy their posts in the school right earnestly and teach what little they know.

I regret to say that those who could fight best are often the last to go to battle—and those who could plow best most often leave the plow rust— while feebler hands are worn to the bone. Brother, I will not deny that you have much knowledge, nor question that you have much experience, nor debate with you your right to be our superior if you are so! But will you kindly be so good as to exceed us in consecration, in self-denial, in earnestness and in holiness? In estimating our personal character, let us not so much calculate what we *could* be, as what we *are*. Let us not so much consider what we *might* be if we could, but what we really are doing for the Lord, for *that* is the matter of most importance! You may be a well of water, but you will get no credit for it at the last—the reward comes for the cup of cold water that was given to a disciple in the name of a disciple!

You may be a great bale of cloth, but you will get no honorable mention for it at the Last Great Day—the commendation will be to those of whom the Lord shall say, “I was naked, and you clothed Me.” You may have a fat larder and a fine buttery, but the honor shall only come to you at the last if it can be said, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, sick and in prison and you visited Me.” God grant we may all think of our responsibilities so that you who could take long strides may not be satisfied to walk like little children—and that you who could do a giant’s work may not be satisfied with attempting that which might be credit enough to a dwarf—but is not at all worthy of your greater powers.

Learn another lesson. The Truth of God before us is a suggestion of great tenderness in dealing with others! Allow me, for a minute, to press that consideration upon you. “Who makes you to differ?” Who but a gracious God has renewed your heart? Yet you met, the other day, with a man fast bound with bad habits and you said, “Nothing can be done with such a wreck of a man. I will not waste words upon him.” Another day you heard of an effort made in the back slums, among the lowest of the low, and you said, “I do not think much can come of it.” Now, my dear Friend, “Who makes you to differ? What have you that you did not receive?”

It would be better to drink into the spirit of holy John Bradford, whose window looked upon the road to the gallows at Tyburn. As from day to day he saw poor condemned prisoners carried in the cart to die, he was known to say, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” If you feel so, let me ask you why cannot the Grace of God cause *others* to fear God as well as yourself? Cannot the Grace of God make other sinners to believe in Jesus as you do? I have never despaired of the salvation of *any* man since the Lord saved me. I know no heart that God cannot win if He could conquer mine! If you believe in your heart the precious Doctrines of Grace, you cannot be hopeless of any, but you must be ready to hope for those in whom there is nothing to encourage expectation! We ought never to look for desert in others, since the Lord did not look for desert in us. If Jesus loved us when there was no reason in us for that love, we ought just as freely to love our fellow men!

The last lesson is not for the Christian. It is for any of you here who wish you were saved. The text is an encouragement for seekers. You have begun another year and you are yet unsaved? But still you desire, if it is possible, to become children of God. Now, do you know an eminent

Christian? “Yes,” you say, “I do.” Perhaps it is your grandmother, or it may be some earnest Christian minister. You greatly admire those people, do you not? Now remember that there is nothing good in them but what they have received from God! The Lord can give the same Grace to you— and you can receive even as they have received. Do you believe that? It is true whether you believe it or not!

The Lord, in His abundant mercy can give to you what He has given to the best of His saints, whoever you may be. “Then what have I to do?” one asks. What you have to do is, according to the text, to be a *receiver*. That is all—and that is the easiest thing in the world!*Anybody* here can be a receiver! When you go past the offering box for the College, perhaps some of you cannot be*givers*, however much you may wish to be. But if I were to put a man at the door with a shilling or a guinea for each one—anybody could *receive* it if he chose! Reception is a faculty which belongs to us however low we may sink. When a person is covered with rags, covered with filth, covered with disease, he can still become a receiver! And even if he cannot stretch out his hand, he can find ways and means for receiving.

Receiving implies neither strength, nor merit, nor wisdom. It requires no power, no faculty, no virtue, no*anything*! The power to be a receiver dwells with the weakest of the weak and the worst of the worst. The emptier you are, the more room there is for reception! The blacker you are, the more room to receive washing! The more foul you are, the more reason to receive cleansing! The more sick and near to death, the more room to receive healing! Will you have the blessing which God in Christ Jesus is ready to give? If you will be saved, listen to the voice of God and live! If you are willing to accept His Son Jesus Christ as your Savior and, from this time forth put your whole trust in Him, you shall be saved! May He by His Grace lead you, now, to become a receiver, for it is written—“As many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on His name.” Amen.

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DISTINGUISHING GRACE  
NO. 262

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***~~“For who makes you to differ from another?” 1 Corinthians 4:7.~~***

OR, as it is in the Greek—“For who distinguishes you?” “Who gives you distinguishing and discriminating mercy?” “Who makes you to differ from another?” Pride is the inherent sin of man and yet it is of all sins the most foolish. A thousand arguments might be used to show its absurdity. But none of these would be sufficient to quench its vitality. Alive it is in the heart and there it will be, till we die to this world and rise again without spot or blemish. Yet many are the arrows which may be shot at the heart of our boasting. Take for instance the argument of creation—how strongly that thrusts at our pride. There is a vessel upon the potter’s wheel, would it not be preposterous for that clay which the potter fashions to boast of itself and say, “How well am I fashioned! How beautifully am I proportioned! I deserve much praise!” Why, O lump of clay, whatever you are, the potter made you—however elegant your proportions, however matchless your symmetry, the glory is due to *him* that made you, not to yourself. You are but the work of his hands.

And so let us speak of ourselves. We are the thing *formed*—shall we say of ourselves that we deserve honor because God has formed us excellently and wondrously? No, the fact of our creation should extinguish the sparks of our pride. What are we, after all, but as grasshoppers in His sight, as drops in a bucket, as lumps of animated dust? We are but the infants of a day when we are most old. We are but the insects of an hour when we are most strong. We are but the wild ass’s colt when we are most wise. We are but as folly and vanity when we are most excellent—let that tend to humble us. But surely if these prevail not to clip the pinions of our high soaring pride, the Christian man may at least bind its wings with arguments derived from the distinguishing love and peculiar mercies of God. “Who makes you to differ from another?” This question should be like a dagger put to the throat of our boasting—“and what have you that you did not receive?”—it would be like a sword thrust through the heart of our selfexaltation and pride.

We shall now, for a moment or two, endeavor to put down our pride by observing wherein God has distinguished us and made us to differ and then by noticing that all this comes of him and should be a reason for humiliation and not for boasting.

1. Many of us differ from others in God’s providential dealings towards us. Let us think a moment how many there are of God’s precious and dearly beloved children who at this moment are in the depths of poverty. They are not walking about in sheepskins and goatskins, persecuted, afflicted and tormented. But still they are hungry and no man gives them to eat. They are thirsty and no man furnishes them with drink—their fires are wasted in poverty and their years in distress. Some there are of God’s children who were once in affluence but have been suddenly plunged into the lowest depths of penury. They knew what it was to be respected among the sons of men, but now they are among the dogs of the flock and no man cares for them.

There are some of us who are here present who have all that heart can wish—God has given us food and raiment, the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage. Let us gratefully ask— “Who makes us to differ?” Let us remember that all we have is the gift of His Providence. Not to you, O my hands, do I sacrifice because you have toiled for bread. Not to you, O you brains, will I offer incense, because you have thought for my daily livelihood. Not to you, O my lips, will I offer my adulation, because you have been the means of furnishing me with words. No—unto God, who gives power to get and to have and to enjoy—unto Him be all the praise for what He has done for us.

Never let our songs cease, for His goodness is an ever flowing stream. Perhaps none of us can ever know, until the great day shall reveal it, how much some of God’s servants are tried. To this day they have “perils by land and perils by sea and perils by false brethren.” To this hour they are pinched by want, they are deserted by friends, they know what despondency means and all the ill which dejection and disappointment can bring to them. They have dived into the lowest depths of the sea of trouble and have walked for many a league over the hot sand of the desert of affliction. And if God has delivered us from these things and has made our path more pleasant and has led us beside the still waters and into the green pastures—if He has distinguished us by the common gifts of His Providence above many others of His children who are far better and far more holy than we, what shall we say?

It is owing only to His grace towards us and we will not exalt ourselves above our fellows, we will not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate. We will not lift our necks with the proud, but we will bow down our brows with the humble. Every man shall be called our brother—not merely those who are arrayed in goodly raiment, but those who are clothed in the habiliments of toil—they shall be confessed to be our kindred, sprung from the same stock. For what have we that we have not received and what makes us to differ from another? I wish that some of the stiff-necked gentry of our Churches would at times remember this. Their condition is smooth as oil and as soft as young down, but their hearts are as high as poplars and their manners as stiff as hedge-stakes. There have been many who would do well if they would learn that they have nothing beyond what God has given them. And the more God has given them, the more they are in debt.

Why should a man boast because he is deeper in debt than another? Do the debtors in the Queen’s Bench say to one another, “You are only a hundred pounds in debt and I a thousand, therefore I am a greater gentleman than you”? I think not. But, nevertheless, if they did so, they would be as wise as men who boast beyond their fellow creatures because they happen to have more of rank, wealth, honor and position, in this world. “Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive?”

But the best way for you to feel this part of the discourse is to go tomorrow into the hospital and walk along the wards and see how poor men’s bodies suffer—and then go into the operating room and see what flesh and blood may have to endure. Then when you have done, go round the neighborhood to see the sick who have lain for ten, or twelve, or fifteen years upon the same bed. After that go and visit some of God’s povertystricken children who just exist in this world and it is but a bare existence, maintained on bread and butter and a little tea and but too little of even such things as those. Go and see their poor, miserable, unfurnished rooms—their cellars and their attics and that will be a better sermon to you than anything I can utter. You will come home and say, “Oh my God, I bless You for Your kindness towards me. These temporal mercies which I once thought so little of, I must heartily bless You. I must thank You for what You have given to me and I will ascribe it all to Your love, for You make me to differ. I have nothing that I have not received.”

**2.**But this is not the most important point for us to observe. We are now going to look at, not matters of Providence, but the things of God’s grace. Here it is that we who are now assembled as a Church have most reason to bless God and to say, “Who makes us to differ from others?” Take, my dear Friends, in your mind’s eye the cases of the careless, the hardened and the thoughtless—of even this present congregation. Sideby-side with you, my Brothers and Sisters, there may sit a man, a woman, who is dead in trespasses and sins. To such the music of the Gospel is like singing to a dead ear and the dropping of the Word is as dew upon a rock. There are many in this congregation whose position in society and

whose moral character are extremely excellent and yet before God their state is awful. They attend the House of God as regularly as we do. They sing as we sing, sit as we sit and come and go as we do and yet they are without God and without hope in the world—strangers from the commonwealth of Israel and aliens from the Covenant of promise.

But what makes us to differ? Why is it that I this day am not sitting down a callous hearer, hardened under the Gospel? Why am I not at this very hour hearing the Word with my outward ear but rejecting it in my inward heart? Why is it that I have not been suffered to reject the invitation of Christ to despise His grace—to go on, Sunday after Sunday, hearing the Word and yet being like the deaf adder to it? Oh, have I made myself to differ? God forbid that such a proud, blaspheming thought should defile our hearts. No, Beloved—

***“‘Twas the same love which spread the feast, That sweetly forced us in.  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.”***

The only reason, my Brothers and Sisters, why you are at this time an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, a partaker of sweet fellowship with Jesus, an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven, is because HE has made you to differ. You were an heir of wrath, even as others, born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Therefore must you give all the glory to His holy name and cry—“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the praise.” Even this one thought when fully masticated and digested might feed up our gratitude and make us humbly bow before the footstool of God’s Throne with joyful thanksgiving.

**3.**Will you please, however, think of other cases? Who makes you to differ from others of this assembly who are more hardened than those to whom we have alluded? There are some men and women of whose salvation, if it were to be worked by man, we must indeed utterly despair—for their hearts are harder than the most stubborn steel. The hammer of the Word makes no impression on such souls. The thunders of the Law roll over their heads—they can sleep in the midst of the tumult—the lightning of Sinai flashes against their hearts, but even those mighty flames seem as if they recoil from the attack. Do you not know such? They are your own children, your husband, your wife, some of your own family and as you look upon them, though you have longed, prayed and wept and sighed for their souls, you are compelled to say in your heart, “I half fear that I shall never see them converted.” You say with sorrow, “Oh, if they are saved it will be a wonder of Divine Grace, indeed. Surely they will never yield their souls to God.

They seem as callous as if their conscience were seared with a hot iron. They appear to have the stamp of condemnation upon their brow, as if they were marked and sealed and had the earnest of the pit upon their hearts before they came there. Yes, but stop—“Who makes you to differ?” Why am I not at this day among the most hardened of men? How is it that my heart is melted so that I can weep at the remembrance of the Redeemer’s suffering? Why is it that my conscience is tender and that I am led to self-examination by a searching sermon? How is it that I know how to pray and to groan before God on account of sin?

What has brought the water from these eyes, but the same power which brought the water from the rock? And what has put life into my heart but the same Omnipotence which scattered manna in the hungry desert? Our hearts had still been like the wild beasts of the forest, if it had not been for Divine Grace. Oh, I beseech you, my dear Friends, every time you see a hardened sinner, just say within yourself, “There is the picture of what I should have been, what I must have been, if all-subduing, allconquering love had not melted and sanctified my heart.” Take these two cases then and you have, Heaven knows, reason enough to sing to the praise of Sovereign Grace.

**4.**But now another—the lowest class of sinners do not mingle with our congregations, but are to be seen in our back streets and lanes and sometimes in our highways. How frightful is the sin of drunkenness, which degrades a man into a beast, which sinks him lower than the brutes themselves! How shameful is the iniquity of blasphemy, which without any object or any chance of profit brings a curse upon its own head! How awful are the ways of the lascivious wretch who ruins both body and soul at once and not content with his own destruction ruins others with him. Cases that come under our observation in the daily newspapers and that assail us in our daily observation and hearing are too vile to be told. How often is our blood chilled with the sound of an imprecation and how frequently our heart is made to palpitate with the daring impieties of the blasphemous?

Now let us stop—“Who makes you to differ?” Let us remember that if we live very near to Christ, we should have lived quite as near to Hell if it had not been for saving grace. Some of you here present are special witnesses of this grace, for you have yourself experienced redemption from these iniquities. Look back some four years with some of you and remember how different were your surroundings then to what they are now. Perhaps four years ago you were in the taproom singing the song of the drunkard as readily as any. But a little while ago you cursed that Savior whom now you love. Only a few months have flitted over your head since you ran with the multitude to do evil. But now, “Who makes you to differ?” Who has brought this miracle of grace? Who has led you to the stool of the

penitent and the table of communion, who has done it?”

Beloved, you are not slow to answer, for the verdict of your heart is undivided. You do not give the glory in part to man and in part to God. No, you cry loudly in your hearts, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” You are washed, you are sanctified and you have been washed in the Redeemer’s blood and sanctified with the Spirit. You have been made to differ and you will confess it. You have been made to differ by distinguishing Grace and distinguishing Grace alone. And what upholds the rest of us from being what these, my reclaimed Brethren, once were and what they will become again unless saving grace keeps them?

What preserves the preacher this day from being a lecturer to Infidels, dishonoring the Grace of God which now he glories to magnify? What prevents the deacon from being an assistant in the courts of Satan? What forbids those who open the doors at the house of our God and who serve Him on the Sabbath from being door-keepers in the tents of the sons of Belial? Why nothing—they had been there unless Grace had prevented them. Grace has done it and nothing else. When we pass a prostitute in the street, we say, “O poor creature! I can pity you. I have not a harsh word for you, for I had been as you are had not God preserved me.” And when you see the reeling drunkard, be not too hasty to condemn, remember you had been as a beast before God unless the Lord had kept you and when you hear the oath and shudder at it, imagine not that you are superior in yourself to the man who curses God, for perhaps you once cursed him, too.

And certainly you would have done had not the Holy Spirit sanctified you and implanted in you a hatred of that which the wicked so greedily follow. Have you seen a man hanged for murder? Have you seen another transported for the most infamous of crimes? If you hear of one who sins against society so foully that mankind excommunicate him, pause and say, “Oh, but I should have gone as low as that, I should have been as black as he, unless restraining Grace had kept me back in my unregeneracy and unless constraining Grace had pushed me forward in the heavenly race, ever since I have known the will of Jesus.”

**5.**And now we will pause again and think over another evil which stares us in the face in connection with every Church. There are most melancholy cases of backsliding in so large a Church as this. We are compelled often to discover the character of men and women who once seemed fair for Heaven, but who manifested that they never had the root of the matter in them. Oh, well did the poet say—

***“When any turn from Zion’s way,***

***Alas, what numbers do!”***  
No trial is greater to the true minister than the apostasy of his flock. All the rage of men is quite unable to bring tears to our eyes, but this has done it. Alas, when those whom I have loved have turned aside from the way of God—when those who have sat with us at the same table and have joined with us in Church communion, have gone out from us and have brought dishonor upon the Church and upon the name of Christ, there has been woe in my inmost spirit.

Sometimes there are cases as glaring as they are painful and as vile as they are grievous. Some of those, who were once in the midst of God’s sanctuary, have become drunkards and whoremongers—and God in Heaven only knows what else. They have sinned against everything that is seemly, as well as everything that is holy. At the remembrance of these our eyes are filled with tears. “Oh that our head were waters and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of our people.” No mischief-makers are so powerful as deserters. None cause so much agony as those who have nestled beneath our wings and then have flown away to feed with carrion vultures on the putrid carcasses of lust and sin.

But now let us pause. How is it that the minister has not forsaken his profession and gone back like a dog to his vomit and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire? How is it that the deacons of this Church have not turned aside unto crooked ways and denied the faith and become worse than infidels? How is it that so many members of this Church have been kept so that the Wicked One touches them not? O Beloved! I can say for myself, I am a continual miracle of Divine Grace. If you leave me, Lord, for a moment, I am utterly undone—

***“Leave, O leave me not alone!  
Still support and comfort me.”***

Let Abraham be deserted by his God, he equivocates and denies his wife. Let Noah be deserted, he becomes a drunkard and is naked to his shame. Let Lot be left awhile and, filled with wine, he revels in incestuous embraces and the fruit of his body becomes a testimony to his disgrace. No, let David, the man after God’s own heart, be left and Uriah’s wife shall soon show the world that the man after God’s own heart has still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Oh, well does the poet put it—

***“Methinks I hear the Savior say, Will you forsake Me, too?”***  
And now let our conscience answer—  
***“Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,***

***~~Unless You hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline  
And prove like they at last.”~~***

Oh be not rashly self-confident, Christian man. Be as confident as you can in your God, but be distrustful of yourself. You may yet become all that is vile and vicious, unless Sovereign Grace prevent and keep you to the end. But remember, if you have been preserved, the crown of your keeping belongs to the Shepherd of Israel and you know who that is. For He has said, “I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment—lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” “You know who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding great joy.” Then give all glory to the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God your Savior, who has kept you thus.

**6.**Allow me one more contrast—once again let your gratitude go with me. Since you and I have joined the Church how many who were once our companions have been damned while we have been saved? How many who were no worse than we were by nature have sunk into the lowest pit of Hell? Conceive their unutterable torments. Imagine their inconceivable woes. Depict before the eye of your fancy their indescribable agonies. Descend in spirit for a moment to the gates of fire—enter into the abode of despair where Justice reigns supreme on her iron throne. Pass by the dreary cell of those who are everlastingly damned. Behold the twisting of that worm that never dies and the bleeding hearts that are crushed within its coils. Look at that flame unquenchable and behold the souls that are sweltering there in torments to us unknown and look, if you can, look, but you cannot look, for your eyes would be stricken with blindness if you could see their torments! Your hair should be blanched with but a moment’s sight of that horrible exhibition.

Ah, while you stand, then, and think on that region of death, despair and damnation, remember that you would have been there if it had not been for Sovereign Grace. You have a harp prepared for you in Heaven, a crown laid up for you when you have finished your course. You have a mansion, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Oh, why is it you are not already in Hell? Who is it that has given you a good hope through Grace that you shall never come into that place of torment. Oh, tell it to the wide world over. Tell it in time and in eternity—FREE GRACE has done it! Free Grace has done it from the first to the last. I was a brand in the fire, but he plucked me from the burning, quenched me in His blood and now He declares I shall be with Him forever in Heaven!

But oh, pause, Brethren and think that some of your former potcompanions, some of the companions of your debaucheries are now in Hell and you are not there—and by the Grace of God never will be there. Oh, why this, why this? Blessed be the Lord my God from this time forth and forever. Praise His name. Grace has done it. Grace has done it all.

No, I never shall wear the chain, I never shall be stretched upon that rack, nor feel that fire—  
***“But I shall see His face,  
And never, never sin.  
But from the rivers of His grace  
Drink endless pleasures in.”***

But I most confidently proclaim that the reason why I shall escape and shall be glorified, is not to be found in me, but in Him. He has made me to differ. I have nothing but what I have received.

Now what shall we say to these things? If God has made you to differ, the first prayer we should now utter should be, “Lord, humble us. Take pride out of us. O God forgive us, that such beasts as we are should ever be proud.” We might have been with our father the devil at this very hour, if it had not been for Divine love. And if we are now in the house of our Father, which is in Heaven, shall we be proud? Be gone you monster! Go and dwell with the Pharisee. Pride agrees well enough with the man who has in his own esteem been always virtuous. Go away and live with him who has had good works from the first day until now. But away from me—

***“I the chief of sinners am,”***  
and saved by Sovereign Grace shall I be proud? It is not fit that you should live in my heart, you monster! Be gone! Be gone! Find a fitter habitation than my soul. Should I be proud after such mercy, after such illdeserving, but such God-receiving? Be gone, pride! Be gone!

Another lesson—if God alone has made us to differ, why may He not make others to differ, too? “After the Lord saved me,” said one, “I never despaired of anybody.” And let us each say so, too. If you were brought in, why not another? Will you ever give up praying for anybody now that you are saved? I once heard one say concerning his child, “I think I must give her up, I can scarcely think she ever will be converted.” Why you have been pardoned yourself! And if the Lord can do that, He can do anything. I am sure if the Lord has brought me to His feet there does not remain in the world a case that can ever equal mine. If He has brought me to receive His Free Grace, His sovereign love, His precious blood and has made me to love Him, then there can be nothing too hard for Him.

O Lord, if You have melted this metal heart and dissolved this stony soul, You can break anything. If You have broken the northern iron and the steel, then what remains beyond Your power? Go back then, Christian, armed with this fact—God who has made you to differ can make *anybody* to differ. There can be no case beyond His strength. If He brought you in He can bring all in. If He does but stretch out His hand, no man need despair. Therefore, “In the morning sow your seed and in the

evening withhold not your hand—for you know not what shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

Again—who has made me to differ? Has my Lord done it? Then let me serve Him more than others. There was a question asked once by our Savior, “What do you more than others?” That question might well be put to each child of God here present. My dear Friends, we must not be content with doing as much as other people do. In fact, we must never be content with our doings at all, but always be trying to do more for Him who has done so much for us. Should I give my body to be burned, my flesh piecemeal to the knife, my nerves to the rack and my heart to the spear, yet should I not give Him all that He deserves. No, if I should pass through the horrors of martyrdom, it were but a poor tribute to love so amazing, so Divine.

What are you *doing* my Friends—what are you doing my Brothers and Sisters for Christ? I will not name you, I censure myself if I censure you. I will confess my own iniquities and leave you to confess yours. I do try to serve my Master, but I do not serve Him as I would. Each act that I perform is marred, either by want of prayer for a blessing upon it, by want of faith in my Lord, or by pride in looking back upon it. I find too continually a tendency to serve myself instead of serving Christ, a constant longing rather to get through the work than to do it acceptably. And oh, when I think upon all, I must say I am an unprofitable servant. Have mercy O gracious Lord on my good works as well as on my bad ones, for my good works are but bad in the best and cannot be acceptable in themselves.

I am certain some of you have a little more need to say that than I have. Let us cease boasting any more. I know there are some here who are not serving Christ. Some members in this Church are doing nothing. You have not thought of doing anything for Christ, have you? You pay your regular subscriptions, you do what you are told to do, but do you give to Christ secretly? Do you devote your substance unto Him when no one knows it? Do you spend your time for Him? Have you chosen a sphere and have you said, “This is my work and by the Grace of God I will do it”? Oh, you cannot tell how much there is to do and how few there are to do it. I would I could have a Church all alive, all active, so that there never could be a want but those who have would be ready to supply and never a work but those who are qualified would be ready to fulfill. Never fear but we should find too many rather than too few to aid its accomplishment. Oh that we had the good spirit of the ancient Church, the spirit to propagate our Christianity everywhere!

There needs to be in many of the suburbs of London fresh Gospel Churches springing up. I can point to many places in my own vicinity, seven or eight, nine or ten in a row, where there is a Chapel needed. In each place there are Believers living who do not think about uniting to establish a fresh cause. But as long as their peculiar wants are satisfied, by journeying a long way off, perhaps, they forget the hundreds and thousands who are pressing around them. Oh, there is much to be done and very little time to do it in. A very few weeks and those of us who have been loved more than others, those of us who have thought we could wash Christ’s feet with our tears and wipe them with the hair of our heads, will have no more opportunities for spreading the name and fame of our glorious Redeemer.

Let us give of our substance to His cause, give of our time to His service and have our hearts in His love and so shall we be blessed, for in returning Christ’s love we shall feel that His love is shed abroad more fully in our hearts and more fully in our understandings. May the Holy Spirit add His blessing upon these broken words—they have been broken because they have broken my heart and therefore I could not help their coming out in a broken way. God accept them. And dear Brothers and Sisters, may he bless them to you by helping you to love Him more, who is my Hope, my Joy, my Consolation and my All.

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PURGING OUT THE LEAVEN  
NO. 965

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 11, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover  
is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness. But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.~~***

“WHAT God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” Evermore in Scripture the Doctrines of Grace are married to the precepts of holiness. Where faith leads the way, the virtues follow in a goodly train. The roots of holiness and happiness are the same, and in some respects they are but two words for the same thing. There have been persons who have thought it impossible that holiness should come out of the preaching of salvation by faith. If you tell men that “there is life in a look at the Crucified One,” will they not conclude that cleanness of life is unnecessary? If you preach salvation by Grace through faith, and not at all by the works of the Law, will they not draw the inference that they need not be obedient to Christ, but may live as they wish?

To this the best answer is found in the godly, honest, and sober lives of the men who are most zealous for the Gospel of the Grace of God. On the other hand, there have been others of Antinomian spirit who have dared to say that because they are saved, and Christ has finished His work for them so that nothing is left undone by way of merit, therefore, from now on they may act as they please, seeing that they are not under Law, but under Grace. Our reply is that the faith which saves is not an unproductive faith, but is always a faith which produces good works and abounds in holiness.

Salvation *in* sin is not possible, it always must be salvation *from* sin. As well speak of liberty while yet the irons are upon a man’s wrists, or boast of healing while the disease waxes worse and worse, or glory in victory when the army is on the point of surrendering, as to dream of salvation in Christ while the Sinner continues to give full swing to his evil passions. Grace and holiness are as inseparable as light and heat in the sun. True faith in Jesus in every case leads to an abhorrence of every false way and to a perseverance in the paths of holiness even unto the end.

The Apostle Paul, while he was showing the Corinthians how wrong they were to tolerate an incestuous person in their midst, compared the spirit of uncleanness to an evil leaven. Then the leaven suggested to him the Passover, and turning aside for a moment, he applied the type of the paschal feast so as to make his argument yet more convincing. He would urge purity upon them by every conceivable reason, and his keen eyes saw an argument in the celebration of the Passover.

In using this type he furnishes me with another proof of the fact that hard by any Scripture where you find the safety of the Believer guaranteed, you are sure to see necessary holiness set side by side with it. Here you have at the Passover a favored people safe beneath the sprinkled blood, safe in that dire hour when the destroying angel’s sword was unsheathed—but you find that people busily engaged in purging out the defiling leaven from their houses—they were not saved by purging out the leaven, but were preserved by the sprinkled blood. They were *obedient* to the Divine precept, and diligently put away the corrupt and forbidden thing. The purity of the house from leaven went side by side with its safety by the blood.

We shall, this morning, first, consider the happy condition of Believers. Next, the holy duty commended to them, running side by side with their privilege. And thirdly, we shall show how their happiness and holiness, their holiness and happiness, act and re-act upon each other.

I. We have set forth to us THE HAPPY CONDITION OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.” The habitual normal state of a Christian is that of one keeping a feast in perfect security. We are to be, as a rule, like the Israelites who stood at the table of the Passover festival, with loins girt, and staves in their hands, expectant of a joyful deliverance. Observe how the Apostle puts it—take his words one by one—“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

“Our Passover,” that by which God’s wrath makes a transition, and passes over us who deserve its full vengeance. It passed *upon* the Lamb of God, and therefore it passes *over* us. Christ is sacrificed or slain, His life is taken, for He gave Himself for us. His life and blood, yes, His true Self, He yielded up for us. The word for “us” implies *substitution*. Christ is sacrificed for or *instead* of us. We should never think of saying that Paul was sacrificed for us, though it is true Paul did lay down his life for the Church of God to promote the interests of the faithful, and in a certain sense, since his exertions handed down the Gospel, he died even for us.

But we use the term so generally and so correctly in the sense of substitution, that we should not think of applying it to any but our Lord, who alone, in the fullest sense was sacrificed for us. He is the Lamb of our Passover, sacrificed on our behalf, that we might not be sacrificed— roasted in the fire of suffering that we might go free. It is by the process of substitution that, according to abundant Scriptures, believing sinners are passed over in judgment and so escape eternal condemnation. “For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” No one can doubt this doctrine who believes the Word of the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many. For He shall bear their iniquities.” “He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Our great joy is that the Sacrifice through which we are passed over is already slain. No new victim is expected or required. The Sacrifice by which we are delivered is complete. Accursed be all those who say that there is offered to God continually a sacrifice in the “mass” by which the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is rendered complete. He has said, “It is finished,” and they are liars before God who say otherwise. “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”

Do you think I am severe in my speech? I say no other than Paul said, “If any man preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed.” All that was wanted to atone for our sin, all that was required to vindicate the Law of God is already offered. There is nothing left to be presented by so-called “priests” on earth or to be made up by the penances and payments of their dupes. Our Passover is sacrificed. Let others offer what they will, ours is the Lamb once slain, and there remains no more sacrifice for sin.

This completeness of sacrifice, indeed, is the main part of the festival which the Christian should perpetually keep. If there were anything yet to be done—if the substitutionary sacrifice were imperfect, how could we celebrate the feast? Anxiety would destroy all enjoyment. “It is finished,” is the joyous peal which rings us into the celestial banquet of present peace! The fact that we are complete in Him—perfect in Christ Jesus—is our soul’s deepest delight.

Our sacrifice is slain—“therefore,” says the Apostle—and it is a natural inference from it—“let us keep the feast.” By which I understand this— Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb, not only was offered as a sacrifice towards God, but He has become a festival towards ourselves. In Him we have communion with God, and joy and peace through believing. We are to keep the feast by feeding upon Christ. The paschal lamb was not slain to be looked at, to be laid by in store, or merely made the subject of conversation. But it was slain to be fed upon.

So, Christian, it is your daily business to feed upon Christ Jesus, whose flesh is meat, indeed, and whose blood is drink, indeed. Jesus is the Food on which your faith must be nourished. And what rich nourishment He is! God over all, blessed forever, has redeemed us. The Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, has been sacrificed for us. My soul, what more could be required? What more can you desire, or can the Almighty One demand? A sacrifice Divine, a perfect Man in union with the eternal God, dies for you. What more is needed to make your faith firm and unmoved? Come and feed yourself on this Bread which came down from Heaven!

The infinite love of the great Sacrifice, the amazing wisdom of it, the transcendent merit of it, the abounding fullness of the blessings which it secures—let your souls consider these things, and feed upon them till they are satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord. Here is a festival the viands of which never can be exhausted, and from which the

guests need never depart. Remember that at the paschal supper the whole of the lamb was intended to be eaten. And even thus, O Believer, the whole of Christ you are to feed upon.

No part of Christ is denied you, neither His humiliation nor His Glory, His kingship nor His priesthood, His Godhead nor His Manhood. All this has He given to you and for you, and you are now to nourish your soul by meditating upon Him. Forget not, moreover, that a feast is not only for nourishment—it is for something more—for joy, for exhilaration. Let us, in this sense also, keep a lifelong feast. The Christian is not only to take the doctrines which concern Christ to build up his soul with them as the body is built up with food, but he may draw from them the wine of joy and the new wine of delight. It is meet that we rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is the bliss of the saints. Is it not a joy unspeakable and full of glory, that my sin will never be laid to my charge if I am a Believer?

My sin has been laid at Jesus’ door, and He has put it all away so that if it is searched for it shall not be found! Is it not an intense delight to believe that Jesus has so effectually put away sin that no destroying angel can touch one of His saints? There being no condemnation, there can be no punishment for us either in this world or in that which is to come. We are as safe as Israel when the door was sprinkled with the blood. And more, being justified, we rise to a higher position—we are adopted into the family of God, and if children, then heirs. What a vista of Glory opens before our eyes at the mention of that word, heirs of God!

All things are ours, because Christ our Passover has been slain for us. My Brethren, do not let your religion merely keep you calm and quiet— look for bursts of joy. “Praise Him upon the cymbals, praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals.” Surely there should be an excitement of delight created by Truths of God so grand, by blessings so inestimable as those of which we are partakers! Let us not treat our religion as merely an ordinary meal for our souls, but as a holy banquet of wine wherein our souls may be exceedingly glad!

When the Jews came together at the Passover, we find that they were accustomed to sing. They did not close the paschal supper without chanting some portions of the great “Hallel,” which consisted of those Psalms at the end of the Book, dedicated to the praise of God. Let us keep the feast in the same way, nourishing our souls with Christ’s sacrifice, making our hearts glad by reflecting upon the blessing which this has brought us, and never forgetting to magnify Jehovah, the Father, the Giver of Christ, the Founder of the Covenant, our God in Christ Jesus. Let your praises never cease!

You remember what I started with—that when the Apostle says, “let us keep the feast,” having drawn that exhortation as an inference from the fact that the Passover is killed, he does not mean, “let us *sometimes* keep the feast,” but let us *always* keep it. Our Passover is perpetual. It has no times and seasons, it is lifelong. Salute your God each morning with your hymn of praise, you redeemed ones! Let not the sun go down without another hymn of thanksgiving. Praise Him, praise Him, praise Him!

Ceaseless as your mercies let His praises be! O for the life of Heaven on earth, to be always praising God! Our Sacrifice is slain, therefore let us keep this feast of daily adoration and hourly thankfulness to Him who passed us by in mercy when He might have smote us in wrath. At the Passover the devout Jew was accustomed to teach his family the meaning of the feast. The children said, “What do you mean by this ordinance?” And then the father explained to them how they came out of Egypt, saying, “With a high hand and an outstretched arm Jehovah brought us forth. And on the night when He smote the first-born of Egypt, He smote not us, for the lamb was slaughtered, and when the Lord saw the blood upon the door He passed over us.”

Let it be a part of our continual festival—and I do not know a more delightful duty—to tell others what our Redeeming Lord has done! Too many of you need to be stirred up to this pleasant duty. When you once break through those wicked, cowardly habits—for I cannot help thinking them so in many of you—which lock your months and prevent your living Jesus praise, you will find it sweet to tell to your children and kinfolk the story of the Atoning Sacrifice. While blessing them, you will obtain a double blessing in your own souls, and if it should please the Holy Spirit to bless your teaching to the salvation of your fellow men, you will be happy, indeed.

Do not suppose that I am exhorting you to keep the feast when you come to the Lord’s Supper. I do not refer to that emblematic feast at all. I refer to our *daily* lifelong fellowship with Jesus. “Christ our Sacrifice is slain for us, therefore let us keep the feast.” The inference is of continuous force. When is Jesus slain? Is He not slain at this hour? Was not His sacrifice completed upon Calvary’s bloody tree? Therefore let us keep the feast always, for the Lamb is always slain. Our keeping of the feast is not a matter for times and seasons—festivals and holidays—it is always our position. O you who go with your heads bowed down like bulrushes, and yet are the Lord’s true people, I would gladly put my hand on your shoulders and say, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.”

Why should we lie in the dungeon when liberty is ours? “Alas,” says a downcast one, “I have so many corruptions.” I know you have, my dear Brother. We will talk about that directly, but “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast.” “But I have so many troubles and I am so very poor.” So were many of the Israelites, but when they had slain the Passover they kept the feast. So, notwithstanding all these things which make you sorrow, you must feast, for “our Passover is sacrificed.”

“All my cares,” says one. What business has a Believer with cares? Is it not written, “Cast your burden upon the Lord, He will sustain you. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved”? You cannot keep a feast while care, like a shrew, hovers above the table. But let us, like Abram, drive away the birds of prey, and keep the feast. “Ah, but I am thinking about the past, my old sins still haunt me.” What? After Christ your Passover is slain? Surely the past is blotted out and forgiven. “Still,” says one, “my mind is heavy, my harp is on the willows.” Will not a sight of Calvary relieve you? Jesus Christ was made a curse for you that you might not be

regarded any longer as accursed. Will not this make you lift up the note of thanksgiving? Certainly it ought!

It should be always feast time with God’s servants, since Christ their Passover is slain. “But I have nothing to rejoice in,” says one, “except my religion.” What more do you want? What was there brought on the table at that paschal supper by way of good cheer, except the paschal lamb? I grant you there was something else upon the table, but what was it? Bitter herbs. Surely those were not an addition to the *joy*? It was not sharp sauce such as we ordinarily use, but bitter, pungent herbs. These did not please the palate, yet they kept the feast upon the lamb, which was all they needed.

So you may bring the bitter herbs of your deep repentance that your sin made it necessary that the Lamb of God should die. But all the feast is in Him, and all the world can contribute nothing to that feast but bitter herbs. If you had all the world, and derived comfort from it for a time, in the end it would become bitter as wormwood. Bitter herbs all things beneath the sky must be—only Jesus is the true Feast. My Soul, rejoice in the Lord always, for you have always reason to triumph, since Jesus Christ is slain!

**II.**Side by side with the picture of the lifelong feast, we find A HOLY DUTY COMMENDED to us. “Purge out, therefore, the old leaven.” “Let us keep the feast. Not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Leaven is used in Scripture, we believe in every case—there is only one case in which the question could possibly be raised—as the emblem of sin. This arises partly from its sourness.

We, being ourselves leavened with evil, find leaven somewhat palatable at the first, but God, who hates all evil, puts away the type in all its stages. Sin, which for awhile may seem pleasant, will soon be nauseous, even to the sinner. But the very least degree of sin is obnoxious to God. We cannot tell how much God hates sin. With the entire intensity of His Infinite Nature He loathes it. He cannot look upon iniquity—it is detestable to Him, the fire of His wrath will burn forever against it—because sin is infinitely loathsome to His pure and holy Nature.

He calls it leaven, then, because of its sourness. Leaven is, moreover, the offspring of a sort of corruption and tends towards further corruption. Sin is a corruption—it dissolves the very fabric of society. It dissolves the constitution of man. Wherever it gets into our nature it puts it out of order, disjoints it, destroys its excellence, and poisons its purity.

Leaven is also very spreading. No matter how great the measure of flour, the leaven will work its way. There is no saying, “To here shall you go, but no farther.” A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Even thus it is with sin. When that leaven had place among angels, it brought a multitude of them down to Hell. One woman sinned, and the whole human race was leavened by her fault. One sin drops into the nature, and it becomes entirely depraved, corrupt through and through, by the leavening influence.

Now, according to the Apostle, if the leaven of evil is permitted in a Church, it will work its way through the whole of it. In the Christian Church a little false doctrine is sure to pave the way for greater departures from Truths of God, so that no one can predict the end and result of the first false teaching. You cannot say, “I will be so far unorthodox.” You might as well break the dykes of Holland, and bid the sea be moderate in its encroachments.

The doctrines of the Gospel have such a close relation to one another that if you snap a link, you have broken the whole chain, and we may say of the system of Truth what is written concerning the Law, “He that offends in one point is guilty of all.” The renunciation of one Truth almost necessarily leads to the giving up of another, and before a man is half aware of it himself, he has let go the Gospel. I greatly fear that the denial of the eternity of future punishment is but one wave of an incoming sea of infidelity. Deny the awful character of sin, and the substitutionary work of Christ will soon follow.

Indeed we have living proofs of this at this day and we shall see many more before long. The new teaching eats as does a canker. It speaks fair, but in its heart there is a deadly enmity to the Gospel itself, and the sooner it is seen to be so the better for the Church of God. The leaven of evil living, too, is equally obnoxious in the Church. Tolerated in one, it will soon be excused in another—and a lower tone of thought with regard to sin will rule the Church. The toleration of sin in the Church soon leads to the excusing of it, and that to the free indulgence of it, and to the bringing in of other sins yet more foul.

Sin is like the bale of goods which came from the east to this city in the olden time, which brought the pest in it. Probably it was but a small bale, but yet it contained in it the deaths of hundreds of the inhabitants of London. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. So, if you permit one sin or false doctrine in a Church knowingly and wittingly, none can tell the extent to which that evil may ultimately go. The Church, therefore, is to be purged of practical and doctrinal evil as diligently as possible. That sour and corrupting thing which God abhors must be purged out, and it is to be the business of the Christian minister, and of all his fellow helpers, to keep the Church free from it.

We will, however, view the text as relating to *ourselves*, and let me remark that the Apostle had in his mind’s eye the custom of the Jews at the Passover. In consequence of the command that they should purge out the leaven at the Passover, the head of the household among the Jews in the olden times, especially when they grew more strict in their ritual, would go through the whole of the house on a certain day to search for every particle of leavened bread. It was generally done in the evening with a candle, and the servants and others would accompany the good man of the house to search for every crumb.

Clothes were shaken, cupboards were emptied, drawers were opened— and if a mouse ran across the room and might be supposed to carry a crumb of bread into its hole—they trembled lest a curse should rest on the home. So strict did they become that our Savior might have rebuked them as straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel. We, however, have no need to fear excessive strictness in getting rid of *sin*. With as scrupulous a care as the Israelite purged out the leaven from his house we are to purge out all sin from ourselves, our conduct, and our conversation. Here is a task set before you, then, my Brethren.

Note well, we do not urge you to purge out sin in order that you may save yourselves, for Christ our Passover is slain, and our salvation is secured. But that being done, in order that we may keep the feast and unbrokenly possess the *joy* of salvation, we are to purge out the leaven of sin. We may suppose that the Jewish householder would very soon put away all the large loaves of leavened bread that remained in the house— just as you and I, when we were sorrowing for sin—gave up at once all those gross outward sins in which we indulged before.

Some of these have never tempted us again. Drunkenness, profanity, uncleanness—I have known men give up these sins at once, in a moment, and they appear to be delivered from their power from now on and forever. Then perhaps there were some stray crusts which the children had left. These were put away, also. So there may be certain minor sins in the judgment of the world which the Christian man, when converted, may not put away the first week. But when they are seen, he says, “I must have done with these! Christ, my Passover, has been offered. I cannot do this wickedness. I am a child of God, more is expected of me than of others.”

But the most trouble would be caused by the little *crumbs* of leaven. These might be hidden away in the cupboard, and perhaps it was a long time after the search began before the householder found these out. But when he did, he said, “Put them away, they must not remain.” And, Beloved, many a Christian man has not found out the sinfulness of some actions for years after his conversion. I am very conscious that certain matters which I thought very lightly of years ago would greatly trouble my conscience now. As I have obtained light upon certain sins, I have, through Grace, put them away. But I expect as long as I live to find something which, viewed in a brighter light, and from a higher standing, will be discovered to be sinful—and I desire Divine Grace to have done with it. We must not hesitate for a moment. We must not retain even a crumb of the evil leaven. We must earnestly desire to sweep it all out.

The whole house was searched. I have seen a picture in which the servant is represented as cleansing the cooking vessels in the kitchen, the housewife is searching garments and cups in the dining room and the master and his sons are opening cupboards, and chests, and diligently investigating. A Christian man may feel that he has got rid of all the leaven from his shop, he is upright and honest himself, and his system of business is just. Yet it may be there is leaven in his private house, for the children are uncorrected, the Sunday is disregarded, or the servants’ souls are neglected.

Perhaps the home is right, and then there may be leaven in the bedchamber. Your conversation with yourself and your God may be in a sad condition. Prayer may be restrained. Suppose you have purged out the leaven of hypocrisy and are sincere—are you also free from the leaven of anger? May you not still be slow to forgive? Are you clear of the leaven of pride, or of covetousness? Every part of our nature needs searching—the heart, the judgment, the mind—all must be cleansed. Purge out the old leaven wherever it has penetrated. It must come away or else, though we are safe beneath the blood, we shall not know and enjoy our safety.

The feast cannot be kept while the old leaven is willfully left within us. I told you that the head of the household usually performed the search. Let your best powers of judgment be exercised upon yourself, my dear Brothers and Sisters. Too many exercise their understandings in criticizing others, but they do not judge themselves in the same way. Let your main and chief thought be, now that you are saved, to get rid of sin. Let the master powers of your soul be called into this purging work, and ask the Master himself to aid you. Does He not sit as a refiner to purify the sons of Levi? Search me, O God! Try me, and know my ways! Your eyes can see what mine cannot. May the great Purifier put forth from us every crumb of the old leaven of our natural corruption.

I said that a candle was used to throw a light into every corner of the house that no leaven might escape notice. Take you the candle of God’s Word, the candle of His Holy Spirit. Do you say, “There is nothing wrong in me if I judge myself by my fellow men”? My Brothers and Sisters, it is a small thing to be able to say no more than this! To be approved of men is but a poor standard for a Christian. Does your own heart reproach you? Does the Word of God reproach you? To be measuring myself by my fellow men, and saying, “Compared with them I am generous to the poor, and diligent in God’s service”—this is to be proud because you are taller than pigmies or fairer than Blackamoors.

Compare yourself with Paul, with John, with Brainerd or Rutherford— and even that is ill advice—for what were the best disciples compared with their Master? There must be no lower standard for us than the perfection of Christ. No attainment must ever satisfy us until we are conformed to His image who is the First-Born among many Brethren. You will tell me I am holding up a high standard. I am. But then you have a great Helper, and I will show you in a moment how you may be of good cheer concerning this business.

To purge out the old leaven many sweepings of the house will be wanted. One certainly will not suffice. You must search, and search, and search on, until you get to Heaven. The motto of your life must be, “Watch, watch, watch.” For, mark you, you are sure to leave some leaven, and if you leave a little it will work and spread. Sin has evermore a swelling tendency, and until the Holy Spirit has cut up the last root of sin, evil will grow up again in the heart. At the scent of water it will bud and put forth once again its shoots. Here is work for all time, enough to keep us busy till we land in eternity.

It is hinted in the text that there are forms of evil which we must peculiarly watch against, and one is malice. Is a Christian man likely to be malicious? I trust in the strong sense of that term, we have done with malice, but, alas! I have known Believers who have had a very keen sense of right, and they have been commendable, who have too much indulged the spirit deprecated here. That is to say, they have been very severe, censorious, and angry—angry with people for not being perfect. Though not perfect themselves, and though they know that if they are better than others, the

Grace of God has made them so, yet they are bitter and harsh towards the imperfections of Christian people. They cherish feelings of prejudice, suspicion, and ill-will. They do not seek the improvement of the faulty, but their exposure and condemnation.

They hunt down sincere but faulty people, and denounce them—but never by any chance offer an excuse for them. In some Believers there is too much of the leaven of unkind talking. They speak to one another about the faults of their Brethren, and, in the process of gossiping, characters are injured and reputations marred. Now harsh judgments and evil speaking are to be put away from us as sour leaven.

If a man has injured me, I must forgive him. And if I find him to be faulty, I must love him till he gets better, and if I cannot make him better by ordinary love, I must love him more, even as Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it, “that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” He did not love her because she was without spot or wrinkle, but to get the spots and wrinkles out of her, He loved her into holiness.

Take heed, also that every form of hypocrisy be purged out, for the Apostle tells us to eat the Passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Do let us leave off talking beyond our experience. Let us never pray beyond what we mean. Ask God, my Brothers and Sisters, to clean us from all unreality, that nothing may be in us but true metal. There is a strong temptation among Christian ministers, and Christian men of all sorts, to seem to be a little more than they are. God save us from it. The slightest taint of hypocrisy should be abhorred by the Christian man. All ill-will and all mere *seeming* should be detestable to the Christian, for where these are there can be little or no communion with Jesus. The fellowship of Heaven is not enjoyed where the leaven of Hell is endured.

**III.**Our last point shall be touched briefly. THE HAPPINESS OF THE BELIEVER ACTS UPON HIS HOLINESS, AND HIS HOLINESS UPON HIS HAPPINESS. First of all, the happiness acts upon the holiness. We have drawn a picture of the paschal feast. Set it before you again. If I know that I feed upon Christ day by day, who has been sacrificed for me, the happiness I feel leads me to say, “Yet it was dearly purchased, my sins slew my Savior, and therefore will I slay my sins.”

Every taste you get of redeeming love makes you feel that sin is a cruel and detestable thing, and therefore you will destroy it. Sitting, as you do, within the house, and knowing that you are all safe because the blood is on the lintel outside—what next? Why, you will say, “The first-born sons of Egypt are slain, and am *I* preserved? What then? Why I must be God’s first-born, and must belong to Him!” “You are not your own, but you are bought with a price,” is the voice of the angel as he passes by the house which he must not enter to destroy. Has Christ loved me and died for me? Then I am His, and if I am His I cannot live in sin! If I am redeemed, how can I continue a slave? If I belong to Jesus I cannot serve the devil, I must be rid of sin.

Then, further, if I feel that all is safe, my mind is calm, and I am able to care about the state of my *heart*. The Israelite was safe within his house, he needed not to keep watch and ward outside—the sprinkled blood was his security—and therefore he had time and space to see to the interior of his abode. “Now,” said the Believer, “I have nothing to do with saving myself, for my salvation is finished. Therefore I will see to my growth in Grace.” He who has outdoor work done for him may well see to his indoor work, and earnestly turn his thoughts to the purging out of the old leaven.

The freedom you have from fear through the blood of Jesus gives you the peace of mind necessary for a thorough search after your sins. Moreover, the Christian man is encouraged to put away his leaven of sin because he has the foresight of a profitable exchange. The Israelite gave up leavened bread, but he soon had angels’ food in the place of it. So the Christian says, “I give up these sins. They were sweet to me once, but now they are sour, stinking, corrupt leaven. I shall receive nobler enjoyments— fellowship with Heaven shall be my portion. I may gladly part with leaven, for I am called to eat the bread of angels, no, the Bread of God!

The Christian, too, who knows that his sin is forgiven, feels that the God who could put away his load of sin will surely help to conquer his corruptions. When I see Calvary I believe everything to be possible. If Jesus can blot out sin, His Spirit can subdue it. The holy peace created in the soul by feeding upon Christ nerves the spirit for conflict with inbred sin. We will overcome it! We will drive out the Canaanites which defile our souls! We will be pure! We will be perfect—for greater is He that is with us than all they that are against us. So you see our happiness in many ways promotes our holiness.

I am quite sure you will not need me to enlarge upon the fact that holiness produces happiness. How quiet does the soul become when the man feels, “I have done that which was right, I have given up that which was evil.” I grant you that the deep peace of the Believer arises from the sprinkled blood, but it is enjoyed by purging out the leaven. You question yourself and say, “Can I believe in Christ if I am living in sin?” and you get back the comfortable sense that Jesus is yours when you can honestly feel that you have, by the Holy Spirit, renounced your old sins. Purging out the leaven clears your evidences, and so enables you to keep the feast.

You were safe enough through the blood, but now you find happiness in a sense of security, a happiness which would have been taken from you had you fallen into sin. My Brethren, how can we expect to enjoy communion with Jesus Christ while we indulge in sin? I am sure you will find that at the bottom our want of fellowship with Christ arises from our want of careful walking before the Lord. I read, sometimes, holy Rutherford’s letters, and say, “I wish I lived like this.” Now, if I do not do so, it is either Christ’s fault or mine. Can I say it is Christ’s fault? I dare not! He is as willing to reveal Himself to me as to any other of His servants. It is my fault, then.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you do not walk in the light as Christ is in the light, it is not because He is not willing that you should walk in His Light—it is because you keep at a distance from Him, and so walk in darkness. Do you believe that the sad faces among God’s servants are caused by their poverty? Some of the very poorest of saints have been the most joyful. Do you think they are caused by their sicknesses? Why, we have known persons confined to the bed of sickness twenty years who have found a very Heaven below in their chamber of languishing! What is

it that makes God’s people look so sad? It is the old leaven.  
“Let us keep the feast,” says the Apostle, but it is useless to hope to do  
so while we keep the leaven. Perhaps there is one thing which we know to  
be our duty, but we have not attended to it. That one neglect will break up  
our festival. “He that knows his master’s will, and does it not shall be  
beaten with many stripes.” Are these stripes to be given in the next world?  
I do not believe it, it is in *this* world that erring *Believers* will be beaten,  
and very often depression of spirit, losses and bereavements happen to a  
Christian because he has knowingly violated his conscience by neglecting  
a duty or permitting a sin.  
Jesus will not commune with neglecters of His will. Jesus will have no  
leaven where He is. If you tolerate that which is nauseous to Him, expect  
not a comfortable word from Him. If you walk contrary to Him He will  
walk contrary to you. Can two walk together unless they are agreed? I  
would with much affection press these considerations upon you, for I have  
pressed them upon my own heart. I fear we shall not enjoy the blessing  
we have had as a Church unless there is more jealousy for holiness  
among us. I am afraid some of us are barren of spiritual usefulness because we do not watch against sin.  
O keep your conscience tender! Beware of getting it seared. It is like the  
pond in the winter—a very thin scale of ice is formed at first—but afterwards the whole surface becomes hard enough to bear half a town. Beware of the thin scale over your conscience! Keep your heart tender before  
God, ready to be moved by the faintest breath of His Spirit. Ask to be like  
sensitive plants, that you may shrivel up at the touch of sin—and only  
open out in the Presence of your Lord and Master. God grant it to you.  
God grant it, for Jesus’ sake!  
This last sentence, and I have done. There are some here who are not  
saved. Notice how salvation comes—not through purging out the leaven!  
No, *that* operation is to be seen to *afterwards.* Salvation comes because  
the Paschal Lamb is slain. The soul feeds on Jesus—His blood is sprinkled—and the soul is saved. Afterwards comes the purging out of sin.  
Dear Soul, if you would be saved, do not begin at the wrong end. Begin  
with the Savior’s blood! Begin with Calvary’s Cross! Go there as a poor  
sinner and look to Him! And then after that we will say, “Let us keep the  
feast,” and we will diligently see to it, in His strength, that the leaven is  
put away. God bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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CHRIST OUR PASSOVER  
NO. 54

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, DECEMBER 2, 1855 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” 1 Corinthians 5:7.~~***

THE more you read the Bible and the more you meditate upon it, the more you will be astonished with it. He who is but a casual reader of the Bible does not know the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the mighty meanings contained in its pages. There are certain times when I discover a new vein of thought and I put my hand to my head and say in astonishment, “Oh, it is wonderful! I never saw this before in the Scriptures.” You will find the Scriptures enlarge as you enter them—the more you study them, the less you will appear to know of them—for they widen out as we approach them. Especially will you find this the case with the typical parts of God’s Word. Most of the historical books were intended to be types either of dispensations, or experiences, or offices of Jesus Christ. Study the Bible with this as a key and you will not blame Herbert when he calls it, “not only the book of God, but the God of books.” One of the most interesting points of the Scriptures is their constant tendency to display Christ. And perhaps one of the most beautiful figures under which Jesus Christ is ever exhibited in Sacred Writ is the Passover Paschal Lamb. It is Christ of whom we are about to speak tonight!

Israel was in Egypt in extreme bondage. The severity of their slavery had continually increased till it was so oppressive that their incessant groans went up to Heaven. God, who avenges His own elect, though they cry day and night unto Him, at last determined that He would direct a fearful blow against Egypt’s king and Egypt’s nation and deliver His people. We can picture the anxieties and the anticipations of Israel, but we can scarcely sympathize with them, unless we, as Christians, have had the same deliverance from spiritual Egypt. Let us, Brothers and Sisters, go back to the day in our experience when we lived in the land of Egypt, working in the brick-kilns of sin, toiling to make ourselves better and finding it to be of no avail. Let us recall that memorable night, the beginning of months, the commencement of a new life in our spirit and the beginning of an altogether new era in our soul. The Word of God struck the blow at our sin. He gave us Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice! And in that night we went out of Egypt. Though we have passed through the wilderness since then and have fought the Amalekites, have trod on the fiery serpent, have been scorched by the heat and frozen by the snows, yet we have never, since that time, gone back to Egypt—although our hearts may sometimes have desired the leeks, the onions and the fleshpots of Egypt—we have never been brought into slavery since then! Come, let us keep the Passover this night and think of the night when the Lord delivered us out of Egypt. Let us behold our Savior Jesus as the Paschal Lamb on which we feed. Let us not only look at Him as such, but let us sit down, tonight, at His Table. Let us eat of His flesh and drink of His blood—His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! In holy solemnity let our hearts approach that ancient supper. Let us go back to Egypt’s darkness and by holy contemplation behold, instead of the destroying angel, the Angel of the Covenant at the head of the feast— “the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.”

I shall not have time, tonight, to enter into the whole history and mystery of the Passover. You will not understand me to be, tonight, preaching concerning *the whole of it*, but a few prominent points therein as a part of them. It would require a dozen sermons to do so—in fact a book as large as Caryl upon Job—if we could find a divine equally wordy and equally sensible. But we shall first of all look at the Lord Jesus Christ and show how He corresponds with the Paschal Lamb—and endeavor to bring you to the two points of having His blood sprinkled on you and having fed on Him.

**I.**First, then, JESUS CHRIST IS TYPIFIED HERE UNDER THE PASCHAL LAMB and should there be one of the seed of Abraham here who has never seen Christ to be the Messiah, I beg his special attention to that which I am to advance when I speak of the Lord Jesus as none other than the Lamb of God slain for the deliverance of His chosen people. Follow me with your Bibles and open, first, at the 12th chapter of Exodus.

We commence, first of all, with the victim— *the lamb*. How fine a picture of Christ. No other creature could so well have typified Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Being also the emblem of sacrifice, it most sweetly portrayed our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Search natural history through and though and you will find other emblems which set forth different characteristics of His nature and admirably display Him to our souls, yet there is none which seems so appropriate to the Person of our beloved Lord as that of the Lamb. A child would at once perceive the likeness between a lamb and Jesus Christ, so gentle and innocent, so mild and harmless, neither hurting others, nor seeming to have the power to resent an injury—

***“A humble Man before His foes, a weary Man and full of woes.”***What tortures the sheepish race have received from us! How are they, though innocent, continually slaughtered for our food! Their skin is dragged from their backs, their wool is shorn to give us a garment. And so the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Master, does give us His garments that we may be clothed with them. He is torn in sunder for us—His very blood is poured out for our sins—harmless and holy, a glorious Sacrifice for the sins of all His children. Thus the Paschal Lamb might well convey to the pious Hebrew, the Person of a suffering, silent, patient, harmless Messiah.

Look further down. It was a lamb *without blemish*. A blemished lamb— if it had the smallest speck of disease, the least wound—would not have been allowed for a Passover. The priest would not have allowed it to be slaughtered, nor would God have accepted the sacrifice at his hands. It must be a lamb without blemish. And was not Jesus Christ even such from His birth? Unblemished, born of the pure virgin Mary, begotten of the Holy Spirit, without a taint of sin. His soul was pure and spotless as the driven Snow—white, clear, perfect. And His life was the same. In Him was no sin. He took our infirmities and bore our sorrows on the Cross. He was in all points tempted as we are, but there was that sweet exception, “yet without sin.” A lamb without blemish. You who have known the Lord, who have tasted of His Grace, who have held fellowship with Him— does not your heart acknowledge that He is a lamb without blemish? Can you find any fault with your Savior? Have you anything to lay to His charge? Has His truthfulness departed? Have His words been broken? Have His promises failed? Has He forgotten His engagements? And, in any respect, can you find in Him any blemish? Ah, no! He is the unblemished Lamb, the pure, the spotless, the immaculate—“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”—and in Him there is no sin.

Go on further down the Chapter. Your lamb shall be without blemish, “*a male of the first year*.” I need not stop to consider the reason why the male was chosen. We only note that it was to be a male of the first year. Then it was in its prime, then its strength was unexhausted, then its power was just ripened into maturity and perfection. God would not have an untimely fruit. God would not have that offered which had not come to maturity. And so our Lord Jesus Christ had just come to the ripeness of manhood when he was offered! At 33 years of age was He sacrificed for our sins. He was then hale and strong, although His body may have been emaciated by suffering and His face more marred than that of any other man—yet was He then in the perfection of Manhood. I think I see Him then. His goodly beard flowing down upon His breast. I see Him with His eyes full of genius, His form erect, His manner majestic, His energy entire, His whole frame in full development—a real Man, a magnificent Man—fairer than the sons of men, a lamb not only without blemish but with His powers fully brought out! Such was Jesus Christ—a Lamb of the first year—not a boy, not a lad, not a young man, but a full Man, that He might give His soul unto us. He did not give Himself to die for us when He was a youth, for He would not, then, have given all He was to be. He did not give Himself to die for us when he was in old age, for then would He have given Himself when he was in decay. But just in His maturity, in His very prime, then Jesus Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us! And, moreover, at the time of His death, Christ was full of life, for we are informed by one of the Evangelists that, “He cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.” This is a sign that Jesus did not die through weakness, nor through decay of nature. His soul was strong within Him! He was still the Lamb of the first year. Still was He mighty. He could, if He pleased, even on the Cross, have unlocked His hands from their iron bolts—and descending from the tree of infamy—have driven His astonished foes before Him like deer scattered by a lion! Yet did He meekly yield obedience unto death.

My Soul, can you not see your Jesus, here, the unblemished Lamb of the first year, strong and mighty? And, O my Heart! Does not the thought rise up—if Jesus consecrated Himself to you when He was thus in all His strength and vigor, should not I, in youth, dedicate myself to Him? And if I am in manhood, how am I doubly bound to give my strength to Him? And if I am in old age, still should I seek while the little remains to consecrate that little to Him! If He gave His all to me, which was much, should I not give my little all to Him? Should I not feel bound to consecrate myself entirely to His service, to lay body, soul and spirit, time, talents—all—upon His altar? And though I am not an unblemished lamb, yet I am happy that as the leavened cake was accepted with the sacrifice, though never burned with it—I, though a leavened cake—may be offered on the altar with my Lord and Savior, the Lord’s burnt offering! And so, though impure and full of leaven, I may be accepted in the Beloved, an offering of a sweet savor, acceptable unto the Lord, my God. Here is Jesus, Beloved, a Lamb without blemish, a Lamb of the first year!

The subject now expands and the interest deepens. Let me have your very serious consideration to the next point which has much gratified me in its discovery and which will instruct you in the relation. In the 6th verse of the 12th Chapter of Exodus we are told that this lamb which should be offered at the Passover was to *be selected four days before its sacrifice and to be kept apart*. Beginning at the 3rd verse, we read, “In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house—and if the household is too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls, every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.” The 6th verse says, “And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month.” For four days this lamb, chosen to be offered, was taken away from the rest of the flock and kept alone by itself. For two reasons— partly that by its constant bleating they might be put in remembrance of the solemn feast which was to be celebrated. And moreover, that during the four days they might be quite assured that it had no blemish, for during that time it was subject to constant inspection in order that they might be certain that it had no hurt or injury that would render it unacceptable to the Lord.

And now, Brothers and Sisters, a remarkable fact flashes before you— just as this lamb was separated four days, the ancient allegories used to say that Christ was separated four years! Four years after He left His father’s house, He went into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil. Four years after His Baptism, He was sacrificed for us. But there is another, better than that—about four days before His Crucifixion, Jesus Christ rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem! He was thus openly set apart as being distinct from mankind. He, on the donkey, rode up to the Temple, that all might see Him to be Judah’s Lamb, chosen of God and ordained from the foundation of the world! And what is more remarkable, still, during those four days, you will see, if you turn to the Evangelists, at your leisure, that as much is recorded of what He did and said as through all the other parts of His life! During those four days He upbraided the fig tree and straightway it withered. It was then that He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple. It was then that He rebuked the priests and elders by telling them the similitude of the two sons, one of whom said he would go and did not—and the other who said he would not go and did. It was then that He narrated the parable of the husbandmen who slew those who were sent to them. Afterwards He gave the parable of the marriage of the king’s son. Then comes His parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment. And then, also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five of whom were foolish. Then comes the Chapter of very striking denunciations against the Pharisees—“Woe unto you, O you blind Pharisees! Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter.” And then, also, comes that long Chapter of prophecy concerning what should happen at the siege of Jerusalem and an account of the dissolution of the world—“learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.” But I will not trouble you by telling you, here, that at the same time He gave them that splendid description of the Day of Judgment when the sheep shall be divided from the goats. In fact, the most splendid utterances of Jesus were recorded as having taken place within these four days! Just as the lamb separated from its fellows did bleat more than ever during the four days, so did Jesus during those four days speak more! And if you want to find a choice saying of Jesus, turn to the account of the last four days’ ministry to find it. There you will find that Chapter, “Let not your hearts be troubled,” there also His great prayer, “Father, I will.” And so on. The greatest things He did, He did in the last four days, when He was set apart.

And there is one more thing to which I beg your particular attention. During those four days, I told you that the lamb was subject to the closest scrutiny, so, also, during those four days it is singular to relate that Jesus Christ was examined by all classes of persons. It was during those four days that the lawyer asked Him which was the greatest Commandment. And he said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” It was then that the Herodians came and questioned Him about the tribute money. It was then that the Pharisees tempted Him. It was then, also, the Sadducees tried Him upon the subject of the Resurrection. He was tried by all classes and grades— Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers and the common people. It was during these four days that He was examined—and how did He come forth? An immaculate Lamb! The officers said, “never man spoke like this Man.” His foes found none who could even bear false witness against Him such as agreed together. And Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him.” He would not have been fit for the Paschal Lamb had a single blemish have been discovered, but, “I find no fault in Him,” was the utterance of the great chief magistrate who thereby declared that the Lamb might be eaten at God’s Passover, the symbol and the means of the deliverance of God’s people! O Beloved, you have only to study the Scriptures to find out wondrous things in them! You have only to search deeply and you will stand amazed at their richness! You will find God’s Word to be a very precious Word. The more you live by it and study it, the more will it be endeared to your minds.

But the next thing we must mark is *the place where this lamb was to be*, which peculiarly sets forth that it must be Jesus Christ. The first Passover was held in Egypt, the second Passover was held in the wilderness, but we do not read that there were more than these two Passovers celebrated until the Israelites came to Canaan. And then, if you turn to a passage in Deuteronomy, the 16th Chapter you will find that God no longer allowed them to slay the Lamb in their own houses but appointed a place for its celebration. In the wilderness, they brought their offerings to the tabernacle where the lamb was slaughtered. But at its first appointment in Egypt, of course they had no special place to which they took the lamb to be sacrificed. Afterwards, we read in the 16th of Deuteronomy and the 5th verse—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates, which the Lord your God gives you. But at the place which the Lord your God shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt.” It was in Jerusalem that men ought to worship, for salvation was of the Jews. There was God’s palace, there His altar smoked and there, only, might the Paschal Lamb be killed. So was our blessed Lord led to Jerusalem. The infuriated throng dragged Him along the city. In Jerusalem our Lamb was sacrificed for us. It was at the precise spot were God had ordained that it should be! Oh, If that mob who gathered round Him at Nazareth had been able to push Him headlong down the hill, then Christ could not have died at Jerusalem. But as He said, “a Prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem,” so was it true that the King of all Prophets could not do otherwise—the prophecies concerning Him would not have been fulfilled. “You shall kill the lamb in the place the Lord your God shall appoint.” He was sacrificed in the very place! Thus, again you have an incidental proof that Jesus Christ was the Paschal Lamb for His people.

The next point is *the manner of his death*. I think the manner in which the lamb was to be offered so peculiarly sets forth the Crucifixion of Christ that no other kind of death could by any means have answered all the particulars set down here.

First, the lamb was to be slaughtered and its blood caught in a basin. Usually the priest stood at the altar. The Levites, or the people slaughtered the lamb and the blood was caught in a golden basin. Then, as soon as it was taken, the priest, standing by the altar on which the fat was burning, threw the blood on the fire or cast it at the foot of the altar. You may guess what a scene it was. Ten thousand lambs sacrificed and the blood poured out in a purple river. Next, the lamb was to be roasted, but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now I do say there is nothing but crucifixion which can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood—the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, for roasting signifies a long torment. And as the lamb was, for a long time, before the fire, so Christ, in Crucifixion, was for a long time exposed to a broiling sun and all the other pains which Crucifixion engenders. Moreover not a bone was broken—which could not have been the case with any other punishment. Suppose it had been possible to put Christ to death in any other way. Sometimes the Romans put criminals to death by decapitation. But by a such death the neck is broken. Many martyrs were put to death by having a sword pierced through them. While that would have been a bloody death and not a bone broken, necessarily, the torment would not have been long enough to have been pictured by the roasting. So that, take whatever punishment you will—take hanging, which sometimes the Romans practiced in the form of strangling—that mode of punishment does not involve shedding of blood and consequently the requirements would not have been answered. And I do think any intelligent Jew, reading through this account of the Passover and then looking at the Crucifixion must be struck by the fact that the penalty and death of the Cross by which Christ suffered must have taken in all these three things. There was bloodshedding. The long continued suffering—the roasting of torture and then added to that, singularly enough, by God’s Providence not a bone was broken! The body was taken down from the Cross intact. Some may say that burning might have answered the matter but there would not have been a shedding of blood in that case and the bones would have been virtually broken in the fire. Besides, the body would not have been preserved entire. Crucifixion was the only death which could answer all of these three requirements. And my faith receives great strength from the fact that I see my Savior not only as a fulfillment of the type, but the only one! My heart rejoices to look on Him whom I have pierced and see His blood, as the lamb’s blood, sprinkled on my lintel and my doorpost and see His bones unbroken and to believe that not a bone of His spiritual body shall be broken hereafter. And I rejoice, also, to see Him roasted in the fire, because thereby I see that He satisfied God for that roasting which I ought to have suffered in the torment of Hell forever and ever.

Christian! I would that I had words to depict in better language—but, as it is, I give you the undigested thoughts which you may take home and live upon during the week. For you will find this Paschal Lamb to be an hourly feast, as well as supper—you may feed upon it continually, till you come to the mount of God where you shall see Him as He is!

**II.**HOW WE DERIVE BENEFIT FROM THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Christ our Passover is slain for us. The Jew could not say that. He could say a lamb, but “*the Lamb*,” even, “Christ our Passover,” was not yet become a victim. And there are some of my Hearers within these walls, tonight, who cannot say, “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” But glory be to God, some of us can! There are not a few here who have laid their hands upon the glorious Scapegoat and now they can put their hands upon the Lamb, also, and they can say, “Yes. It is true. He is not only slain, but Christ our Passover is slain for us.” We derive benefit from the death of Christ in two modes—first, by having His blood sprinkled on us for our *redemption*. Secondly, by our eating His flesh for food, *regeneration* and *sanctification*. The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the doorpost and on the lintel. Note the fact that the blood was never sprinkled on the threshold. It was sprinkled on the lintel, the top of the door, but never on the threshold, for woe unto him who tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God! Even the priest of Dagon trod not on the threshold of his god. Much less will the Christian trample under foot the blood of the Paschal Lamb. But His blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard and on our left to be our continual support. We need to have Jesus Christ sprinkled on us. As I told you before, it is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner. It is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart. Let us turn to the land of Zoan. Do you not think you behold the scene tonight! It is evening. The Egyptians are going home—little thinking of what is coming. But just as soon as the sun is set, a lamb is brought into every house. The Egyptian strangers passing by, say, “These Hebrews are about to keep a feast tonight,” and they retire to their houses utterly careless about it. The father of the Hebrew house takes his lamb. He examines it once more with anxious curiosity. He looks it over from head to foot, to see if it has a blemish. He finds none. “My son,” he says to one of them, “Bring here the basin.” It is held. He stabs the lamb and the blood flows into the basin. Do you not think you see the sire, as he commands his matronly wife to roast the lamb before the fire! “Take heed,” he says, “that not a bone is broken.” Do you see her intense anxiety as she puts it down to roast, lest a bone should be broken? Now, says the father, “bring a bunch of hyssop.” A child brings it. The father dips it into the blood. “Come here, my children, wife and all and see what I am about to do.” He takes the hyssop in his hands, dips it in the blood and sprinkles it across the lintel and the doorpost. His children say, “What mean you by this ordinance?” He answers, “This night the Lord God will pass through to smite the Egyptians and when He sees the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the Destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.” The thing is done. The lamb is cooked. The guests are set down to it, the father of the family has supplicated a blessing. They are sitting down to feast upon it. And mark how the old man carefully divides joint from joint, lest a bone should be broken. And he is particular that the smallest child of the family should have some of it to eat, for so the Lord has commanded. Do you not think you see him as he tells them, “It is a solemn night—make haste—in another hour we shall all go out of Egypt.” He looks at his hands, they are rough with labor. Clapping them, he cries, “I am not to be a slave any longer!”

His eldest son, perhaps, has been smarting under the lash and he says, “Son, you have had the task-master’s lash upon you this afternoon. But it is the last time you shall feel it.” He looks at them all, with tears in his eyes—“This is the night the Lord God will deliver you.” Do you see them with their hats on their heads, with their loins girt and their staves in their hands? It is the dead of the night. Suddenly they hear a shriek! The father says, “Keep within doors, my children. You will know what it is in a moment.” Now another shriek—another shriek—shriek succeeds shriek—they hear perpetual wailing and lamentation! “Remain within,” he says, “the Angel of Death is flying abroad.” A solemn silence is in the room and they can almost hear the wings of the angel flap in the air as he passes their blood-marked door. “Be calm,” says the sire, “that blood will save you.” The shrieking increases. Eat quickly, my children,” he says again. And in a moment the Egyptians coming, say, “Get out of here! Get out of here! We care not for the jewels that you have borrowed. You have brought death into our houses.” “Oh,” says a mother, “Go! For God’s sake, go! My eldest son lies dead!” “Go!” says a father “Go! And peace go with you. It were an ill day when your people came into Egypt and our king began to slay your first-born, for God is punishing us for our cruelty.” Ah, see them leaving the land. The shrieks are still heard. The people are busy about their dead. As they go out, a son of Pharaoh is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master’s sons taken away. A happy night for them—when they escape! And do you see, my Hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood and also to eat the lamb. Ah, my Soul, have you ever had the blood sprinkled on you? Can you say that Jesus Christ is yours? It is not enough to say, “He loved the world and gave His Son,” you must say, “He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.” There is another hour coming, dear Friends, when we shall all stand before God’s bar. And then God will say, “Angel of Death, you once did smite Egypt’s first-born. You know your prey. Unsheathe your sword.” I behold the great gathering. You and I are standing among them. It is a solemn moment. All men stand in suspense. There is neither hum nor murmur. The very stars cease to shine lest the light should disturb the air by its motion! All is still. God says, “Have you sealed those that are Mine?” “I have,” says Gabriel, “they are sealed by blood, every one of them.” Then He next says, “Sweep with your sword of slaughter! Sweep the Earth! And send the unclothed, the unpurchased, the unwashed ones to the pit of Hell.” Oh, how shall we feel, Beloved, when for a moment we see that angel flap his wings? He is just about to fly. “But,” will the doubt cross our minds, “perhaps he will come to me”? Oh, no! We shall stand and look the angel full in his face—

***“Bold shall I stand in that great day!  
For who anything to my charge shall lay? While through Your blood absolved I am  
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”***

If we have the blood on us, we shall see the angel coming and we shall smile at him. We shall dare to come even to God’s face and say—

***“Great God! I’m clean! Through Jesus’ blood, I’m clean!”***But, my Hearer, if your unwashed spirit shall stand before its Maker. If your guilty soul shall appear with all its black spots upon it, unsprinkled with the purple tide—how will you speak when you see the flash from the scabbard—the angel’s sword swift for death and winged for destruction when it shall cleave you asunder? I think I see you standing now. The angel is sweeping away a thousand there. There is one of your pot companions. There one with whom you did dance and swear. There another, who after attending the same Chapel, like you, was a despiser of religion! Now Death comes nearer to you, just as when the reaper sweeps the field and the next ear trembles because its turn shall come next. I see a brother and a sister swept into the pit of Hell! Have I no blood upon me? Then, O rocks, it were kind of you to hide me! You have no benevolence in your arms. Mountains, let me find in your caverns some little shelter! But it is all in vain, for vengeance shall cleave the mountains and split the rocks open to find me out! Have I no blood? Have I no hope? Ah, no! He smites me. Eternal damnation is my horrible portion! The depth of the darkness of Egypt for you and the horrible torments of the pit of Hell from which none can escape! Ah, my dear Hearers, could I preach as I could wish, could I speak to you without my lips and with my heart, then would I bid you seek that sprinkled blood and urge you, by the love of your own soul—by everything that is sacred and eternal—to labor to get this blood of Jesus sprinkled on your souls. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner!

But when the Christian gets the blood sprinkled, that is not all he needs. *He needs something to feed upon*. And, O sweet thought! Jesus Christ is not only a Savior for sinners, but He is food for them after they are saved! The Paschal Lamb by faith we eat. We live on it. You may tell, my Hearers, whether you have the blood sprinkled on the door by this— do you eat the Lamb? Suppose for a moment that one of the old Jews had said in his heart, “I do not see the use of this feasting. It is quite right to sprinkle the blood on the lintel or else the door will not be known. But what good is all this inside? We will have the lamb prepared and we will not break his bones but we will not eat of it.” And suppose he went and stored the lamb away. What would have been the consequence? Why, the Angel of Death would have smitten Him as well as the rest, even if the blood had been upon him! And if, moreover, that old Jew had said, “There, we will have a little piece of it. But we will have something else to eat, we will have some unleavened bread. We will not turn the leaven out of our houses but we will have some leavened bread.” If they had not consumed the lamb but had reserved some of it, then the sword of the angel would have found the heart out as well as that of any other man! Oh, dear Hearer, you may think you have the blood sprinkled. You may think you are just. But if you do not live *on*Christ as well as *by*Christ, you will never be saved by the Paschal Lamb! “Ah,” say some, “we know nothing of this.” Of course you don’t. When Jesus Christ said, “except you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you,” there were some that said, “this is a hard saying, who can bear it?” And many from that time went back—and walked no more with Him. They could not understand Him. But, Christian, do you not understand it? Is not Jesus Christ your daily food? And even with the bitter herbs, is He not sweet food? Some of you, my Friends, who are true Christians, live too much on your changing frames and feelings, on your experiences and evidences. Now, that is all wrong! That is just as if a worshipper had gone to the tabernacle and began eating one of the coats that were worn by the priest. When a man lives on Christ’s righteousness it is the same as eating Christ’s garment. When a man lives on his frames and feelings, that is as much as if the child of God should live on some tokens that he received in the sanctuary that never were meant for food, but only to comfort him a little. What the Christian lives on is*not* Christ’s righteousness, but CHRIST! He does not live on Christ’s pardon, but on Christ! And on Christ he lives daily! Oh, I do love Christ-preaching. It is not the Doctrine of Justification that does my heart good, it is Christ, the Justifier! It is not pardon that so much makes the Christian’s heart rejoice, as it is Christ the Pardoner. It is not election that I love half as much as my being chosen in Christ before worlds began! Yes, it is not Final Perseverance that I love as much as the thought that in Christ my life is hid and that since He gives unto His sheep, eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand! Take care, Christian, to eat the Paschal Lamb and nothing else. I tell you Man, if you eat that, alone, it will be like bread to you—your soul’s best food! If you live on anything else but the Savior, you are like one who seeks to live on some weed that grows in the desert, instead of eating the manna that comes down from Heaven! Jesus is the manna! *In* Jesus as well as *by*Jesus we live. Now, dear Friends, in coming to this Table, we will keep the Paschal Supper. Once more, by faith, we will eat the Lamb. By holy trust we will come to a crucified Savior and feed on His blood.

And now, in concluding, let me ask you, are you hoping to be saved, my Friends? One says, “Well, I don’t hardly know. I hope to be saved, but I do not know how.” Do you think I tell you a fiction when I tell you that people are hoping to be saved by works? It is not so, it is a reality! In traveling through the country, I meet with all sorts of characters, but most frequently with self-righteous persons. How often do I meet with a man who thinks himself quite godly because he attends church once on a Sunday and who thinks himself quite righteous because he belongs to the Establishment. As a Churchman [Church of England member] said to me the other day, “I am a rigid Churchman.” “I am glad of that,” I said to him, “because then you are a Calvinist, if you hold the ‘Articles’.” He replied “I don’t know about the ‘Articles,’ I go more by the ‘Rubric’.” And so I thought he was more of a formalist than a Christian! There are many persons like that in the world. Another says, “I believe I shall be saved. I don’t owe anybody anything. I have never been a bankrupt. I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound. I never get drunk. And if I wrong anybody at any time, I try to make up for it by giving a pound a year to such-and-such a Society. I am as religious as most people. And I believe I shall be saved.” That will not do! It is as if some old Jew had said, “We don’t want the blood on the lintel, we have got a mahogany lintel. We don’t want the blood on the doorpost, we have a mahogany doorpost.” Ah, whatever it was, the angel would have smitten it, if it had not had the blood upon it! You may be as righteous as you like—if you have not the blood sprinkled—all the goodness of your doorposts and lintels will be of no avail whatever.

“Yes,” says another, “I am not trusting exactly there. I believe it is my duty to be as good as I can. But then I think Jesus Christ’s mercy will make up the rest. I try to be as righteous as circumstances will allow and I believe that whatever deficiencies there may be, Christ will make them up.” That is as if a Jew had said, “Child, bring me the blood,” and then when that was brought, he had said, “bring me a pitcher of water.” And then he had taken it and mixed it together and sprinkled the doorpost with it. Why the angel would have smitten him as well as anyone else, for it is *blood, blood, blood, blood* that saves! It is not blood mixed with the water of our poor works. It is *blood, blood, blood, blood*and nothing else! And the only way of salvation is by blood! For, without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Have precious blood sprinkled upon you, my Hearers. Trust in precious blood! Let your hope be in a salvation sealed with an Atonement of precious blood and you are saved! But having no blood, or having blood mixed with anything else, you are damned as you are alive—for the angel shall slay you, however good and righteous you may be! Go home, then and think of this—“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2661 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A MARVELOUS CHANGE  
NO. 2661

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1882.~~***

***~~“Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.~~***

THE Gospel is as holy as the Law. The Gospel is full of mercy to sinners, but it shows no mercy to sin. The Gospel speaks most tenderly to the ungodly, but it speaks most sternly to ungodliness. There is a great difference made, in the New Testament, between the sinner and the sin. And while the sinner is, in Infinite mercy, spared, encouraged to hope, and wooed by almighty love, sin is denounced as a dreadful thing, an abominable thing which God hates and must punish.

Ah, dear Friends, it is not from Sinai, alone, that we have need to shrink if we are lovers of sin, for, if we are resolved to keep on sinning, Calvary also condemns us and, at last, even from the lips of Jesus Christ, Himself, willful sinners, continuing in their sin, shall hear the awful sentence, “Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.” Let no man say, when we proclaim God’s message of mercy to the very chief of sinners, that, therefore, we think lightly of sin! No, it is because of the shedding of the precious blood of Him whom we call Master and Lord, without whose agonizing death not a single sin could ever have been put away, that we are able to freely preach the mercy of God to those who truly repent of their transgressions. But, at the same time, we never hesitate to declare in the plainest possible terms, that God will not spare the guilty ones who refuse to repent, for only through the blood of His dear Son will He have mercy upon the ungodly sons and daughters of men, who turn unto Him, with full purpose of heart, trusting in the great atoning Sacrifice of Jesus!

The highest standard of holiness is set forth under the Gospel. It does not come to cut down the requirements of the Law and to say, “You cannot keep the perfect Law of the Lord, but do the best you can and that will suffice.” There is nothing like that in the New Testament! It does not come to men and say, in a tone of pity, “You are poor ignorant creatures who have unwittingly fallen into sin and, therefore, there is no guilt in your transgression of the Law of God.” Nothing of the kind, for even when our Savior, on the Cross, said, concerning His mockers and murderers, “they know not what they do,” He prayed, “Father, forgive them,” thereby plainly declaring that they were sinners who needed to be forgiven, even though their transgression was a sin of ignorance!

That is the short preface to the discourse I am now to deliver, which will be divided into three parts, the first of which will show us that we have, here, *a solemn sentence—*a sentence shutting the guilty and unrepentant out of the Kingdom of God. Then, secondly, here is a *reminder to some of us—*“and such were some of you.” And, then, thirdly, here *is a change spoken of—*“but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

**I.**Now, Beloved, first of all, here is A SOLEMN SENTENCE. “Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?” Oh, While I speak of it, pray God, in Infinite mercy, to carry home the words I say to any who are guilty of either or all the sins in this black and shameful list!

“Be not deceived: neither fornicators shall inherit the Kingdom of God.” That is the first set of sinners mentioned in this terrible catalogue—“fornicators”—men and women who have been guilty of unchastity with those who are unmarried. Not necessarily in the bonds of wedlock should we all be, but always in the bonds of purity. And those who sin against that which is pure, in their relations with one another, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Nothing could be more explicit than this Inspired declaration of the Apostle. If any persons live in lust and uncleanness, God will not permit them to defile His true Church on earth, or to profane His Temple above. It is quite possible that I may be speaking to some people upon whose ears this message grates very harshly— for all sorts of hearers come to this place—and they will be the first to say, “The preacher should not mention such a subject.” My answer to that remark is, Then you should not commit such iniquity and give me cause to speak of it! As long as there are sinners of this character in the world, there must be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ faithful enough to pluck the velvet from their mouths and to speak with the utmost plainness about them and to them! Let there be no mistake concerning this matter—you cannot be Christians if you thus defile yourselves. You cannot be children of God and live in filthy sin. It must not—it cannot be— and God here, by the pen of the Apostle Paul, *excommunicates all who pretend to be members of His Church* and yet are guilty of the sin of fornication.

Strange to say, in the very next place stands idolatry, that is, the worshipping of any god other than the true and living Jehovah, the God of the whole earth. All through the Old Testament the Lord calls this sin of idolatry by the name of fornication, because it is the turning away of that love which ought to be fixed upon the one and only God, and giving it to those that are not gods, and so defiling the heart and sinning against God. “Oh,” says one, there are no idolaters here!” I greatly fear that there are, for idolatry is not merely the worship of images made of stone, or wood, or gods of gold, or crucifixes, or pictures of the Virgin Mary— *though all that is idolatry*—but it is also the worship of that dear child you have at home, of whom you make an idol. Or it is the worship of the Queen’s image on gold and silver pieces by those who live only to amass worldly wealth. Or it may be even the worship of yourself! The Apostle tells us of a very low form of idolatry when he writes concerning those “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” There are far too many of such idolaters as these still about, all around us, and our text declares that they “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

As to adulterers, whom the Apostle next mentions, I need not say much, but, alas, there are still many such sinners and they are found not only among the poor, but perhaps even more among those who can afford to pay for divorces, dispensations and indulgences to vice. Oh, horrible and terrible in this country, as well as in other lands, is the prevalence of this filthy sin! If there are any persons here who have made a profession of religion and yet who have fallen into this guilt and crime of adultery, let me read this solemn sentence of my text to you without mincing matters in the least, or toning down the severity of the Inspired language—you “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Unless you hate and abhor this shameful sin—and flee from it, as from a poisonous serpent—you can never come into that Kingdom where Christ is—neither in the Kingdom of His Grace, nor in the Kingdom of His Glory can you ever have any inheritance, for, as Dr. Watts sings—

***“Pure are the joys above the sky,  
And all the region peace!  
No wanton lip nor envious eye  
Can see or taste the bliss.  
Those holy gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin and shame—  
None shall obtain admittance there  
But followers of the Lamb.”***

I dare not explain to you what is meant by the next expression used by the Apostle—“nor effeminate”—but, alas, alas, there are still to be found all too many who are altogether given up to sinful practices, and who go from one form of vice to another, secretly ruining themselves both in body and in soul for time and for eternity! These are also among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” So are those whom the Apostle next describes—“nor abusers of themselves with mankind.” Would God that this accursed vice had been swept off the face of the earth, as God did sweep it away when He rained brimstone and fire from Heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed the guilty inhabitants of the cities of the plain!

Next to these great sinners, whom the Apostle mentions, come “thieves.” There are still far too many of them in the world—not merely those who are brought before the magistrates for having broken into a house, or having robbed a person in the street. But those who steal little things—peculators, servants in the house who take what is not their own! And men who do dishonest things in trade, calling an article in their shop by a name that is not its proper description—and so cheating their customers and getting their living by their lies. These are also among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” You do not like to hear me talk about such matters? Then do not continue to sin in this fashion. I shall cease to rebuke the sin when it has been abandoned, but, as long as such evils abound, it is my duty, as the servant of the living God, to declare plainly that the continuance in dishonest actions is not consistent with being in the Kingdom of God’s Grace and it will effectually close the gate of the Kingdom of His Glory. Dr. Watts was right when he wrote—

***“Not the malicious or profane,  
The wanton or the proud,  
Nor thieves, nor slanderers shall obtain  
The Kingdom of our God.”***

Then, next, the Apostle says, “nor covetous.” It is a strange thing that hardly anybody ever admits that he is covetous. Such a person calls himself, “Mr. Prudent Thrifty.” Mr. Covetous tries to make us believe that he is only thrifty and prudent, both excellent qualities which are not to be condemned! But he is really greedy and grasping, which are quite different. He denies help to the poor and help to the work of God—all he cares for is himself, that he may be rich. It is very significant that the covetous are put in the same list with fornicators and adulterers. Oh, dear, how quickly Mr. Covetous would move out of the seat if he thought that there were any such people as those about! But, my dear Sir, you need not be so particular, or think so much of yourself, for, in the sight of God, you are in the same condition as they are and you, also, are among those who “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” unless you repent of your sin!

“Nor drunkards,” says the Apostle. We know that in the Church at Corinth there were some who were so degraded that they were actually drunk at the Lord’s Table. We hope there are no professing Christians, nowadays, of so low a type as that, though we know that there are still some who have named the name of Christ who are rightly called by that terrible name, “drunkards.” And we also know that outside the nominal Church, there are multitudes to whom that title belongs. Drunkenness is one of the most debasing of sins—it lowers the whole tone of the person who is held in bondage by it. We sometimes talk of a man being “as drunk as a beast,” but whoever heard of a beast being drunk? Why, it is more beastly than anything a beast ever does! I do not believe that the devil himself is ever guilty of anything like that. I never heard even him charged with being drunk! It is a sin which has no sort of excuse—those who fall into it generally fal1 into other deadly vices. It is the devil’s backdoor to Hell and everything that is hellish, for he that once gives away his brains to drink is ready to be caught by Satan for anything.

Oh, but while the drunkard cannot have eternal life abiding in him while he is such, is it not a joy to think of the many drunkards who have been washed and saved? This night, there are sitting here, those who have done with their cups, who have left behind them their strong drink and who have renounced the haunts of their debauchery. They are washed and cleansed—and when they think of the contrast between where they used to spend their evenings, and where they now are, they give echo to the question—“Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”

After the drunkards, the Apostle says, “nor revilers”—those who gossip and slander, pulling other people’s characters to pieces. Or those who revile the saints and the things of God, profane swearers, who constantly add oaths to anything they have to say, those who cannot let the godly man’s character alone. All such as these “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” And, alas, there are thousands and tens of thousands of them even in this so-called Christian country!

And then, to close the black list, the Apostle writes, “nor extortioners”—the men who demand usurious interest, those who prey upon the poor while they pretend that they are going to be their helpers. They have a certain sum of money to lend and they are willing to lend it out of pure benevolence. But, when any fall into their clutches, they pick their bones and suck their blood before they have done with them. Woe unto the men who grind the poor and rob another of anything that is justly his due! Of all these people, the Apostle truly says that they “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” No, not merely does the Apostle say it, but the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of His servant Paul! He whose word is faithful and true—He who knows what the Truth of God is, declares that all such persons as these whom the Apostle has been describing are not partakers of Divine Grace—they are not subjects of King Jesus and into His glorious Kingdom they can never come except they repent of their sins and turn unto the Lord with godly sorrow and genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

So much for that part of our subject. May God make these solemn and faithful words to be like arrows from the bow of a mighty man!  
**II.**But secondly, in our text we also have A REMINDER TO SOME OF US—“and such were some of you.”  
The Apostle does not say, “and such were all of you,” and I thank God that I have not to say that to you, my Hearers. Oh, what a mercy it is for any of us to have been kept from those terrible sins! Yet, with the Apostle, I can say, “and such were some of you.” Those vices and evils were so common in Corinth that it was a great glory to God that He had taken some of these people who had formerly committed them, and had made Christians of them! “Such were some of you.”  
Now, will you, dear Friends, look at the first part of our text and, as you run your eyes down the black list, put your finger upon the points where you were guilty—and then say to yourself, “Yes, it is true, such was I, before the Lord saved me by His Grace. That, or that, or that was my grievous offense against Him.” “Such were some of you.” Then let me ask you, my Brothers and Sisters, to consider why it is that God is pleased to save some of the worst of sinners so that, in the Church of Christ, it can always be said, *“such were some of you*”?  
First, *it illustrates the great power of the Gospel.*If nobody were saved except the better sort of people, who have never openly offended, then the quibbler would say to us, “That is a very poor religion of yours! It is suitable for the moral, the sober and the chaste, but what good is it to a poor fallen world where there are so many real sinners of the blackest dye?” But the Lord seems to have said, “I will stretch out My hand and I will save some of the very chief of sinners, in order that, throughout all time, it may be known that My Gospel can effect the salvation of all sorts of sinners, even the most degraded. However depraved and fallen they may be, they cannot have gone beyond the reach of the Gospel of My Son.” Is not that a glorious fact? Oh, when I think of some of you big sinners whom the Lord has saved under my ministry, I stand on this platform and, with the utmost confidence, cry to the guiltiest sinners who may be present—“Come along with me, whoever you may be! I have a Gospel that is just suited to you.” I can say, “Come*,*you who are moral and refined, who have never gone into any gross sin, here is a Gospel just suitable for you!” But I am also glad to be able to add, “Come along, you who have raked the very kennels of Hell with your iniquities—here is that which can wash you and make you white as the newly-fallen snow!”  
That, I believe, is one reason why the Lord saves these great sinners— to glorify His Gospel.  
Next, He does it to magnify His mercy, for when, in great tenderness, He comes to look upon sin as a disease, then, the worse the disease, the more is His pity! I remember reading of one who was giving some relief to a dumb man and his companion said to him, “Why, he never asked anything of you!” “No,” he answered, “but his dumb lips asked of me more eloquently than any man could have done by speaking.” Look at the blind man. He cannot affect you with his eyes, for he has none, but it is the absence of his eyes that makes you stop and say to him, “Poor blind man, I am so sorry for you, here’s a trifle to help you.” The crafty beggars in the streets will often show their sham sores and imitation wounds in order to provoke your pity. But our great God, when He sees us really full of sin—leprous, foul, corrupted—then He says, “Poor Soul, I will have pity upon you.” It is in this way that He looks upon these greatlydiseased ones and blesses some of them on purpose that the majesty of His mercy and the Omnipotence of His Grace may be plainly seen by the sons of men!  
I am sure that He does it, also, to confound self-righteousness. I have heard this kind of remark again and again, “If God saves anybody, it ought to be those of us who always go to a place of worship and listen so attentively to the preacher.” Ah, yes, you proud sinner! I know what you think, but I must remind you that there is no sin worse than pride, the one you are evidently full of! “Oh, but,” someone says, “I have always been seeking and striving to be as good as I could, and yet I am not saved. But over there is a poor fallen girl, just rescued from the streets, who has believed in Christ and is now rejoicing in Him.” I can easily explain why you are not saved—it is because you say that you see and, therefore, you prove that you are blind! You think you are righteous and that thought is, itself, the very essence of unrighteousness! I pray you notice how the Lord rebukes you and to learn, from His rebuke, where your sin lies. He does, as it were, smite your pride on the cheekbone, and He says, “Because you say that you do not need a Savior, you shall not have a Savior. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance.” Come down off your lofty pinnacle, Mr. Pharisee—you who thank God that you are not as other men are! Stand side by side with the poor publican whom you have despised, and cry, as he does, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” And then see if God will not deal in mercy with you, also!  
I am sure, too, that God saves some of these very black sinners on purpose *to encourage the preachers of His Gospel.*I will tell you a secret. We ministers are often a very faint-hearted set of men. And if we do not have a great many converts, we go crying to our Master, “Who has believed our report?” And, while we are doing it, in comes one who has been a drunkard, or an unchaste person, or a thief, and we hear what God has done for him by our poor feeble ministry—and we shake his hand. Then he cries, and we cry—and we do not know which is the bigger sinner of the two—he for his open iniquity, or we for our unbelief! I know that when I meet with such converts, I say, “Bless God for them! When I get into the pulpit again, I will give the people some more of that same Gospel, for I see that what it has done for them, it can do for others!” Oh, yes, they may empty the prisons if they like, and let all the criminals in them come to hear the Gospel! We have a Christ to preach who is more than a match for the very worst of them! And even if there should come one whose heart had been turned into thrice-hardened steel, this Gospel would be able to melt it and, behind it, there is the Christ who can take the hard heart away and give in its place the heart of flesh, full of tenderness and full of love to Himself and to saints and sinners, too! Oh, yes, God often encourages His servants by fetching out from among the ungodly some of these great black sinners, washing them whiter than snow in the precious blood of Jesus and bringing them into His Kingdom on earth, in anticipation of the time when they shall be received into His Kingdom above!  
Further, by this means, He also *encourages other great sinners to come to Him.* I have known a man who said, “I fear that I cannot be saved, for I have been such a terribly great sinner.” But, one day he has met one of his old companions who used to swear, drink and lie. And finding him to be saved, he said to himself, “Oh, then, I also might be saved!” I once knew a poor fellow who was very much distressed in spirit because he thought there was no pardon that could ever come to him. But he went into a chapel one morning when a little Prayer Meeting was being held before the service, and there was a certain old sea captain praying with such a tremendous voice that the man thought, “I must surely have seen and heard that man somewhere else.”  
When the prayer was ended and he saw the man’s face, he said to himself, “Why, that is Captain So-and-So! Six months ago my very blood ran cold as I listened to his blasphemy! I never heard a man swear as he did and I never before heard a man pray as he now does!” And then he added, “God can save me, now that He has saved him, for I am sure that, great sinner as I have been, I never went his length in blaspheming my Maker.”  
There was good ground for that man’s conclusion and many other people have argued in a similar fashion. It has frequently been the case that the big sinner has become a kind of decoy. He is caught first in the blessed Gospel net and then he allures others to come in with him! Very often those who had not the courage to go to Jesus, before, say, when they see how He welcomes some out-and-out profligate, “Well, as He has received him, why should He not also receive me?”  
You know how Bunyan relates that when he was converted and began to preach, people said, “What? Is that tinker saved?” And they gathered together to hear what he had to say—and then he preached to them, Jesus the Savior, and there were more tinkers that got tinkered that day! No, not tinkered, but *made new creatures* in Christ Jesus! Christ finds it easier work to make us anew than to mend us—and that is what we really need to have done to us. If any of you are thinking of being mended tonight by signing the pledge, [This sermon was delivered at the service in the Tabernacle which was followed by a public meeting in connection with the Gospel Temperance Mission held there in September, 1882] well, I am glad to see old kettles repaired, but, for all that, I would rather that you were made new kettles altogether!  
That is to say, I pray God to take you in hand and make you new creatures in Christ Jesus, for that is what we are aiming at in all these Gospel Temperance services—and we shall not be satisfied unless that great work is accomplished!  
I want to tell you one more thing about the salvation of these great sinners. I believe that the Lord saves them in order *that He may win from them great love, intense zeal and much earnestness*. If a man, with a cut finger, calls on a doctor, the surgeon says, “Oh, yes, I see! Put this piece of plaster on and it will be all right in a day or two.” And so it is. He had not much the matter with him, so there was not much to be said when his finger was healed. But here is a man who can hardly breath. He is on the very borders of the grave. He will be dead in a week unless something extraordinary happens to him. He has been to scores of doctors and they all say, “It is no use to give you any medicine, for nothing will ever cure you—you will soon die,” But he hears of a physician who has been the means of healing other sick folk in just such a plight as his. He calls him in and the doctor says to him, “If you take this remedy, you will recover.” And so he does. In a month’s time, that man is walking about, breathing the fresh air, and he is soon going to work again. Will he talk about the wonderful physician who cured him? Won’t he talk about him? Why, there is no stopping him when once he begins on that topic! To every friend whom he meets, he says, “Do you see what a difference there is in me? You remember how my bones were almost sticking through my skin? It was as much as ever I could do to keep on breathing, but just look at me now, I have every hope of living on, perhaps for 20 or 30 more years!” Possibly a man who is suffering from neuralgia comes to see him, and he says, “I am not sure whether my doctor treats such a slight ailment as that—I almost wish you were in a consumption like mine was, for he would cure you as he healed me.”  
Is it not so with regard to the diseases of the body and gratitude to the man who cures them? Well, in like manner, when the Lord saves a great big sinner, oh, how that sinner will love Him and how he will talk about Him to other sinners! There is a common saying among game preservers, that an old poacher makes the best game warden. He is the man to catch all other poachers when they come, for he knows, from his own experience, all their ways. “Set a thief to catch a thief,” is a similar proverbial expression which teaches the same lesson. A woman who has been brought up out of great sin, into the paths of virtue and honor, is the one who will rejoice in rescuing others from a life of sin and shame. If you find a man who has been permitted to know the depths of sin, he is the one who will delight to go and seek after those who are sinking in the terrible flood.  
In the Providence of God I was never allowed to plunge into gross open sin, yet the Lord made me to feel myself to be the worst sinner who ever lived. I had such a vivid realization of my own guilt that I thought there never was another individual who had broken God’s Law as I had—and when He pardoned me, I felt that there was no one who owed more to Him than I did. People say that I preached Calvinistic doctrine from the very first. I know I preached Free Grace and that I must and will proclaim until I die, for I should have been damned in Hell, years ago, if it had not been for the freest, richest and mightiest Grace that ever came from the heart of God! And, oh, I do love to tell you big black sinners that He can forgive your grossest sin and cleanse you from your worst wickedness—that He waits to do this for all who will come and put their trust in His dear Son! And that very trust He *gives them by the effectual working of His Spirit*. Salvation is all of Grace from first to last and, as it is all of Grace, the greater the sinner who is saved by it, the more glory to the Grace that saves him!  
**III.**My time has gone, but I must say just a little about the third point, that is, THE MARVELOUS CHANGE.  
Oh, that I knew how to preach upon this theme! I never feel my own weakness so much as when I stand here to plead with unconverted men to yield to the Savior! If any man thinks that he can preach, let him come and try it, if by preaching he means affecting the hearts of men and bringing them to God. This must be the work of the Holy Spirit and, whatever we may do, nothing comes of it until He works the great miracle! We go back home and say, “Who has believed our report?” until the arm of the Lord is revealed and then men are saved.  
Now, turning to this last part of our text—“and such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I will endeavor briefly to set all these things before you as best I can. The Lord knows how much better I would do it if it were in my power to do it. But, after all, it is not my language which is the important matter—it is the power of the Truth of God I utter on which I rest. Nor yet even upon that, but on the wonder-working Spirit of God who can effectually apply that Truth of God to the heart, and make it anew by His Omnipotent Grace— ***“Come, Holy Spirit, (for, moved by You,  
The Prophets wrote and spoke)  
Unlock the Truth, Yourself the Key,  
Unseal the sacred Book!  
God, through Himself, we then shall know, If You within us shine  
And sound, with all Your saints below,  
The depths of love Divine.”***  
“And such were some of you.” Where are you—dear members of this church, or of other churches of whom this is true—“and such were some of you”? “But you are washed.” The High Churchman says that this means Baptism. Does it? I have seen some people washed by Baptism—I do not mean sprinkled, for I never could see how anyone could be washed in that way. But when we have immersed them, know this —that an unregenerate person, even after immersion is unregenerate still! And that a man who is not a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ before he is baptized, has need to be baptized again, for it is not really Scriptural Baptism to him—and it cannot be a means of blessing to him. It may be a piece of hypocrisy on his part and of no value to those who practice it. No, no! That is *not* the washing of which Paul writes! And Baptism, repeated ten thousand times, can do you no good whatever unless, first of all, you are washed in another fountain of which we often sing. Let us sing about it, now, all of us who know the verse—  
***“There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.”***  
[This verse was accordingly sung by the congregation, and then MR. SPURGEON resumed and concluded his sermon.] That is the washing of which the Apostle says, “but you are washed,” and after that washing comes the sanctifying, that is, the changing of the heart and the making of the whole nature holy! And that is the work of the Spirit of God, by the application of the Word of Christ.  
And then follows the justification. Pardon washes away our sin. Justification makes us righteous in the sight of God and sanctification gives us true holiness. Justification gives us imputed holiness, so that we stand before God, first in the righteousness which Christ has worked out for us—and next in the righteousness which the Spirit of God has worked in us. Oh, what a marvelous change is worked as the result of that one act of blessed washing!  
Now, to close, let me say that if you would be saved, this is the one thing for you to do—believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not trust in anything else whatever, but rely alone upon Him. Trust in Christ to make you hate sin. Trust in Christ to enable you to overcome every bad habit. Trust in Christ to help you to do everything that is right. Trust in Christ to cause you to stand fast even till you get to Heaven. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life”—not, “he shall be saved tomorrow, or ten years hence”—he is saved *now*, on the spot! If you have only trusted in Christ since last that clock ticked, you are forgiven, you are a child of God, you are accepted in the Beloved, you are saved! It is an instantaneous, an immediate, but a perfect work—this washing away of sin—and this giving to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Lord grant it to each one of you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-14.***

**Verse 1.***Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?* In those days, the courts of law were utterly unjust. It was all a matter of who could bribe the most, for he would gain the suit. I think that we cannot say that it is quite like this at the present time in our law courts, neither can this verse be strictly a rule for the guidance of men in these days, except that, in the spirit of Paul’s words, *all lawsuits among Christians should be avoided if possible*.

**2, 3.***Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know you not that we shall judge angels?*Sitting with Christ, at the last great day of judgment, we shall give our, “Amen,” to the condemnation of the fallen spirits.

**3, 4.***How much more things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.*For they will be better judges than the best of worldly men! Do you set such people to judge your difficult matters? And if you do not, then why do you go to those who are even worse qualified to give a right decision?

**5-11.***I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? No, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you.*They were Corinthians and some of them had fallen into the same sad and shameful condition as the rest of the inhabitants of Corinth. Many of them had been fetched, by almighty Grace, out of the very depths of the grossest sin, so that Paul, after giving a list of the blackest sinners, could add, “and such were some of you.”

**11, 12.***But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.* There are some things that I may do. That is, I have the liberty to do them if I please. But I must also consider whether they are expedient, or whether they will damage others and do mischief to them. And, if so, it will be better for me not to do them because they are not expedient, even though they are lawful.

**12, 13.***All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.* So, on the one hand, do not make too much of abstaining from this or that, for these things, after all, are but small matters to glory in. But, on the other hand, let no man ever call himself a Christian while he is a slave to any evil habit. What does Paul say? “God shall destroy both it and them.” In the previous verse, he says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” The immortal spirit under the power of materialism? No, that must never be!

**13, 14.***Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.*Our bodies belong to Him! Therefore, let us think highly of them and never do anything to injure them and, especially, let us take care never to let them become instruments of iniquity to the grieving of the blessed Spirit of God.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 550, 551.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #961 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SAINT ONE WITH HIS SAVIOR  
NO. 961

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 20, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”  
1 Corinthians 6:17.~~***

THE connection of our text is very terrible. When we are reading the sixteenth verse one seems to remember Sodom, its infamy, and the fire and brimstone that came down from Heaven upon it. But here in our text we enter into Jerusalem, the holy city, whose streets are of purity so rich and rare as to be comparable to gold clear as transparent glass. And there we seem to behold the Great White Throne of the thrice Holy, surrounded by the white robed bands of the immaculate. In looking at the text I call to mind John Bunyan’s description of the way through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. It was an “exceedingly narrow” path, not readily kept. On the right hand the dreadful gulf, and on the left the fearful quagmire.

See in my text a road fit for angels, and for the angels’ Master, and yet on either hand, in the sixteenth and eighteenth verses behold the fiends and devils howling for their prey! Happy is he who finds that path which the eagle’s eye has not seen, that center of the King’s highway of which it is written, “No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon.” How glorious is that “way of holiness”! Gaze on it—it is clear as the sapphire, bright as the brilliant crystal. Deep down in its depths your eyes may look, and in it there is nothing to obscure, it is as the holiness of God Himself, a purity so wonderful that conscious of our shortcomings we cry, “It is high, I cannot attain unto it.”

The exceeding elevation of the Believer in being joined unto the Lord appears all the more marvelous when it is set, as in the text, in contrast with the dreadful impurity into which we *might* have fallen, and against which we are still solemnly warned, as if to remind us that our indwelling corruption would drag us down if Divine Grace did not prevent it. Brethren, sin is never seen to be so truly horrible as when we behold it in the light of Christian privilege. It is a terrible thing for a creature to rebel against its Creator, but for the adopted son of God to be disobedient to his ever loving Father, this is worse by far.

Sin is black if we see it in the dim twilight of spiritual conviction when our conscience is half awakened, but it grows blacker than Hell’s murkiest midnight when we set it in contrast with the amazing brightness of the Divine favor which has shone upon us, His elect—redeemed, justified, and adopted people. That yonder professor should be so careless and so inconsistent is sad, but when I remind him that he is one of the redeemed I trust he will feel his lukewarmness to be monstrous. When man is chosen of God and washed in the Savior’s blood, must it not seem to angels a prodigy of human depravity, a marvel of human corruption, that such a one should for a moment forget the way of holiness and desire the paths

of iniquity?

In ourselves how heinous is all transgression, seeing we have been the objects of such ceaseless, boundless, loving kindness! For us to follow afar off, to backslide, to grow indifferent is indescribable baseness, a violation of the sacred demands of gratitude. If the more frequent sins of Christians appear thus heinous in contrast with their great privileges, much more loathsome must be vices of the fouler kind, such as Paul here speaks of— sins not to be named among us, or even thought of without horror. God forbid that any of us who claim to be of the body of Christ should degrade ourselves by filthy lusts of the flesh.

Casting a veil over the matter forbidden, not that we may forget it altogether, but may turn our eyes away from beholding vanity, we shall now endeavor to conduct you to the elevated platform of the text itself. I see in it, first, a mysterious deep which I cannot fathom. And, therefore, in the second place, we will sail across it while we speak of a manifest Grace which glistens on its surface.

I. First, then, there is in the text A MYSTERIOUS DEEP. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” What does that joining to the Lord mean which is mentioned here? There is a joining to the Lord in election. We were chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world, and by Sovereign Love we were predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. There was a further joining to the Lord in Covenant, when Jesus became of old the Head of His Church. As Adam was the head of all that came of his loins, so is Christ the Head of a spiritual seed to whom the promise belongs by the Everlasting Covenant signed, sealed, and ordered in all things and sure.

Further, Christ was joined to us when He took upon Himself our Nature. When He came into this world and was made a Man, then He was truly joined to us. He left His Father, and was joined unto His bride, and they two became one flesh. “For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren.” He was one with us in Nature, one in our sufferings, one in our life and death, one, too, in bearing our curse, taking upon Himself our sin. All this makes up a glorious joining unto the Lord—but it is not the doctrine taught here—for all that are joined to Christ in the Divine purpose are not yet made of one spirit with Him, for many of them are still living in their natural ignorance, little aware of the Grace ordained of old for them.

They are yet to be brought out from the house of bondage. Their election is to be followed by their calling. The Lord Jesus who is God’s Covenant is yet to be revealed to the eye of their faith, and a living union to Christ is yet to be created. This last work of Grace is not yet worked in the uncalled, and they are not in that sense joined to the Lord. A vital and spiritual union is meant in the text, a union which is matter of living *experience*, and is worked in us when we are born again, when we pass from darkness into Christ’s marvelous Light—when we rise from the death of sin to find the Lord Jesus to be our life.

From that moment we are “dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.” From the moment of our regeneration, we who were once the branches of the wild olive are grafted into the good olive. We who were cast out like withered branches to be burned, are grafted into the ever-living Vine, and become one with Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the union here spoken of, and he that is joined unto the Lord in that way by a work of the Holy Spirit radically and thoroughly changing him, and renewing him, and bringing him into oneness with Christ, is said to be the “one spirit.”

But what does that word, “one spirit” mean? Well, we must get at it by degrees. You may guess at its meaning from the fact that in other parts of Scripture the union between Christ and His people is described by that of a marriage union, and then it is said, “these two shall be one flesh.” But to take off the carnal edge of the metaphor, lest we fall into any grossness of thought, we are told that we in union with our Lord are one spirit. The union is a *spiritual* one. It is a great mystery, says the Apostle, when he speaks concerning Christ and His Church.

You get a glimmer, then, of what he means. There is a spiritual union, as real as when two are made one flesh. But it is not to be misread, and corruptly thought of as a carnal, material matter. It is a deep Truth of God belonging to the world of spirit. Try to get at it again. Remember that Christ and His people have one Spirit. The Holy Spirit who quickens us anointed Him. The Holy Spirit who illuminated us gave to Jesus Christ the unction with which He came to preach the reconciling Word to man. “The Spirit of the Lord,” says He, “is upon Me, for He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted.”

The Holy Spirit on Christ is the same Holy Spirit as upon us. The oil which ran down Aaron’s beard, and descended to the skirts of his garments, was the same holy anointing which was poured upon his reverend head. Yes, and glory be to God for the Truth—we have the same Spirit with the Lord Jesus Himself. The Apostle says, “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.” And again, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free. And have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” But we need not stay there, for we may add—we all have the same Holy Spirit as Jesus had. The foot is baptized into the same Spirit as the head. The ear not only has the same Spirit as the hand, but has the same Spirit as the glorious crowned and adored Head of the Church.

That is not all the meaning of the text, though it helps us to come near it. We have a greater mystery here. Some have read it, “we are of one spirit with Him,” that is to say, we come to think and feel as Jesus does, have common motives, aims, emotions, and desires. This is most true, and is the *practical* meaning of the text, but a more *spiritual* sense is under it. Let us, however, turn this over a moment. We who are joined unto the Lord are of one spirit with Him—the one Holy Spirit has worked us unto the same thing.

As Jesus is actuated by an intense desire for the glory of God, the Holy Spirit has worked us unto the same fervent longing. His meat and drink is also ours. Into His labors and His joys we enter. This meaning is high—O for Grace to reach it in our own characters! Yet the text says not that we are *of* one spirit, but we *are* one spirit. We not only have one spirit, and are of one spirit, but we are one spirit. Now, what shall I say of this? I

shall say nothing but that this is a matter to be understood only by the spiritual mind, and not to be readily, if at all, expounded in human words. It is not a Truth for which we have adequate expressions—letters, syllables, words fail us.

This much we can say though more is left unsaid—there is a union between Christ and His people most deep, most mysterious, most essential. If you would know it, ponder this sentence of our Lord’s prayer, “I in them and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Christ and His saints actually are one spirit. Ah, the depth! Your contemplation, if aided by the heavenly Interpreter, may assist you. As for me, I should but darken counsel by words without knowledge if I tried to open up what these words rather conceal than reveal.

Yet an illustration or two. We have known on earth friends who have become one spirit—intimacy and mutual admiration have ripened friendship into unity till the one seemed to be the complement of the other—and the mention of one suggested the other. They pursued one object with equal footsteps. They never differed, but appeared to have one soul in two bodies. The death of one almost necessarily involved the death of the other—the two were inseparable companions. Damon and Pythias lived over again in them. Jonathan and David seemed risen from the dead. Feebly, and but feebly, this reflects the image of our text.

So have we seen one spirit in another relationship, which is often used as the token of the union between Christ and His people, between the husband and the wife, of which we shall speak more particularly later, where there has been one love, one aim, one object. Like two stars, the wedded pair have shone with such blended rays as to have seemed more one than two. One name, one heart, one house, one interest, one love— they have also had one spirit. More fully, still, our text is illustrated by the branch and the stem. The branch in the vine is nothing if separated from the stem. Its sap is the very same sap that is in the stem—one life is in the stem and the branch—and they are both struggling for the same object, both seeking to produce and ripen the fruit.

They have no different aim, or even existence. The stem does not hoard for itself, nor the branch blossom for itself. The branch and stem are one vine. They are nothing separated from each other, their life one and their design one. See here again, as in a glass darkly, an amazing spiritual Truth. Yet more fully is this gracious union between us and our Lord brought out in the metaphor of the union of the member with the body. In that case there is, indeed, one spirit, not only in a vital but in an intellectual sense. If there is life in this finger, it is identically the same life that is in the head. But one spirit quickens all the parts of the body, whether comely or uncomely, whether base or honorable.

And so in the whole Church of God the life of Christ is the life of His people. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of His people. They are not two but one. The mystical union is so complete that even the marriage bond, of which we spoke just now, cannot fully come up to it—it is but an earthly symbol of a yet truer heavenly reality. We who are joined unto the Lord are one spirit. I say no more. What I have said may rather conduct you to the door than open it. But there is One whose work it is to be the Revealer of secrets, ask Him and He shall reveal even this unto you.

**II.**May the Holy Spirit help us while considering the second head. On the very surface of the text, there is A MANIFEST GRACE. Our one spirit with Christ reveals itself practically in a manifest sympathy of spirit between us and our Lord, so that we, being one spirit, are seen to be actuated and impelled by the same influences. We are of one spirit with Jesus. That meaning I shall try and bring out. Union with Christ in these days, when religion wears her holiday garments, is a word with a pleasant sound, and because of its honorable esteem men would gladly possess it.

But alas, they know not what it is! They hang a cross at their necks, or embroider it on their garments, or stamp it on their books—and fancy that this gives them some degree of unity to the Crucified. But, Brothers and Sisters, this matter lies quite out of their reach. To be one spirit with Christ, much more is needed than to bear the Christian *name*. You may call yourself a Christian, or a Brother, or a Sister, or one of the Society of Jesus, and in so doing you may have selected what you think to be the most orthodox of terms by which to designate yourself and the congregation to which you belong—but union to the Lord stands not in name only.

There were those of old who called themselves Jews and were not—their taking the name did not give them the *nature* of Israelites. They that are joined unto the Lord may not always be known by the same name. They may be called Christians at Antioch and Jews at Philippi (Acts 16:20), but a right or a wrong name will not change the real *character*. Call a poppy a rose and you will not, thereby, give it perfume. Perhaps none in all the world are less joined to the Lord than some who *adore* the very name of Christian, and make an idol of the outward sign of the Cross. Neither is true union to Christ to be gained by mere outward profession. You may be baptized in water, but unless you are baptized into the Holy Spirit, you know not what union with Christ is. If in Baptism we are buried with Him, then it is well, indeed, but the sign in itself is nothing, for Simon Magus, though baptized, had no part nor lot in the matter.

We may sit at the Lord’s Table with His people, yes, in the company of Apostles, and yet be sons of perdition! He may eat and drink in our streets, and yet may never know us. To eat the visible bread is not to be one with His mystical body. Union with Christ lies deeper than *name*, lies deeper than outward *signs* and seals of Church fellowship—and it even lies deeper than the performance of some apparently good actions and the use of religious words in conversation. We may do many things in His name, yes, and great things, too, for in His name many cast out devils and did many wonderful works and so were partakers of the powers of the world to come. And yet they were rejected by Him at the last as unknown of Him.

When judgment begins at the House of God small store will be set by mere visible union, for the branches in Christ after this fashion, not bearing fruit, will be cast forth, and withered, and burned in the fire. We must be rooted and built up in Him. He must be *formed* in us or it will little avail us to have been numbered with His disciples. The superficial, the nominal, and the outward will not suffice. He that is joined unto the Lord must be one spirit—deep down in the very vitals of our being must this

union with Jesus Christ most eminently reside, and in our hearts and minds must His Truth be found.

This is solemn teaching, and it ought, like the candle of the Lord, to search the secret parts of our nature. The carnal mind loves that which is outward, for it can readily comply with it, and that without Divine assistance. But the unregenerate heart kicks against that which is purely *spiritual*, for it cannot understand it, and here it is compelled to feel its own powerlessness, except to counterfeit with base imitations. My Brethren, this is a discerning Word, dividing between the joints and marrow, and discovering the thoughts and intents of the heart. You who are quickened with the incorruptible Seed, and discern spiritual things, come to the search, and see well to it that you are joined unto the Lord. Not in the *form* of godliness only, but in the *power* of it, also.

Let us give you, for your assistance, an illustration of what unity of spirit is as we see it among men, for here we may dimly see it as between the Lord and our souls. We will take a copy from that rare conjugal union which exists among those who realize the highest ideal of the married life. Sometimes we have seen a model marriage, founded in pure love and cemented in mutual esteem. There the husband acts as a tender head, and the wife, as a true spouse, realizes the model marriage relation, and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be. She delights in her husband, in his person, his character, his affection.

To her he is not only the chief and foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all, her heart’s love belongs to him and to him only. She finds sweetest content and solace in his company, his fellowship, his fondness. He is her little world, her Paradise, her choice treasure. To please him she would gladly lay aside her own pleasure to find it doubled in gratifying him. She is glad to sink her individuality in his. She seeks no name for herself. His honor is reflected upon her, and she rejoices in it. She would defend his name with her dying breath—safe enough is he where she can speak for him. The domestic circle is her kingdom, and that she may there create happiness and comfort is her lifework, and his smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks.

Even in her dress she thinks of him. Without constraint she consults his taste and thinks nothing beautiful which is obnoxious to his eye. A tear from his eye, because of any unkindness on her part, would grievously torment her. She asks not how her behavior may please a stranger, or how another’s judgment may be satisfied with her behavior. Let her Beloved be content and she is glad. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand, but she believes in them all, and anything that she can do to promote them she delights to perform.

He lavishes love on her and she on him. Their object in life is common. There are points where their affections so intimately unite that none could tell which is first and which is second. To see their children growing up in health and strength, to see them holding posts of usefulness and honor is their mutual concern. In this and other matters they are fully one. Their wishes blend, their hearts are indivisible. By degrees they come very much to think the same thoughts. Intimate association creates conformity.

We have known this to become so complete that at the same moment the same utterance has leaped to both their lips. Happy woman and happy man! If Heaven is found on earth they have it! At last the two are so welded, so engrafted on one stem, that their old age presents a lovely attachment, a common sympathy by which its infirmities are greatly alleviated, and its burdens are transformed into fresh bonds of love. So happy a union of will, sentiment, thought, and heart exists between them that the two streams of their life have washed away the dividing bank and run on as one broad current of united existence till their common joy falls into the main ocean of felicity.

Such a sight, it may be, is not commonly seen, but it is inexpressibly beautiful, and is a fair type of what the Christian ought to be in his oneness with his Lord. For the Believer there should be no attractive beauty but in Christ, nothing that can charm him, stir the deeps of his soul, or move his nobler passions, but the glorious person of Emmanuel, the chief among ten thousand. He loved us and gave Himself for us—we also must love Him and give Him our whole selves. For us the one object of life is to please our Lord. We should not dare to sin, not because we are slavishly afraid of punishment, but because we would not grieve the Bridegroom of our souls. We must labor for His cause, not because of legal demands, but because we know no higher happiness under Heaven than to make Him honored and to let Him see in us, and through us, of the travail of His soul.

Our Lord has great ends and objects. We cannot understand them all, but to our utmost we desire to promote them by suffering or by service. Our prayer is, “Lord, show me what You would have me to do.” We would be tenderly sensitive to His desire, not surrendered to it only, but *delighting* in whatever He wills. We reckon it our honor to be permitted to help Him, however humbly, to work out any of His designs. As to the children of His Grace, both His and ours, regenerated by His Spirit and converted by our ministries, they are doubly dear to us, and their perfection we seek with Him. Our constant enquiry is, can we do anything for them? Can we call home the backsliding? Can we comfort the desolate? Can we help the poor and needy? Can we be of any service to the lambs of His flock?—

***“There’s not a lamb in all His flock  
We would disdain to feed.”***

We would do anything by which we might show our love to Him, for our union of heart, and our union of purpose, our union of thought with Him, are all deep and true. Such a Christian grows to think as Christ thinks till the teachings of Jesus are plain to him. He never tries to tone down the Gospel as certain philosophic minds are ever doing, because they are not in union with the great Teacher’s heart. But he comes to see things from the Lord’s point of view, and knows his Master’s meaning as by a sacred instinct. Blessed consummation when our hearts at last are all wrapped up in Jesus, even as the bush at Horeb was all on fire with God.

Just as Jesus has set all His love on them, so they come to set all their love on Him, and they can say with the Apostle, “For me to live is Christ,” while the gain which they anticipate in death is the gain of being nearer to their Beloved, and forever beholding the glory of His face. I have given you an illustration, and have worked it out but poorly, but even had I worked it out to perfection, it must necessarily fall short of the incomparable “one

spirit” which dwells in our glorious Head and all His members. Go on till you sing with quaint old Francis Quarles—  
***“Even like two little bank-dividing brooks,  
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams,  
And having ranged and searched a thousand nooks,  
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,  
Where in a greater current they conjoin.  
So I my best Beloved’s am; so He is mine.  
Even so we met. And after long pursuit,  
Even so we joined, we both became entire.  
No need for either to renew a suit,  
For I was flax, and He was flames of fire.  
Our firm united souls did more than twine,  
So I my best Beloved’s am; so He is mine.”***  
Where such union as that exists, what does it produce? Its fruits are precious. They who are thus one spirit with Christ live for the same end. He lived for God’s glory. “Know you not,” said He in His youth, “that I must be about My Father’s business?” In His riper years He said, “It is My meat and my drink to do the will of Him that sent Me.” He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit in that respect. For him the great, one, *only* thing is to glorify God. In such a case the soul sees everything in this one light, and asks concerning all, how will it affect the kingdom of God? Even in reading the newspaper one says, “Great events are transpiring in politics, how will these work for the glory of God?” The engineer considers the effect the war may have on the world, the politician thinks of the balance of power, the reformer meditates on its results as to human progress, but the man who is joined unto the Lord prays only, “Father, glorify Your name.”  
To him the profit of his business is only profit so far is it will enable him to help the Master’s cause, and his honor is no honor unless he can raise out of it some matter for Jehovah’s praise. The glory of God, the glory of God, the glory of God—this was the one target towards which our Lord went onward in His life. Like a shot that crashes through everything until it reaches its mark, so must our spirits find no target but the glory of God! And if we are one spirit with Christ, it will be so. God’s glory, God’s glory will be first, last, midst, everywhere, everything. All for God, and God in all, will be our motto, as “hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come,” is our daily prayer.  
Further, if we are joined to Christ, so as to be one spirit, we shall seek the same end for the same reason. He desired the glory of God not for His own glory, but because He loved God. He was one with the Father. He loved the Father, therefore would He see the Father glorified. Brethren, it is easy to seek the glory of God with a view to your own glory. Did you ever find yourself doing so, desiring that the children in your class should be converted, that in the school it might be said what a successful teacher is so-and-so? Oh, how have I sought to wring that black drop out of my spirit, when the desire to bring souls to Christ has been backed with the desire that I might have a good standing as a successful minister! Into Christ’s thoughts so base an element never entered—He sank Himself in God. He knew His Father would give Him the reward, and for the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame—but Self-seeking never threw its alloy into the pure gold of His devotion to the Father. If we are one spirit with Christ, self will be swallowed up in God. Lord, do what You will with me, so long as You are glorified! If I can glorify You best in silence, then let me never speak again. If it is most for Your glory that I should die, though my life appears to be useful to Your Church, yet let me end my days. If it will glorify You that I should be unsuccessful, that I should be in the world’s judgment a disappointed man, perhaps a fool without brain enough to succeed, Lord, let me be a fool, or an idiot for You! Only glorify Yourself in me, and that is enough. This is true oneness of spirit with Jesus. Self is nothing. God is to be All in All. Comfort, esteem, joy, and even life will be as the small dust of the balance to a man filled with Christ’s spirit.  
Then we shall come, if we are one spirit with Christ, to aim at the glory of God by the same means. How did He aim at it? By the conversion of souls—not by being made a king, not by being called rabbi. He sought for the souls of little children, of peasant women, and of outcasts. If my mind is as Christ’s mind, I shall seek God’s glory by following after the waifs and strays of society—by bringing in backsliders, by seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel—laboring by any means to save some. How, my Brethren, are you bending your souls towards the conversion of sinners? It is a great mark of oneness of spirit with Christ when we have a great tenderness towards lost souls. Do you ever think of lost souls? Do you ever bring yourselves to the painful consideration of this huge city, so much larger than Jerusalem in our Savior’s day, and, I was about to say, equally wicked? Do you never pour out floods of tears for it because it knows not its day, and is neglectful of the invitations of Grace? If you are one spirit with Christ you will weep with Him. You will burn with an ardent passion to gather this city’s children beneath the wings of mercy.  
You will pray for them, sigh for them, live for them, and persevere in labor for them. Your thought about a person will not merely be what trade you can do with him, or how much you may trust him in business, but, “How much good can I do him, and can I find an opportunity in any way of bringing him as a jewel to adorn my Savior’s crown?” If our spirits were one with Christ’s we should each one be missionaries of the Cross, bearing witness to His saving power.  
Beloved, with such a spirit we should be content to use the same modes as our Lord. Christ’s modes of winning souls were very simple, and He always adhered to them—teaching, preaching, living, suffering, and dying were His whole art. Some nowadays seem tired of Christ’s plans, and hunt up more rapid methods. I do not believe that Jesus ever strained after effect by animal excitement. He did not strive and cry, and become fanatical, and try to excite poor ignorant people, who know not what they do, to say what they do not understand. He went to work by instructing the ignorant, enlightening their consciences and understandings, and gradually leading them to Himself.  
When His spirit is ours we shall be better satisfied with that oldfashioned way of Gospel preaching which the critics nowadays are so fond of sneering at. We shall feel this is the best way—this hard, plodding way that does not usually produce a great mass of converts all at once—this is best, for Jesus thought so. We shall pine for large harvests, but go on sowing the same Seed, and preaching His Gospel and no new one of our own. What was wisdom to Him will be wisdom to us.  
Then shall we, if we are of one spirit with Jesus, go to work as He did, with the same emotions. If we had but six men thoroughly of one spirit with Jesus, London would soon be shaken from end to end. But where are they? God make all His servants such, and we shall hear a new sort of preaching to what is current at this hour. For when Jesus preached, it was tremendous preaching! True, it was pleasing, attractive, interesting, but was far more—it was full of deep heart-power, such as made men see His solemn earnestness—and such as overcame men’s souls. His soul, as it were, leaped upon them in all the majesty of love’s Omnipotence. O that we felt as He did the weight of souls, the guilt of sin, the terror of the wrath to come, and the tenderness of Divine mercy! If these great principles actuated and moved our spirit as they moved His, we should rise to a higher standard, and our age would know it. Let me add that if we are fully joined to our Lord, and of one spirit with Him, we shall have the same tastes as Jesus. What He loves will charm us, what He hates we shall loathe. We shall then come to have the same will with Him. As one said, “If God wills not as I will, yet at any rate we will be agreed, for I will will as He wills if He will but graciously enable me.” If I cannot have things as I would like, I will like to have them as Jesus pleases. Oh, to have the two wills, the human and Divine perfectly coinciding—this is perfection! Brethren, if this unity between our spirit and Christ’s spirit goes on we shall abide in Him, and He will abide in us. Oh, to be our Beloved’s and to know that He is ours! I cannot resist quoting another two verses from old Quarles, they so depict my ideal—  
***“Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow  
My least desires unto the least remove;  
He’s firmly mine by oath. I His by vow;  
He is mine by faith. And I am His by love;  
He’s mine by water. I am His by wine;  
Thus I my best Beloved’s am; thus He is mine.  
He is my altar. I His holy place;  
I am His guest. And He my living food;  
I’m His by penitence. He mine by Grace;  
I’m His by purchase. He is mine by blood  
He’s my supporting wall. And I His vine—  
Thus I my best Beloved’s am; thus He is mine.”***I have many things to say, but time fails me, and therefore let me just pour out a few thoughts. There would be produced in you and in me, if we were joined unto the Lord, great oneness of aim in our service of God. We have a dozen aims now, but if we were of one spirit with Jesus we should have but one object in life. A man dies, and they say, “Ah, he died a martyr to his science.” Another dies, and they say, “He killed himself with attention to his business.” When will men be thus said to die for Christ? Men commonly say of their fellows, “He is a man of one idea, he lives for it. Wherever he is he must always ride his hobby.” How I wish they would say the same of Christians! Wherever our Lord was, not imprudently, but with true wisdom, He was sure to pursue His life work. Where Jesus was there would the Gospel be heard or seen before long. If He sat to eat bread at a Pharisee’s house nobody could suspect Him of being a Pharisee, or need to ask who He was. His speech before long betrayed Him, for the one object of His soul was uppermost. May it ever be so with us! May we be of one idea and that one idea to glorify God through the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ!  
This would give us, beside unity of purpose, great force, great fervor. We should feel this in private. Our prayers, if we had the spirit of Christ would be very different from what they are. This would be visible in public, also. Our public service of God would never be so sluggish and sleepy as it now is. With what ardor did the Savior burn! Would God that same fire dropped into my soul, and utterly consumed me as a living sacrifice. This would produce in each of us an abiding pertinacity. Defeated in one place we should try in another. It would be with us a determination never to be overcome in doing good. Like Jesus who sought the souls of men, not in a languid search, but over hill and dale till He went down into death’s cold shade and traversed the sepulcher that He might deliver them, so we also in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report, in poverty and wealth, in life and death, should still be seeking the glory of God and the salvation of the sons of men.  
This same spirit would work in us a wonderful serenity of spirit. If our spirit were like Christ’s spirit—altogether set on God’s glory—we should not be disturbed and vexed so soon as we are with little, petty remarks of men, nor should we even be moved by great calamities. If any disaster happened to us we should only say, “How can I use this for God’s glory?” If prosperity smiled on us, we should ask, “How can I make this glorify my Lord?” We should not be cast down by the one nor lifted up by the other. If men sneered at us we should say, “It is well that they think little of me, for now if God will bless my efforts they will think the more of God and know that the work was not done by *my* power.”  
If, on the other hand, we find men thinking highly of us, we should say, “How can I use the influence I thus obtain to advance the great cause of my Lord and Master?” When self is dead our sorrows are sweet. When self-seeking is gone, then serene is the calm lake of the soul, unruffled by the storms of ambition which continually toss with blustering breath the minds which seek themselves. I am persuaded, Brethren, your highest state, your happiest condition—will be when you are so joined with the Lord as to be one spirit.  
Lastly, what does all this teach us by way of practical lesson? These three things—First, see here a rebuke for us. We have been joined to Christ, but have we been manifestly one spirit with Him? Angry—was that Christ’s spirit? Worldly—was that Christ’s spirit? Frivolous, verging upon impropriety—was that Christ’s spirit? Proud, dictatorial, slothful, repining, or unbelieving—was that Christ’s spirit? O Brothers and Sisters, if you can read that verse without a tear you are either better or worse men than I! You are worse perhaps, for you do not feel the penitence you should. Or you are better, and you have no need to confess the same faults which unhappily rise before my memory. The spirit of Jesus, we have a measure of it I trust, but does not our own spirit adulterate it dreadfully!  
The next practical word is one of hope. We want to have the same spirit as Christ. Well, Brethren, our hope is that we shall have it, for we are joined to the Lord, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Are you not joined to Jesus, my Brother, my Sister? I know what you say, “I sometimes fear I am not.” Well, but what do you add to that? You add, “But I desire to be, and I do today renew my union with Him by another act of faith and confidence in Him. Dear Lord and Savior, You are my only Hope. I at this hour embrace Your Cross once more. I know You save sinners, I know that they who believe in You are saved, and therefore I am saved. Now, being persuaded of this, I love You. O that I could kiss Your feet where the nail prints are, and that my whole life could be a washing of those feet with my tears!”  
Since, then, you are joined to Christ, you are one spirit, and though it is not yet fully seen, it will be before long. There are better times coming, there are deeper degrees of Grace for you yet, only persevere. The last word will help you to persevere. Don’t you see, my Brethren, the way to get more of the spirit of Christ? It is indicated in the text, it is by thinking more of your union with Him. To be nearer the Lord is the way to be more like He is. Do not let doubts and fears endanger your fellowship with Him. You may think, “I fear I have no right to say I am one with Christ.” But that suspicion will not sanctify you. It will not help you to be holier to doubt your union to your Lord.  
Men never grow in Grace by departing from the Savior by unbelief. The more you need Christ the closer cling to Him. The less you are like He is the tighter hold Him. Your hope lies there. “If my spirit is not yet subdued to Your spirit, my Savior, yet I cannot let You go, for that were to drive the physician away because I am still sick. That were to renounce my friend because I have great need of him. No, but closer to You will I cling by Your Holy Spirit from this day forth, that being joined to You, I may be of one spirit.”  
I feel I have feebly addressed you, but at the same time I know precious Truth has been set forth. May the Holy Spirit open it up to your hearts, and bless it to your souls, and He shall be magnified. But if you have no part nor lot in this matter, may that dreadful fact lead you at this hour to seek the Savior.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1004 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“BOUGHT WITH A PRICE”  
NO. 1004

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 6, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“You are not your own. For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.~~***

OUR beloved Brother, Thomas Cook, who has for so long a time served this Church as an honored deacon, has fallen asleep in Christ. We have laid his earthly remains in the tomb—his spirit rejoices before the Throne of God. This day we thank God for his useful life, and ask for Divine Grace to imitate it. Before he closed his eyes in death he left a text of Scripture for the pastors—“Christ is All, and in all.” And he left another for his fellow Church members, for all of you this day who are members of the body of Christ. And this is the legacy, which now, as a spiritual executor, I present to you—“You are not your own. For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

I have no doubt the intention of our departed brother was to promote God’s glory by speaking to us even after he was dead concerning our sanctification that we might be stirred up to a greater consecration to the Lord our Savior. You will notice that in this chapter the Apostle Paul has been dealing with sins of the flesh, with fornication and adultery. Now, it is at all times exceedingly difficult for the preacher either to speak or to write upon this subject. It demands the strictest care to keep the language guarded, so that while we are denouncing a detestable evil we do not, ourselves, promote it by a single expression that should be other than chaste and pure.

Observe how well the Apostle Paul succeeds—for he does not mask the sin—he tears the veil from it and lets us know what it is that he is aiming at. Yet there is no sentence which we could wish to alter. Here he is a model for all ministers, both in fidelity and prudence. Be sure, also, to note that the Apostle, when he is exposing sin, does not trifle with it, but like a mighty hunter before the Lord pursues it with all his might. His hatred to it is intense. He drags it forth to the light. He bids us mark its hideous deformity. He hunts it through all its territory, hotfoot, as we say. He never leaves it breathing time—argument after argument he hurls like javelins upon it.

He will by no means spare the filthy thing. He, who above all others speaks most positively of salvation by Grace, and is most clear upon the fact that salvation is *not* by the works of the Law, is at the same time most intensely earnest for the holiness of Christians and most zealously denounces those who would say, “Let us do evil, that good may come.” In this particular instance he sets the sin of fornication in the light of the Holy Spirit. He holds up, as it were, the seven-branched candlestick before it, and lets us see what a filthy thing it is.

He tells us that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore ought not to be profaned. He declares that bodily unchastity is a sacrilegious desecration of our manhood, a violation of the sacred shrine wherein the Spirit takes up its dwelling place. And then, as if this were not enough, he seizes the sin and drags it to the foot of the Cross—and there nails it hand and foot—that it may die as a criminal. For these are His Words—“You are not your own. For you are bought with a price”—the price being the blood of Jesus. He finds no sharper weapon, no keener instrument of destruction than this.

The redemption worked on Calvary by the death of Jesus must be the death of this sin, and of all other sins, wherever the Spirit of God uses it as His sword of execution. Brothers and Sisters, it is no slight thing to be holy. A man must not say, “I have faith,” and then fall into the sins of an unbeliever. After all, our outer life is the test of our inner life. And if the outer life is not purified, rest assured the heart is not changed. That faith which does not bring forth the fruit of holiness is the faith of devils. The devils believe and tremble. Let us never be content with a faith which can live in Hell, but rise to that which will save us—the faith of God’s elect which purifies the soul—casting down the power of evil, and setting up the Throne of Jesus Christ, the throne of holiness within the spirit.

Noticing this as being the run of the chapter, we now come to the text itself, and in order to discuss it we must take it piece by piece, and I think we shall see in it at once three things very clearly. The first is *a blessed fact*, “You are,” or as it should be rendered, “You *were* bought with a price.” Then comes a *plain consequence* from that fact, a consequence of a double character, negative and positive—“You are not your own.” “Your body and your spirit are God’s.” And out of that there springs inevitably *a natural conclusion*—“Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.”

**I.**Let us begin, then, first of all, with this BLESSED FACT—“*You are bought with a price*.” Paul might, if his object were to prove that we are not our own, have said—“You did not make yourselves.” Creation may well furnish motives for obedience to the great Lawgiver. He might also have said, “You do not preserve yourselves—it is God who keeps you in life— you would die if He withdrew His power.” The preservation of Divine Providence might furnish abundant arguments for holiness. Surely He who feeds, nourishes, and upholds our life should have our service!

But Paul prefers, for reasons known only to himself, but which it would not be hard to guess, to plead the more tender theme, Redemption. He sounds that note, which if it does not thunder with that crash of power which marked the six days’ labor of Omnipotence, yet has a soft, piercing, subduing tone in it. A tone, which, like the still small voice to which Elijah listened, has in it the Presence of God. The most potent plea for sanctity is not, “You were made,” or, “You are nourished,” but “You are *bought*.”

This the Apostle selects as a convincing proof of our duty, and as a means to make that duty our delight. And truly, Beloved, it is so. If we have, indeed, experienced the power of Redemption we fully admit that it is so. Look back to the day when you were bought, when you were bond slaves to your sins, when you were under the just sentence of Divine Justice, when it was inevitable that God should punish your transgressions. Remember how the Son of God became your Substitute? How He bared His back to the lash that should have fallen upon you, and laid His soul beneath the sword which should have quenched its fury in your blood?

You were redeemed then, redeemed from the punishment that was due to you, redeemed from the wrath of God, redeemed unto Christ to be His forever! You will notice the text says, “You were bought *with a price*.” It is a common classical expression to signify that the purchase was expensive. Of course, the very expression, “You were bought,” implies a price, but the words, “*with a price*” are added, as if to show that it was not for nothing that you were purchased. There was a something inestimably precious paid for you. And I need scarcely remind you that, “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,” but, “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Ah, those words slip over our tongue very glibly, but we may well chide ourselves that we can speak of Redemption with dry eyes. That the blood of Christ was shed to buy our souls from death and Hell is a wonder of compassion which fills angels with amazement! And it ought to overwhelm us with adoring love whenever we think of it—glance our eyes over the recording pages—or even utter the word “Redemption.” What meant this purchasing us *with blood*? It signified pain. Have any of you lately been racked with pain? Have you suffered acutely? Ah, then at such times you know to some degree what the price was which the Savior paid.

His bodily pains were great. His hands and feet nailed to the wood, and the iron breaking through the most tender nerves. His soul pains were greater still. His heart was melted like wax—he was very heavy, his heart was broken with reproach—he was deserted of God, and left beneath the black thunder clouds of Divine wrath. His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. It was *pain* that bought you.

We speak of the drops of blood, but we must not confine our thoughts to the crimson life-floods which distilled from the Savior’s veins. We must think of the pangs which He endured, which were the equivalent for what we ought to have suffered—what we must have suffered had we endured the punishment of our guilt forever in the flames of Hell! But pain alone could not have redeemed us. It was by death that the Savior paid the ransom. Death is a word of horror to the ungodly. The righteous has *hope* in his death.

But as Christ’s death was the Substitute for the death of the ungodly, He was made a curse for us, and the Presence of God was denied Him. His death was attended with unusual darkness. He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” O think earnestly on this! The Ever-Living died to redeem us! The Only-Begotten bowed His head in agony, and was laid in the grave that we might be saved! You are bought, then, “with a price”—a price incalculable, stupendous, infinite—and this is the plea which the Apostle uses to urge upon us that we should “be holiness to the Lord.” I desire upon this theme—which is a very simple and an everyday one, but which is, nevertheless, of the weightiest consideration—to remind you, dearly Beloved who profess to be followers of Christ, that this matter of your being “bought with a price” is *an indisputable fact to every Christian*.

To every person here present it either is a fact or not. I scarcely need to ask whether any of you are prepared to renounce your Redemption. And yet, professor of the faith of Christ, I shall put it to you now—are you willing to have the negative put upon this? Will you deny that you were “bought with a price?” Will you now confess that you were not redeemed on Calvary? You dare not, I am sure! You would sooner die than renounce your belief of it. Well, then, as certain as is your redemption, so certain is it that you “are not your own,” but belong to God, and should glorify Him!

It is inevitable that if you are “bought with a price,” you have ceased to be your own property, and belong to Him who bought you. Holiness, therefore, is necessary to all the redeemed. If you cast off your responsibility to be holy, you at the same time cast away the benefit of Redemption. Will you do this? As I am sure you could not renounce your salvation, and cast away your only hope, so I charge you by the living God be not so inconsistent as to say—“I am redeemed, and yet I will live as I wish.”

As redeemed men, let the inevitable consequences follow from the fact, and be you evidently the servants of the Lord Jesus. Remember, too, that *this fact is the most important one in all your history*. That you were redeemed “with a price” is the greatest event in your biography! Even your birth—what was it unless a second birth had been yours? Might you not say—“Let the day perish in which I was born and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived”? Would it not have been to you the direst calamity to be born into the world if you had not been rescued from the wrath of which you were the heir?

You left your father’s house, and it was an important step in life. Perhaps you crossed the great and wide sea. It may be you aspired to high office in the State and you obtained it. It is possible you have been sorely sick, or it may be you have sunk from affluence to poverty. Such events leave their impression upon the memory—men cannot forget these great changes in their lives. But they all shrivel into less than nothing compared with this fact that you were “bought with a price”! Your connection with Calvary is the most important thing about you. Oh, I do beseech you then, if it is so, PROVE IT!

And remember, the just and righteous proof is by your not being your own, but consecrated unto God. If it is the most important thing in the world to you, that you were “bought with a price,” let it exercise the most prominent influence over your entire career. Be a man, be an Englishman, but be most of all Christ’s man. A citizen, a friend, a philanthropist, a patriot—all these you may be—but be, most of all, a saint redeemed by blood! Recollect, again, that your being “bought with a price” *will be the most important fact in all your future existence*. What say they in Heaven when they sing? They would naturally select the noble topic and that which most engrosses their minds, and yet in the whole range of their memory, they find no theme so absorbing as this—“You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.”

Redeeming love is the theme of Heaven. When you reach the upper realms your most important memory will not be that you were wealthy or poor in this life—nor the fact that you sickened and died—but that you were “bought with a price.” We do not know all that may occur in this world before the close of its history, but certainly it will be burnt up with fire, and you, in yonder clouds with Christ may witness the awful conflagration. You will never forget it. There will be new heavens and new earth, and you, with Christ may see the new-born heavens, and earth, laughing in the bright sunlight of God’s good pleasure.

You will never forget that joyous day. And you will be caught up to dwell with Jesus forever and ever. And there will come a time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father and God shall be All in All. You will never forget the time of which the poet sings—

***“Then the end, beneath His rod  
Man’s last enemy shall fall.  
Hallelujah, Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All in All.”***

All these divinely glorious events will impress themselves upon you, but not one of them will make an impression so lasting, so clear, so deep as this—that you were “bought with a price.” High over all the mountain tops, Calvary—but a little mount in human estimation—shall rise. Stars shall the events of history be. But this event shall be the sun in whose presence all others hide their diminished heads! “You were slain”—the full chorus of Heaven shall roll it forth in thundering accents of grateful zeal. “You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” The saints shall remember this first and foremost. And amidst the cycles of eternity this shall have the chief place in every glorified memory.

What then, Beloved? Shall it not have the chief place with you *now*? It has been the fact of your life up to now. It will be the fact of your entire eternal existence—let it saturate your soul, let it penetrate your spirit, let it subdue your faculties—let it take the reins of all your powers and guide you where it will. Let the Redeemer, He whose hands were pierced for you, sway the scepter of your spirit and rule over you this day and world without end. If I had the power to do it, how would I seek to refresh in your souls a sense of this fact that you are “bought with a price”? There in the midnight hour, amidst the olives of Gethsemane, kneels Immanuel, the Son of God! He groans! He pleads in prayer! He wrestles—see the beady drops stand on His brow! Drops of sweat, but not of such sweat as pours from men when they earn the bread of life, but the sweat of Him who is procuring *life itself* for us!

It is blood, it is crimson blood—great globs of it are falling to the ground. O Soul, your Savior speaks to you from Gethsemane at this hour, and He says—“Here I bought you with a price.” Come, stand and view Him in the agony of the olive garden, and understand at what a cost He procured your deliverance! Track Him in all His path of shame and sorrow till you see Him on the Pavement. Mark how they bind His hands and fasten Him to the whipping-post. Look, they bring the scourges and the cruel Roman whips. They tear His flesh. The plowers make deep furrows on His blessed body, and the blood gushes forth in streams—while rivulets from His temples, where the crown of thorns has pierced them—join to swell the purple stream.

From beneath the scourges He speaks to you with accents soft and low, and He says, “My child, it is here I bought you with a price.” But see Him on the Cross itself when the consummation of all has come—His hands and feet are fountains of blood—His soul is full of anguish even to heartbreak. And there, before the soldier pierces with a spear His side, bowing down He whispers to you and to me, “It was here I bought you with a

price.” O by Gethsemane, by Gabbatha, by Golgotha—by every sacred name collected with the passion of our Lord! By sponge and vinegar, and nail and spear, and everything that helped the pang and increased the anguish of His death—I plead with you, my Brothers and Sisters—to remember that you were “bought with a price,” and “are not your own!”

I push you to this. You either *were* or *were not* so bought—if you were, it is the grand fact of your life. If you were, it is the greatest fact that ever will occur to you. Let it operate upon you, let it dominate your entire nature, let it govern your body, your soul, your spirit. And from this day let it be said of you not only that you are a man, a man of good morals and respectable conduct, but this—above all things—that you are a man filled with love to Him who bought you, a man who lives for Christ, and knows no other passion!

Would God that Redemption would become the paramount influence, the lord of our soul, and dictator of our being! Then were we, indeed, true to our obligations—short of this we are not what love and justice both demand.

**II.**Now let us pass on to the second point. Here is A PLAIN CONSEQUENCE arising from the blessed fact. You were “bought with a price.” Then first it is clear as a negative, that, “You are not your own,” and secondly, it is clear as a positive, that, “Your body and spirit are God’s.”

Take first the negative—if bought, you are not your own. No argument is needed for this, and indeed, it is so great a benefit in itself that none of us could find it in our hearts to object to it. It is a great privilege not to be one’s own. A vessel is drifting on the Atlantic here and there, and its end no man knows. It is derelict, deserted by all its crew. It is the property of no man. It is the prey of every storm, and the sport of every wind. Rocks, quicksands, and shoals wait to destroy it. The ocean yearns to engulf it. It drifts onward to no man’s land, and no man will mourn its shipwreck.

But mark well yonder boat in the Thames which its owner surveys with pleasure. In its attempt to reach the sea it may run ashore, or come into collision with other vessels. Or in a thousand ways suffer damage. But there is no fear, it will pass through the floating forest of “the Pool.” It will thread the winding channel, and reach the Nore because its owner will secure a skillful and apt pilot.

How thankful you and I should be that we are not derelict today! We are not our own—not left on the wild waste of chance to be tossed to and fro by fortuitous circumstances. But there is a hand upon our helm. We have on board a Pilot who owns us, and will surely steer us into the Fair Havens of eternal rest. The sheep is on the mountain side and the winter is coming on. It may be buried in the snow. Perhaps the wolf may seize it, or by-and-by, when the summer crops have been eaten, there may be little fodder for it and it may starve. But the sheep’s comfort, if it could think at all, would be this—it is not its own—it belongs to the shepherd, who will not willingly lose his property.

It bears the mark of its owner, and is the object of his care. O happy sheep of God’s pasture! What a bliss it is to you that you are not your own! Does any man here think it would be a pleasure to be his own? Let me assure him that there is no ruler so tyrannical as self. He that is his own master has a fool and a tyrant to be his lord. No man ever yet governed himself after the will of the flesh but what he, by degrees, found the yoke heavy and the burden crushing. Self is a fierce dictator, a terrible oppressor—imperious lusts are cruel slave drivers!

But Christ, who says we are not our own, would have us view that Truth of God in the light in which a loving wife would view it. She, too, is not her own. She gave herself away on a right memorable day of which she bears the golden token on her finger. She did not weep when she surrendered herself and became her husband’s. Nor did they muffle the bells, or bid the organ play the “Death March”—it was a happy day for her. She remembers it at this moment with glowing joy. She is not her own, but she has not regretted the giving herself away—she would make the same surrender again to the selfsame beloved owner—if it had to be done.

That she is her husband’s does not bespeak her slavery, but her happiness. She has found rest in her husband’s house, and today, when the Christian confesses that he is not his own, he does not wish that he were. He is married to the Savior. He has given himself up—body, soul, and spirit—to the blessed Bridegroom of his heart. It was the marriage day of his true life when he became a Christian, and he looks back to it with joy and transport. Oh, it is a blissful thing not to be our own! So I shall not want arguments to prove that to which every gracious spirit gives a blissful consent.

Now, if it is true that we are not our own, and I hope it is true to many here present, then the inference from it is, “I have no right to injure myself in any way.” My body is not my own, I have no right then, as a Christian man, to do anything with it that would defile it. The Apostle is mainly arguing against sins of the flesh and he says, “the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. And the Lord for the body.” We have no right to commit uncleanness, because our bodies are the members of Christ and not our own.

He would say the same of drunkenness, gluttony, idle sleep, and even of such excessive anxiety after wealth as injures health with carking care. We have no right to profane or injure the flesh and blood which are consecrated to God. Every limb of our frame belongs to God—it is His property. He has bought it “with a price.” Any honest man will be more concerned about an injury done to another’s property placed under his care than if it were his own. When the son of the Prophet was hewing wood with Elisha, you remember how he said, when the axe head flew off into the water, “Alas, Master, for it was borrowed.”

It would be bad enough to lose my own axe, but if it is not my own, then I doubly deplore the accident. I know this would not operate upon thievish minds. There are some who, if it were another man’s, and they had borrowed it, would have no further care about it—“Let the lender get it back, if he can.” But we speak to honest men, and with them it is always a strong, argument—your body is another’s, do it no injury. As for our spirit, too, that is God’s, and how careful we should be of it! I am asked, sometimes, to read an heretical book. Well, if I believed my reading it would help its refutation, and might be an assistance to others in keeping them out of error, I might do it as a hard matter of duty. But I shall not do it unless I see some good will come from it. I am not going to drag my spirit through a ditch for the sake of having it washed afterwards—for

it is not my own.

It may be that good medicine would restore me if I poisoned myself with putrid meat, but I am not going to try it—I dare not experiment on a mind which no longer belongs to me. There is a mother and a child, and the child has a book to play with, and a black lead pencil. It is making drawings and marks upon the book, and the mother takes no notice. It lays down one book and snatches another from the table, and at once the mother rises from her seat, and hurriedly takes the book away, saying— “No, my Dear, you must not mark that, for it is not ours.”

So with my mind, intellect, and spirit. If it belonged to me I might, or might not play tomfool with it, and go to hear Socinians, Ritualists, Universalists and such like preach. But as it is not my own, I will preserve it from such fooleries and the pure Word of God shall not be mingled with the errors of men. Here is the drift of the Apostle’s argument—I have no right to injure that which does not belong to me—and as I am not my own, I have no right to injure myself.

But, further, I have no right to let myself lie waste. The man who had a talent and went and dug in the earth and hid it, had not he a right to do so? Yes, of course, if it was his own talent, and his own napkin. If any of you have money and do not put it out to interest, if it is all your own, nobody complains. But this talent belonged to the man’s *master*, it was only entrusted to him as a steward—and he ought not to have let it rust in the ground. So I have no right to let my faculties run to waste since they do not belong to me. If I am a Christian I have no right to be idle. I saw the other day men using picks in the road in laying down new gas pipes. They had been resting, and just as I passed, the clock struck one, and the foreman gave a signal.

I think he said, “Blow up.” And straightway each man took his pick or his shovel, and they were all at it in earnest. Close to them stood a fellow with a pipe in his mouth, who did not join in the work, but stood in a freeand-easy posture. It did not make any difference to him whether it was one o’clock or six. Why not? Because he was his own—the other men were the master’s for the time being. He, as an independent gentlemen, might do as he liked, but those who were not their own fell to labor. If any of you idle professors can really prove that you belong to yourselves, I have nothing more to say to you. But if you profess to have a share in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ, I am ashamed of you if you do not go to work the very moment the signal is given. You have no right to waste what Jesus Christ has bought “with a price.”

Further than that, if we are not our own, but “are bought with a price,” we have no right to exercise any capricious government of ourselves. A man who is his own may say, “I shall go where I will, and do what I will.” But if I am not my own, but belong to God who has bought me, then I must submit to His government. His will must be my will, and His directions must be my Law. I desire to enter a certain garden, and I ask the gardener at the gate if I may come in. “You should be very welcome, Sir, indeed,” says he, “if it were mine, but my master has told me not to admit strangers here, and therefore I must refuse you.”

Sometimes the devil would come into the garden of our souls. We tell him that our flesh might consent, but the garden is not ours and we cannot give him space. Worldly ambition, covetousness, and so forth, might claim to walk through our soul, but we say, “No, it is not our own. We cannot, therefore, do what our old will would do, but we desire to be obedient to the will of our Father who is in Heaven.” Your will be done, my God, in me, for so should it be done where all is Your own by purchase. Yet, again, if we are not our own, then we have no right to serve ourselves. The man who is living entirely for himself, whose object is his own ease, comfort, honor, or wealth—what knows he concerning Redemption by Christ?

If our aims rise no higher than our personal advantages, we are false to the fact that we “are bought with a price.” We are treacherous to Him in whose Redemption we pretend to share. But time would fail me if I dwelt upon this, or, indeed, at any length upon the positive side of this blessed fact—I will therefore only say a word or two concerning it. Our body and our spirit are God’s. And, Christian, this is certainly a very high honor to you. Your body will rise again from the dead at the second Resurrection. Because it is not an ordinary body, it belongs to God—your spirit is distinguished from the souls of other men. It is God’s spirit, and He has set His mark upon it, and honored you in so doing.

You are God’s, because a price has been paid for you. According to some, the allusion price here is to the dowry that was paid by a husband for his wife in ancient days. According to the rabbis there were three ways by which a woman became the wife of a man, and one of these was by the payment of a dowry. This was always held good in Jewish law. The woman was not her own from the moment when the husband had paid to her father or natural guardian the stipulated price for her.

Now, at this day, you and I rejoice that Jesus Christ has espoused us unto Himself in righteousness before ever the earth was. We rejoice in that language which He uses by the Prophet Hosea, “I will betroth you unto Me forever.” But here is our comfort—the dowry money has been paid—Christ has redeemed us unto Himself, and Christ’s we are, Christ’s forever and ever. Remember that our Lord has paid all the price for us. There is no mortgage or lien upon us. We have, therefore, no right to give a portion of ourselves to Satan. And He has bought us entirely from head to foot, every power, every passion, and every faculty—all our time, all our goods—all that we call our own, all that makes up ourselves in the largest sense of that term. We are altogether God’s.

Ah, it is very easy for people to say this, but how very difficult it is to feel it true and to act as such! I have no doubt there are many persons here who profess to be willing to give God all they have, who would not actually give Him five shillings. We can sing—

***“Here, Lord, I give myself away,”***  
and yet if it comes to yielding only a *part* of ourselves, if it requires selfdenial, or self-sacrifice, straightway there is a drawing back. Now, was the Cross a fiction? Was the death of Christ a fable? Were you only fancifully

“bought with a price,” and not in deed and in truth?  
If Redemption is a fable, then return a fabled consecration. If your purchase is a fiction, then lead the fictitious lives that some of you lead with regard to consecration to Christ. If it is only an idea, a pretty something

that we read of in books, then let our belonging unto God be a mere idea and a piece of sentiment. But a *real* Redemption demands *real* holiness. A true price, most certainly paid, demands from us a practical surrendering of ourselves to the service of God. From this day forth, even forever, “you are not your own,” you are the Lord’s.

**III.**And now I must close, and oh, may God give power to His Word while I beg to speak upon the last point, namely, THE NATURAL CONCLUSION. “Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.” I am not clear that the last few words are in the original. A large number of the old manuscripts and versions, and some of the more important of them, finish the verse at the word “body.” “Therefore glorify God in your body.”

It was the body the Apostle was speaking about, and not the spirit, and there is no necessity for the last words—still we will not further raise the question, but take them as being the inspired Word of God. But still I must make the remark that according to the connection, the *force* of the Apostle’s language falls upon the word, *body*. And perhaps it is so because we are so apt to forget the Truth of God that the body is redeemed and is the Lord’s, and should be made to glorify God.

The Christian man’s body should glorify God by its chastity. Pure as the lily should we be from every taint of uncleanness. The body should glorify God by temperance, also. In all things, in eating, drinking, sleeping—in everything that has to do with the flesh. “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” or as the Apostle puts it elsewhere, “whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” The Christian man can make every meal a sacrament, and his ordinary avocations the exercise of his spiritual priesthood.

The body ought to glorify God by its industry. A lazy servant is a bad Christian. A working man who is always looking for Saturday night—a man who never spends a drop of sweat except when the master is looking does not glorify God in his body. The best Christian is the man who is not afraid of hard work when it is due—who works not as an eye-servant or man pleaser—but in singleness of heart seeks to glorify God. Our bodies used to work hard enough for the devil—now that they belong to God we will make them work for Him. Your legs used to carry you to the theater. Be not too lazy to come out on a Thursday night to the House of God.

Your eyes have been often open upon iniquity—keep them open during the sermon—do not drop asleep! Your ears have been sharp enough to catch the word of a lascivious song—let them be quick to observe the Word of God. Those hands have often squandered your earnings in sinfulness—let them give freely to the cause of Christ. Your body was a willing horse when it was in the service of the devil—let it not be a sluggish hack now that it draws the chariot of Christ. Make the tongue speak His praises! Make the mouth sing of His Glory. Make the whole man bow in willing subservience to the will of Him who bought it!

As for your spirit, let that glorify God, too. Let your private meditations magnify God. Let your songs be to Him when no one hears you but Himself, and let your public zeal—let the purity of your conversation, let the earnestness of your life—let the universal holiness of your character glorify God with your body and with your spirit. Beloved Christian Friends, I want to say these few things and have done. Because you are God’s, you will be looked at more than others, therefore, glorify Him. You know it is not always the thing itself, but the ownership that causes curiosity. If you were to go to a cattle show and it were said, “such-and-such a bullock belongs to Her Majesty,” it may be it is no better than another, but it would be of interest to thousands as belonging to royalty.

See here, then, such-and-such a man belongs to God! What manner of person ought he to be? If there is anyone in this world who will NOT be criticized, depend upon it, Christian, it is not the Christian! Sharp eyes will be upon him, and worldly men will find faults in him which they would not see if he were not a professor. For my part I am very glad of the lynx eyes of the worldlings. Let them watch if they will! I have heard of one who was a great caviler at Christian people, and after having annoyed a Church a long time, he was about to leave, and therefore, as a parting jest with the minister, he said, “I have no doubt you will be very glad to know that I am going a hundred miles away.”

“No,” said the pastor, “I shall be sorry to lose you.” “Why? I never did you any good.” “I don’t know that, for I am sure that never one of my flock put half a foot through the hedge but what you began to yelp at him, and so you have been a famous sheepdog for me.” I am glad the world observes us. It has a right to do so. If a man says, “I am God’s,” he sets himself up for public observation. You are lights in the world, and what are lights intended for but to be looked at?

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Moreover, the world has a right to expect more from a Christian than from anybody else. He says he is “bought with a price.” He says he is God’s. He therefore claims more than others, and he ought to render more. Stand in fancy in one of the fights of the old civil war. The Royalists are fighting desperately and are winning apace, but I hear a cry from the other side that Cromwell’s Ironsides are coming. Now we shall see some fighting! Oliver and his men are lions.

But, lo! I see that the fellows who come up hang fire, and are afraid to rush into the thick of the fight! Surely these are not Cromwell’s Ironsides, and yonder captain is not old Noll? I do not believe it—it cannot be. Why, if they were what they profess to be, they would have broken the ranks of those perfumed cavaliers long ago, and have made them fly before them like chaff before the wind! And so when I hear men say, “Here is a body of Christians.” What? Those are Christians? Those cowardly people who hardly dare speak a word for Jesus? Those covetous people who give a few cheese-parings to His cause? Those inconsistent people whom you would not know to be Christian professors if they did not label themselves?

What? Such beings followers of a crucified Savior? The world sneers at such pretensions! And well it may! With such a Leader let us follow bravely. Bought with such a price, and being owned by such a Master, let us glorify Him who condescends to call such poor creatures as we are His portion—whom He has set apart for Himself. And let us remember that by men who profess to be “bought with a price,” the name of Christ is compromised if their behavior is unseemly. If we are not holy and gracious, ungodly men are sure to say, “That is one of your Believers in God. That is one of your Christians.”

Do not let it be so! Every soldier in a regiment ought to feel that the renown of the whole army depends upon him, and he must fight as if the winning of the battle rested upon himself. This will cause every man to be a hero. Oh, that every Christian felt as if the honor of God and the Church rested upon him—for in a measure it certainly does! May we so seek God that when we come to die we may feel that we have lived for something. That although our hope has rested alone in what Jesus did, yet we have not made that an excuse for doing nothing ourselves. Though we shall have no good works in which to glory, yet may we bring forth fruit that shall be for the glory of our Lord.

I feel I so desire to glorify God—body, soul, and spirit while I breathe— that I would even do so on earth after I am dead. I would still urge my Brethren on in our Lord’s cause. Old Zizka, the Hussite leader, when about to die, said to his soldiers—“Our enemies have always been afraid of my name in the time of battle. When I am dead take my skin and make a drum-head of it, and beat it whenever you go to battle. When the enemy hears the sound they will tremble, and you will remember that Zizka calls on his Brethren to fight valiantly.”

Let us so live that when we die, we live on, like Abel, who being dead yet speaks. The only way to do this is to live in the power of the Immortal God and under the influence of His Holy Spirit—then out of our graves we shall speak to future generations. When Doctor Payson died he desired that his body should be placed in a coffin, and that his hearers should be invited to come and see it. Across his breast was placed a paper bearing these words, “Remember the words which I spoke unto you, being yet present with you.”

May our lives be such that even if we are not public speakers, yet others may remember our example and so may hear what our lives spoke while we were yet on earth. Your bodies and your spirits are God’s—oh, live to God, and glorify Him in the power of His Spirit as long as you have any breath below, that so when the breath is gone, your very bones, like those of Joseph, shall be a testimony. Even in the ashes of the saints their fires live on. In their hallowed memories they rise like a phoenix from their ashes.

The Lord make us more and more practically His own, and may His name be glorious, forever and ever. Amen, and amen.  
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Peter 1.**  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1554 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REDEMPTION BY PRICE  
NO. 1554

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.~~***

ATTACKS have often been made upon the central doctrine of the Gospel, namely, the doctrine of Redemption or Atonement, for it is well-known to be the crux of the Gospel. These onslaughts have, in many instances, been very craftily made. They have professed to be mere corrections of our phraseology, but were essentially assaults upon the Truth of God itself. We believe that in and through the blood of Jesus we have redemption and that we have been ransomed from destruction by the Mediator’s death, the Lord Jesus having bought us by the suit and service which He rendered in our place and on our behalf.

When we speak very plainly upon this point, certain pretentious Divines, whose custom it is to sneer at the old theology, at once raise objections to what they are pleased to call, “the *mercantile* theory of Atonement.” With weak minds an ugly phrase stands for argument, but in this case there is really nothing horrible in the description, even if it is allowed all its force. There may have been, among us, certain persons who carried ideas of the shop and the counter into their notion of redemption, but we maintain that even these were nearer the Truth of God than those who reduce the ransom paid by the Lord Jesus to nothing and make His Redemption a meaningless figure of speech.

Within the idea of *purchase* lies hidden the essence of the Savior’s work and, therefore, it is to be adhered to. He is coming again to complete the Redemption of the purchased possession and we shall not forego our hope to please the squeamish. Paul, at any rate, was not afraid of the mercantile theory, if men so please to call it, for he writes, “You are *bought*,” yes, to make it still more sure, he puts it, “bought with a *price*.” This is put very strongly and there is no planing it down. If it means anything, it must mean that a price was paid for us! Instead of our being forever captives under bondage and death, a *Ransom* has been found, according to that ancient saying, “Deliver him from going down to the Pit—I have found a ransom.”

The song of Heaven is no idle rhapsody. Listen how they chant the solemn hymn before the Throne of God and the Lamb, saying, “You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.” Was it not said of Him while He was here below, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many”? There was a *substitutionary* Sacrifice presented on the behalf of His people by Jesus Christ, who thus redeemed His chosen from their lost estate. This was a matter of fact and an efficacious action, actually ransoming those who were redeemed.

We do not believe in a cloudy, phantom-like Atonement, which did something or nothing and was a mere exhibition without results. We believe that Jesus did actually redeem His people by a Ransom, which Ransom was His suffering and death in their place, by which the justice of God was satisfied and His Law was honored. If there were no other text in Scripture, the one which is now before us would abundantly justify us in using those very expressions which have been ridiculed as mercantile— “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” Though we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, yet the transaction was, none the less, real and effective. An equivalent was given, a possession was secured.

The fact is, the objection is not merely to the mercantile expression— the objection is to the very idea of Substitution and a vicarious Sacrifice. The pretense is that mistaken words are criticized, but it is a mere pretense—the gun is aimed at Christ’s bearing Divine Wrath in our place— this is the doctrine which they cannot endure! They will have to aim very often and burst their cannon before they will be able to destroy *our* belief in the truth of Substitution while we have the 53rd chapter of Isaiah remaining in the Bible and other passages of sacred Scripture to the same effect. Even if they could disprove the Doctrine of Vicarious Suffering and show that Substitution is an ignorant fancy, the best thing they could do would be to wring their hands in agony because they had blotted out the brightest star that ever shone amid the storm-wreck of a tempestuous conscience.

No Truth of God within the circle of theology is so eminently consolatory to souls burdened with sin as the great fact that Jesus Christ bore the sins of many and carried away, on His own shoulders, the transgressions of His people. Let others believe or disbelieve, I nail my colors to the Cross where Jesus, my Lord, paid His blood as a price for me! It is a high honor to our poor fallen race that man is the only redeemed creature in the universe! He, alone, has cost the Lord His life! Rebellious angels kept not their first estate—they are left to their doom and no price has ever been paid for them. Other angels, sustained by God’s power, still keep their high position in His sacred courts, but they are not redeemed by *blood*. In them there is an exhibition of Divine wisdom, power and goodness, but there is no display of Free Grace and dying love.

Only man stands in this respect—nowhere else is the blood-mark—the blood-mark of the Son of God! We, alone, are the flock of God which He has redeemed with His own blood! Therefore *man* cost God more than the whole universe besides. The Lord could speak worlds into existence. He could mold ponderous orbs as one rolls clay between His palms, or create constellations as the smith strikes off sparks from the anvil—but to erect the new creation of *redeemed men*, God must endure the loss of His own Son—resign His Beloved to death! And in the Person of the Only-Begotten, He must ransom men by His own sufferings! I may not venture, now, to describe the agonies of the Incarnate God, but all these were necessary to redeem man. The Lord has given more than Ethiopia or Seba for us, for He has given Himself!

Think of yourself, my dear Friend, (if, indeed, you have believed in Christ), as being a singularity in the realm of beings, a special wonder in the creation! You, alone, can say, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” Neither in the earth nor in the stars, however they may be peopled, nor in yonder golden streets, are there *any* beings except men who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We are the costliest of creatures! We are dearest to God, for He has spent most upon us and made us the choice objects of His heavenly expenditure. This work of Redemption is a very marvelous one, for the more one tries to study it, the more its many-sidedness appears.

In what respects and under what aspects have we been ransomed? Time would fail me to recount them all. We have been redeemed, we know, in reference to Divine Justice. We had violated God’s Law and, therefore, there was a punishment to be exacted from us. This punishment the Lord Jesus has endured in our place. “The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquities of us all.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” We are justified, or reckoned as just through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus! Our great Redeemer has done, for the honor of the Law, more than all of us put together could have done and this stands as a ransom for us—so that we may go free because He has suffered in our place whatever was due from us to the Law of God.

This is a blessed aspect of Redemption and one which we hope to always keep prominent in our thoughts and in our teaching. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” May the Holy Spirit teach us to value this great Redemption! Furthermore, we are redeemed from the power of evil, even as the Holy Spirit says in the Epistle to Titus, “He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” This Redemption may be said to be not so much Redemption by price as by *power*, yet even in this, there are signs of price, for the Apostle says, “He gave Himself for us.”

It is true that no price was paid to *Satan*—that is not to be imagined for an instant! We were never the devil’s rightful possession and, therefore, he is compelled to let go of his captives neither for price or reward. We have been brought out from under the power of evil even as Israel was brought out from under the tyranny of Pharaoh. No redemption money was paid to the Egyptian king, but the Lord redeemed His people with a high hand and a stretched out arm—it was a case of redemption by*power* and yet that smear of blood made by the hyssop on the lintel and the two side posts still indicated that price went hand in hand with power and the blood of Atonement was needed as well as the rod of Omnipotence.

In our deliverance from evil it is not only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are delivered, but He applies the blood as a cleansing power. The Lord Jesus is “made unto us sanctification and redemption.” Of those who conquer sin and Satan it is said, “they overcame by the blood of the Lamb.” Grace breaks the yoke from off the neck of the Believer, but the finger of delivering Grace is dipped in blood and leaves Redemption’s token wherever it comes. Do you see it? Know you not that you are not your own—the price paid in Gethsemane and Calvary has set you apart? Another phase of this Redemption which we do not often think of seems to me to be suggested by the text. There was a time, Brothers and Sisters, when we thought ourselves to be our own.

Now, says my text, “You are *not* your own.” “Because you are ‘bought with a price.’” Bought from whom? May I not fairly say that, in one sense, you were bought from yourselves? Where else is the force of the expression, “You are not your own.” Through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, a compensation has been given to *you* for yourselves, so that your rights to yourselves are now the property of your Lord Jesus! That independence and liberty which you once delighted in is now surrendered. You said, “Our lips are our own—who is Lord over us? Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice? As for us, we will be free and do according to our own wills!” But the matchless Ransom has been paid and all idea of selfwill and self-indulgence are trespasses upon the enclosed possession of the Redeemer.

Our vested interest in ourselves, though it never was a true property at all, is once and for all surrendered to Him who has laid down His life for us! We have received at the Lord’s hands a thousand-fold for all that we hand over to Him—the price is so great, so altogether beyond all computation—that we gladly yield our unworthy selves to be the Lord’s forever and ever. I shall need you to remember this form of redemption and to that end I will set it first among the points to which I shall call your attention.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us try, at this time, to feel the force of the Truth of God that we are bought with a price and are not our own, for it must not remain a dead letter. It ought to affect our hearts and influence our lives. I shall try to set it forth to you in a series of contrasts which I may compare to the double glasses of a stereoscope—they will, I trust, aid you in seeing more clearly and feeling more forcibly. We can never be too much affected by this important practical Truth of God. O that the Spirit of God would press it home upon our hearts and consciences!

**I.**First, I see in the text COMPENSATION AND YET GAIN. Compensation is intended to make good a loss, but in our case the transfer of ourselves from self to Christ is a clear gain. Compensation, then, first—“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” You have surrendered, as Believers, your right and property in yourselves. Have you made a good bargain? Assuredly you have, for, first of all, you *live* and, had you retained your supposed right to yourself, you would have died! He that saves his life in such a sense, by keeping it to himself, shall lose it.

You were, in fact, already dead while you lived, because you were living in pleasure and finding that pleasure in yourself. But now the Lord has given you a new, high, noble, *Divine* life. Is not that a compensation, indeed, for giving up the groveling life of the flesh? He has given you, in addition to life, *peace*—you are now at rest in Jesus. As a Believer, you know that your sins are forgiven for Christ’s name’s sake, that the Father Himself loves you, that you are accepted in the Beloved and safe in Jesus’ hands! You enjoy great peace—deep, lasting, ever-flowing. Is it not much better to have peace and to be Christ’s than to be like the troubled sea that cannot rest and belong to yourself? One drop of sacred peace is an abundant recompense for the yielding up of yourself to Jesus.

In addition to peace, you have *joy*. Sometimes when it is at flood, your happiness is as much as you can bear—you know what it is to be carried off your feet by a whirlwind of intense delight when you are musing upon your Lord and His love to you and the price paid to win you. Oh, the joy, the unutterable blessedness which is the fruit of the Spirit! What delights grow on the bitter tree, the cross! No clusters of the vine can equal the fruit of Calvary’s Cross! I am sure that whatever earthly joys you have given up, you are abundantly compensated for them all by the joy you find in the purchase price which Christ Jesus gave for you. And then you have a grand reversion—a hope which looks across the stream of death to a better land—a hope of immortality with Christ, of likeness to Him and association with Him and glory with Him forever!

Why, my Friend, if there had been a kingdom to renounce; if there had been a world of self-denials and 10,000 pleasant things to be given up, you might have been well content to be repaid by such a price! You have received for your little, the fullness which is in Christ who is All in All— yes, the polluting joys, the dangerous independence, the rebellious indulgences of sin at their best and all put together are not worthy to be compared with the matchless endowments which your Redeemer has bestowed upon you! Today you possess all that the blood of Jesus confers and effects and I cannot, in a few words, tell you the whole of that treasury of Grace! The price which Jesus paid means cleansing—“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Is it not better to be cleansed and to be the Lord’s than to be filthy and be your own? The blood of Jesus brings us near to God, for we are “made near by the blood of Christ.” Is it not better to be near to the Lord and belong to Jesus than to be in the far-off country with the swine and the husks and be your own? The blood has spoken peace—it “speaks better things than that of Abel.” Is it not better to be God’s and hear the blood cry, “Peace,” than to be your own and to hear a terrible sound in your ears of judgment to come? The blood has given you entrance into the Most Holy Place, even into the very heart of God! And is it not better to be the Lord’s beloved and to come close to Him and speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend than to be your own and to be shut out from God and from the Glory of His Presence? Until the blood is sprinkled, no man may dare to approach the thrice holy God, but that once done, we have access with boldness! Is not this a joy? If any complain that a Christian’s life is a life of self-denial as, indeed, sometimes it is, yet the compensations are incalculably rich, for in the blood of Jesus we have had given to us 10,000 times over and above all that we ever lost for Christ’s sake.

So far *compensation*. But then we must not forget that the supposed loss is an actual gain! It is a fine business when a man is compensated for a loss and yet the loss, itself, becomes an advantage to him. Yet most emphatically this has been our case, for anything that we have lost for Christ’s sake, we may truly count as clear gain. We have only lost that which dishonored, injured and enslaved us. Blessed loss! What were we without Christ? We were the slaves of self! But if set free from self, we are, indeed, set free from a worse than Egyptian bondage whose wage is death! It was inevitable that we must have some master or other, but all our former masters were tyrants. Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are set free from Satan and is not that a gain to be delivered from the Prince of the power of the air?

Once we served the world and it was our lord, but what gain it is to feel that we are no longer the servants of men because we are bought with a price. Instead of needing that anything should be given to us as a recompense for self-surrender, we can reply—We find our joy and our delight in being altogether Christ’s and the very height of our ambition is that, byand-by, we may live entirely according to the will of God! Oh, that this much-desired were fully come, for we shall never know perfect liberty until we reach that lofty degree and then we shall be ready to step into Glory. The Lord help us in it!

So much, then, on the first point—the Lord Jesus has, by His blood, given us compensation and yet there never was a loss, but an unspeakable gain.

**II.**Look at the text again and you will see in it HIGH VALUE AND YET LOWLINESS—“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” Value is clearly here, for we are bought with an *immense* price. How great a store ought man to set by himself as before God, for he is a purchased possession. God thinks not lightly of man, but esteems him sufficiently, in Divine condescension, to buy him with the richest price conceivable! He lost the angels and would not pay a penny for them—but when man had fallen, He laid down His life to ransom him! You, my dear Friend, should have the very lowest view of yourself, but yet see how *God* has exalted you! “What is man, that You are mindful of him, O God? And the son of man, that You visit him?”

Yet He does visit him. He has visited him so as to take his nature into union with the Divine! More than that, He visited him so as to redeem him with pangs and unutterable anguish. If you want to know the value of yourself, see Christ upon the Cross and make a note of His wounds. You are not a thing to be trifled with. Do not reckon so cheaply of yourself as to stoop to become a mere money-grubber or earthworm! You are worth more than that! Do not fancy that you ever can truly be yourself while you are living for any human objective or any earthly aim—you are too precious to waste yourself on fading flowers.

In the first place, you are a being of God’s making. In His own image, remember, He made you and nothing but sin could spoil you—and now you have been bought and, therefore, have become a costly thing—more costly than a mere creation. In the Lord’s house you are not a vessel of dishonor, a broken crock to be flung on the dunghill and another obtained in your place—you are a vessel of honor fit for the Master’s use since He has paid so dearly for you. “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” There is a sanctity about a blood-bought man or woman of the highest degree—the Lord has purchased Him with His life!

A sanctity surrounds even these frail bodies, for the Apostle is speaking about them in the text now before us. Let me read what he says upon them—“What? Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God and you are not your own?” Never, therefore, give up your body to idleness, drunkenness, or any form of uncleanness. Paul speaks especially of fornication as a thing not to be thought of among the saints because the body has been valued by God at a great price and purchased accordingly. And it must not, therefore, be defiled by even an impure*conversation*. Though Paul, in another sense, called it a “vile body,” yet it cannot be vile in all respects, for even now it is a sacred thing, the shrine of the eternal Spirit!

We ought to value the very dust of the departed saint. It little matters what becomes of a dead body, yet would I have it laid reverently in its last resting place and let its bones be undisturbed until the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, for every atom of a Believer’s body has been redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ, as well as His soul and spirit! Yes, his entire manhood has been purchased by Christ Jesus. I want you, then, to think of yourselves, you Believers, as precious things! The Lord says to each one of His own beloved, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” You are “the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold.” Use yourselves only for honorable purposes, for God puts honor upon you.

Now look at the other side of the picture. You are precious, but you must yet be lowly, for whatever value there is about you, you do not belong to yourself. “You are not your own.” Though precious enough to have been bought with a price, yet none of the preciousness is*yours*. Believers, you are the goods and chattels of Christ—as you were once sold under sin, so are you now “bought with a price.” We are done with slavery of men, I hope, though in a few countries it ignominiously lingers as a crime on which society has laid its ban. But the *blessed bondage* of belonging to Christ I pray that it may be extended all over the world! “I bear in my body,” said Paul, “the marks of the Lord Jesus,” as if he had been branded with Christ’s name, as sheep and cattle often bear the mark of their owner.

I think he alluded to the scars which had been left by the scourges, or perhaps to the watermark of Baptism which he had received in his entire body—in which some of us greatly rejoice because it is the reminder of our being dead with Christ and buried with Him. Never can the fact of our immersion into the sacred name be reversed! Only once and that to last forever, we are buried with Christ in Baptism unto death! Into His name have we been plunged, that we may be His forever and no more our own. A man cannot be proud of himself, however he knows his value, when He perceives that not a hair on his head or a finger of his hands belongs to himself.

In true Christian life not a pulse beats for ourselves, not a breath is breathed for ourselves, not a single part of the complex machinery of our body or of our mind or soul remains our own—we are to use all for Christ, for we are bought and sold properties—taken right away from ourselves and owned by Christ by an everlasting tenure as “a purchased possession.” I wish I could get into the mind of all here the thought which burdens my own heart, that we should esteem ourselves as blood-bought men, as being sacred things, as holy as the golden candlestick, or as the golden table of the showbread and yet think of ourselves as being the very least and lowest in the Lord’s house because we are not at all our own. Our honor lies in our Owner!

God forbid that we should glory in anything except that we belong to Christ! Paul cried, “Whose I am and whom I serve!” And this we, too, will say with hearty exultation! We will walk with holy boldness as the Lord’s own, but yet with deep humility as not our own.

**III.**Thoughtfully let us consider another contrast—“You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” This brings before my mind SECURITY AND YET WATCHFULNESS. First, security. You will not be lost, for He who owns you is able to keep you. If you were to perish, who would be the loser? Why, He to whom you belong and “you are not your own,” you belong to Christ! My hope of being preserved to the end lies in this fact, that Jesus Christ paid far too much for me ever to let me go. Each Believer cost Him His heart’s blood! Stand in Gethsemane and hear His groans! Then draw near and mark His bloody sweat and tell me—will He lose a soul for whom He suffered like this?

Look at Him hanging on the tree, tortured, mocked, burdened with an awful load and then beclouded with the eclipse of His Father’s face! Do you think He suffered all that and yet will permit those for whom He endured it to be cast into Hell? He will be a greater loser than I shall if I perish, for He will lose what cost Him His life! Surely He will never do that. Here is your security—you are the Lord’s portion and He will not be robbed of His heritage! We are in a hand that bears the scar of the nail! We are hidden in the cleft of a rock—*the* Rock that was riven for us nearly 1,900 years ago! None can pluck us from the hand which redeemed us— its pressure is too warm with love and strong with might for that.

Now turn the picture over. Look at the other side of the medal. Here is reason for watchfulness. “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.” Therefore take great care of yourselves and keep your hearts with all diligence, for you are a King’s treasure. If a thing is my own, I may do what I like with it, but if it is entrusted to my care, I must mind how I behave towards it or else I shall be an unfaithful steward. Come, come, Friend, you may play with yourself if you like if you are your own, but if you belong to Jesus Christ, I charge you by the love you bear Him and by the dignity of His sacred Character and by His death—the price He gave for you—do not pollute or degrade yourself! You are not your own, therefore permit no damage to come to your Lord’s estate lest He call you to account.

The prodigal away in the far country may live just as he likes if he is his own, for the citizens of that country and their swine care nothing about how he behaves. Poor wretch that he is, he may destroy himself if he wills—on his own head shall come the loss—nobody will grieve over a fool and a spendthrift. But you and I are not in that condition! We have been brought home and are our Father’s own children and we must behave ourselves according to the law of His house and please Him in all things. We have no rights of property in ourselves, now that Christ has purchased u, and it is our solemn duty to act towards ourselves as husbandmen act towards a vineyard, the fruits of which are not to be eaten by themselves, but by their lord.

Let us preserve each cluster of the heart’s vine for the King to whom it belongs and trim each walk and train each flower of the soul’s garden according to His pleasure. See to it, then, that you waste not and spoil not the royal estate. You are safe in the Lord’s hands, therefore rejoice! But mind you take the other side of the Truth and watch so as to keep your garments white by walking close to God, for “you are not your own: you are bought with a price.”

**IV.**A fourth contrast, well worthy to be worked out in your private meditations, is CONSECRATION AND YET PERFECT LIBERTY. “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price”—there is consecration. You are, today, to dedicate yourself wholly and entirely to the Lord because you are not partly redeemed, but *wholly* redeemed. Do you make any provision for the flesh, dear Friend? Do you keep back any faculty you possess from Christ? Is not this a robbery of your Lord? How would you like to think of that particular reservation as being unredeemed? Would you be content to believe that no blood of Christ has ever fallen to redeem that part of you?

Which portion is it which is to be unconsecrated? Is it the body that you would pamper and indulge? What? Have you an unredeemed*body*, then? Are you satisfied that it should be eaten of the worm and never rise from the dust? Or do you give to Christ your loving heart, but reserve your thinking mind to yourself and say, “I will invent my own beliefs and not yield my judgment to the dicta of Revelation”? What? My Friend, have you, then, an unredeemed *intellect*? What is to become of it in that day when only those things shall be gathered into Heaven which have been bought with blood and owned by Christ? In that day when He makes up His jewels, He will not put another man’s goods among them!

Do not keep back from Christ even your second-class powers. Withhold not your voice, but *sing* for Jesus, or *speak* for Him if you can! Write for Jesus, paint for Jesus, yes, make and mend garments for His sake! Do not keep back from Christ any minor power that you possess, but ask God to enable you to consecrate the skill of your fingers to Him as well as the force of your arms, for even your least members are bought with a price. Your time is included in the purchase, for there is never a moment when you are unredeemed! Some people think, perhaps, that they are off duty now and then—let me ask them, “Are you ever off the roll of Redemption? Is there one St. Monday in the week in which you are an unredeemed man and may be your own or the devil’s? Suppose you die that day? What then?”

As this consecration holds good for all times, so in all manner of ways. You are consecrated to Christ to do whatever you can do to His Glory—to suffer whatever you can suffer as He lays it upon you and, above all, to be, as well as to do, and to suffer—to be forever the Lord’s! There is a great deal in actually being Christ’s, even when you are not actively engaged—when you are neither praying, nor singing, nor working, but, as it were, standing still—it is well to be as the sweet flowers in the garden which exhale the perfume of their innermost hearts in silent surrender to the passing gales. O that we may be full of Grace and may the wind of the Divine Spirit scatter abroad the sweetnesses of our inner life, even when we are scarcely conscious of it!

But then, there is with this, a perfect liberty. I believe that to be consecrated to Christ is when we come to the bottom of things, the sure way to give to all the faculties of our nature the fullest possible play. Vice is the indulgence of the passions. True. Therefore some think it joy, but if all the passions of a man of every sort were to be exercised in their right harmony and proportion, as they would have been had he remained in his first estate, then perfect virtue and not vice, would have been the result— and in that virtue manhood would have found a delightful liberty. The propensities of our nature as nature—not as *fallen* nature—will have their right indulgence when they acknowledge a complete subservience to the will and Law of God. Liberty to sin is slavery, liberty *from* sin is freedom!

There is no liberty to a man like that of being under Law to God. If we are encased within the compass of the Law, we are no more restricted than a bird which is imprisoned within the boundless expanse of air, or a fish which is shut in by the ocean! Obedience to Christ is our element! The element of a truly renewed man is holiness and, therefore, when you and I shall become perfectly consecrated to Christ, so as to live only for Him, we shall have reached that way of living which God designed us to follow wherein we shall be perfectly filled with happiness.

Do not think, therefore, that the more a Christian you become, the more you will feel of restriction and bond. Say, rather, that you will rejoice more in the freedom of such as good men, alone, can understand. The fact is that self-denial, itself, will become no self-denial, but a supreme joy when once the heart is perfectly loyal to its Lord!

**V.**To close, I will mention a fifth pair of contrasts—SUBMISSION AND EXPECTANCY. These are both suggested by my text. Submission—“You are not your own” and, therefore, God has a right to do whatever He wills with you. We cannot tell what He may do with us, yet, but if we must suffer pain week after week upon our bed, He has a right to lay us there and chasten us in every limb. If the Lord says, “Go into your room and cough all the winter through and then melt away with decline,” we must bow before His decree, remembering these words, “You are not your own.” Or, if He says, “Come down from your position of comfort into hard work and poverty,” again you must remember, “you are not your own.”

Or if He says, “Migrate across the seas. Go to a new country, cut every tie and break the fondest connections,” you must cheerfully obey, for, “you are not your own.” If the call of duty should be, “Go, preach the Gospel among the heathen! Go and die among them—find a grave where malaria shortens life, or cruelty brings sudden death”—you must go without question, for, “you are not your own.” Ours is not to raise questions or debates, for those can only be legitimate among persons who are their own—

***“Ours not to reason why:***

***Ours but to do and die,”***  
for we are not our own! Submission, absolute submission, is the rightful position of the blood-bought!

Side by side with that comes expectancy. I could not do much for myself if I were my own, but if I am Christ’s, I expect that *He* will do great things for me. Do you see those two boys? Neither can do much for himself, but one of them has great expectations. And why? Because he has a kind and wealthy father, of whom he expects great things. He says, “I am my father’s son and he will take care of me.” It is the same with us! Our great Owner’s goodness and power have raised our expectations! Look at this body of mine—it must decay and become mere dust—but my Lord has bought it and you can be sure He did not purchase it to let it end in corruption! It is not my own, therefore I feel sure that He who owns it, will lift it up, again, in nobler form than it now wears and make it bright and glistening like His own, not liable to pain, or sickness, or decay.

I know He will! If this body were only mine, I should expect there would be an end of it when the gravedigger hides it in the earth. But if it is my Lord’s, since He has paid so much for it, He *must* have some grand intention concerning it! He sees in this body the raw material out of which His Grace and power can make something that shall glorify Himself. Is there not a guarantee for great expectations in our belonging to Christ? We are not our own! Then these minds of ours—depend upon it He will enlarge them! He will increase our mental caliber and make His property more worthy of its Owner. You say, dear Brother, “I shall never be much of a man. I have but small capacity for learning.” Well, what you have belongs to Christ and *He* will sanctify your talents and increase them and give you wisdom to use them for His honor!

You do not know what you may yet become. You will know more after you have been in Heaven five minutes than all the doctors of divinity on earth! For there you shall know even as you are known. You shall know Christ and see Him and rejoice in Him beyond all that you can now conceive. You are not your own, but He who owns you means to make something out of you—He bought you at too great a price to let you run to waste. As for your entire being, rest assured that He intends to reflect His own Glory by means of it throughout eternity. I never knew Christ act unwisely, yet, and though sometimes it seems to me as though I could have forbidden the Cross and His Sacrifice—as though His death were too dear a price to redeem such insignificant beings as we are—yet He must have seen in our poor, fallen nature, in its very sin and misery, room for His Grace, room for His power and, therefore, the opportunity for a grand display of His power and love to the amazement of angels and principalities and powers throughout eternity!

At any rate, a piece of clay that lies in the pit, all its own, has no destiny before it until it has been purchased by the potter and beaten and prepared. And when it feels itself revolving on the wheel, it has just reason to believe that it will bear a useful part in time to come. It might say, if it could speak, “I am not my own lump of clay! I have been bought with a great price and, therefore, something is to be made of me! It does not yet appear what I shall be, but when he that fashions, has finished me, I shall, no doubt, be worthy of the hand that has worked this upon me.” Raise your expectations as high as you will—God means to do for you exceedingly above what you can ask or even think! According to the riches of His Glory in Christ Jesus He will show the greatness of His power in you that believe in Jesus Christ! Blessed are the men, then, of whom it is true, “You are not your own: for you are bought with a price.”

Now, I finish with this question—“Are you your own, dear Hearer?” I can imagine some sitting here saying, “Of course I am! I do not believe in surrendering myself to God.” Well, then, if you are your own, you will go to your own place and where your own place is read the Word of God and discover! There shall you find that those who know not God shall be driven from His Presence! If they are their own, they must be their own comforters and their own helpers, but they shall be driven far off from God forevermore! Are you anxious to be saved, my dear Hearer? Then the way of salvation is that you believe in Jesus Christ—and it is an essential part of that believing that you surrender yourself to Christ.

If He will save you, shall He have you to be His possession? If He will buy you, will you be His? If He will redeem you, will you confess that you are not your own? Many a man is unable to find peace because he wants to be independent and demands to have his own will and way. Surrender! That is a necessary exhortation to every revolted one who would be restored. Surrender! Surrender at discretion! God cannot deal with rebels while they carry their weapons in their hands. Down with your weapons! Cry to Him, “Lord, I am dying, starving, perishing! Wrath is upon me! Only let me live and be cleansed and I will be Yours forever, as Your Grace shall help me.”

He will accept you! He *does* accept you, now, if that is the utterance of your heart! And you, too, may go away and sing—  
***“I am Yours and Yours alone,  
This I gladly, fully own.”***

God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.  
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Sermon #1163 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REDEMPTION AND ITS CLAIMS  
NO. 1163

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 8, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“You are bought with a price.”  
1 Corinthians 6:20.  
“You are bought with a price.”  
1 Corinthians 7:23.~~***

THE same words are found in each place, though a different inference is drawn from them. “You are bought with a price.” This morning’s text was, “Without money and without price,” [#1161] and to the best of my ability I tried to show how freely the blessings of the Gospel are bestowed upon the sons of men. But though they cost us nothing, they cost the Savior dearly. They are without price to us, but what a price He paid! Well did our poet put it in the remarkable verse which we sang***—***

***“There’s never a gift His hand bestows  
But cost His heart a groan.”***

Out of that fact grow certain most weighty practical Truths of God and I have chosen it as the subject of this evening’s discourse that I may urge them upon your minds. May the Holy Spirit work graciously through the Word which you will hear and cause you to live as those who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

First, I shall have to say to you that *redemption is our chief blessing—* nothing better can be said of you than this, “You are bought with a price.” Then I shall have to remind you that *redemption on God’s part becomes His paramount claim upon us.* And thirdly, I shall have to show that *this claim is remarkably extensive*, and I shall urge you to admit it.

**I.**First, then, “YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.” To every man of whom this may be said, it is the best news he ever heard! An angel sent from Heaven could not bring to any man or woman a more delightful message than this, “You are bought with a price, even with the precious blood of Christ.” “You are Christ’s,” says the Apostle in the chapter we read to you (1 Corinthians 3), and he seemed as if his heart glowed as he said it. He even made it the climax of a remarkable burst of eloquence. “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”

To be bought with a price is the grandest distinction of our manhood and lifts us above angels themselves! It puts great honor upon the saints, even as the Lord has said, “Since you are precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” Redemption is a greater mercy than *creation*. It is no mean blessing to have been made and to have been made a man rather than a dog or a toad, or a worm—to have been blest with intellect, with a mind that can soar into the unseen, a judgment which can weigh, a memory which can retain, an imagination which can create and color thoughts of every kind. It is no little matter to be capable of a mental capacity which widens the sphere of existence, beliefs which open up the past and make us see the far-gone ages and hopes which relieve the darkness of the present with lamps borrowed from the future.

It is a great thing to be a man and not a bird—a man with a soul which will never fall by the fowler’s gun. It is a great thing to be an*immortal* man, to be a creature that shall live on forever, into whom God has dropped a spark of undying flame. It is a grand thing to have a spirit within us and not to be dumb driven cattle. But for all that, although man is highly elevated in the scale of being, and stands even at the very top of being as respects this world, having dominion over all the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the sea—yet if you, O created man, are not *redeemed*, everything about you will only be turned into dust, so that it were better for you that a millstone had been tied about your neck, that you had been thrown into the depths of the sea, or even better for you that you had never been born, if you are not redeemed! “Bought with a price” makes existence life! To be unredeemed would make existence an endless death.

*Providence,*also, is a short word, calling before our minds a great mass of mercies. But Providence is second in its blessedness to redemption. I would remind you of the inestimable blessings which the Providence of God has brought to many here present. It is no small thing to be in good health, no little thing to have your reason preserved. It is no minor blessing to have bread to eat and raiment to put on—and not to be distressed as many of the poorest of our Brethren are as to where they shall lay their heads—and where they shall find tomorrow’s food. Some of us are surrounded with many comforts, and ought, every time we look at the bed on which we sleep at night, and the room in which we spend our days, sing unto God who has favored us so much—

***“Not more than others we deserve,  
But God has given us more.”***

Look around you! Some of you have not only the necessities, but the *luxuries* of life. You are exceedingly favored in these things. But, oh, if you are not redeemed, what will it matter though you were clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and fared sumptuously each day, like Dives, and then should lift up your eyes in the flames of Hell? What would it matter, though you had the comeliness and majestic appearance of an Absalom, and yet over you a pious father would have to say, “Would God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son!” What would it be to you to have been possessor of the world and to have called the seas your own, if you had no part or lot in the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ and were never saved from wrath through Him? Redemption demands a louder note of gratitude than creation! Sweet as Providence must ever be to the Believer, yet redemption, *redemption* is the best wine kept unto the last—the last and best work of Heaven—the mirror in which the brightest attributes of Jehovah are most clearly reflected.

This is the headstone of the corner, crowning the great temple of Divine Grace. “God so loved the world”—not as to make it fair and beautiful— that is not enough! “God so loved the world”—not so as to sustain it and give it day and night, and summer and winter—*that* is not enough! But the line that will fathom the depths of Divine Love is this—He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” Remember, dear Friends, that redemption is that which gives effect to all the other great blessings of God!

I say, “great blessings,” for I refer to *spiritual* blessings—all these need redemption to complete their design. For instance, election, the wellhead of Divine Grace, needs the conduit pipe of *redemption* to bring its streams down to sinners. We are chosen of God, but unto*obedience*, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. The saints are chosen in Him—without Him of what good would election be? Where, also, would be our calling? Vain would it be to be called if there were no feast of dying love for us to be called *to* and no fountain filled with blood to which we might come at the call! Redemption is the fullness of all the blessings of God! They are like Gideon’s fleece and redemption bedews them! It is the key of Heaven, the channel of Grace, the door of Hope. It constitutes our song in the house of our pilgrimage and will be the theme of our eternal music above.

I would not fail to remind you, also, that redemption, at this moment, is the foundation of all the real peace that any man possesses. If you have any peace of mind worth having, you have found it at the foot of the Cross. If the tempest of your fears concerning the wrath of God has been quieted—there is only one voice which could have stilled its boisterous noise—it is the voice of Jesus. There is no peace apart from the blood of Jesus, unless it is that delusive peace which, like the solemn stillness which precedes the hurricane, is only the forerunner of destruction! All the peace you have is through *redemption* and all the security you have comes by the same way. You hope to be saved at the last. Your trust is that you shall die triumphantly and rise rejoicingly—but it is all through the blood of Jesus! Where were all the saints if it were not for redeeming Grace and dying love? Notwithstanding their professions, they are, without Christ, as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Piety has no root where redemption is unknown. Past experience and present enjoyment would melt away like the coating of morning’s frost before the rising sun were it not that we are sealed by the precious blood of Christ! The Lord knows them that are His and will keep them securely to the end.

But, oh, Beloved, there is one more Truth of God never to be forgotten! It is through Redeeming Grace that we expect to enter Heaven! In a few short weeks, or months, or, perhaps, years, you and I, who believe in Jesus, will be in Glory! We shall have done with these workdays here and shall have entered into the endless Sabbath! We shall be—

***“Where congregations never break up,***

***And worship has no end.”***  
Our head shall soon wear the immortal crown and our hands shall bear the harp from which we will draw the richest music of praise! But our *only* hope to enter there is through the *blood*—and our only song shall be, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” O you morning stars that sang together when a new-made world first revolved around the sun! O you wondering spirits who have often admired the Wisdom and the Justice of God in dealing with the sinful race of men, lift high your notes and sing yet sweeter songs concerning redemption! And let your wonder never cease that God should become Man and, as Man, should suffer, bleed, and die that He might redeem His people—that of them it might be said they were “bought with a price”!

**II.**I have thus assured you all that redemption is our best blessing. I trust you will not rest without it. Now, I want to dwell upon the next point, namely, that therefore REDEMPTION IS THE LORD’S PARAMOUNT CLAIM UPON US. Paul does not say, “You are not your own, for God made you.” That is true of all things that are—cattle, the trees, the dust of the earth as well as regenerated man. He does not say, “You are not your own for God created you.” That would be true of the devil and his angels, and of the whole race of rebellious men.

Neither does he say, “You are not your own for God preserves you.” That would be most true, for God, who keeps the breath in our nostrils, ought to have our praise. But that also would be true of *all* creatures, even of the most wicked. But there is a special point here, “You are not your own—you are *bought*,” not merely made and preserved, but *bought* and, “bought with a price.” You who are children of God, you were bought as the devils never were, for Jesus never died to save them! “He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham.” You are bought as the ungodly were not, for they remain the slaves of Satan and are not redeemed from their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers. They have rejected the purchase price—they remain unredeemed from their slavery to sin.

But you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot! And therefore Christ lays His pierced hand upon you and says, “You are Mine.” Your King sets the broad arrow on you and marks you tonight as royal property. There was one possession which Jacob had which he greatly valued and which he gave to his darling son, Joseph, “because,” he said, “I took it out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.” You, also, are the possession which Christ values beyond everything, because He has delivered you out of the hand of sin and Satan by His own sufferings and death—and because of this He has the highest conceivable right of property in you. He is not merely your Creator and Preserver, but He is your Redeemer and, therefore, if all the world should refuse Him homage, and all men should revolt from Him, and even if the angels should desert His standard, yet *you* must not, for you are bought with a price. Other claims are forcible, but this claim is overwhelming. Other bands are strong, but these cords of love are invincible. The love of Christ constrains us.

Now let us look at this claim. Think, Beloved, what you were bought *from*. You were a slave and you have been redeemed! You were a slave to *sin*. Remember that. Perhaps there was a time when you could rap out an oath as well as anybody and when the pleasures of this world and the lusts thereof were sweet morsels under your tongue. How did you come to be saved from bad habits and filthy passions? You are bought with a price! You are the Lord’s freeman! You have broken those chains, but not by *your* power. You have been bought with a price, for “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ.” *There* is a redemption from sin!

Then you have been redeemed from the *punishment* of sin. You had begun to feel that. You were full of doubts and fears and dreadful apprehensions of God’s wrath. You felt as if Hell had begun in you. It is not so now, the blood of redemption has spoken peace and you are no more afraid. Well do I remember when the flames of Hell burned in *my* soul, as far as they could in this human life, yes, they dried up my spirit and parched up my heart, so that my soul chose strangling rather than life! It was such a wretched thing to live.

But it is not so now, blessed be God! We are redeemed from remorse and despair, and set free from the horrible sense of guilt! In a little time we should have been in Hell—but since we have believed we never shall come into the place of torment—for sin is forgiven and the sense of sin is removed. We can say in the words of our text of last Sunday night, “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that has risen again, who sits at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” We are redeemed from sin, from remorse, and from Hell itself! And now, at this moment, we are redeemed from the avenging justice of God. Jesus Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, and by the merit of His death has forever rendered compensation to the injured honor of Divine Justice. He has magnified the Law and made it honorable so that the Law, itself, can ask no more of a sinner for whom Christ has died, for Christ has paid to the Law all that Justice could demand.

Oh, think of that! Rejoice, Beloved, that you are redeemed from sin, and death, and Hell and the claims of unbending Justice—and surely you will feel that there is a claim upon you that you should be the Lord’s. Reflect most lovingly upon that dear Friend who bought you out of iron bondage, who it was that redeemed you! You have not been redeemed by an angel. Dear would the angelic name have been had it been so! But angels were powerless in this grand affair. Who stooped to pick you up, O insect of a day? Who stooped to save you? Who but He who bears earth’s huge pillars up and spreads the heavens abroad? The Son of God, Omnipotent, Eternal and Infinite, has fallen in love with the fallen sons of man—and for them has donned the garment of human flesh and in that flesh has suffered to the death—and died a most shameful death upon the gallows of

Calvary!  
Oh, tell it everywhere that Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed  
forever, has redeemed us! And after that, who will say that we do not belong to Him? Then think of the price He paid. The text does not tell us  
about it, and surely the reason for its silence is to be found in the fact  
that words cannot express the mighty sum. “You are bought. You are  
bought with a price.” Sometimes it is best, when you cannot say what you  
would, to say nothing at all. The famous painter, when he drew the picture of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of his daughter, felt that he could not  
depict the sorrow of the father’s countenance and therefore he wisely put  
a veil over it, and represented him as hiding his face from the fearful  
sight.  
So the Apostle seems to have felt, “I cannot tell you all that Jesus suffered so I will leave it. You are bought with a price.” Now, turn that over  
lovingly. Muse on it devoutly till your hearts burn like coals of juniper! “A  
price!” The price was God born at Bethlehem as a man and then living 30  
years and more in poverty and contumely, suffering in Gethsemane till  
sweat of blood fell on the ground—falsely accused, ridiculed, spit upon,  
buffeted, mocked, scourged, nailed to the Cross, left there to die—while, in  
His soul, the great millstone of Jehovah’s Wrath crushed His spirit as in  
an olive-press till His heart was broken and His spirit melted within Him  
like wax.  
Only God knows the sufferings of the Son of God—well does the Greek  
liturgy pour forth that mysterious plea, “By Your unknown sufferings,  
good Lord, deliver us,” for unknown they were. O you saints were, indeed,  
bought with a price, and I charge you, by the agony and bloody sweat, by  
the Cross and passion, acknowledge the fact that you belong to Jesus!  
Confess that He bought you with an incalculable price! You are His and  
would not wish to question that Divine purchase which is the groundwork  
of your hope. You must not, *cannot* dispute the sacred claims which Jesus  
has upon you—rather should you cry, “O Son of David, we are Yours and  
all that we have.”  
There is yet this further consideration, that the purchase price of every  
child of God has been fully paid. I have seen lands which have belonged to  
men who were reputed to be rich, but there was a heavy mortgage upon  
them so that, though they called them theirs, they were scarcely so. But  
there is no mortgage on the saints! There is no debt to be demanded in future ages either of us or of our Redeemer. “It is finished,” said the Savior,  
and finished it is. He has bought you and He has paid for you. Are you not  
His? There is not one single good work of yours needed to complete the  
merit, or a single pang of suffering required from you to perfect the  
Atonement. You are perfect in Christ Jesus.  
Well, then, if the price is paid so fully, are we not completely and fully  
the Lord’s? I will say this one thing very solemnly to you, and then leave  
the point. Beloved, if you are ready to confess that you were bought with a  
price, you must be equally ready to acknowledge that you cannot be your own, but belong to Him who bought you. Mark you, if the first is not true, then the second does not press. But if the first *is* true, namely, that Christ redeemed you, then the second is just as true, namely, that you are His and must live as His, or otherwise you are defrauding Him. If you are prepared to give up your redemption, you may also throw away your allegiance to Christ. But if you are not willing to give up redemption by the blood—and I trust you are not, for that is to give up *everything*—then you must also agree to this, that you are not your own, or any other man’s,  
but belong wholly to Christ.  
And for that cause you are bound to render Him your whole self, spirit,  
soul and body. It is only your reasonable service, for every reasonable  
man expects to have what he has paid for. If Jesus has paid dearly for  
your soul and if it is confessed that it is His, then let Him have it and be  
not so base as to rob Christ of the reward of His heart’s blood! “Will a man  
rob God?” Will you rob your Redeemer? Will you steal from Him the purchase of His agonies and deprive Him of that which it cost Him His life to  
buy? The claim is strong, but only gracious hearts will feel it. O blessed  
Spirit, cause us to feel it deeply, now, and evermore to *act* under its constraining power!  
**III.**This brings me to the third point, which is, as I have proved the Redeemer’s claim—to show THE EXTENT OF IT—the claim of redemption is  
comprehensive. If you will kindly read the context of my first text you will  
see that it includes the body and the soul, “Glorify God in your body and  
your spirit, which are God’s.” There the Apostle speaks, first, of the body.  
Young man, read that passage when you get home, will you? I cannot read  
it now, but if you profess to be a Christian, remember that this body of  
yours is holy and it will rise again from the dead. I charge you, by the  
blood of Christ, never defile this body either by drunkenness or by lust. If it were the body of a common man, I would say to you, for your own  
sake, avoid these evils. But if you are a Christian I have a stronger argument, for your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Mark how strongly  
the Apostle puts it and try to feel the force of his words. You young men  
who come to London amidst its vices, read this passage and shun everything that is akin to lewdness, or leads to unchastity—for your bodies  
were bought with your Lord’s lifeblood— and they are not yours to trifle  
with. Shun the strange woman, her company, her wine, her glances, her  
house, her songs and her resorts. Your bodies are not yours to injure by  
self-indulgence of any sort. Keep them pure and chaste for that heavenly  
Bridegroom who has bought them with His blood.  
And then your *soul* is bought, too. I was obliged to mention the body  
because it is mentioned here and it is so necessary it should be kept pure.  
But keep the soul pure, too. Christ has not bought these eyes that they  
should read novels, such as are published nowadays, calculated to lead  
me into vanity and vice. Christ has not bought this brain of mine that I  
may revel in the perusal of works of blasphemy and filthiness. He has not  
given me a mind that I may drag it through the mire with the hope of  
washing it clean, again, as some seem to do who imagine it to be the right thing to be always defiling themselves with skepticism and heresy that they may afterwards come to some minister to help them out of the dirt, or some wise friend to scrub the filth off. There will be enough of dust in going along the *best* roads—there is no need to go and roll in every dirt heap which foolish atheists and proud skeptics choose to put in the way. Do not defile your mind—it belongs to God—it is bought with the blood of  
Jesus.  
Your whole manhood belongs to God if you are a Christian. Every faculty, every natural power, every talent, every possibility of your being,  
every capacity of your spirit—all were *bought*. It would be an awful thing  
for you if there were any part of you left out of the inventory. That would  
be a cursed part of the fabric of your being! But it is *all* bought with blood,  
if you are, indeed, a redeemed man or woman. Therefore keep the whole  
for Jesus, for it belongs to Him. The Apostle draws from the fact that we  
are bought with a price in my first text, the inference, “You are not your  
own.” It is clear as the sun at noon that if you are bought you are not your  
own.  
Now, if I am not my own, what does that negative declaration imply? It  
means, first, that I may not claim the right to do as I like. I am not my  
own. If I were my own I might do what I pleased. But I am not my own. I  
am not to do what I please, but what Christ pleases. I am to please my  
Lord and Master in *everything*. My question in life is not how shall I get  
the most happiness to *myself*, but how can I bring the most honor to  
Him? I am not my own—then I am not to follow my own passions. If I were  
my own I might fling the bridle on my neck and go where I want and no  
longer restrain my passions. But since I am not my own, I must not. I  
cannot live after the flesh. Unless I am false to Him that bought me, I dare  
not obey the bidding of my corruptions.  
Neither, if I am not my own, may I follow my own tastes if in any way I  
should so bring grief to the people of God or dishonor to the name of  
Christ. I think, dear Brothers and Sisters, that one of the best tests of a  
Christian is that he will not only do no wrong, but he will not do that  
which might lead others to do wrong. Many things are lawful to us which  
are not expedient. And often the Christian will say to himself, “Such a  
thing I think I might do if I were Alexander Selkirk on a desert island and  
nobody saw me. But insomuch as there are others who will take occasion  
to go beyond this act of mine—and weak ones who will be scandalized by  
what I do—God forbid I should make my Brother or Sister to offend, for I  
am not my own. If I were my own master and had not my Lord and His  
cause to consider, I might do a thousand things. But I will deny myself  
many lawful things for His sake and the sake of His Church, for I am not  
my own. I will deny myself even *allowable* things that I may manifest that  
I do not belong to myself, but to Him.”  
I am not my own. Then I must not trust my own reasonings. If I were  
my own teacher, then, of course, I should learn my lessons from my own  
book. But I have a Rabbi, even Jesus, and I am resolved with meekness to  
learn of Him. I thought I was wise, once, but now I have become a little child, and I love to sit at Jesus’ feet to learn of Him, for I have surrendered my reason to Him. I believe what He teaches me because He says so. His *ipse dixit* stands to me instead of argument, for what He says must be true. I am not my own and so I must not seek my own ends. I must not live in this world that I may get rich, or that I may be famous. I may trade and get riches, but it must be that I may use them for Him. I have a family to be kept. Yes, I must give my family to Christ, and then work to keep  
Christ’s family—and so shall I be working for Christ.  
It is not my business to support myself, for the Lord is my Shepherd,  
but the Lord supports me through my own exertions and therefore do I,  
even in common labor, serve Him. “Having food and raiment,” I shall be  
content. And I shall live to do good to the poor, and to the Church of God,  
and to my fellow men. When He sends me riches I shall take my alabaster  
box and break it, and pour it on His head, and never count my treasures  
so well used as when I give them up to Him. If, like Joseph of Arimathea,  
the Believer possessed a new tomb, where man never lay, prepared for  
himself—he would count it best used if his Lord deigned to use it for *His*  
burial. Gladly would he lend his chamber for Jesus to keep the Passover,  
or his animal that his Lord might ride into Jerusalem—for the saint holds  
all things ready at his Master’s beck and call. His life is consecration. He  
has vowed unto the Lord, “I

ill work for Him. I will suffer for Him. I will  
write for Him, I will live for Him—I will even die for Him—by some means  
or other I will show that I am not my own, or anything that I have.” Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I would not like to have an unconsecrated  
hair on my head, or an unconsecrated hour of the day, or an unconsecrated faculty! Every mental power which God has given to a man ought  
to be used for God’s cause. No faculty which is essentially natural to us  
may be excused from bowing its neck to the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Sometimes when I have said a humorous thing in preaching I have not  
asked you to excuse me, for if God has given me humor I mean to use it in  
His cause. Many a man has been caught, his ear arrested and his attention won by a quaint remark. If anyone can prove it is a wickedness, and  
not a natural faculty, I will abandon it. But it is a faculty of nature and it  
ought to be consecrated and used for the cause of Christ! Whatever you  
can do, if it is a right thing to do, and God has made it a characteristic of  
your being, do it for Jesus! If you cannot speak like Mr. Moody, sing like  
Mr. Sankey—but somehow or other help to promote the glory of the Lord  
Jesus Christ, for you are not your own, “You are bought with a price.” In my second text the Apostle brings forth another inference. Read the  
seventh chapter at the 23rd verse—“You are bought with a price; be not  
you the servants of men.” By which he means this—As you are not to live  
for yourself, so you are not to make yourself the slave of other men and  
give your powers up to any but to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not even follow good men slavishly. Do not say, “I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I am of  
Calvin. I am of Wesley.” Did Calvin redeem you? Did Wesley die for you?  
Who is Calvin and who is Wesley but ministers by whom you believed as  
the Lord gave unto you? Do not so surrender yourself to any leadership that you rather follow the *man* than his Master. I will follow anybody if he goes Christ’s way, but I will follow nobody, by the Grace of God, if he  
does not go in that direction.  
Do not pin your faith to anybody’s sleeve. Keep close to the Lord Jesus  
Christ. You are bought with a price—do not be the servants of men. Do  
not give yourselves up to party spirit. It is a pity when a man cares only  
for politics—when the one grand thing he lives for is to return a Liberal to  
Parliament, or to get in a Radical, or to lift a Tory to the top of the poll. To  
live for a political party is unworthy of a man who professes to be a Christian! The most advanced politics beneath the sun are *nothing* compared  
with living for the bleeding Savior and spending one’s self for the promotion of the immortal principles of the Cross. We are not to give ourselves  
up to any scientific speculation, educational effort, or to any philanthropic  
enterprise so as to divert our minds from the grand old cause of Jesus  
and our God!  
A story is told of one of the early saints—I think it was Jerome—that he  
dreamed that he died and went to the gates of Heaven, and they said to  
him, “Who are you?” And he said, “I am Jerome, a student of Scripture.”  
And they said to him, “No, you are not. You are one Jerome, a student of  
Cicero,” for he had been much more accustomed to the study of Cicero  
and the great Latin writers than to the reading of the Scriptures. He  
dreamed, therefore, he was not permitted to enter Heaven. And upon waking from his dream he put aside his classic books to make the Word of  
God the main study of his life. Alas, there are a great many people in the  
world who do not live for Christ! They are living for something else. The  
main thing with them is often a trifle light as air—a pursuit of the most  
infinite value.  
I heard once a great Divine saying to another great Divine that he had  
spent a most important day on Snowdon—he considered it one of the  
most successful days of his life. Being in their line, myself, I wondered  
what great revival services had been held on Snowdon, among the Welshmen. The eminent ecclesiastic said he had been many years on the watch,  
but had never, till that day, been able to satisfy himself! I wondered if he  
had been in prayer, watching for the conversion of the Welsh people. He  
said he found three different kinds of them and was now sure they were  
quite distinct. Did he mean three kinds of religious inquirers whose cases  
he had, at last, been able to understand?  
Not he! He had been speaking of three species of beetles which he had  
met with after a day’s searching. The minister of Christ had much joy over  
three beetles, but probably cared little for repenting sinners. And I am  
afraid there are many who spend their time in trifles as small as that and,  
perhaps, far less innocent. Everything is a trifle to a man who is a Christian except the glorifying of Christ. “Felix has driveled into an ambassador,” said good old William Carey, when they told him that his son Felix  
had been made ambassador from the British court to the court of Burmah. He had been a poor missionary, before, and now they had made him a great ambassador. But his father said, “He has driveled into an am  
bassador.”  
If a man who lives for Jesus and preaches the Gospel could suddenly  
be transformed into the Emperor of Germany, it would be a frightful  
come-down for him! To live for Jesus is the highest style of man! God  
grant we may realize that—for we are bought with a price. If we do not belong to man, it follows that we ought not to follow the fashions of the  
world. Some people must be in fashion, cost what it may—out of the fashion they feel they might as well be out of the world. It is almost death to  
them if they cannot dress and act after the manner of *society.* Therefore  
they run into extravagance, pride, show and folly. The pride of life eats  
them up. When fashions go wrong it should be the Christian’s fashion to  
go against the fashion. Let no man be your master! If you have masters  
according to the flesh, serve them with all faithfulness, as becomes you,  
giving unto them diligent service—but as to any master over your *spirit*,  
allow no one to be so—consciences were made for God alone! Bow not  
down your heart and conscience before man, but be free, for, “you are  
bought with a price.”  
To close. We are, then, it seems, wholly Christ’s. Christ, then, my  
Brothers and Sisters, if we are as we should be, is Lord of our time. We  
may not say, “I have an hour of my own to waste.” It is Christ’s time. He is  
Lord of our *household*. We do not claim to be paramount there, but we  
say, “Lord, these are Your children. Help us to bring them up for You. Our  
household is Yours, Lord, grant that by family prayer and by holy example  
we may make our family to be ‘Holiness to the Lord.’” You will go out to  
business and say, “This business is not mine. It is my Master’s.” You will  
not trade in any dishonest way if you do that. It will be *holy* trading. The  
farmer goes to the field and says, “This is the Redeemer’s field, and what  
profit I shall make from it is His profit.” If he feels in that way his actions  
will be kind, generous, right and God-fearing.  
I would that every young man felt, “If I have talents they are God’s talents, to be used for Him.” Young men will join clubs and societies, and  
become most energetic members. But when they join *Churches*, very often  
we get the distinguished honor of having their names on the book to encumber the Church roll, and not much more. That is not right if they belong to Jesus. Christian people ought, in all they do, to be looking out for  
opportunities of serving Christ. I have heard of a Jew, who, going forth to  
trade and having a choice between two towns, asked, “Where is the synagogue?” and when he had found there was a synagogue in one town and  
not in the other, he gave the preference to that in which he could worship  
with his brethren. It ought to be so with the Christian! But often Christian  
men forget even to inquire about such matters.  
They make money and go and live out of London, and where do they select their residence? They say, “Here is a beautiful view, and a respectable  
neighborhood.” But there is no place of worship where they can take their  
children and where they can go, themselves—does that always influence  
them? I fear not. They look to other matters first. I have known them go to places where they could not *possibly* get any good—and they have not even tried to *do* any. I like to hear a Christian man say, “There is a destitute village. Now, if I live *there* I may build a little place of worship and so I may do good.” This is an object worth aiming at—and if the wealthy Christians of England, when they remove from large centers of population— would always set to work to try and spread the Gospel round about where they live, they would be like seed sown in the ground or like salt scattered  
among society to preserve the land.  
Our first aim in life should be to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. I am  
afraid I am rapping some of you a little hard, or perhaps you will call it  
treading on your corns. You should not have corns, you know, and then I  
could not tread upon them. If you are *not* doing right and anything I say  
comes close to stepping on your corns, it should! Dear Brother, try to  
mend. Find not fault with the preacher because he finds out *your* faults.  
Go and amend. There came into this house some years ago a dear  
Brother, an earnest Christian young man. I was preaching some such  
sermon as this and he felt that he had not been living for Christ. He went  
back to the city where he lived and he began to preach in the streets. He  
continued to preach and God blessed him, and he developed into an earnest and talented servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is very  
dear to you all. One of the best days’ work I ever did was to be the means  
of calling him out to such a service! Is there not some young man of that  
kind here, tonight?  
May there not be here present a Christian woman, with ability, and talent, and education who ought to be teaching young women, and doing  
good, and bringing them to the Savior? My dear Sister, you are not your  
own—you are not your own. If you were, I think you would be quite right  
in taking your ease on Sunday and making yourself comfortable in the  
week. But you are not your own. You are not your own. The blood of Jesus has bought every particle of you. Will you not devote yourself to Him?  
Will you not pray to make your consecration more practical than it has  
been up to now, from this time forth? The sacred blood mark is on every  
part of your spirit and your body—do not try to hide it. Give up all to Jesus that while you live, and when you die, you may fight a good fight and  
finish your course, and have it said to you, “Well done, good and faithful  
servant.”  
O you who know nothing about being bought with a price, you will be  
lost unless you do know it! If Christ has not bought you, Hell will receive  
you, and despair will be your portion! May God grant you to know the  
power of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 3.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—658, 663, 660.** Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2861 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THE TIME IS SHORT”  
NO. 2861

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1903.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“The time is short.”  
1 Corinthians 7:29.*

THE text does not say that *time* is short. That would have been a true statement, but compared with eternity, time, at the very longest, is but as a pin’s point. But note what the text does say—“*The* time is short.” It is the time of our life, the space of our opportunity, the little while we shall be upon the present stage of action that is short. It is narrow and contracted, as the original implies. “Behold,” said the Psalmist, “You have made my days as a handbreadth and my age is as nothing before You.” Brief is the season we have allotted to us, Brothers and Sisters, in which we can serve the Lord our God.

This is a Truth of God which everybody believes, knows and confesses. It is trite as a proverb on every tongue, yet how few of us act as if we believed it! We are conscious of the precariousness of other people’s lives, but, somehow or other, we persuade ourselves that our own time is not quite as limited as theirs. We think we have “ample time and verge enough,” but we wonder that our neighbors can be so careless and prodigal of days and years, for we observe the wrinkles on their brows, we detect the gray hairs on their heads and perceive the signs of death in their bearing and we doubt not they will soon have to render in their account. “All men think all men mortal but themselves,” is a “night thought” that may well startle us as we rest from the business and the bustle, or the waste and wantonness of each succeeding day. Why do you hide from yourselves the waning of your own life-work, the weakening of your own strength, the weaving of your own shrouds? As a creature, you are frail—as an inhabitant of the world, you are exposed to casualties. As a man, there is an appointed time for you on earth. You must be swept away by the receding tide—you must go with the rest of your generation.

Ask an angel what he thinks of the life of a mortal and he will tell you that he remembers when the first man was made—and since then the earth has been always changing its tenants. Perhaps he is baffled to recall the races that have come and gone in countless succession. For a little while they floated on the surface, then they sank beneath the stream. At first they struggled on through centuries, but, after that, they failed, any one of them, to attain a tenth of that pristine age. “Short-lived!” says the angel, “they seem to me as leaves upon a tree, as insects on the earth, as flies in the air. Like the grass that flourishes in the meadows, scarcely have I gazed upon them before they are cut down, withered and gone.” Oh, if you never meet with an angel to interrogate him, talk familiarly with one of the trees of an ancient forest! Ask what it has seen and, though it cannot speak in articulate tones, you can lend it a tongue and it will tell you that hundreds of years have passed and history has accumulated, from the time when it was an acorn, till now. It covers a wide space with its far-spreading foliage. Yes, the oak and elm can tell us that man is but an infant of today!

Would you rather take counsel of your fellow creatures? Then ask the old man what he thinks of life. He will tell you that when he was a boy, he thought he had a vast length of time before him. So heavily did the days hang on his hands that he played the hours away and was glad when birthdays told of the years that were gone. It was his strong desire and his panting ambition to break loose from the moorings of childhood and launch out into the great wide sea of turmoil and enterprise! But now he looks back on these 70 years that have been gradually accumulating, as a dream. Through all the fitful stages of life’s journey, present time is always perplexing—it must be past before it is understood! It seems to him only as yesterday when he left his father’s roof to be an apprentice. He remembers it distinctly and fondly tells you of some quaint things that happened in those olden times. How short a while since the bells rang out his marriage peal and now his children have reached their manhood—and his children’s children climb upon his knee and call him “Grandfather.” Yet he remembers when, as it were but yesterday, he was himself a little child and his grandfather clasped him to his bosom! My venerable Friends, you will bear witness that I do not exaggerate when I speak thus—my language is only the feeble expression of a forcible experience. You can realize more vividly than I can paint the sensation of looking back over the entire span of threescore years and ten! To the stripling, this appears a very long period, while to you it merely seems as a watch in the night.

And yet, perhaps there are among you, some hoary veterans, some elderly matrons who need to be reminded that “the time is short.” Present health and activity may tempt you to forget that nature, in your case, stands upon the verge of her confines. What if your frame is strong? What if the bloom still lingers on your checks? You have nearly reached the goal, the allotted term that mortals cannot pass. I have seen fine days, in autumn, when the air was soft as in balmy spring, but they gave no promise of another summer. I knew the season was too far advanced for winter to delay its approach much longer. So, you, my aged Friend, can be sure that the hour of your departure is drawing near. Should five, or even 10 more years be granted to you, how quickly they must pass when 70 by-gone years have so rapidly fled! The remnant of your days will surely cover little space when the whole compass of your life has stretched over so small an area. Be frugal of minutes, now, though you may have been, at one time, prodigal of years! At the end of life you have no time to parley and postpone—to resolve and yet to trifle with resolutions—to waste and squander golden opportunities. “The time is short”!

But to estimate this Truth aright, we may well turn from the cycles that angels have witnessed, the centuries that trees have flourished and the seasons that have come and gone in the memory of our grandparents to consider “the years of the right hand of the Most High.” Enquire at the mouth of the Lord. Take counsel of the eternal God. Remember how it is written, “A thousand years in Tour sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” “He sits upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers”—insects of an hour compared with Him. Like the grass, we spring up, and like the grass we are mowed down! Compared with the lifetime of the Eternal, what is our life? No, there is no comparison! It is almost too insignificant for contrast. “My days are like a shadow that declines, and I am withered like grass. But You, O Lord, shall endure forever; and Your remembrance unto all generations.” I wish I had the power to impress this Truth on every heart. As I have not, I shall try to point the moral it suggests and pray that the Spirit of God may seal the instruction upon every heart.

“The time is short,” so, first, *it warns.* Next, *it suggests.* Then,*it inspires* and, lastly, *it alarms.*  
**I.**First, IT WARNS. If you knew the sterling worth of time, you would shrink from the smallest waste of so precious a thing. Fools say that time is long, but only fools talk like that. They say that “time is made for slaves.” He alone is a free man who knows how to use his time properly— and he is a slave, indeed, who finds it slavery to pursue his calling with a good conscience and serve his God with diligence, fidelity and zeal. Knowing that “the time is short,” you and I have not an hour to squander upon unprofitable amusements. There are some diversions which afford a respite from the incessant strain of labor and anxiety and are profitable to strengthen the mind and brace up the nerves. These are not only allowable, they are fit and proper. But while recreation is both necessary and expedient to keep the mental and physical powers in working order, we can give no countenance to such dissipation as tends rather to enervate than to invigorate the constitution. Popular taste displays its own perverseness in seeking to extract pleasure from folly and vice. Fashion lends its sanction to many a pastime that ill becomes any wise, rational, intelligent person. But the Christian, in his relaxations, must seek healthy impulse and avoid baneful stimulant. “The time is short.” *We cannot afford to lose it in senseless talk, idle gossip, or domestic scandals.*  
Nor can we afford to plan a round of empty frivolities to while away an afternoon or an evening, as the manner of some is. Our time is too precious to be frittered away in formal calls and punctilious visits. Well might Cotton Mather complain of the intrusion of a certain person who had called to see him, as people will call on ministers, as though their time was of no importance. “I would sooner have given that man a handful of money,” he said, “than that he should have thus wasted my time.” You count it a little thing to trespass on our minutes, but in so doing you may spoil our hours! Whether you think so, or not, it is often distracting to us to be troubled with trivial things in the midst of our sacred engagements. We may be called from an absorbing study. We may be rudely interrupted when our knees are bent and our heart is being lifted up to God in intercession. We may have our minds drawn from the weightiest matters to listen to the most frivolous observations. It is said of Henry Martyn that he never wasted an hour. I wish it could be said of us that we wasted neither an hour of our own time, nor an hour of other people’s time! Brothers and Sisters, the time is too short to make a desire for a friendly visit an excuse for frothy conversation. It requires no stretch of imagination to picture to ourselves two men who are both Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, “called to be saints,” and accounted faithful, meeting in a room and greeting each other as friends. They will surely have something choice to talk about. All Heaven is full of God’s Glory and the earth is full of His riches. There is range enough for thought, for speech, for profitable converse!  
But listen awhile. One observes that the weather is very cold. “Yes,” says the other, “the frost is still very sharp.” There they stick—they have nothing further to say till, presently, one of them remarks, “It will be rather slippery travelling tonight,” to which comes the reply, “I daresay many horses will fall down.” And are these the men of whom Peter testifies that they are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ from their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers? Are these the men who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit? Is this frivolity becoming to the heirs of Heaven? Yet thus, often is precious time squandered and the faculty of speech abused! There is an ancient prophecy which I would love to see fulfilled in modern history. In “David’s Psalm of Praise,” (only one Psalm, the 145th, is so entitled), he says, “All Your works shall praise You, O Lord; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom.” By such converse as that, Beloved, you might “redeem the time” in these evil days!  
But you are afraid of being charged with cant, or with pushing your religion a little too far. Brothers and Sisters, it is high time we had a little more of such cant and that we did push religion a little farther than has been our habit! Golden opportunities are lost and profitable interchange of holy thought is lamentably neglected in these days! In days of yore, “they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another, and the Lord listened and heard it.” Not much of this now prevails among professing Christians. Little enough is said that is worth men’s hearing, much less worth God’s hearing—and if He did hear it, instead of putting it down in “a Book of Remembrance” and saying, “They shall be Mine,” surely, in His Infinite Mercy, He would forbear to record the vain thoughts and empty words which could only be a stigma upon their characters! By the brevity of time, then, and by the rapidity of its flight, I admonish you to refrain from all abuses of the tongue. Invest each hour in some profitable manner that, when past, it may not be lost. Let your lips be a fountain from which all streams that flow shall savor of Grace and goodness.  
The time, moreover, *is much too short for indecision and vacillation.*Your resolving and retracting, your planning and scheming, your sleeping and dreaming, your starting up from slumber only to sink down into a drowsier state than before are a mockery of life and a willful murder of time! Of how many of you is it true that if you ever did entertain a noble purpose, you never found a convenient season to carry it out? On the verge of conversion, sometimes, you have halted till your convictions have grown cold. Ten or 20 years ago, you listened to the appeal, “My son, give Me your heart,” and you answered, “I will.” But, to this day you have never fulfilled your word! “Go work in My vineyard,” said the Master. “I go, Lord,” was your prompt reply—yet you have never gone! Today, as before, you stand idling. Some of you, indeed, were in a more hopeful condition 30 or 40 years ago than you are at present! What account can you give of yourselves? What has become of those intervening years? The Infinite Mercy of God has kept you out of Hell, but there is no guarantee that His long-suffering will shield you from destruction another instant. O Sirs, “the time is short,” the business urgent, the crisis imminent! ‘Tis madness to be halting between two opinions! If God is God, serve Him— and if not, take the alternative and serve Baal! Let your mind be made up, one way or the other, without another moment’s delay. How long do you waver between two opinions?  
And you Christian people with your grand illusive projects, how they melt away! Some of you would have done a great deal that is useful by now if you had not dreamed of doing so much that is imposing. Oh, what wonderful plans for evangelizing London, for converting the whole Continent of Europe to Christ float in the brain, or evaporate in a speech—and nothing is done! We are like a certain Czar of Russia, of olden times, who always wanted to take a second step before he took the first. We are always projecting some wonderful scheme that proves too wonderful to ever be carried out! So we dream of what ought to be and should be—of what might be and as we hope may be! Such “dreams are the children of an idle brain.” The dreamers grow listless and nothing is done. In the name of the eternal God, I beseech you, if you love Him, get to work for Him! Better slay a single enemy than dream of slaughtering an army! Better that you sow a single grain of corn or plant a single blade of grass, than dream about fertilizing the Sahara, or reclaiming from the mighty sea untold acres of fertile land! Do something, Brothers and Sisters, do something! It is high time to awake out of sleep, for “the time is short.” This thought may serve to warn us against another folly—*that of speculating upon the points of controversial theology.*You know how the schoolmen used to debate and wrangle about how many angels could stand on the point of a needle—and with many other propositions, no less absurd, did they weary themselves. Strange, indeed, was the ingenuity of men taxed to find subjects for discussion in the dark days of those dull doctors of learning. There is something of that spirit abroad even now. Ministers will devote whole sermons to the discussion of some crotchet or quibble that does not signify the turn of a hair to anybody in the universe! I have generally noticed that the less important the point is, the more savagely will some persons defend it—as if the world might go to rack and ruin—and all the sinners in it go blindfold to Hell and the work of salvation must stand still to have this point discussed! One Brother who occasionally meets me, can never be five minutes in my company, but what he attacks me upon the question of free agency and predestination. I told him the last time I saw him that I would have it out with him one of these days, but I must defer it till after the Day of Judgment, for I was too busy to talk about it just now. And I feel like that about a great many questions!  
There are Brothers who can fully explain the Book of Revelation, though I generally find that they exclaim one against the other, till they declaim each other off the face of the earth! I would sooner be able to proclaim the Cross of Christ and explain the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, than to decipher the imagery of Ezekiel, or the symbols of the Apocalypse. Blessed is he who can expound the mysteries. I have no doubt about his blessedness, but I am perfectly satisfied with another blessedness, namely, if I can bring sinners to Jesus and teach the saints some practical Truths which may guide them in daily life. It seems to me that the time is much too short to go up in a balloon with speculations, or to go down into the mines of profound thought to bring up some odds and ends and scraps of singular knowledge. We want to save souls and to conduct them to that Heaven where God’s Presence makes eternal day! This seems to me to be the pressing demand upon us now that “the time is short” and, “the night comes when no man can work.”  
Let this also admonish us, Brothers and Sisters, *to singleness of purpose.*We must have only one aim. Had we plenty of time, we might try two or three schemes at once, though even then we should most probably fail for lack of concentrating our energies. But as we have very little time, we had better economize it by attending to one thing. The man who devotes all his thought and strength to the accomplishment of one reasonable objective is generally successful. My Soul, bend yourself down and lay yourself out for the Glory of God! Be this the one aim of your entire being! Form your friendships and order your occupations so as to fulfill this first and highest duty of life. Be it your one sole motive to live for His honor and, if necessary, even to die to promote His renown among the sons of men! “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Attune your souls to the great Hallelujah—“While I live will I bless the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise you the Lord.”  
O Brothers and Sisters, this sublime enthusiasm will work wonders! You dissipate your strength and fritter away your opportunities by dividing your attention. You say that you want to be a Christian—meanwhile, your heart is set upon getting riches, you seek to store your mind with the learning and wisdom of the world, you wish to gain repute as a good talker in company and a convivial guest at the social board. Ambition prompts you to seek fame among your fellows. Very well, I shall not denounce any one of these things, but I would use every persuasive to induce you who are Believers in Christ to renounce the world! If Christ has bought you with His blood and redeemed you from this present evil world, He has a claim on you as His servant and it is at your peril that you take up with any pursuits that are inconsistent with a full surrender of yourself to Him. You belong to Him, so live wholly to Him! The reason why the majority of Christians never attain to any eminence in the Divine life is because they let the floods of their life run away in a dozen little, trickling rivulets, whereas, if they cooped them up into one channel and sent that one stream rolling on to the Glory of God, there would be such a force and power about their character, their thoughts, their efforts and their actions that they would really “live while they lived.”  
**II.**“The time is short. THIS SUGGESTS.  
Do you know what reflection this fact suggested to me? “Surely, then,” I thought, “I have some opportunity to follow out the work of faith, the patience of hope and the labor of love, though not the opportunity I once had.” Then, picturing to myself an ideal of a short life all used, nothing wasted, all consecrated, nothing profaned, I seemed to see a boy giving his young heart to Christ. I saw the lad believing in Jesus while yet beneath his father’s roof and under his mother’s care. No sooner saved than he began at once to serve God after a boy’s way. And still increasing in intelligence and energy as a stripling and afterwards as a young man, from the first he devoted himself, with all the intensity of his being, to his Lord’s service. So diligent and persevering was he that he lost no time. So jealously did he watch his own heart and so far was he from falling into sin, that there were no dreary intervals spent in wandering and backsliding, and retracing his steps in repenting of the evil, in getting lukewarm and then rekindling former ardor. With my mind’s eye, I followed that young man living a holy life through a succession of years, getting up to the highest possible platform of spirituality and staying there, and all the while blessed with such abundance of the Graces and gifts of the Spirit of God as should make him bring forth much fruit to the Glory of the Father, do much for the honor of Jesus, prove a great blessing to the Church, bear a rich testimony to the world and spread

saving benefits to the souls of men.  
This was my ideal of a vessel “meet for the Master’s use.” I lingered lovingly upon it. The child became a man. His life was brief. It was soon over. Our days on earth are as a shadow but happily they may be radiant and leave a trail of light behind them. Might not even God, Himself, look down, with a measure of admiration, from His eternal dwelling place on the career I have sketched? The slender threads of fleeting moments are worked up to the goodly fabric of a complete biography. Endowed with one talent, this and that endowment sparse—the gift so prized as to be economized, so looked after that it is never squandered, so usefully employed that its judicious expenditure can never be vainly regretted—so profitably invested that the faithful steward welcomes the advent of his Lord, ready and anxious to give in his account! This is as I would wish to be!  
Some of you, who are unconverted can never hope to receive the greeting that awaits such a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have lost your golden opportunity. You have wasted your substance in riotous living. But are there not children here to whom this is possible? And youths who might convert my daydream into a narrative? Oh for men and women with the ambition and one enterprise to glorify the Lord! Ardently do I desire that God should be glorified in me and that not in a small measure. I have prayed and I do pray Him to make the most He can make of me, to do it anyway He wills. What, if to this end, I must be cast into the furnace of action and suffer for His sake? What if my honor should be trampled in the dust and my name become a hissing and a byword, and a reproach among the sons of men while the witness of my integrity is on high? Here am I, O Lord, to do anything, to bear anything that You shall bid! Only get as much Glory to Your own name as can be got out of such a poor creature as I am! Who will join me in this petition? Vows made in our own strength are vain, but I solemnly charge each Christian young man to foster this aspiration. In the name of Him who has redeemed you with His blood, gird up the loins of your mind and survey the course you have to run. Prepare for the good fight of faith in which you are to engage. Live to the utmost possible consecration of your entire manhood in its triple nature—spirit, soul, and body. Yield yourself up unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ! Do not stop to parley. “The time is short,” therefore, “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave where you go.”  
**III.**“The time is short.” THIS INSPIRES US.  
*It ought to fire us with zeal for immediate action.*The sun hastens on, the sands run down. “Now is the accepted time.” Let those who love the Lord be prompt. The time to do the deeds that you must do, or leave them undone, flies swiftly past. Say not, “I will do this, by-and-by.” Do it at once! Other duties await you. Brief is the space allotted you for all. Are your children converted? Pray with them tonight. Let not tomorrow come without putting your arms about their necks and kneeling down with them devoutly—and praying fervently that God would save their souls. It is the King’s business and it demands haste! “The time is short” for others as well as for yourself. A dear Brother told me, a week or two ago, that a man who frequently worked for him, brought in goods when they were finished. And he thought that the next time the man came in, he would speak to him about his soul. When he came, however, business absorbed the employer’s attention and the man went his away. He felt, he did not know exactly why, pricked in his conscience, and resolved that on the next occasion, he would enquire as to his eternal interests. But he was too late.  
Instead of coming again, a messenger brought tidings that he was dead. Startled by the news, our Brother could find no comfort in regrets, though he bewailed as one who could not forgive himself a hundred wasted opportunities in the presence of one keen self-reproach. Oh, that an inspiration would constrain you to serve the Lord now! Every time the clock ticks, it seems to say, “now.” The time is so short that the matter is urgent. Do not wait, young man, to preach Jesus till you have had more instruction—begin at once! You who mean to do something for the poor of London when you have hoarded up more money, spend your money *now*—do it at once! You who mean to leave a large sum to charities when you die, defer it not—be your own executors. Lay out the capital at once! Get some joy and comfort out of it yourselves. Now is the time to carry a good purpose into good effect. Before you were saved, the message to you was, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” After you are saved, the message to you is, “Today, obey His voice and serve the Lord your God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.” “The time is short,” so make the most of it!  
“The time is short.” I want to ring this sentence louder and louder in your ears, that it may *inspire you to pray for immediate conversions.*I have met with many who are hoping to get converted some day, but not now. Is not such procrastination perilous? Dare any of you run the risk of willfully abiding in unbelief another hour? Can you brook the thought of remaining, month after month in jeopardy of your soul? Is it safe to tempt the Lord and provoke the anger of the Most High? O Sirs, while you flatter yourselves with pleasing prospects, you are beguiling your hearts with a reckless presumption! We want you to be converted and no time can be more suitable than this present time. Forsake your sin immediately! Do not turn back to dally with it a little longer. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and lay hold on the promise of eternal life without any further delay! You may never see another morrow, or the desire that whets your appetite now may fail you then. This is our prayer, that you may, this very hour, be brought into the fold of Christ!  
Then seeing that “the time is short,” *let us bear with patience the ills that vex us.*Are we very poor? “The time is short.” Does the bitter cold pierce through our scanty garments? “The time is short.” Is consumption beginning to prey on our trembling frame? “The time is short.” Are we unkindly treated by our kinsfolk? Do our comrades revile and our neighbors mock us? “The time is short.” Have we to bear evil treatment from an ungenerous world? “The time is short.” Do cruel taunts try our tempers? “The time is short.” We are travelling at express speed and shall soon be beyond the reach of all the incidents and happenings that disturb and distract us. As we travel home to our Father’s House, the distance diminishes and we begin to see the city of the blessed, “the home over there.” It is needless to murmur or repine! Why trouble yourselves about what you will do a month or two from now? You may not be here! You may be in Heaven. Your eyes will have beheld “the King in His beauty,” you will have seen “the land that is very far off.”—  
***“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long, So smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”*** *Worldly-mindedness ill becomes us* who have confessed that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” “The time is short” in which we can hold any possessions in this terrestrial sphere. Then let us not love anything here below too fondly. We brought nothing into the world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Survey your broad acres, but remember that you will not long be able to walk across them. Look on your plenteous crops, but before long another shall reap the profit of those fields. Count your gold and silver, but know that wealth, greedily as it is sought, will not give you present immunity from sickness and sorrow— neither will it secure your welfare when called to quit your frail tenement. Trust in the living God! Love the Lord and let eternal things absorb your thoughts and engage your affections. “The time is short”—it remains that both they that have wives be as though they had none. And they that weep, as though they wept not. And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not. And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passes away.”  
Are these gloomy reflections? No, dear Brothers and Sisters, the fact that “the time is short” *should inspire us, who are of the household of faith, with the most joyous expectations!*Do you really believe in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Do you really believe that your head is to wear a crown of life that fades not away? Do you really believe that these feet of yours, all shod with silver sandals, will stand upon that street of pure gold? Do you really believe that these hands shall pluck celestial fruit from trees whose leaves can never wither and that you shall lie down in the spice-beds in the gardens of the blessed? Do you believe that these eyes shall see the King in that day when He comes in His Glory and that these bones shall rise again from the grave and your bodies shall be endowed with an incorruptible existence? “Yes,” you say, “we do believe it and believe it intensely, too.” Well, then, I would that you realized it as so very near that you were expectant of its fulfillment! Who would cry and fret about the passing troubles of a day when he saw the heavens open, beheld the beckoning hand and heard the voice that called him hence? Oh, that the glory might come streaming into your soul till you forget the darkness of the way! Oh, that the breeze from these goodly mountains would fan you! Oh, that the spray from that mighty ocean would refresh you! Oh, that the music of those bells of Heaven in yonder turrets would enliven you! Then would you speed your way towards the rest that remains for the people of God, inspired with sacred ardor and dauntless courage! But the ungodly are not so. It is to them I must address the last word, “The time is short.”  
**IV.**THIS ALARMS US. And well it may on their account. Let me toll a knell. It is a dismal knell I have to toll for the unconverted man to whom life has been a joy, for he has prospered in the world. You have succeeded in the enterprise on which you set your heart. You have bought the estate that you longed to secure. It is certainly a fine place, but you have only got it for two or three years! Would I have taken it for that term? No, I would not have taken it on a 999 years’ lease. Freeholds for me! Did I say two or three years? No, there is not a man beneath the sun who can guarantee that you will hold it for three weeks! “The time is short.” Drive down the broad avenue, walk round the park—look into the old feudal mansion, but, “the time is short,” very short, and your tenure very limited. You have gained your objective, you are possessed of real property—what next? Why, make your will! The thing is urgent. “The time is short.” But what have you not done?  
You have not believed in Christ! You have not embraced the Gospel. You have not found salvation, you have not laid hold on eternal life—you have not a hope to solace you when your strength fails and you pant for breath! How few the opportunities that remain! Some of you have attended my ministry all the while I have been in London. I wonder how much longer you will hear me and yet remain unsaved? Your turn to die will come at length. You ail a little, but your trifling indisposition does not yield to treatment. The symptoms grow serious, the disease is dangerous, your death is imminent. Pain unnerves you. Terror distracts you. Your family and your friends look at you with helpless pity. The doctor has just left you in dismay. Send for the priest, or fetch the parson—but what can they do for you unless you believe in Jesus? ‘Tis over, the last struggle!  
Then picture yourself to yourself—a lost spirit asking for a drop of water to cool your tongue! That will be your portion, Sinner, unless you repent! Think, Sirs—there is but a step between you and death—a short step between you and Hell unless you believe in Jesus! Do you still imagine that there is time enough and to spare? I beseech you, do not cherish so vain a thought! It may be that you suspect me of exaggerating, but that I cannot do in such a case as this. Time is rushing on, swiftly but silently. While I speak, the minutes pass, the hour is soon gone, the day is almost spent. I charge you, then, by the ever-blessed Spirit, listen now to the warning—escape from sin! Get out of that broad road which leads to destruction! Believe in Jesus! Lay hold on eternal life! May the Spirit of God awaken you! May these words be blessed to you! They would be put more forcibly if I knew how. With all the fervor of my soul, I entreat you, for I know your everlasting interests are in imminent jeopardy! God grant that you may not linger longer, lest haply you linger too long and perish in your lingering! “The time is short.”  
In a little while there will be a great concourse of people in the streets. I think I hear someone enquiring, “What are all these people waiting for?” “Do you not know? He is to be buried today.” “And who is that?” “It is Spurgeon.” “What? The man that preached at the Tabernacle?” “Yes. He is to be buried today.” That will happen very soon and when you see my coffin carried to the silent grave, I would like every one of you, whether converted or not, to be constrained to say, “He did earnestly urge us, in plain and simple language, not to put off the consideration of eternal things. He did entreat us to look to Christ. Now he is gone, our blood is not at his door if we perish.”  
God grant that you may not have to bear the bitter reproach of your own conscience! But, as I feel that “the time is short,” I will stir you up as long as I am in this Tabernacle! And I do pray the Lord to bless the word every time I preach it from this platform. Oh, that some souls may be saved, that Jesus Christ may be glorified, Satan defeated and Heaven filled with saved ones!—  
***“‘Tis not for man to trifle! Life is brief  
And sin is here!  
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,  
A dropping tear.  
We have no time to sport away the hours All must be earnest in a world like ours. Not many lives, but only one, have we—  
Frail, fleeting man!  
How saved should that one life ever be—  
That narrow span!  
Day after day filled up with blessed toil, Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.”***

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #481 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS  
NO. 481

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But this I say, Brethren, the time is short: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they  
had none. And they that weep, as though they  
wept not. And they that rejoice, as though  
they rejoiced not. And they that buy, as  
though they possessed not. And they  
that use this world, as not abusing it:  
for the fashion of this world passes away.”  
1 Corinthians 7:29-31.~~***

Holy Scripture seldom gives a special rule for each particular case, but it rather instructs us by general principles applicable to all cases. To meet every distinct moral emergency which could possibly arise, and solve every separate problem of action would require rather a library than a volume. To men who are taught of the Spirit of God, general principles are far more valuable than special precepts, and I am half persuaded that it is so with all persons. For it is less difficult to apply a general principle to a peculiar case than it is to find out exactly what the particular case may be, and what special rule is applicable to it.

In writing to the Church at Corinth the Apostle had to answer several questions with regard to marriage. Whether, for instance, it was not better in those persecuting times, when men often had to flee suddenly from their houses, that they should remain unmarried. Whether, again, supposing a person became a Christian after marriage, it was lawful for him to separate from the person with whom he was unequally yoked. And several other questions as to fitting action in certain extraordinary positions.

To these the Apostle answers with an, “I suppose,” or again, “Howbeit, for this speak I, not the Lord,” as if he felt himself quite out of his element in attempting to meet every case. But soon he lands on sure ground in the verses before us, and seems to say, “Whatever may be the answers which I ought to give to these special questions, of this one thing I am quite sure—I say positively and without any doubt that the time is short, and therefore, it remains, whether you are married or not, whether you weep, or whether you rejoice, whether you buy or whether you sell—that you should act in all these things as knowing their temporary and unsubstantial character.”

Dear Brethren, the important lesson which we endeavor to teach this morning is just this—that because time is so short, and the things of this world so frail and fleeting, it becomes us always to look at the things which are seen in their true character. We are never to build substantial hopes on unsubstantial comforts, nor seek for solid joy from unreal things. In order that I may make this matter very plain, and may be the more likely to enlist your attention and to secure the friendship of your

memories in future years, I intend this morning to *take you to a play*.

Strange thing for me to do, who has never crossed the threshold of a theater on any occasion, good or bad! Yet this morning I shall seat you in front of the stage, and I shall *put the worldling side by side with you while the five acts are performed*. I shall next invite you to attend *in the character of a Christian*, *to look through the whole and discern its emptines*s. Then, in the third place, I shall *point you to the curtain which is quite sure to drop upon the scene*. And then we will walk out of this theater of unreal show, this fashion of this world which passes away, and *see what there is to do in this world which is real, practical, and lastin*g.

Do not suppose that the idea of taking you to a theater this morning is original on my part. It is in my text. “The fashion of this world passes away”—the word translated “fashion” is borrowed from the changing scenes of the drama—where the splendid pageantry vanishes as the scene changes. Nor will you think Holy Scripture too severe in its comparison, when I remind you that one of the world’s own poets has said—

***“All the world’s a stage,***

***And all the men and women merely players.”***Nor will the most precise among you complain of the levity of a metaphor which is sanctioned by Apostolic use. But I trust you will all cheerfully listen, while in simple words I tell the story which the bard of the sanctuary has sung in flowing verse—

***“This life’s a dream, an empty show;  
But the bright world to which I go,  
Has joys substantial and sincere—  
When shall I wake and find me there?”***

**I.**WE WILL WITNESS “THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD” AS IT PASSES BEFORE US, LISTENING TO THE WORLDLING’S COMMENT.  
The *first act* introduces *those that have wives*. It opens with *a wedding*. The bride and bridegroom advance to the altar in bridal attire. The bells are ringing. Crowds are cheering at the door, while overflowing mirth is supreme within. In another scene we observe domestic happiness and prosperity, a loving husband and a happy wife. Yet, further on in the performance, rosy children are climbing the father’s knee. The little prattlers are lisping their mother’s name.  
“Now,” says our companion as he gazes with rapture, “This is real and enduring, I know it is. This will satisfy me. I crave for nothing more than this. *Home* is a word as sweet as Heaven, and a healthy happy race of children is as fine a possession as even angels can desire. On this rock will I build all my hope. Secure me this portion and I cheerfully renounce the dreamy joys of religion.” We whisper in his ear that all this is but a changing scene and will by-and-by pass away, for time is short, and wife, and children are dying creatures.  
The man laughs at us and says, “Fanatics and enthusiasts may seek *eternal* joys, but these are enough for me.” He believes that if there is anything permanent in the universe, it is marrying and being given in marriage, educating and bringing up a family, and seeing them all comfortably settled. He is right in valuing the blessing, but wrong in making it his *all*. Will he see his error before the curtain falls? Or will he continue to found the hopes of an immortal spirit upon dying joys? See the green mounds in the cemetery, and the headstone, with “Here he lies.”  
Alas for you, poor deluded worldling, where is your soul now? Does it console you that the dust of your offspring shall mingle with your ashes? Where have you now a home? What family have you now to care for? The first act is over. Take a breath and say, “This also is vanity.” The tenor of the drama changes, alas, how soon! Household joys are linked with household sorrows. *They that weep*are now before us in the second act. The cloudy and dark days have come. There are parents wringing their hands. A beloved child has died and they are following its corpse to the tomb. Soon, the merchant has suffered a tremendous loss. He puts his hand to his aching head and mourns, for he knows not what will be the end of his troubles. The wife is smitten by the hand of death. She lies on her bed, blanched with sickness, and weak with pain.  
There is a weeping husband at her side, and then there is another funeral, and in the dim distance I see the black horses again and again. The woes of men are frequent, and sorrow’s visits are not, like those of angels, few and far between. Our man of the world, who is much moved at this second act, foreseeing his own sorrows in it, weeps until he fairly sobs out his feelings, clutches us with earnestness and cries, “Surely this is awfully real. You cannot call this a fleeting sorrow or a light affliction! I will wring my hands forever. The delight of my eyes has been taken from me. I have lost all my joys now. My Beloved in whom I trusted has withered like a leaf in autumn before my face. Now shall I despair. I shall never look up again!”  
“I have lost my fortune,” says the afflicted merchant, “and distress overwhelms me. This world is indeed a wilderness to me. All its flowers are withered. I would not give a snap of my finger to live now, for everything worth living for is gone!” Sympathizing deeply with our friend, we nevertheless venture to tell him that these trials to the Christian, because they are so short and produce such lasting good, are not killing sorrows. “Ah,” says he, “you men of faith may talk in that way, but I cannot. I tell you these are real things.” Like an English sailor, who, seeing a play, sprung upon the stage to help a lady in distress, believing that the whole was real, so do such men weep and sigh, as if they were to mourn forever, because some earthly good has been removed.  
Oh that they knew that the depths of sorrow were never yet explored by a mortal mourner! Oh that they would escape from those lower deeps where immortal spirits weep and wail amidst an emphasis of misery! The sorrows of time are trifles, indeed, when compared with the pains of everlasting punishment. And on the other hand *we* reckon that they are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. They are but light afflictions, which are but for a moment, a mere pin’s prick to the man of faith. Happy is the man whose eyes are opened to see that heirs of Heaven sorrow not as those who are without hope. A real joy of heavenly origin is ever with Believers, and it is but the shadow of sorrow which falls upon them. Then let the curtain drop—let us enter into an eternal state and what and where are these temporary griefs? But the *third act* comes on and presents us with a view of *those who rejoice*. It may be that the first-born son has come of age, and there are great festivities. They are eating and drinking in the servants’ hall, and in the master’s banquet chamber. There are high notes of joy and many compliments, and the smiling sire is as glad as man can be. Or is it the daughter’s wedding and kind friends implore a thousand blessings on her head and the father smiles and shares the joy? Or is it a gain in business, a fortunate speculation? Or the profits of industry have come flowing in, slowly perhaps, but still surely, and the man is full of rejoicing. He has a house, and home, and friends, and reputation, and honor, and he is, in the eyes of all who know him, happy.  
Those who do not know him think he has no cares, that he can have no sorrows, that his life must be one perpetual feast, and that surely there can be no spot in his sun, no winter in his year, no ebb to follow his floods. Our friend by our side is smiling at this sunny picture. “There,” says he, “is not that real? Why, there must be something in that! What more do you want? Only let me get the same and I will leave you the joys of faith and Heaven and immortality, to yourselves. These are the things for me—only let me laugh and make merry—and you may pray as you will. Fill high the bowl for me. Put the roast and the viands on the table, and let me eat and drink, for tomorrow I die.”  
If we gently hint to our friend that all this passes away like a vision of the night, and that we have learned to look on it as though it were not, he laughs us to scorn and accounts us mad, when he is most mad himself. As for ourselves, so far from resting upon the softest couch that earth can give us, we spurn its vain delights—  
***“There’s nothing round this spacious earth That suits my large desire.  
To boundless joy and solid mirth  
My nobler thoughts aspire.  
Where pleasure rolls its living flood,  
From sin and dross refined,  
Still springing from the Throne of God,  
And fit to cheer the mind.”***  
But the *fourth act* of the drama is before us and *they that buy*demand our attention. The merchant is neither a mourner nor a man of mirth. In the eyes of certain Mammonites he is attending to the one thing necessary, the most substantial of all concerns. Here feast your eyes, you hard, practical, earth-scrapers. There are his money bags. Hear how they thump on the table! There are the rolls of bonds, the banker’s books, the title-deeds of estates, mortgages, securities, and the solid investment in his country’s own console. He has made a good thing of life, and still he adheres to business, as he should do. And, like a painstaking man, he is accumulating still, and piling up his heap, meanwhile adding field to field and estate to estate, till soon he will possess a whole county.  
He has just now been buying a large and very fine house, where he intends to spend the remainder of his days, for he is about to retire from business. The lawyer is busy making out the transfer. The sum of money is waiting to be paid, and the whole thing is as good as settled. “Ah, now,” says our friend, who is looking on at the play, “you are not going to tell me that *this* is all a shadow? It is not. There is something very solid and real here, at least, something that will perfectly satisfy me.” We tell him we dare say there is something that will satisfy *him* but *our* desires are of a larger span and nothing but the infinite can fill them.  
Alas for the man who can find satisfaction in earthly things! It will be only for a time. For when he comes to lie upon his dying bed, he will find his buying and his money poor things to stuff a dying pillow. He will find that his gains and his acquisitions bring but little comfort to an aching heart, and no peace to a conscience exercised with the fear of the wrath to come. “Ah, ah,” he cries and sneers sarcastically, putting us aside as only fit for bedlam, “Let me trade and make a fortune and that is enough for me! With that I shall be well content!” Alas, poor fool, the snow melts not sooner than the joy of wealth, and the smoke of the chimney is as solid as the comfort of riches.  
But we must not miss the *fifth act*. See the rich man, our friend whom lately we saw married, whom we then saw in trouble, afterwards rejoicing, and then prospering in business—he has entered upon a green old age. He has retired and *has now come to use the world*. You will notice that in my text this is the last act of the drama. The world says he has been a wise man and has done well, for all men will praise you when you do well for yourself. Now he keeps a liberal table, a fine garden, excellent horses and many servants. He has all the comforts, in fact, that wealth can command—and as you look around his noble park, as you gaze at his avenue of fine old trees—or stay a day or two at the family mansion, and notice all its luxuries, you hear your friend saying, “Yes, there is something very real here. What do you think of this?”  
When we hint that the gray hairs of the owner of all these riches betoken that his time is short, and that if this is all he has, he is a very poor man, for he will soon have to leave it—and that his regrets in leaving will make his death more pitiable than that of a pauper—our friend replies, “Ah, ah, you are always talking in this way. I tell you this is not a play. I believe it is all real and substantial, and I am not, by any talking of yours, to be made to think that it is unsubstantial and will soon be gone.” O World, you have fine actors, to cheat men so well, or else mortal man is an easy fool, taken in your net like the fishes of the sea. The whole matter is most palpably a mere show, but yet men give their souls to win it.  
Why, O sons of men, are you thus beside yourselves? “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” Dear Friends, I have put before your mind’s eye a fair picture of that which men who live by sight, and not by faith, regard as being the chief end of man, and the real object of his being. It is to be married. To pass through the trials and joys of life with decency. To trade and grow rich, and at last to use the comforts of this world without abuse—a very comfortable and quiet picture, by no means the representation we should have to present before you of the profligate, the profane, the dissolute, or the debauched.  
There is nothing here but what is proper and right, and yet everything is improper and everything becomes wrong at once if these are thought to be the substantial things for which an immortal spirit is to spend its fires, and for which an undying soul is to exhaust its powers.  
**II.**Let us now take the CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THIS DRAMA. “Life is real, life is earnest”—it is real thus far to the Christian, it is real for work and activity for God. It is real in the solemn responsibility which it brings. It is real in the gratitude which we owe to God for the comforts which He is pleased to bestow. It is real to us so far as we can see God in it, and can turn everything to God’s glory. The unreality of this world to a Christian is found in the fact that *time is short*. This is the wand which torches the substance and makes it, before the eye of wisdom, dissolve into a shade. Time is short!  
When the Apostle declares that *they that have wive*s should be as though they had none, he does not teach us to despise the marriage state, but not to seek our Heaven in it. Nor let it hinder our serving the Lord. It is supposed that there are some things which a man without a wife and family can do—those things the man with a wife and family *should* do. It is supposed that a man without a wife can give his time to the cause of God—the man with a wife should do the same and he will not find it difficult to do so, if God has blessed him with one who will second all his holy endeavors. It is supposed that a man without a wife has no care—a man with a wife should have none—for he should cast all his cares on God who cares for him.  
“He that cares not for his own house is worse than a heathen man and a publican.” And yet the Apostle says, in the verse following my text, “But I would have you without carefulness.” For we should learn to live by faith. The man who has a large family and many things to exercise his mind, should, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, live as quietly and comfortably as though he had none, depending and resting by simple faith upon the Providence and goodness of God. Then, again, it is supposed that an unmarried man will find it easier to die, for there will be none of that sorrow at leaving his beloved family—the man with a wife and family *should*, by faith, find it just as easy, since the promise runs, “Leave your fatherless children, and let your widows trust in Me.”  
Full of the same faithful tenderness and affection which another husband would exhibit and even excelling in love and kindness, yet the Christian should look up to the Divine Lord who is the Husband of the widow, and with confidence leave his offspring and bid them trust in his God. May God the Holy Spirit teach us how to walk in our households, loving always and yet remembering that all our kindred shall pass away.  
Again, there is the second act—*weeping*. Every Christian man must weep—but the Apostle says that our sorrows are to be regarded by us, because time is short, *as though they were no sorrows at all*. A man who knows that his trials will not last long can be cheerful under them. If he sees a Father’s hand in the midst of every adversity, and believes that when he is tried he shall come forth like gold from the furnace. If he knows with the Psalmist that, “weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning,” why then grief has lost its weight, and sorrow has lost its sting! And while the man weeps, he rejoices, seeing the rainbow of the Covenant painted on the cloud.  
Happy man, who, under bereavement, under crosses and losses, can still cast his burden upon God and can say, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines. The labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!” The Christian man is bound to live above his sorrows. He weeps, for, “Jesus wept.” He may mourn, for the faithful have been mourners often, but he must not so mourn and weep as to be eaten up with grief. Over the tops of the rolling waves he must see the haven of peace and rejoice evermore.  
So is it in the third part. The Christian has his *rejoicings* and he is not forbidden to be happy. Indeed, he is *commanded to rejoice*. And the things of this life he may freely enjoy with the double zest of the mercy itself, and of the God who gave it to him. But still, Believer, in all your joys, *remember to hold them with a loose hand.* Never so hold your joys as if they were all in all to you. Though it is wife, or child, or property, or health, or wealth, or fame—still ever stand ready to surrender all into your Father’s hands, feeling that these, after all, are not your joys—you have better springs to drink from than those which earth’s summers can dry up—and that you have rivers of pleasure deeper and broader than any which earth’s winter shall be able to freeze.  
Stand steadfast in this, that, as earth cannot cast you down to despair, so it cannot lift you up so as to make you forget your God. Learn in these things to rejoice as though you had them not, and let this be your solace, that your name is written in Heaven. So, too, in the matter of *buying and possessing*. It is not wrong for a Christian to trade and to trade well. I cannot see any reason why a Christian should be a fool. In fact, those who are fools in business are very often a great dishonor to the Christian religion, for a fool is very often first cousin, if not father, to a knave. But, still, while we buy and sell it should always be thus—“This is not my real trade. This is not the way in which I really get rich, for my treasure is beyond the skies, where moth devours not, and where rust cannot consume.”  
Handle these things, Brethren, knowing that they take to themselves wings and fly away. Look at them as transient objects which are to be used and sanctified in the passing—not your own—but lent to you for a time. To be repaid at last, with interest, in the day when the Master says, “Give an account of your stewardship, for you may be no longer a steward.” A man may be as rich as Croesus, and his wealth will never hurt him if he does not hold it with a tight hand. And a man may be as happy as happiness can make him here, and yet it will not hurt him if he learns to keep it under his feet. But oh, when one’s rejoicings or possessions get the upper hand of us, there is as dreadful a drowning in a sea of pleasure as in a sea of misery. Keep before your mind the words of our sweet singer—

***~~“To You we owe our wealth and friends, And health and safe abode.  
Thanks to Your name for meaner things, But they are not my God.  
What empty things are all the skies, And this inferior clod!~~***

***~~There’s nothing here deserves my joys,  
There’s nothing like my God.”~~***

The last scene *is the using of the things of this life*. The creatures of God are given us to be used. John the Baptist may be an ascetic, but the Son of Man is come eating and drinking. The Christian man knows that the mercies which God has given him are to be used, but while he uses them *he must use them as though he did not use them*. That is a high philosophy which I fear not many of us have learned, the philosophy of the Apostle when he said, “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.” That man is the full grown and true Christian whom circumstances cannot alter! He trusts in God when he is penniless, and he trusts in his God just the same when he is rich.

He rests on God when he can enjoy nothing, and he rests on Him just the same when he can enjoy everything. He learned to build on the Rock of Ages when he had no comfort, and he builds on the Rock of Ages now, when he has every comfort! This, I take it, is where the Apostle would have us brought. To the true Christian, the things of this world are only real so far as they involve responsibility. But, seeing that time is short, he looks on life as men look upon a play. He sees a monarch strut, and he says, “Ah, he is to pull off his robes behind the stage!” He sees a peasant or a beggar, and he smiles and thinks of the time when the king and the peasant shall be equal, and the servant and his lord shall stand before one tribunal to give an account of the things done in the body.

Send your souls longing after real and unchanging joys, for these splendid, gaudy, shifting scenes mock the beholder and delude his hopes. Gorgeous as the colors of the bubble and quite as frail, farewell you worthless things, our spirit leaves you for eternal mansions in the skies!

**III.**And now, dear Friends, I want your attention a few minutes while I point you to THE CURTAIN WHICH IS SOON TO DROP UPON ALL THESE THINGS, it bears this short message, “TIME IS SHORT.” It is very difficult to keep men in mind of the fact that they are mortal. We confess that we are mortal, but we profess by our actions that we are immortal. Said a man of eighty-two concerning another of seventy, when he wanted to buy his land and could not get it at the price he wished—“Never mind, So-andSo is an old man, he will soon be dead and then I’ll buy it.” Though he was ten or twelve years older than the other, yet the other must, of course, soon die, while he, in his own thoughts, must live for many a year.

How short time is! Do we not, dear Friends, get more and more that impression? I am but young compared with very many of you, yet the impression constantly grows upon my mind. Why, it seems but the day before yesterday when I plucked the first early primrose of spring, while the flowers were breaking up from under the earth, and the buds were ready to burst from the sheath! It was only as yesterday that we were walking in the fields and were remarking that the corn was just beginning to be tinged with the golden hue of harvest! Only a few Sabbaths ago I was talking to you of Ruth in the harvest fields and of the heavily laden wagon that was pressed down with sheaves.

And now the leaves are almost all gone. But few remain upon the trees. These frosty nights and strong winds have swept the giants of the forest till their limbs are bare and the hoar frosts plate them with silver. Then, before we shall have time to burn the winter’s log, we shall see the snow flakes drop and the yellow crocus heralding another spring! At what a rate we whirl along! Childhood seems to travel in a wagon, but manhood at express speed. As we grow older I am told that the speed increases till the gray-headed old man looks back upon all his life as being but a day. And I suppose, if we could live to be a hundred and thirty we should feel the same, till, like Jacob, we should say, “Few and evil have been the days of your servant!”

And, if we could live as long as Methuselah, I doubt not our life would appear shorter still! How time flies, not only by the measurement of the seasons but by *ourselve*s! A few days ago I trudged with my satchel on my back to school, or joined in boyish sport. How lately was it when the boy became a youth, and must be doing something and was teaching other boys as he had been taught in his day? It was but yesterday I came to Park Street to address some few of you, and yet how time has fled since then, till now some nine years of our ministry have passed. No weaver’s shuttle, no arrow from a bow, no swift post, no meteor seems to fly at a rate so wonderful as does our life!

We heard of one the other day who had seen Wesley preach, and so we find ourselves side-by-side with the last century, and those old people have known some others in their youth who told them of the yet older time! And you find that going through the history of some ten or twelve persons you are carried back to the days of William the Conqueror, and you see our country taken by the Normans and then you fly back to ancient British times as with a thought. You no longer say, “How long the nation has existed!” for it is as a sleep.

You stand by some old cliff and see a deposit of shells, and as you remember that it may have taken a million years to have formed that bed, you think—“What is man? And what is time? It is not here but gone!” We have only to think of what time is to conclude at once that time is not! It is but a little interlude in the midst of the vast eternity—a narrow neck of land jutting out into the great, dread, and unfathomable sea of everlastingness!

But while time is thus short, *its end is absolutely sure*. That curtain yonder must soon fall! *It must fall*. It is inevitable. I cannot prevent my death by the most regular habits of life. The most skillful physician cannot preserve my life for me. A host of angels, should they swear to make me immortal, could not! When the time comes die I must! And, as my death is inevitable, so it may be *very near*. Let each man remember that! How soon it, may be we cannot tell! Every Sunday there are some in this house who are dead before the next Sunday. I am not now venturing a guess. It is a matter of fact, a matter of fact, too, that comes under my own cognizance very frequently. According to our population and the gradual number of deaths, there must be some out of this congregation here this morning who will have gone the way of all flesh before next Sunday!

There was one—I look at her seat now and a Brother sitting near by looks there with sorrow!—who was with us one Sunday, and we soon heard that she had gone to enjoy the Eternal Sunday! At a Church meeting last week, no less than three of our sisters were reported as having fallen asleep in Jesus within a week. Ah, how near is death to us! Perhaps he now stands looking over your shoulder, young man. God holds back his hand but the dart of death is close to your heart and soon—ah, how soon!—may you be taken to the place appointed for all living!

Go, you strong man, and remember that you are a mass of feebleness! Go, you young man, and remember that death reaps green corn! Go, you old man, and expect the sickle! And go, you rich man, and remember that you shall soon leave everything that you have—and then where are you if you have no treasure in Heaven—if you have not laid up in store for immortality?

And I must add here that, to those who have no God, death, while inevitable and very near, *will be most awful and terrible*! There was a dreadful story told in the papers this last week. At the seaport town of Garliestown one day last week, certain workmen were busy preparing a better berth for a vessel which seems to have taken the ground a little too soon. Suddenly someone raised a cry that the ship was listing over. and while some four men were able to escape, one poor fellow was unable to do so. The ship fell upon his lower extremities and loins. Now this was thought, perhaps, to be no great danger, for they could take away the sludge and extricate him.

So they began to shore the ship, and willing hands brought ropes and blocks and wedges and earnest strength. But they soon discovered that the thing was impossible from the nature of the bottom of the river and from the position of the cargo, which, I suppose, they could not speedily remove. The man was jammed under the bulwarks, and must remain fixed there without hope. There was just one awful hour before the coming tide would reach the spot. Well might a solemn hush succeed the frantic labors of the townsmen as death was seen riding on the advancing flood. The poor creature had to lie there that hour as the tide came gently in. A minister stood by his side praying with him. Let us trust that his soul found peace with God!

But O the terror of his position! Well might he say, “Cover my head, that I may not see the water.” Steadily the cold unpitying waters flowed on until a corpse was hidden where an hour or so before a strong man labored. This is a graphic picture of the position of every ungodly man! He does not know it, but the waves of time are coming up about him now, and *we* cannot help him to escape. The load of his sins is on his loins—he cannot deliver himself. The great waters of God’s wrath must swallow him up quickly. O, Sinner, would that I could save you! Alas, it is not in my power! But there *is* an arm that can deliver you. There is one who can lift the burden off you and say to you, “Be free!” Believe in Him and you shall never die!

Trust in His power, and rest yourself on His Love, and you shall escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. And when death comes it shall be no death to you, but a peaceful migration from the land of shadows to the world of substance. God help us to be wise, that we may remember our latter end! I would say a few more words to the sinner. I cannot think, O Worldling, why you should love this world so much when it is so soon to vanish! In the old Greek cities they had a king every year and, because it was so poor a thing to be a king for only one year, and then to be a common man again, all the citizens dreaded to be kings. How can you long to be rich, when you are only to be rich for so short a time?

When the sailor is just about to furl his sail because he is near the port, he will not fret himself with some little inconvenience in the ship. And why are you so sore vexed with all these little trials, when you are so near the eternal haven? When men buy property on a short lease, they will not give much for it, for they are only to have it for a brief term. Why do you spend your *soul* to buy this *world*? What will it profit you, if you gain it, if your soul is lost? When men have a house and they are soon to leave it, they will not lay out much in repairing it. Why, then, care you so much for your body? Why mind you so much *this* life? The bell is even now trembling to toll for you, and the grave is yawning that it may swallow you up!

Oh Man! Oh Man! I would that you were wise! You are to live forever, forever, forever, either—  
***“In flames that no abatement know,  
Though briny tears forever flow,”***

or else in joy beyond degree! Which shall it be with you, Man? If you die as you are, O Sinner, remember, there remains nothing for you but a fearful looking for judgment and of fiery indignation! I pray you by the love of God, to consider your ways. Thus says the Lord unto you this day by my lips, as truly as He spoke to Hezekiah by the Prophet of old, “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.”

How will you stand, Sinner, in the day when the Lord comes to make inquisition for sin and to avenge their iniquity upon the heads of the unpardoned? Fly, Sinner! God help you by His Grace to fly now to yonder open door, where Jesus waits to receive you, and to put away your sin. Whosoever believes on Him is not condemned. Like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man is lifted up that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**IV.**Come, come, you wise men, rise and leave this theater, we have seen enough of it. “The fashion of this world passes away.” And for you, and for me, happy shall it be when it shall have passed away forever. But is there nothing real? Can I do nothing real here? Is there nothing I can do that shall last forever? Yes, the *soul*is lasting. Then let me see to my own soul. Let me make my calling and election sure, for I shall have been of all fools the most mad, if I shall have trifled with these things and yet have neglected my soul.

The Roman emperor, Claudius, once invaded Great Britain but his performance only consisted of gathering pebbles and shells from the sea coast. This shall be my triumph, this my only reward, if here in this world I live only to gather wealth. At the last I shall be as though I gathered pebbles, for these things shall be of no value to me if my soul shall perish.

O Lord, by Your rich Grace set me upon a sure foundation and make me right before Your face.

Yes, there are some real things besides my own soul. There are *other men’s souls*. What am I doing for them? Am I teaching, am I preaching, or, if I am not doing this, am I helping others to preach? Am I doing my best to add to the kingdom of Christ by the ingathering of immortals? Have I a sphere in the Ragged School or in tract distributing, or am I helping in some way or other to do good? For, if not, my life is a play—I am doing nothing real. I am only hurrying here and there, and when it comes to the last I shall have been as a workmen that has neglected his own work to play with children in the streets!

Dig up your buried talents, O Idlers. Work while it is called today, O you who are given to slumber. Yes, there is something real—*there is Christ’s Church*. The Church that is to shine like the stars in Heaven forever, the Bride of the Lamb—what am I doing for her? Do I seek the good of Jerusalem? As a member of the Church, do I contribute to its strength? Do I give of my substance to her efforts, and of my talents to her doings? Do I cast myself wholly into the arms of Christ and work for Him! Yes, there is something real—*Jesus is so*. Am I glorifying Him here on earth? When I see Him in His poor people, do I feed Him? When He shivers at my door in the garb of poverty, do I clothe Him?

When I know that He has need, do I visit Him? If so, I am doing real things. If I devote my life to God, to Christ, to His Church, to the souls of men, and if my own soul is saved, then I am living. But if not, I am dead while I live. “*Let us live while we live*!” Alas, how many are dying while they live, driveling while they live! Oh, the scores of pounds we spend on ourselves. The hundreds we give to our own comfort! And where is that? It is gone like smoke! But that which is given to God lasts and endures. It is treasured up in God’s bank. That which is given to the poor and needy is made—though unrighteous mammon—to be treasured up in Heaven!

But I know many practical persons will say, “Yes, this is a very pretty speech for a young minister. But these ministers do not understand business. They cannot be expected to understand temporal matters.” I would to God you understood them half so well, for our understanding in this matter we know is sound. And when you shall come to see these things in the light of eternity streaming between the curtains of your dying bed, you will understand, then, that there was nothing worth living for but God and Christ and His Church. And you will give your verdict, then, with mine to this—that truly to live must be Christ, or else to die never can be gain! God add His blessing and may some be led to trust in Jesus, by His Grace, this morning!

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3032 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD”  
NO. 3032

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1907.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1869.~~***

***~~“The fashion of this world passes away.”  
1 Corinthians 7:31.~~***

IN this Epistle, Paul deals with many matters of conscience and explains them for the benefit of the troubled ones in the Church at Corinth. In the chapter out of which our text is taken, he writes wisely concerning the important question of marriage. And he recommends that during the time of persecution it is well to abstain from marriage, though he does not forbid it even under the pressure of those trying circumstances. Then, after he has spent a considerable time in looking at the subject from various standpoints, he says, “It remains that they that have wives, be as though they had none.” He seemed to think that the whole matter of marriage was too small for him to take into any very serious consideration, seeing that the time was so short in which such questions could need to be discussed at all, “for,” he said, “the fashion of this world passes away.”

The Greek word used in this verse has, by some expositors, been read as though the Apostle referred to mathematical figures, as when the boy at school, working out the propositions in Euclid, draws upon his slate, circles, triangles and squares—and then almost immediately rubs the whole out and begins another set of figures. In that sense, the whole scheme or fashion of this world is only like the markings on a slate, or the chalk drawings on a blackboard—something not intended to last, but to be done away with almost immediately. So there is no need to be troubled about the things of this world, except so far as they have reference to the world to come, for the whole scheme, plan and fashion of this world passes away.

But an interpretation which is far more likely to be correct is that the Apostle meant, “The whole theatrical performance of this world’s pageant passes away. The whole of its various acts, shows and manifestations passes away.” If that is the meaning, Paul seems to be of the mind of the world’s great poet, that—

***“All the world’s a stage,***

***And all the men and women merely players.”***So he says, “The whole play passes away. The whole performance which is now upon the stage will soon be changed and all will be gone.” Just as men put on mimic robes and one is arrayed as a monarch and another appears as a slave. Just as one is dressed in scarlet and fine linen and another comes on the scene in the rags of a beggar but, as soon as the play is over, they all take off the clothes appertaining to their various parts and go to their homes in quite different garb. And so, all the pomp and glory of this world will soon have passed away and men will go to their own eternal dwelling place, the fashion of this world having passed away forever. It is to that thought that I wish to call your earnest attention just now. May the Holy Spirit teach us what He intended the Apostle to convey to our minds concerning the transitory character of all worldly things!

I. First, then, let us ask, WHAT IS THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD THAT PASSES AWAY?  
I answer, first, it is *the whole world, itself, and all humanity dwelling upon it*. All that we see around us is passing away. Although, to some minds, this visible creation looks as if it might last forever, there are signs of decrepitude and decay which the thoughtful can easily discern. The very granite crumbles, the sea breaks its bounds, even the sun’s lamp, at times, grows dull! All things bear signs that this world is but as the traveler’s tent that is pitched tonight, only to be struck tomorrow morning. The day is coming, whether we wish it or not, when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” As once by a deluge of water, so the second time by a deluge of fire, the whole fashion of this world shall surely pass away—“all these things shall be dissolved.” We talk about the everlasting hills and speak of the sea as the hoary ocean, but there is nothing except God that is really worthy of veneration because of age. We read of His Son, in whom He has manifested Himself, that “His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow,” to indicate the great antiquity of Christ—but all human beings are but things of an hour—and they and the world they inhabit shall soon have departed!  
Vain man, who looks on this world as a thing that is lasting, should at least look upon himself as fleeting! Generations have followed each other till the whole earth resembles a beach when the tide is down, where ten thousand worms have each one cast up his little separate hillock and then gone from sight. What is there to remind us of past generations but their graves? Even their works have decayed before the time when all men’s works are to be consumed. Since we have been our own little while in the world, how many have passed away! The funeral bell is almost always tolling—the sexton never ceases from his work. Every time the clock ticks, a soul takes its flight into the unknown land. While we have been sitting here, the great processes of decay, dissolution and death have been going on—and although we may not have noticed it, we ourselves have been passing onwards by an inevitable march towards the confines of the spirit world! We are in a dying world and none of us will be able to escape from the influences that are, in due time, to bear us away from this world which is itself passing away! So, Brothers and Sisters, if the Apostle meant nothing more than this, there is enough in the remembrance that this world and all who are upon it are passing away, to calm our minds and to remind ourselves of the instability of mortal things— and of the necessity of securing something more substantial and enduring!—  
***“The time is short ere all that live  
Shall hence depart, their God to meet!  
And each a strict account must give,  
At Jesus’ awful Judgment Seat.  
The time is short, oh, who can tell  
How short his time below may be?  
Today on earth his soul may dwell,  
But tomorrow in eternity.”***  
But, secondly, “the fashion of this world passes away” *in reference to all its honors and dignities*. All that was ever emblazoned on the roll of fame and thought to be written there forever, shall surely be blotted out. They who now wear royal crowns shall not always be crowned. Those who are now decorated with glittering satin and jewels shall not be always so adorned. Come to the graveyard and see how much is left of any of the Caesars! Look into the vault of Alexander and see how little is the greatest of the great! The monarch cannot be distinguished from his slave—and men cannot maintain their various ranks and degrees of dignity in the grave. Death, that great Radical and Communist, that awful leveler, is continually smiting down the mighty and with his dread axe he fells the haughty cedar of Lebanon as easily as he does the rush by the riverside. But there are those who will be kings when these kings of earth are no more regarded as royal, and there are those who will be peers of the heavenly reality when earthly peers have lost their patents of nobility. There are kings and priests whom the world knows not of who shall yet come forth from their obscurity—in the day when the King of kings shall be revealed, they shall also be revealed—but meanwhile, the fashion of this world, so far as its pomp and greatness are concerned, passes away.  
Then, dear Friends, let us remember, in the third place, that *the civil fashion of this world*will certainly pass away too. It is necessary for good government that there should be judges, dignitaries, magistrates and so forth, and men think much of the power of governing their fellow creatures, and talk proudly about constitutions that are to last all down the ages, and establishments that will withstand the attacks of the years that are yet to come—but they make a great mistake. All these must pass away! The magistrate on the bench must be made equal with the prisoner at the bar. The great man must slumber in the dust with the beggar who was splashed by the mud front his horses’ hoofs as he rode along in his pride!  
Remember, too—and this is a solemn reflection that ought to press heavily upon every ungodly heart—that the association of the righteous and the wicked, which is part of the fashion of this world today, is passing away. Many of you are, at the present moment, being kindly cared for by Divine Providence more for the sake of your godly relatives than for your own sakes, for you are ungodly and, therefore, God cannot regard you in the same light as He does His own believing children. You are nestling under the same roof with your father, who is a saint of God—yet, if you died as you now are, you would be lost forever. You are, at this moment, sitting in the same pew with one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, but you are, yourself, Christless and hopeless. This congregation, as I look upon it, seems to me like a heap of corn upon the threshing floor, but there is much chaff mingled with it! I see here a great field of precious grain springing up, but the tares are mixed with the wheat. That is according to the fashion of this world—it must inevitably be so in the present state of things.  
Even in the professing Church, itself, this is the fashion today, for the great dragnet has taken in its meshes, fish of every kind—some good and some bad. But this shall not be the fashion for long, for this present fashion passes away and, then the net shall be drawn to shore and they shall gather the good into vessels, but they shall cast the bad away. The great reaping time shall come, by-and-by, and then the tares shall be bound in bundles to be burned—while the wheat shall be gathered into the garner—  
***“East and West, and South and North,  
Speeds each glorious angel forth,  
Gathering in with glittering wing  
Zion’s saints to Zion’s King.  
Man nor angel knows that day,  
Heaven and earth shall pass away.  
Still shall stand the Savior’s word,  
Deathless as its deathless Lord.”***  
Think of this, you who are living now in close relationship to Christian people! How will you bear to be separated from them when this present fashion passes away? O husbands of gracious wives, children of godly parents, ungodly parents of converted children, think of the time when this fashion shall be ended and the separating day shall come—and you are driven forth to the blackness of darkness forever, while your loved ones are walking with Christ forever in the home of the blessed in Glory!  
Mark, too, fourthly, *that the busy fashion of this world* will also pass away. You are engaged in your shops most properly. You are toiling in your various callings, or pursuing your several professions. One is a lawyer and another is a doctor, but all this occupation passes away. There is a land in which there shall be no toiling for daily bread and no need to cast ourselves wearily upon our bed after too long and too trying a day of toil. There is a time coming when that extra ten pounds which seems so important now, or that extra ten thousand pounds, or that extra million pounds added to ones estate shall be thought to be of no more value than a single hair! When men come to die, how their business dwarfs to nothing! It casts a long shadow right across the pathway of life—but when they lie upon their last bed and gaze into eternity, they see things in a different light and estimate them at their real value! O Sirs, you who are pursuing earthly gain as though it were something substantial, are like the fools who hunt the will-o’-the-wisp and plunge after it in the morass to their own destruction! Can you carry your gold with you into the world where you are going? If you could hang it on the cerements that are to be wrapped about you in the tomb, how much richer would your dead body be for all its golden decorations? What can your old buy for you beyond a thicker slab of stone to lie upon your corpse while the poor sleep under a lighter load in a field where the wild flowers grow?  
Believe me, there is nothing here that is worthy of your pursuit! If you give your soul up to anything earthly, whether it is the wealth, or the honors, or the pleasures of this world, you might as well hunt after the *mirage* of the desert or try to collect the mists of the morning or to store up for yourselves the clouds of the sky—for all these things are passing away! It is difficult, sometimes, to realize that we are citizens of that country where worldly wealth has lost all value because of the infinitely more precious wealth, there, that is the common property of all the saints. It is difficult, sometimes, to realize what that land must be where we are to rest forever and yet serve God day and night in His Temple. But when we are indulged by the Holy Spirit with a faith’s view of that better country and are permitted, for a little while, to think of the time when we shall gather our weary souls in these seas of heavenly rest and not a wave of trouble shall roll across our peaceful breast—then are we glad that the fashion of this poor weary word is so soon to pass away! But alas, the thought of death and the natural clinging that we all have to life, make us, sometimes, wish that this world would last forever and that its fashion were no so transient as it is! Yet, wish as you may, you sons of men cannot make the fashion of this world remain—it will soon be gone—every jot of it! So may you all have a portion that will last!  
Once more, *even this world’s religious fashions will pass away.* The time is coming when the Pharisee will no more stand and say, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.” Self-righteousness is a fashion that will not outlast the trial hour of death. The time is coming when men will no longer be able to put their trust in priests, or to imagine that occult influences can flow from human hands into their souls! The foolish fashion of Ritualism and ceremonialism will certainly pass away! It ought never to have

xisted, for it is a delusion and a snare, but it will pass away when He comes who abhors it with all His soul. This world’s religion is sometimes that of mere formal orthodoxy—the mental acceptance of a certain creed, the laying hold of certain dogmas and fighting for the outward forms of them. All this is common enough in the religion with which many men are satisfied—but it will all pass away! In that day when nothing but genuine heart-work will endure the tests that will then be applied and when only the real regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will pass current with the Most High, all mere head-knowledge and notional religion will have melted and flowed away. Your unopened family Bibles with their great gilded clasps, your brass-bound prayer books and hymn-books, your mere formal family prayers read out in so orderly a tone, with no heart in the performance—all will pass away like the foam upon the waters! What cares God for all that you have to say if you say it not from your heart? What value does He set upon a round of ceremonies if true soul-worship is absent from them?  
All mere outward godliness and fictitious religion will pass away—and how naked and ashamed will the worldly professor be when God shall strip him of his tawdry robes! How foul will they look who thought themselves clean! How horrible will be the leprosy upon the brows of those who imagined that all was well because they covered their filthy sores from the sight of man! How desperate will be their doom who dreamed of going to Heaven, yet who have never trusted in Christ’s great atoning Sacrifice! May none of us have anything to do with this world’s fashion which will pass away, but may we all have that righteousness which will ensure to us the life everlasting!—  
***“We’ve no abiding city here!  
This may distress the worldling’s mind,  
But should not cost the saint a tear,  
Who hopes a better rest to find.  
We’ve no abiding city here!  
Sad truth, were this to be our home,  
But let this thought our spirits cheer—  
We seek a city yet to come.  
We’ve no abiding city here!  
Then let us live as pilgrims do.  
Let not the world our rest appear,  
But let us haste from all below.”***  
This will suffice concerning the fashion of this world which passes away.  
**II.** Now, just for a few minutes I am going to try to show you by way of contrast to what I have been saying, that THERE IS A FASHION THAT WILL *NOT* PASS AWAY.  
There are some things that will remain. And among them is, first, *the life within the Believer which God’s Holy Spirit has implanted*. Do you know what it is, dear Friends, to be born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which lives and abides forever? He who has a mere notional religion that springs from his own free will, will find that sooner or later it will die. But that incorruptible Seed of the Holy Spirit which constitutes us the living children of the last Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit, shall never die! That life came not from mortal man, neither can the teeth of Time fret it, nor the arrow’s of Death kill it. This is one of the things that passes not away.  
And, as the inner life of the Believer thus endures, so, thank God, *the outward truth also passes not away*. There is not a single Truth of God that is revealed in this blessed Book that shall ever become a lie. There is not one promise there that shall ever be revoked. What God has revealed in His Word is not for yesterday nor for today, alone, but for tomorrow, and until the world’s end and throughout eternity! I know that there are those who would like to see a new Bible, or a revised version of it. I mean a revised version of the original Scriptures to suit their depraved taste! They would gladly have what they call “new developments” and “fresh light” worthy of this “advanced” generation! But, beloved Friends, there is nothing new in theology but that which is false—only the old is true— for the Truth of God must be old, as old as God Himself! So let us rejoice that whatever may happen, and although the fashion of this world shall surely pass away, there is not a single text between the covers of this Book that shall ever lose an atom of its Divine Truth and force. Oh, no! The old Book is not effete and the Revelation it has brought to us will never grow stale! The promises well up with as rich consolation to us today as they did to the first of the martyr-band! The solemn oaths and Covenant of God stand as firm and fast today as when He first gave them to our fathers! So let us cling to the Holy Word and to the doctrines of God’s Grace, for these are among the things that are to abide forever!— ***“Engraved as in eternal brass  
The mighty promise shines,  
Nor can the powers of darkness erase  
Those everlasting lines!  
He that can dash whole worlds to death,  
And make them when He please—  
He speaks and that almighty breath  
Fulfils His great decrees!  
His very Word of Grace is strong  
As that which built the skies.  
The voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises!”***  
Yet again, as the life within, and the Truth revealed, so the *fruit of the inner life, wherein we are led by the Holy Spirit and the Word, shall remain*. They who build a worldwide empire will lose all that they have labored to gain. Men may pile up a city of marble only to see it become a heap of dust. But if you give a cup of cold water, in the name of Christ, to one who belongs to Him, you shall not lose your reward! Every holy thought, every devout purpose, every thankful hymn, every earnest prayer, every true-hearted sermon, every good work that is done for God in the power of the Holy Spirit lives beyond the possibility of death! The saints depart from earth in due season, but why? “That they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” Their works are still present before the mind of God and He accepts them. Not all that even Christians do shall abide, for “the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” Many a man—and many a good man, too, shall lose much of what he did—much of his preaching, much of his teaching, much of his so-called praying and alms-giving shall prove to be but wood, hay and stubble which shall be burned, though he, himself, being on the Rock, a believer in Christ, shall be “saved yet so as by fire.” But happy is that man who so completely lives unto God and is so fully guided by the Holy Spirit and by the revealed Truth of God that he spends himself and is wholly spent in his Master’s service—and so builds upon the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ, not wood, hay, and stubble, but gold, silver and precious stones which shall be found to his own joy and to God’s Glory in the great testing time that is surely coming!  
Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it is a very sweet reflection that among the things that shall never pass away are such as these—the love that was fixed upon us before the day-star knew its place or planets ran their round. The love that bought us upon Calvary’s Cross. The love that has prepared a place for us that where Jesus is, there we, also, may be, to be like He and with Him forever—that love shall never pass away! So too, the power of God which brought us up out of Egypt and is leading us through the wilderness. The power that has fought our battles and has kept us safely to this day—that power shall never pass away! Then, too, the fullness of God upon which we have lived and from which we have been drinking such deep draughts to satisfy our great necessities—that fullness shall never pass away! There will come a time when everything of a spiritual kind which we have rejoiced in here, instead of passing away, shall be brighter than ever to our sight, nearer to us and better understood! Our true daylight draws near. It is twilight with us now, but not the twilight of the evening—it is the twilight of the dawn! Our pathway lies upward—we have already ascended somewhat, but we have to go far higher yet. Up the ladder that Jacob saw, we pursue our joyful way and there shall be no descent for us! There shall be no falling from the elevation to which Divine Grace lifts us, “for the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.”  
We shall soon see the King in His beautyand the land that is very far off. We may begin to put off our old week-day garments, for the heavenly Sabbath bells will soon ring out their welcome call. Let us shake ourselves from the dust, for our beautiful array is ready and we shall soon sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Eagerly anticipate—all of you who love the Lord Jesus Christ—eagerly anticipate your better portion! You daughters of sickness, you shall soon have done with all pains and pangs forever! You children of poverty, you shall soon have done with your anxieties and griefs concerning your many needs. You toil-worn workers in the vineyard of Christ and you who are oppressed with many cares, you shall be Marthas no longer, but you shall sit at Jesus’ feet forever! As for you who have been mourning, and sighing, and crying—your weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning! Put off your sackcloth, for God shall gird you with the garment of praise. Forget the drought of the wilderness for You shall soon be in the Paradise of God and at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore—  
***“O Paradise eternal!  
What bliss to enter thee  
And once within your portals,  
Secure forever be !  
They all around shall love us,  
And we return their love;  
One band of happy spirits,  
One family above!  
There God shall be our portion,  
And we His jewels be—  
And gracing His bright mansions,  
His smile reflect and see.  
O Paradise eternal,  
What joys in you are known!  
God of mercy guide us,  
Till all is felt our own!”***  
The gist of all I wanted to say is just this. Brothers and Sisters, let us hold very loosely everything here, but let us get a very firm grip of everything that is to be hereafter! Let the visible begin, even now, to melt away and let the invisible take its true substantial form. If God has been prospering some of you—and He has been very gracious and kind to some of His people in temporal matters, set not your hearts on any of those things. Your garden, your house, your children, your gold—all the prosperity that God gives you—accept it, rejoice in it, use it as you ought, but do not abuse it—these things are not your God! You have no abiding city here, but you seek one to come and, oh, do give a grip as of steel to the things that are eternal! Never endure a doubt that Christ is really yours! If you have one doubt, may the Holy Spirit cast it out and give you the full assurance of faith! Never tolerate the question, “Is Christ mine?” If it must be raised, and it must, sometimes, never be content till you have settled it! With your face in the dust and your hands in the prints of your Savior’s pierced feet, come now to Him again—cling to Him anew—make Him your All-in-All. And so, when the shadows thicken and the world grows dim, may the light stream full upon your eyes and your soul stretch her wings and soar away to her eternal rest!  
The Lord bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 9:1-38.**

**Verse 1, 2.** *And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* Christ’s disciples were often inquisitive even when their Master was bent upon giving proofs of His practical benevolence. Fools may sometimes ask questions which wise men may not think it proper to answer, but on this occasion our Savior gave an answer to the enquiry which His disciples had put to Him.

**3, 4.** *Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night comes when no man can work.* Think of our Lord being under the necessity of working— “I must work.” Men say that, “Must is for the king,” but here is the King of kings declaring that work is by the most urgent necessity laid upon Him—so will not you, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, come under this Divine necessity? Will not you feel that you, also, must be doing all you can for your Divine Lord and Master?

**5.** *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* While Christ was here on earth, He was the great Light-Giver—and He is still the great Light-Giver! And now that His visible Presence has been withdrawn from the world, His people are to be “the light of the world” by reflecting the light they have received from Him! In such works as you will be unable to perform after death, you are now to give light to the sons of men.

**6-9.** *When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went His way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is He. Others said, He is like he. But he said, I am he—*“There is no mistake about this! I know that I am that man!”

**10, 11.** *Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said*. In his own quick, clear, intelligent way, for he was a man who evidently had twice as many eyes in his brain as other people had, even while he had none with which he could see! “He answered and said”—

**11-14.** *A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. And I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.*You may be sure that the Pharisees would be in high dudgeon because Christ did that for, according to their stupid superstition, to make clay with spittle was a kind of brick-making which must not be done on the Sabbath—and they would, for that reason, condemn Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath!

**15.** *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed and do see.* Now that he has to deal with Pharisees, he will not waste a word upon them. The more often he tells the story, the shorter it becomes. That is not the usual rule with stories—they generally grow like snowballs as they roll along until, at last, you would hardly recognize the original story, so much has been added to it as it has been told again and again! But this honest, straightforward man cuts the story down to the barest details and yet tells it well.

**16, 17.** *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God because He keeps not the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man again, What do you say of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet*. He felt that he could safely go as far as that, for Jesus could not have worked such a miracle as that if He had not been a Prophet sent by God.

**18-21.** *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself.*These parents, though in humble life, were evidently like their son, sharp and shrewd. So they referred the question to the one who knew how to answer it.

**22-24.** *These words spoke his parents because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, he is of age, ask him. Then again they called the man that was blind and said unto him.* They wanted to see if they could catch him in his talk, so they said to him, in a very pious fashion—

**24.** *Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner*. Dear me, what wonderful “knowledge” those Pharisees had!  
**25.***He answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*There was no driving him out of that stronghold! That which is a matter of our own personal experience is a thing about which we may well feel positively certain. I wish we had more Christian people firmly established in their faith because it is a matter of deep, heart-felt, personal experience with them. I like to meet a man who can say, “I am willing to yield to opponents upon certain points concerning which I am not quite sure. But the fact of the efficacy of the Gospel of God’s Grace, the power of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse the heart and conscience, the Divine operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul—all these are Truths of God which I cannot and will not yield! Like this man, I can say, ‘One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.’”  
**26, 27.***Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: Why would you hear it again? Will you, also, be His disciples?* He carried the war into the enemy’s camp, as well he might!  
**28.***Then they reviled him.* That is an unprincipled lawyer’s rule— When you cannot answer the plaintiff’s argument, abuse him! This was the last resort of those who knew that they had a bad case, or no case at all—“Then they reviled him.”  
**28-31.***And said, You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He came. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing that you know not from where He came and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners.*The man meant, God does not open blind eyes by the hands of sinners. He does not work miracles to bear witness to the agency of ungodly men.  
**31-33.***But if any man is a worshipper of God and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.*Bravo! You who used to be blind—what an irresistible thing truth is, whoever handles it! These Pharisees, keen of intellect, well instructed in the letter of the Law of God, yet crafty up to their eyes in selfconceit, are like chaff driven before the wind when a plain-speaking man does but handle the Truth of the living God. Never be afraid or ashamed to spread the Gospel of Christ, my Brothers and Sisters! No— ***“Speak His Word, though kings should hear, Nor yield to sinful shame.”***  
A beggar with the Truth of God is mightier than priests and princes with a lie!  
**34.***They answered and said unto him.* What could they say to him? Nothing but more reviling and abuse!  
**34.***You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? And they cast him out.* That is the last argument of all. “We cannot answer him, so let us turn him out!”  
**35.***Jesus heard that they had cast him out and when He had found him.* Oh, how He rejoices in finding those that are cast out by the world, or by the self-righteous! “When He had found him.”  
**35, 36.***He said unto him, Do you believe on the Son of God? He answered and said*. Note the humility of the man’s tone, how changed it is from that sharpness, that sourness to which he had been driven by his enemies. “He answered and said.”  
**36.***Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?* He is a lamb before Christ though he was a lion before the Pharisees! That is the true Christian character—gentle, tender, humble, meek in the Presence of the God of Mercy—but with no trembling, no giving way in the presence of the adversaries of Christ and His Truth!  
**37, 38.***And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him and it is He that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.* He was no Unitarian! “He worshipped Him.” And you, Beloved, cannot help worshipping Him who has opened your eyes spiritually! It is those who are still blind who will not worship Him. But once let us feel the touch of His light-giving finger. Once let us know that He has shed His eternal light into the darkness of our souls and we shall not be satisfied with the mere verbal avowal of our faith—we shall add to it our reverent adoration as this man did when he first said, “Lord, I believe”—and then “worshipped Him.”

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1692 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“WITHOUT CAREFULNESS”  
NO. 1692

***~~DELIVERED AT THE THURSDAY EVENING LECTURE, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“I would have you without carefulness.”  
1 Corinthians 7:32.~~***

AT the time when Paul wrote these words he was giving judgment as to whether it was expedient for Christians in those days to marry. The question was whether they were likely to be better Christians married or unmarried. This was a question of much delicacy and Paul answered it with remarkable discretion and fidelity. And, in so doing, he laid down a great general principle which is of much more value to the Church, today, than Paul’s private opinion about the matter of marriage or non-marriage. Paul tells us that concerning virgins, he had no commandment of the Lord, but gave his judgment as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful—he did not speak, in this case, as under Divine Inspiration, but as an experienced and consecrated man giving his judgment for the good of others—and for the benefit of the great work so dear to him.

In that capacity, Paul’s words are, by no means, to be despised. I had far rather follow the uninspired advice of Paul than that of any other man. In mental clearness none ever excelled that consecrated man. But he spoke under Inspiration, beyond all question, when he gave this as his reason for desiring that they would remain unmarried—“I would have you without carefulness,” or as the Revised Version reads it, “I would have you to be free from cares.” This is the mind of the Holy Spirit as well as the mind of the Apostle Paul. This is a text, not for Paul’s time, alone, but for our time and for all time.

The general principle in our text I will endeavor to open up before you. We who have believed are the servants of Christ and are no longer at our own disposal. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. If you look back in the chapter, at the 23rd verse, you find a statement to that effect. Hence our business in life is to serve Him who has redeemed us. This one occupation should entirely absorb and engross us. Everything, therefore, which helps us better serve the Lord Jesus is a good thing—and everything which hampers and hinders us in the main business of our life, though it may be good enough for others, is bad for us. The chief work of the Christian is to glorify God and, to this chief work everything must be subordinated. If a thing is lawful to me, and yet, while lawful, it hinders me in the service of God, it is not expedient and, therefore, I am to renounce it.

No man ever succeeds in anything who does not give himself wholly to it—it matters not what it is—concentration is essential to perfection in any pursuit. He who would be eminent in any one direction must forego a great many other things which are perfectly allowable. These he must renounce for the sake of his one objective. He will not succeed unless he sacrifices all other things for the one chief thing. So must it be with the Christian. The rule of his life is to be, “This I will not do, this I will not enjoy, this I will not allow for myself because I could not serve God as well with it, and my business is to keep myself in the best possible form for doing my Master’s work.” We are to labor as much as we can for our Lord and all other results of life must be to us as chaff to the wheat.

It is with us, Paul tells us, as with a soldier. A soldier is a man who must not open shop, or become a banker or a farmer. He must not think of settling quietly in the town where, for a while, he is billeted. Why not? The reason is clear—even if there is no war at the present time, yet no man that wars, entangles himself with the things of this life if he would please him who has called him to be a soldier. Soldiering requires the man to be altogether a soldier and it cannot afford to let him be a tradesman or a farmer—he must not hamper himself with that which would hold him to the spot and prevent his hastening to the field. The nation requires that its army be ready for any and every emergency, so that when the trumpet blows, the regiment marches, the troopship steams across the sea, and the foe is promptly confronted. It is necessary that the soldier keep himself in marching condition and the less luggage he has to carry, the better.

So it is with the Christian—he is to aim at a condition best adapted for his holy warfare. He is not to be satisfied when he has said to himself, “Is this right, or is this wrong?” He is to go further. I hope that many of us have long passed beyond that stage, for we have a judgment and discernment which tell us at once what is right and what is wrong—we now ask a still higher question—“Will this help me to glorify God, or will it not?” This is the enquiry of the higher life and a godly man is careful in the answering of it. The best thing is bad if it hinders our vocation. Though the garment were made of silk, bespangled with jewels and made with golden thread, yet must we, as racers, lay it aside if it would entangle us in our running.

Though the burden were a bag of pearls and every pearl were a king’s ransom, yet if we are to run—and none can win but those that run—we must leave that bag of pearls in another’s keeping, for our business is with the crown before us! We must lay aside every weight and the vesture of sin which does so easily entangle us, that we may run with patience the race that is set before us. At this time the Apostle says to us—“I would have you without carefulness as to *earthly* things,” and this because he would have us *full* of carefulness as to *heavenly* things! He wants us to be free from cares, that all our thought, anxiety, meditation, suggestiveness, inventiveness and burden-bearing may go towards the service of our Divine Lord. We have only a certain measure of mind and he wants all of it for the Lord Jesus, that we may walk worthy of our high calling.

But towards other things, he says, “I would have you without carefulness.” How are we to be without carefulness? This must be the work of the Holy Spirit, for He is the Comforter and the Helper of our infirmities, But as far as we are to work with Him, the question needs a careful reply. How are we to be without carefulness?

**I.**I answer—we may hopefully attempt this in the power of God, first, BY AVOIDING THOSE STATES WHICH INVOLVE CAREFULNESS. Mark well, it is not given to many to select their place in life. More or less it may be committed to us to turn to the right or to the left on certain occasions, but men and women are thrown into certain conditions in which it may be their duty to abide in their calling, though it may surround them with special difficulties. That calling may be one which, ordinarily, involves a vast amount of care and anxious thought and yet they cannot get out of it. They ought not to leap the hedge which the Lord has placed along their way, for if they do, they may fall into a ditch on the other side, muddy their garments, and so make matters worse. By crying to God for help and trusting in His sure Word, they will be able to bear the burden which God has put upon them and, it is their wisdom to do so.

Yet there *are* points in which we are allowed a choice about the state in which we would place ourselves and here our text comes in as a rule of action. Paul, in the case before us, is talking about the marriage of Christians and he bids Christians, in the first place, not to marry, for, he says, “I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”

Now, observe the condition of affairs which led Paul to give this advice. Times of great persecution were present. Christians were continually being dragged into court or set before the lions in the amphitheatre, or shut up in prison, or put to cruel deaths—in such circumstances few would desire to have families about them. The Christian man who had no wife or child could flee in a moment if it were right to flee. Or, when he stood before the bar of Nero, he had not to think within himself, “If I die, I leave a wife and fatherless children.” When the single man put on his hat, he housed all his family, and thus he could move this way or that way to preach the Gospel, or to escape from persecution—and his moving was no great affair such as would be involved in transporting a family from land to land.

Paul wished the Church to be like an army which is not encumbered with baggage. The circumstances of the time demanded that they should be unencumbered, like troops upon forced marches. Paul, himself, carried all his property in a little bit of canvas—it consisted of half a dozen needles and a reel of thread, with which he made tents wherever he went. He was thus without carefulness. In those hard and desperate times, it was the best possible thing that a man could do, or a woman, to remain single—they were thus in the best condition for flight, or suffering, or service, or death. It was not a time in which they could settle down and engage in trade or agriculture and Paul, therefore, gives, as a recommendation, that they had better not *then* be married.

If we get into such times, again, we will give the same advice, but we are not certain that we should speak thus, to-day, as a general rule. The circumstances are decidedly different and we are to follow the great principle rather than the particular instance. I have known Brothers who, I am sure, had a great deal more care before they were married than ever they had afterwards. Poor things that they were, they needed somebody to look after them! I have known cases in which women have had great care and burden in their single state, but have found rest in the house of a husband and, it has been upon the whole, the best for them in the truest sense. They served God better and were freer from carefulness in the married state. That is the rule to judge by.

But numbers of you never judge at all in this way! Many men and women rush into marriage when they know that it must involve them in all sorts of care and trouble—and deprive them of the possibility of doing anything in the Master’s service. It is not for me to offer advice, for it is useless. I am often asked for advice, but I generally find that people have made up their minds long before they come to their minister! They only want him to sanction what they have already settled and, therefore, I very seldom give any advice. Still, I shall lay down the general principle which every Christian man and woman must accept—“I would have you to be free from cares,” You are to put this to the front, that you are not your own, you are bought with a price.

And about this matter of marriage, as well as everything else, you are to consult the will of your Lord and Master, and you are to put this as the question, “Shall I glorify God better married or unmarried? May I hope that I shall not so greatly increase my carefulness as to distract myself from serving my Lord? There is something to be said on each side, but may I hope that the balance may be struck so that I shall really be the better servant of Christ in the marriage state? If so, I may enter upon it, but if not, I am not to gratify myself at my Savior’s expense. I may not marry if I should, then, cease to be as good a servant of Christ as I am now.” None of you are too good servants of Christ—I have never met with any that were! We cannot afford to lose anything which we already have, for we are not even, now, all that we ought to be. No, we must give ourselves whole-heartedly to Christ and remember the admonition of the text, “I would have you without carefulness.”

We have got over that somewhat difficult part of our road which is concerned with marriage. We come to another which is very plain, but needs to be spoken of, namely, the matter of increased worldly business. Some forget this advice of the Apostle altogether. Regarding it as a check upon enterprise, such persons take up a number of businesses and, consequently, increase their cares indefinitely! Now, if you can serve God better by having a dozen shops, have a dozen. But I have known persons whom God blessed in one shop and they lost the blessing when they felt they needed to open two or three. In a moderate business, they obtained a livelihood and all that they could need—and they were able to get out to the House of God and to have spare hours for the service of God in the Sunday school, in preaching, or other forms of Christian service. Thus they were in an enviable position for usefulness and ought to have been pillars in the house of the Lord.

But they were not content with so favored a state! Nothing would do for them but they must have shop number two, three, four and then, of course, they were too busy to go out on week evenings, to lectures, classes, or Prayer Meetings. When invited to take their part in the Lord’s work, they replied—“You see, I cannot get out. You must excuse me, I am so tired.” Just so. Of course you must look after business, now that you are so immersed in it, but how did you come to get into such a state of bondage that you cannot get out to the worship or service of God? Is not your excessive toil your own fault? If you have brought yourself into such a condition that you cannot give to God His due, is it an excuse for your not being able to do it? The disability is entirely of your own creation— how can it excuse you?

If this were the time, I could mention persons who were members of this Church whose departure from the way of righteousness was owing to a grasping spirit—and that grasping spirit has, in certain cases, led to a foolish rush after riches which has ended in poverty and discredit! They had as much as they could have managed, but they wanted more, and more, and more—and to get more they ventured upon ways and methods which were questionable. By-and-by, the means of Grace were neglected because they must attend to business. Very soon, for the same reason, they could not get up on Sunday morning, they were so tired—they did not get the shop shut till twelve—and then there was clearing up till halfpast one, so they could not get out on a Sunday morning.

Worse than that, after a while they just looked over the ledger a little on Sunday afternoon. Soon the very vitals of godliness were gone and, not long after that, the name to live went, also—for the power of godliness had entirely departed from them. “I would have you without carefulness” and, therefore, to the most enterprising Brother, I would say—Brother, do not fill your pocket at the expense of your soul! Do what is best for the best part of yourself and that best part of yourself is the soul which deals with God and eternity! God can prosper you and make you exceedingly happy with a more manageable business and He can make you miserable if you willfully increase your cares. The Lord Jesus said, “A man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.”

Therefore, as I would have you without carefulness, look well, my dear Friend, before you launch out into that new business, or take that offhand farm, or enter upon that speculative operation. Do not wade into risks so deep that you will be drowned in anxiety! Remember how Napoleon tried to do too much, and did it, and did for himself. Men of large capacity may rule an empire and yet serve the Lord admirably, but the most of us had better be satisfied with a smaller sphere. At any rate, let us not heap up such a load of our own that we shall not be able to bear the burden which our Master would have us carry for His love’s sake.

Do not look so cross, good Friend, or I shall think that my advice is more necessary to you than it is pleasing! The day may come when this warning will be better understood by you than at this moment. Some Christian men need to have a touch on the elbow about public engagements. For my part, I believe that everything which concerns a man concerns a Christian, and that God never wished His servants to leave the government of this realm to all the place-hunters and unprincipled selfseekers who look for a seat in Parliament. Christian men ought to see to it that right is promoted and justice done. To abandon Law-making to the worst of men would be infamous! So with everything which concerns the public welfare, I believe that we are to turn the scale for truth and righteousness, and are not to let the devil have his way and give robbery and oppression the run of all the parishes in England.

But there is a limit to a man’s acceptance of public office and let that limit be watched carefully by all the Lord’s children. Let the rule be—first our God and then our fellow men. What if I am a patriot, yet first of all the New Jerusalem is the place of my citizenship! I am a pilgrim and a stranger—and even though I seek the good of these aliens among whom I dwell, I must still keep my eye upon my own native country, towards which I am speeding. A man must not be doing 20 things in public life and neglecting the calls of the Lord Christ. If he does this, he will have care upon care, and will weary and trouble himself with things of no profit—and he will not care for the things of God as he should. Brothers and Sisters, “I would have you without carefulness”—you are the servants of God—do not make yourselves the slaves of men!

Here I wish to say another word to some whose occupations prevent their attendance at the House of God. I am not going to censure or judge any, but I will say this—whenever I hear of a young man who has an occupation with a moderate salary, who is able to get out to worship and has the whole Lord’s-Day to himself, so that he can help in the Sunday school and, perhaps, in some week-evening engagements—if I hear that he is offered twice as much money in a place where he must be shut out from worship and service, I hope he will look long before he makes the bargain. If part of the Sabbath must go and all week-night privileges must go, I would, in most cases, say, “My Brother, forego the temporal advantage for the sake of the spiritual.” There may be exceptions to rules and I lay down nothing as a hard-and-fast rule, but still, let this be the general guide in such matters—“I would have you without carefulness.”

If it is so that he who has less, has less care, let me have less! He who has a moderate income, with small responsibility, is a richer man than he who has twice as much, with twice as much responsibility—and only half as much opportunity of serving his God. For you, Christians, the best place you can have is where you can do most for Jesus—and the worst place you can have is where you are denied Christian privileges. No amount of salary can make up to you the disadvantage of being kept from the assemblies of the saints, or can make up to your soul the loss sustained by excessive labor in the house of bondage. “I would have you without carefulness.”

This bears very hard upon all those forms of speculation of which some men are so fond. A man says, “I believe that I can get rich in a hurry by a certain venture.” Do not touch it! You will have no end of care and it may bring absolute poverty upon you. You have heard of the man who hurried to be rich and was not innocent. I am afraid that few are long innocent who hasten to be rich! They clutch at everything on a sudden and they are apt to include in that clutch a few things which do not belong to them! What devouring care must prey upon those whose trade is as risky as a throw of the dice? When business is mere gambling, it ceases to be legitimate! Let speculators take heed of those dangers which necessarily attend all games of chance. I believe that every form of gambling, though it may take a business shape, tends more, or less, to harden the heart.

As for the naked form of play which risks upon the roll of a ball, it is murder to all the finer feelings of the heart! Nobody but gamblers could have cast the dice, all blood bespattered, at the foot of the Cross of our Redeemer! Gambling brings men into a state of heart worse than almost any other form of sin. When a man is willing to risk practically his all on the mere toss of a halfpenny whether goods shall go up or down, he is usually a bad man. And if he is not, he will be so before long, for that kind of thing does serious mischief to the most tender tissues of the heart. If any Christian man attempts it, what a state of mind will he soon know! Can he pray? Can he meditate? Can he commune with the Lord Jesus? Can he be without carefulness? Where can his trust be? Where his faith in God? When he has practically committed his fortunes to the devil, how can he confide in his God?

Gambling and prayer can never go together except in the case of the reprobate—I suppose they are profane enough to unite the two—but therein they blaspheme Heaven most detestably! Brothers and Sisters, abstain from those things which inevitably create undue excitement, anxiety and suspense. I speak as unto wise men—judge you what I say—I would have you without carefulness and, therefore, I would have you avoid those states which involve it.

**I.**Secondly, BY KEEPING AWAY FROM THOSE OBJECTS OF PURSUIT WHICH WOULD NATURALLY FOSTER IT, I would have you without carefulness. When a man makes the gaining of riches the first thing in life, he cannot be without carefulness. Where his treasure is, there will his heart be, also. There is the carefulness to get, the carefulness to hold, the carefulness to place out at interest, the carefulness to collect dues and so forth. Yes, and this may be the case, even, with poor people who may be as full of greedy care as the millionaire! Thrift is commendable, but covetousness is detestable. Men not only lay by for a rainy day, which is well— but when they make saving the main object of their lean and hungry lives—God’s Glory and man’s needs are, alike, forgotten.

Now, if you live for anything but God—especially if you live to hoard up with the determination that somehow or other you will be immensely rich—you must be *full* of carefulness. It cannot be helped. Suppose that you are of a nobler spirit and you live with the view of gaining honor among men—you will, with equal certainty, be full of cares. I hope you will not say, “I must be honored. I must have my neighbors think well of me and I will make a slave, or a fool, or a hypocrite of myself to please them.” This resolve is detestable and if you go into that line you will not be without carefulness, I can tell you—and with all your carefulness you will never succeed. To please everybody is as impossible as to make ice and bake bread at the same moment in one oven. Give up the wretched attempt!

Be a man and be not a mere man-pleaser. How blessedly easy I feel in my work for God! But I owe that ease to the fact that I have no one to please but my Lord. When I preach, the last thing that ever occurs to me is to ask myself whether any of you will like it or not. It is no wish of mine to give offense, but it has never occurred to me to think whether you will be offended or not. I do not think you would respect me if I made my preaching an occasion for seeking to please *you*. If it pleases *God,* it will please you, if you are right—and if you are wrong and it does not please you—well, it never *ought* to please you!

This enables a preacher to give all his mind to his subject. The opposite feeling would distract him and make him live the life of a toad under a harrow. Go into life in just that kind of spirit—do everything to please your fellow man *if* it will do him real good. Never be ungenerous, nor unkind, nor uncourteous, but never live to please the world. No slave is so slavish as the wretch who draws his breath from other people’s nostrils and can only live if he is approved by his neighbors. Scorn such servitude! I would have you without carefulness and you cannot be without carefulness if you only seek to please men. Many persons are so ambitious to be respectable that they never will be without carefulness—they have a pound coming in but they spend a guinea to be respectable—and so they cannot be without carefulness. I charge you do not care about being what is known in the world as “respectable.” Be Christians, whether people respect you or not!

That littleness which stamps out everything that is good or brave in order to put a man into the fashion is to be the object of our supreme contempt! Do right. Serve God. Live for Heaven. Care little about man’s esteem. Abhor the pride of life. Live above the world, or you will be eaten up with carefulness—it cannot be helped. Some persons have a favorite objective in life—not God, but an earthly thing—and these cannot be without carefulness. Dear mother, love your children by all manner of means, but if that little one has become an idol, I am sure you cannot be without carefulness! I have known mothers kill their children because they did not want them to die. That is to say, they never let the wind blow on them— they kept them in a box, screened the blessed air of Heaven from them— and so brought them up that they became weak and sickly, thanks to their mothers’ indulgent care. Lots of children have suffered a martyrdom from too much nursing! Excessive carefulness has created cause for care.

If it is not a child, if it is anything else that becomes the pet and hobby of life, you will soon find that you have plenty of care about it—a horse, a dog, a flower, a painting may entangle men and women in nets of care. I have seen it and lamented it. The more objects you set your heart upon, the more thorns there are to tear your peace of mind into shreds. I know people who dread every puff of wind and every shower of rain because a yacht might be tossed about, or a garden-party spoiled—such trifles may sensible people be troubled about! “What are we to do, then?” asks one. Why, live for God! Live wholly for God! Put everything else into its true place. Children, business, every favorite pursuit—leave them in the hands of God—for until you do this, you will be cankered with carefulness of one kind or another and be incapacitated for the joyful service of the Lord your God!

Thus have I given you two helpful rules—first, avoid the states which involve carefulness. And secondly, avoid the pursuits which involve carefulness. May the Spirit of God help you to carry them out.

**III.**But now, thirdly, and better still, I would have you without carefulness BY EXERCISING A CHILD-LIKE FAITH IN THE EVER-BLESSED GOD. He sends you troubles and trials, but be without carefulness, first, by never trying to anticipate them. Never meet them half-way. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Oh, the strength it gives a man when he learns to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”! It would be a poor prayer if a man should cry, “Lord, give me a guarantee of my bread for six months.” No, no! The Lord never taught us to ask for that! That forestalling of the demands of the future finds no petition written for it. Our Lord would have us cultivate the feeling that whatever the necessity of the day, whatever the requirement of the day, whatever the trial of the day, we shall take it to God as it comes and He will, then and there, meet the case. Commit your way unto the Lord and then be without carefulness.

I will now tell you something still better. If you can manage to live by the five minutes, that is better than living by the day. I am not, tonight, at 20 minutes past eight o’clock, allowed to fret myself about what is likely to happen at ten! I have Grace at this time for the present moment, but not for 10 o’clock. Why, therefore, should I hurry towards a trouble for which I am not yet prepared? Leave 10 o’clock worries till 10 o’clock comes! The hour that brings the trial will bring the strength! The hour that tests you, will find God ready at your hand to help you! Live by the day—yes, live by the hour.

The next thing is, if you would be without carefulness, be quite content with the Lord’s will. Suppose you do not prosper in business as you would like? Be content not to do so. Do your best and leave your prospering in the hands of God. Suppose that after consulting a physician you find that your complaint is not removed? Duly follow all right and wise prescriptions and directions—and then leave your health with God. With regard to those you love, when you have prayed for their restoration and they are not restored, then still say, “Not as I will, but as You will.” If you cannot suit your purse to your wishes, bring your wishes to your purse! Higher still, if God does not give you all your desires, do the other thing—submit all your desires to God! When your desires and God’s decrees agree, all will be well! Whether God gives you your wish, or you give up your wish, will make no notable difference. You will be equally happy so long as your will is God’s will and God’s will is your will.

And I believe—and I speak experimentally—that when you are racked with pain, if God teaches you to submit, (and it is often a hard lesson), you can suffer in every limb and yet *sing* in your inmost soul! This is the way to live without carefulness—first, not to meet trouble before it comes and, next, when it does come—to be content, saying, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seems good to Him.” The next thing is to be quite sure about the love of God. He cannot make a mistake and He cannot fail His people. If the worst thing, as it seems to us, should happen, it must be the right thing because God has sent it! Be sure, also, that when our needs come, God’s supplies will come, too. The Lord is bound by His own promise to provide for all the real necessities of those who trust in Him. Oh, that we did thoroughly know God and did fully believe in Him! Then would our peace be as a river, and our joy like that of birds when the sun is rising. Then should we sing—

***~~“I have no cares,  
O blessed Lord,  
For all my cares are Thine!~~***

***~~I live in triumph, too, for You  
Have made Your triumphs mine!”~~***

Another sweet thing would help us to be without care and that is to believe fully in the power of prayer—and in the fact that God does actually answer it. God will grant His children’s desires and answer their prayers! We constantly meet with instances in which God does most manifestly come to the help of those that walk before Him aright. I personally met this week with a notable case. A dear Sister is left a widow, with three children. She wonders what she shall do for the morning’s bread. There is none in the house. She thinks to herself that she formerly kept shop and that she has a few goods left, a little stained and soiled, but still saleable at a price. She goes into her room and prays God, in her agony of soul, to direct her to a customer. To her delight a person asks her whether she kept shop, once, at such-and-such a road.

Yes, she is the individual. Such goods as she used to buy at the shop, this stranger cannot get anywhere else, and she much needs them. Could she tell her where she could get the like? Yes, these are the very goods that she had hoped to sell and, though a little soiled and stained, the enquirer is glad to have them! The very person who wants them has come to buy them before she has crossed the threshold to seek a customer and she is amazed at the goodness of the Lord! This honest woman is told that it was a mere coincidence—she says that she knows nothing about coincidences, but she blesses the Lord that her needs were supplied for the time—and she means to trust Him for the future! I did not attempt to alter her resolution to rely, in the future, upon God in time of trouble—on the contrary, I cheered her in it, for I would have her without carefulness.

When my grandfather was a young man, before my days, he had a great family and a small income. He had a cow that he kept for his children and he went to fetch it up from the meadow. But when it was near the house, it was taken with “the staggers,” and died. My grandmother said, “There, James, what shall we do, now, through the winter without the cow?” He replied, “My dear, God has provided for us and He always will, though I do not know how.” And with a heavy heart he went to pray and lay his trouble before the Lord. I have heard the dear old man tell how that morning brought a post-letter, with nine pence to pay—and Grandmother said, “Troubles never come alone. Here is nine pence to pay for this letter. Shall we take it in?” But when she did take it in, it brought 20 pounds from a society in London, to which the good man had never applied! He could not make out how they knew of him at all! But the *Lord* knew and led them to send the money on the day of Grandfather’s greatest need!

These stories are a few out of many that are in my wallet—instances which I have gathered in my pilgrimage. I have seen enough, in my own lifetime, to fill a volume concerning the goodness of the Lord in answer to His children’s prayers. When you are as sure that God answers prayer as I am sure of it, then you will realize the meaning of the text, “I would have you without carefulness.” Some people of my acquaintance are full of carefulness. I know a maiden lady who possesses what many poor people would think to be wealth. She has a fixed, regular and ample income, but she will not spend it because she must first save a certain sum. At first her ambition was to have enough in hand to bury her. Why, she has enough already to bury 20 of her, but she keeps on nipping and scraping, still, and whenever you meet her she talks of how little she eats, and how dear everything is!

She might live in plenty and have something for the cause of God, but instead of that, she has always an awful story about her expenses. I believe that if she were made into the Empress of China, she would be afraid that there would not be enough tea grown in China for her to drink! She is of such a spirit that she is a burden to herself and a plague to all who are about her! When you once give way to grumbling and grasping, then you are careful, and careful, and careful till you become good-for-nothing in the service of God. Do, I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, try to get rid of this disease, for your fretful carefulness will make you a misery to yourself and to your friends! It will destroy your power to do good and it will cut off your communion with God!

If you do not trust God, God will not walk with you. I do not care to have a man of my acquaintance who does not believe in me. I cannot bear him if he is always mistrusting me. And so it is with God—He will not commune with you or smile upon you if you will not trust Him—but if you will leave everything with Him and believe that your heavenly Father knows best, you shall have many a kind word from His lips, and you shall find what a good, gracious, loving Father He is. Why, you and I ought to be as happy as the birds of the air and as merry as crickets on the hearth! Just think what a God we have, who will take care of us both in this life and in the life to come! All things are ours—the gifts of God—the purchase of a Savior’s love!

Even our troubles are the best troubles in the world! Our cross is a heavy one, but it is the best cross for us. Each man has the cross which best fits him. You could not carry mine and I could not carry yours half as well as my own. Despite your peculiar trials, you are a happy and a favored man, and God has dealt infinitely better with you than you ever deserved or could have expected! Praise Him, then, and bless His name! Get out of the fidgets, Brother, if you can. Get out of the worries, my dear Sister. You are a good, dear housewife, and your husband says if he could get a little of the Mary *into* you, and a little of the Martha *out* of you, you would be a perfect wife! Is not this a practical suggestion? Let us see whether we cannot, each one, be improved by trying to be without carefulness. Let us, each one, give all our thought and care to this one object—How can I please God? How can I avoid sin? How can I be holy? How can I win sinners to Christ? How can I comfort my fellow Christians? How, in a word, can I live as Christ would have lived?

You never find Jesus worrying. If He weeps, it is for the souls of men. If He suffers, it is to redeem men from going down to the Pit. And if He dies of a broken heart, it is a broken heart about the sins of others. As for Himself, what a delicious carelessness of holy confidence there was about Him! He went on board ship and He knew that a storm would come, a storm that would try the poor little boat, but He lay down and slept! The disciples are all in a worry. They cry, “Master, we perish!” And where was their Master? Asleep! You have often thought of the sleep of the Savior and almost deemed Him negligent. Now, think of the grand confidence of the Savior in being able to sleep in a storm! If His disciples had been asleep, too, it would have been the best thing they could have done, for they could not manage the winds or the waves. If they had possessed the moral dignity which ennobled their Lord and had been able to go down into the back part of the boat and to go to sleep with Him, they would have woke up in the morning in a calm.

The best thing you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, can do in a great trouble may be to remember that text, “He gives His beloved sleep.” Pray over your difficulty and then go to sleep—and wake up and find it all over—for the Lord has worked a great deliverance for you. I knew one, well, who was always in trouble about how he should die. Dear good man, he refused to be comforted, but was often troubled about the horrors of the departing hour—until one night he went to bed, shut his eyes on earth—and opened them in Glory! He never knew that he was away from earth till he knew that he was in Heaven, for he died in his sleep! And so it turned out that he had been worrying himself about nothing! Leave everything with God. If I can trust my *soul* with Him, I am sure I can trust my body with Him! If I can trust my eternal condition with Him, can’t I trust Him with a matter of a five-pound note?

What? Rest on Christ for Glory, and not rest on Christ for bread! Come, come! The Lord get you out of that low, unbelieving state! I am nearly at the close and so I press upon you my text. Like Paul, “I would have you without carefulness.” May you be so, through the power of the gracious God who taught the Apostle Peter to say in the Spirit, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Amen.

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THE BATTLE OF LIFE  
NO. 3511

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1916.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“Who ever goes to war at his own expense?”  
1 Corinthians 9:7.*

THIS question occurs in the course of an argument. The Apostle was proving that the minister who gives all his time to the preaching of the Word is entitled to a maintenance from those people among whom he labors. He gives divers illustrations, among them this—that the soldier who devotes himself to the service of his country is not expected to find his own equipment and his own rations, but he is provided for by his country. And so should it be, he teaches us, in the Church of God. The minister set apart to labor wholly in spiritual things should have temporal supplies provided him. That is a topic, however, on which it would be superfluous for me to enlarge. Your convictions are so sound and your practice so consistent, that you do not need to be exhorted, much less to be expostulated with on that matter!

But the same question may be asked when we have other morals to point. Is it ever expected that men who go on a warfare should pay their own charges? There is a warfare in which all of us are engaged. What is life but a great battle, lasting from our earliest days until we sheathe the sword in death? This battle we hope to win and yet, if we succeed, it will be a distinct and definite response to the challenge before us, “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?” We may be quite sure that if ever we attempt the warfare of life at our own expense we shall soon find ourselves failing—and it will end in a miserable defeat! Going at once to the subject, we have here—

**I.**AN INSPIRING METAPHOR.  
When life is represented as a warfare, some peaceful minds may feel a little alarmed at the pictures. Yet there are other minds with enough of gallantry in their constitutions to feel their blood pulsing stronger at the thought that life is to be one continued contest! I do but borrow a reflection from the secular press when I say that it were ill for us if the love of peace, fostered among us as a nation, should degenerate into a fear of danger, a reluctance to bear hardships, or an indifference to the accomplishment of exploits. Coward spirits we may always expect to find, who conjure up gloomy anticipations, and who prophesy horrible disasters. The untrod path and the unaccustomed climate are dreadful bugbears. But is this the instinct of an Englishman? How else should he contemplate difficulties but as problems to be solved—capital out of which fame or fortune is to be won? And as for the British soldier, is he to be looked upon as a hothouse plant who shrinks from exposure? Far rather would I respect him as a representative individual, the type of his race, always ready for any emergency! In the days of the old Gallic wars, when we had to fight with Napoleon in Egypt, there were just as many knotty points and critical situations to be grappled with—and certainly at headquarters, the War Department was not more efficiently managed than it is now. Yet British soldiers pressed forward, then, to the conflict nor did they pant for fortune! What they did seek was a career with some opportunity of distinguishing themselves.  
Moreover, those who stayed at home scanned the dispatches with eager interest and full often lamented that they had not the chance given them of going forth to the fight. Well may the patriot ask, Has AngloSaxon courage all fled?—if at every call to fresh deeds of heroism we listen to the crowing of those whose nature it is to look black and utter dark omens. Our children’s children may read how the haughty insolence of Theodore of Abyssinia was humbled, but I hope they will never hear the screeching of the ravens who warned us of the mountain fastnesses in which he was lodged! The Ashantee War is behind us, now, and I suppose those who were once afraid of its perils are now amazed at its prowess! Yes, and that is how I would have Christians feel with regard to spiritual conflicts. Difficulties? Well, they are things to be deciphered! Dangers? They are things to be met and encountered! Impossibilities? They are to be scouted as a nightmare, a delirious dream! The Christian wakes to find impossibility impossible! With a history behind him and a destiny before him, he can say, “The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” Things that are impossible with man are possible with God. I like my text all the better because it implies a hostile engagement and speaks of warfare. For me the battlefield has no charms. With host encountering host, and carnage left behind, I have no sympathy—but *spiritually* my soul seems enamored by the idea—I buckle on my armor at the very thought that life is to be a conflict and a strife in which it behooves me to get the mastery!  
Do I not address many young men just commencing spiritual life? If you have thought of life at all, I hope you have thought that it is wise to *begin the battle of life early*. We have all so little time to live—and the first years of life are so evidently the best years we shall ever have, that it is a pity to waste them! Oh, how much more some of us might have done if we had begun earlier! Had the very flush of our boyhood been consecrated and the strength of our youth spent in our Master’s service, what work we might have accomplished! Now, young men, as a comrade a little farther on the road than you, I take you to the brow of the hill for a moment—and point out to you the pathway we have to pursue—and as I point it out, I tell you that you will have to fight along every inch of the road if you are, at the end, to win the crown which I hope your ambition pants after! Are you ready for the conflict? Then let us talk awhile about it, for as we shall always have to be on the alert, it is well for us to study the map and to acquaint ourselves with the tactics we must practice.  
Be sure, then, my Friend, that if you and I are ever to be conquerors at the last, we shall have to fight with that trinity of enemies—*the world, the flesh and the devil*. There is the world. Do you resolve to do the right and to love the true? Depend upon it, you will get no assistance from this world! Of its maxims, nine out of ten are false, and the other one selfish! And even that which is selfish has a lie at the bottom of it. As for its customs—well, live where you may, the customs of the world are not such as a citizen of Heaven can endorse. Go into what company you please, and you will find that there is much of the prevailing habit that is no friend to Divine Grace, and no friend to virtue. In the upper circles, with much pretence, there is little reality, but there is a lack of sound honesty. Among the lower classes, go where you will, if you firmly resolve to be a Christian, to follow closely the footsteps of your Lord, you will have to breast the current! The most of men are going down the hill. You will be like the solitary traveler when you are threading your way upwards. Do you enlist for Christ tonight? Then know that you enlist against the whole world! You will henceforth be an alien to your mother’s children and a stranger to your own household unless, happily, that household should have been converted too! Young man, the young men in the shop will be against you! Alas, for the wickedness of the young men of London! Young woman, you will find in the workroom, yes, perhaps you will find even in your father’s house, influences at work to impede, if not to thrust you back! Man of business, when you meet others on exchange, if perchance the conversation should turn upon religion, you will find it far from profitable and far from genial! You will be like a speckled bird—and all the birds round about you will be against you. As a marked man, your motives will be mistrusted, your character impugned, your piety burlesqued! If you resolve to win the crown of immortality, you will only do it as by the skin of your teeth! It matters not where you are cast, this is sure to be your lot, unless, as here and there is the case, you may be a timid and shielded one, too weak for conflict and, therefore, God keeps you in retirement. And yet as for the world, I think we could easily overcome that were it not for a worse enemy.  
Soldier of Christ, you have to struggle *with yourself*. My own experience is a daily struggle with myself. I wish I could find in me something friendly to Grace, but up to now I have searched my nature through and have found everything in rebellion against God! At one time there comes the torpor of sloth, when one ought to be active every moment, having so much to do for God and for the souls of men—and so little time to do it. At another time there comes the quickness of passion. When we should be calm and cool, and play the Christian, bearing with patience, there come the unadvised word and the rash expression! Soon we are troubled with conceit, the devilish whisper—I can call it no less—“How well you have done! How well have you played your part!” This pride is the archenemy of our souls! Then will come foul and faithless distrust, suggesting that God does not regard the affairs of men and will not interpose on our behalf. Fresh forms of evil are generated in our own breasts and this chameleon heart of ours, which never seems of one color but for a single moment, which is this and that by turns, and nothing long, challenges us on all occasions—and against it we shall have to struggle perpetually! Unless we deny ourselves and lay violent hands upon the impulses of our nature, we shall never come to the place where the crowns are distributed to the conquerors!  
And then another foe comes up, though not the closest, the strongest of the three—*the devil*! If you have ever stood foot to foot with him, as some of us have, you will remember well that black day, for even he who beats Apollyon concludes the battle wounded in his own hands and in feet. Oh, that stern enemy! He knows how to attack us in our sore points. He discerns our weaknesses and he is at no loss for cunning devices. He understands how one moment to fawn upon us and flatter us, and how the next moment to cast his fiery darts, telling us that we are castaways and shall never see the face of God with acceptance! He can quote Scripture for his purpose. He can hurl threats at the heads of the saints which were only meant for sinners, and he can tear promises out of the saints’ hands and cast them in the mire just when they are ready to feed upon them as fair fruits of Paradise! Believe me, it is no small thing to have had to fight with Apollyon, the Prince of Hell. Do you see, then, young soldier, what is before you? There is a triple host of foes, and you must overcome them all or else there shall never be given to you the white stone and the crown of everlasting life!  
Think not that this is an engagement to be quickly terminated. Unlike the laconic dispatch of the ancient Roman, “*Veni, vidi, vici*,” “I came, saw, and conquered,” this is a continuous fight! Should you fight your way to Heaven, not today, nor tomorrow—even if you win it with a deadly skirmish or a brilliant dash like a knight at a tournament—you cannot come back a conqueror! In sober truth, every man and every woman who enlists for Christ will have to wrestle till their bones shall sleep in the tomb! There shall be no pause nor cessation for you from this day until the laurel is upon your brow. If you are defeated one day, you must overcome the next—if a conqueror today, you must fight tomorrow. Like the old knights who slept in their armor, you must be prepared for reprisals— always watchful, always expecting temptation and ready to resist it— never saying, “It is enough,” for he who says, “It is finished,” until he breathes his last, has not yet truly begun! We must have our swords drawn, even to the very last. I have sometimes thought that could we enter Heaven by one sharp, quick, terrible encounter, such as the martyrs faced at the stake, we might endure it heroically. But day after day of protracted martyrdom, and year after year of the wear and tear of pilgrimage and soldier life is the more bitter trial of patience! I do but tell you in order that you may be convinced that it *is not in our power to fight this warfare at our own charge*, that if we have to endure in our own strength and with our own resources, it is most certain that disaster will befall us and defeat will humble us! To fight, and fight on, is our vocation. But if thus you fight, you may hope to conquer, for others have done so before you. On the summit of the palace do you not see those robed in white, who walk in light, with faces bright, and sparkling over with joy? Can you not hear their song? They have overcome, and they tell you— ***“To him that overcomes,  
A crown of life shall be.  
He with his Lord and Master  
Shall reign eternally.”***  
They have overcome! Then why should not you? Jesus Christ, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, has passed through the sternest part of the battle and He has overcome—a Type and Representative of all those who bear their cross, and who shall overcome as He has done!  
Do I see some young man, eager, earnest, all aglow, ready for the crown? Let me remind you *that you may be defeated*. Though it is well for you to begin life with a resolute determination to fight through the battle, still I would have you remember that you may be led captive by your foe! There is a most instructive little book, issued by the Religious Tract Society, called *The Mirage of Life*, which I think all young men should read. It gives historical pictures of the different ways in which men have sought to be great, wherein the result of the greatness attained has proved to be a mirage, mocking the man, as the mirage in the desert mocks the traveler when it promises him water and he finds none. That book contains the history of such men as Beckford, a man worth £200,000 a year, who spent the former part of his life in building Fonthill Abbey, with an enormous tower, enriching the place with all the treasures that he could gather from every country! He made the grounds so splendid that crowned heads longed to look within, but, it is said, were refused! And at the end of his life you find him almost penniless—the house upon which he had spent all his time and money, a dilapidated ruin, the tower fallen to the ground, and the name of Beckford forgotten! You have a sketch of William Pitt, the heaven-born minister. One of the greatest of statesmen, who could make war or peace at his will, and after years of the most brilliant success he dies with a broken heart through grief. The high ambition of men of art such as Haydon, is introduced to your notice. This great painter, after blazing with wondrous fame in his art, took his life because he found himself a disappointed and forgotten man! As I read a series of such cases, each one seemed sadder than the other, and it was enough to make a man sit down and weep to think that our mortal race should be doomed to follow such phantoms and to be mocked by such delusions! As I read them all I could not help feeling how necessary it was to say to young men, especially just as they are beginning life, and to young women, too—yes, and the lesson is profitable for all of us—Take care how you run in the race, lest after running till you think you have won the prize, you find that in truth you have lost it! We must take care how we live, for this is the only lifetime we shall have in which to settle the life that lasts forever! Make bankruptcy in your secular business—why, you can start again—but once make bankruptcy in soul affairs, and there is no second life in which to start your career afresh! Are you a defeated soldier of life? Ah, then, you can never begin again, or turn the defeat into a victory. If you go down to your grave a captive of sin, the iron bands will be about you forever! There is no retrieving your position. The priceless blessing of freedom is beyond your reach. You may lament, you cannot attain it. See then, our life is a battle! We must constantly fight! Haply we may win, or haply we may be defeated. I now proceed to mark a second point with—  
**II.**A KINDLY HINT.  
Like a cool breath fanning our cheeks when too hot with ambition, this enquiry greets us, “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?” *So, then, there will be expenses in this life battle*. It is not to be won without pain and cost. Let us just glance at some of these expenses. You will soon see how they mount up. If any man shall get up to Heaven, what a demand for courage he will have to meet! How many enemies he must face! How much ridicule he must endure! How frequently must he be misrepresented and maligned! How often must he be discreet enough to be silent, and then, bold enough to speak and avow his convictions and his purpose!  
If a man shall get to Heaven, what an expense of *patience* he will have! How he must bear and forbear! How he must put up with one sharp difficulty and another,

making light of fatigue and fasting, restless days and sleepless nights— unflinching in fiery temptation, unabashed amidst cold contempt!  
If any man will get to Heaven, what an amount of *perseverance* he will require to hold on and to hold out! What hours of prayer, what wrestling with God for a blessing, what striving with himself to overcome sinful propensities! What an expense of watchfulness he will have! How he must guard the avenues of his being! How he must track his actions to the springs of motives and keep his thoughts pure from guile! There can be little ease and not much slumber for a man who would get the eternal crown! What fresh supplies of zeal he will need, for we shall not drift into Heaven without a conflict or a care. We must cut, and hack and hew with intense energy, for the Savior says, “The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by storm.” What *strength* he will require, for he has to deal with potent foes! And oh, what *wisdom* he will need, for he has to stand against the craftiness of evil creatures and to overcome one who is wiser than the ancients, even *Satan*, the arch-tempter!  
It is possible that the difficulties of an expedition may be intensely aggravated by a lack of knowledge as to the country to be invaded. Under such circumstances it is hard to anticipate the contingencies that may arise. In the battle of life this is the rub. Who knows what lies next before him? How can we forestall the surprises that may await us? “Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth.” If I were aware of the temptations that would befall me a year from now, I think I could guard myself against them. But I do not even know what pinch or peril may befall me before the *hour* has passed! You cannot tell the provocations that may occur before you close your eyes in slumber tonight. You may have a trial or a temptation such as never crossed your path before. Therefore I beseech you to consider the greatness of the expenses of this warfare. You have to pass through an experience which no man before you has proved. All the path of life is new to you, unmapped, untrod, unanticipated. Yet all you lack of clear statistics is made up for in dire prognostics. No doubt the climate is baneful and will subject you to fever or heat. Our British soldiers, rank and file, must press forward though they are landed on a blazing beach, across which they have to march—nor will it ever do for them to be dismayed by steep mountains, dismal swamps, or savage tribes. Bent on victory, they brave the incidents of the campaign before they sight the adversaries they attack— while their heads and hearts are full of honor, promotion, stars, stripes and Victoria crosses! But in our eventful battle of life, the checks and bars to progress, the dangers and temptations that we shall all have to meet with in our natural constitution and our secular calling, the unnavigable currents and the impassable barriers that thwart us before we grapple with the main enterprise to enter Heaven are more than I can describe in one sermon! No marvel to me that Mr. Pliable should say, as he turned back, “You may have the brave country yourselves for me.” The Slough of Despond, as a first part, put him into a dudgeon and he said, “I do not like it. I will have no more of it.”  
Apart from Divine Strength, Pliable was a wise man, wise in his generation to shrink from the adventure, for it is a hard journey to the skies. They spoke the truth who said that there were giants to fight with, dragons to be slain, mountains to be crossed and black rivers to be forded. It is so, and I pray you count the cost. There is no “royal road” to Heaven, except that the King’s highway leads there. There is no easy road skillfully leveled or scientifically paved. The labor is too exhaustive, the obstructions are too numerous, the difficulties are too serious—unless God, Himself, comes to our help! I wittingly put these dilemmas before you that I may compel you to say, “Who can go this warfare at his own expense?” And now, in the third place, let us look at our text as—  
**III.**A GRACIOUS REMINDER.  
Does any man at any time go a warfare at his own expense? I think not. Young man! Young woman! I have told you of difficulties and of dangers. I trust your bold spirit taught by God has, thereby, been fired to greater ardor. Now I have something to say to you which has cheered me, and cheered your sires before me, and made them strong, even in their weakness. It is this. You see you cannot do this warfare in your own strength. Is not that clear to you? Then, I pray you, do not try it! Do not for a moment contemplate it! If you do, you will rue it. Your fall will be your first warning! The second time it will warn you more bitterly. If you continue in your own strength, you will, perhaps, have a warning too late! But you may rely on God to help you. The text implies it. If, by faith, you yield yourself to Christ, whoever you may be, with a desire and intent to live henceforth as a follower of Jesus, God will help you, and that right early! Though a warfare is before you, you are not to go at your own expense.  
Shall I tell you how God will help you? Certainly *you may reckon upon His watchful Providence*. You little know how easy the Almighty can make a path which otherwise would have been difficult and dangerous. Follow God’s leading and you shall never lack for His comfort. I have lived long enough to see many people carve for themselves very eagerly, and cut their fingers very severely! I have seen others who albeit they were great losers for a time by doing right, have had to bless God year after year for the abundant recompense they received afterwards! No man shall be a loser in the long run by loving and serving God! If you are willing and obedient, trusting yourself with Christ, you shall find those awful wheels of Providence revolve for your welfare. The beasts of the field shall be in league with you, and the stones of the field shall be at peace with you. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Now I am not pretending that piety will procure wealth, or that if you espouse Christ’s cause you shall grow rich. I should not wonder if you did. You are none the less likely to prosper in business for being a Christian. I am not going to predict that you shall be without sickness, much less without temptation, for, “whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” But I am sure of this, that if you put your trust in God and do right, no temporal circumstances shall ever happen to you which shall not be for your eternal good! This is forestalling much more than any transient benefit. In the short space you are to live here you may reckon upon the gigantic wheels of Providence as your helpers. The angels of God shall be swift to defend you. Your eyes shall not see them, but your heart shall wax confident. You shall perceive that by some means you have been rescued from a place of drought and led into a fruitful land!  
More than this—as you fight this warfare, looking to God to bear your expenses, *you shall have the Lord Jesus Christ to help you*. Promise not yourself that you will be able to maintain henceforth a perfect life. Sin will harass you. Old corruptions, even when they are driven out from the throne (for sin shall not reign over you), will yet struggle at the foot thereof! But Jesus Christ will be your Helper. He will always be present to revive you with His precious blood, to sprinkle your hearts from an evil conscience, to wash your bodies with pure water. Have you ever admired that picture of Christ, with the basin and the towel washing His disciples’ feet? This is what He will always do for you at every eventide when you have defiled yourself through inadvertence or infirmity. Look into the face of the Crucified! Perhaps you have sometimes wished that He were now visible and accessible to you in body. That sympathizing One who has suffered so much for you! You have said, “Oh, that I might go and tell Him my griefs, and get His help!” He is alive! He is here! He is not far from anyone that seeks Him! Whoever trusts shall surely find Christ to be his very present help in time of trouble. Believe this and you shall prove it true!  
And he that is a soldier of the Cross shall have *the Divine Power of God, the Blessed Spirit, to help him*. I have sometimes thought, when some strong passion has been raging within my soul—How can I ever overcome it? The will was good, but the flesh was weak. But as soon as the Spirit of God has moved on me, the flesh has given way. The Holy Spirit can give the man that is prone to idleness such an intense apprehension of the value of time that he shall be more industrious than the naturally active man. I believe that if any of you who are subject to a bad temper will lay this besetting sin before God in prayer—and ask the Holy Spirit’s help—you shall not only be able to curb it, but you will acquire a sweeter and gentler spirit than some of those whose temperament is naturally even, with no propensity to fitful change or sudden storm! Do not tell me that there is anything in human nature too difficult for the Lord to overcome, for there is not! Whatever may be your temptation, you need not account it an effectual hindrance to your being a Christian. What if it is beyond your own power to grapple with it? When the Eternal arm comes to the rescue. When the right hand of Jehovah is made bare. When the Holy Spirit puts forth His irresistible power, He can smite through the loins of our kingly sins and cut the Rahabs and dragons of our iniquities in pieces! Rest in the might of Jehovah, the God of Israel! He that broke Egypt in pieces with His plagues can vanquish our sins with His judgments or with His Grace—and He can bring the new nature—like the children of Israel, up out of bondage into joyous liberty! Go to the blood, and you shall conquer sin! Go to the Eternal Spirit and your worst corruptions shall be overthrown! “Who ever goes to war at his own expense?” As the soldier draws from his paymaster, so let every Christian draw from his God and Savior! Conduct your warfare trusting in the blessed God! My last words shall be to those who are beginning the great battle of life. Let me urge upon them these—  
**IV.**CAUTIONS AND COUNSELS.  
Behold *the wisdom of meekness*. I heard some time ago of a minister preaching on the dignity of self-reliance! And I thought to myself, Surely that is the dignity of a fool! The dignity of self-reliance? Taken in a certain sense, there is some kind of truth about it, or at least the folly of asking counsel of your neighbor in every strait is sufficiently obvious. But he that relies on his own wits will soon pander to expediency and grovel in the mire! His actions will admit of no better defense than excuses and apologies. No, Sirs, “but let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” A better subject, and one that no preacher need be ashamed of if the Master should come before the sermon is done, is the dignity of *reliance upon God*, and the wisdom of diffidence of oneself! Begin life, young man, young woman, by finding out that the capital you thought you had is much less than it looked like before you counted it. Begin life, young Christians, by understanding that all in your nature that glitters is not gold and that your strength is perfect weakness! Begin by being emptied—and you will soon be filled! “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Begin by being poor. If you begin with lowliness, you will not need to be humiliated—  
***“He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low no pride.  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.”***  
He will win the battle who knows how to begin on the low ground and to fight uphill by Divine Strength. Learn the wisdom, not of self-reliance, but of meekness, for he that trusts in his own heart is a fool!  
Be thoroughly alive to *the importance of prayer*. If all our charges in the war of life are to be paid us by the Paymaster, let us go to the Treasury! Among the strangest of human sins is a distaste for prayer. I open my eyes with wonder at myself whenever I find myself slow to pray! Why, if your children want anything of you, they are not slow to speak! They need not be exhorted to ask for this or that—they speak at once! And here is the soul-enriching exercise of prayer. Is it not strange that you and I should be slack in it? Did you ever stand in a market and see the people coming in from the country with their goods? How diligent they are in their business! How eager to take home as much money as they can! How their eyes glitter! How sharp they are! But here is Heaven’s market—God’s wares are *given away to them who will ask for them!* Yet we seem indifferent, as though we did not care to be enriched! We even leave the Mercy Seat of God unvisited! Oh, young people, do understand the value of prayer! And you aged people, do continue in prayer and supplication, for if we are to win this battle of our life, it can only be by taking in our invoice to the Great Paymaster and asking Him to discharge the expenses of this war.  
Consider, too, the *necessity of holiness*. If, in my life’s warfare, I am entirely dependent upon God, let me not grieve Him. Let me seek so to walk with Him that I may expect to have Him with me. Oh, let our consecration be unreserved and complete!  
And in all these we must prove *the power of faith*. If we have never begun to trust in Jesus, let us begin now. Oh, may the Eternal Spirit breathe faith into our souls! The beginning of true spiritual life is here— trusting what Christ has worked for us, relying upon His sufferings on our behalf. The continuation of spiritual life is here—trusting, still, in what Christ has done and is doing. The consummation of spiritual life on earth is still the same—trusting still, trusting always—always repairing to Christ for the supply of all our needs—going to Him with our blots to have them removed, with our failings to have them forgiven, with our needs and requirements to have them provided for, with our good works and our prayers to have them rendered acceptable, and with ourselves that we may still be preserved in Him!  
Sharpen your swords, soldiers of the Cross, and be ready for the fray, but as you march to the battle, let it be with heads bowed down in adoration before Him who alone can cover your heads in the day of battle! And when you lift up those heads in the front of the foe, let this be your song, “The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song! The Lord has become my salvation!” And when the fight waxes hot, if your head grows weary, think of “Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and still fight on until you win the day! And then as the fight draws to a close and your sun is going down, and you can count your scars, and are ready to enter into your rest, be this your prayer—“I have gone astray like a lost sheep, but seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments.” And be this your last words on earth, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit, for You have redeemed me, O Lord God of my salvation.” So shall this be your eternal song in Heaven above, “Unto Him who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #34 New Park Street Pulpit

PREACH THE GOSPEL  
NO. 34

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 5, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me,  
if I preach not the Gospel.”  
1 Corinthians 9:16~~***

THE greatest man of Apostolic times was the Apostle Paul. He was always great in everything. If you consider him as a sinner, he was *exceedingly*sinful. If you regard him as a persecutor, he was *exceedingly*mad against the Christians and persecuted them even unto strange cities. If you take him as a convert, his conversion was the most notable one of which we read, worked by miraculous power and by the direct voice of Jesus speaking from Heaven—“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” If we take him simply as a Christian, he was an extraordinary one, loving his Master more than others and seeking more than others to exemplify the Grace of God in his life. But if you take him as an Apostle and as a preacher of the Word, he stands out pre-eminently as the prince of preachers and a preacher to kings—for he preached before Agrippa, he preached before Nero Caesar—he stood before emperors and kings for Christ’s name’s sake. It was the characteristic of Paul that whatever he did, he did with all his heart. He was one of the men who could not allow one half of his frame to be exercised, while the other half was indolent. When he set to work, the whole of his energies—every nerve, every sinew—were strained in the work to be done, be it bad work or be it good. Paul, therefore, could speak from experience concerning his ministry because he was the chief of ministers. There is no nonsense in what he speaks. It is all from the depth of his soul. And we may be sure that when he wrote this, he wrote it with a strong unpalsied hand—“Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yes, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.” Now, these words of Paul, I trust, are applicable to many ministers in the present day—to all those who are especially called—who are directed by the inward impulse of the Holy Spirit to occupy the position of Gospel ministers. In trying to consider this verse, we shall have three inquiries this morning—First, *What is it to preach the Gospel*? Secondly, *Why is it that a minister has nothing to glorify of*. And thirdly, *What is that necessity and that woe, of which it is written*, *“Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel*”?

**I.**The first enquiry is, WHAT IS IT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL? There are a variety of opinions concerning this question and possibly among my own audience—though I believe we are very uniform in our doctrinal sentiments—there might be found two or three very ready answers to this question—What is it to preach the Gospel? I shall therefore attempt to answer it, myself, according to my own judgment, if God will help me. And if it does not happen to be the correct answer, you are at liberty to supply a better to yourselves at home.

**1.**The first answer I shall give to the question is this—*To preach the Gospel is to state every Doctrine contained in God’s Word and to give every Truth its proper prominence*. Men may preach a part of the Gospel. They may only preach one single Doctrine of it. And I would not say that a man did not preach the Gospel at all if he did but maintain the Doctrine of Justification by Faith—“By Grace are you saved through faith.” I would put him down for a Gospel minister, but not for one who preached the whole Gospel. No man can be said to preach the whole Gospel of God if he leaves out, knowingly and intentionally one single Truth of the blessed God! This remark of mine must be a very cutting one and ought to strike into the consciences of many who make it almost a matter of principle to keep back certain Truths from the people because they are afraid of them. In conversation a week or two ago with an eminent professor, he said to me, “Sir, we know that we ought not to preach the Doctrine of Election because it is not calculated to convert sinners!” “But,” I said to him, “who is the man that dares to find fault with the Truth of God? You admit, with me, that it is a Truth of God, and yet you say it must not be preached? I dare not have said that thing. I would reckon it supreme arrogance to have ventured to say that a Doctrine ought not to be preached when the all-wise God has seen fit to reveal it! Besides, is the whole Gospel intended to convert sinners? There are some Truths which God blesses to the conversion of sinners. But are there not other portions which were intended for the comfort of the saint? And ought not these to be a subject of Gospel ministry as well as the others? And shall I look at one and disregard the other? No—if God says, ‘Comfort you, comfort you, My people,’ if Election comforts God’s people, then must I preach it.” But I am not quite so sure that, after all, that Doctrine is not calculated to convert sinners! The great Jonathan Edwards tells us that in the greatest excitement of one of his revivals he preached the Sovereignty of God in the salvation or condemnation of man. He showed that God was infinitely just if He sent men to Hell! That He was infinitely merciful if He saved any. And that it was all of His own Free Grace—and he said, “I found no Doctrine caused more thought—nothing entered more deeply into the heart than the proclamation of that Truth.” The same might be said of other Doctrines. There are certain Truths in God’s Word which are condemned to silence. They, indeed, are not to be uttered, because, according to the theories of certain persons looking at these Doctrines, they are not calculated to promote certain ends. But is it for me to judge God’s Truth? Am I to put His words in the scale and say, “This is good and that is evil”? Am I to take God’s Bible and sever it and say, “This is husk and this is wheat”? Am I to cast away any one Truth and say, “I dare not preach it”? No—God forbid! Whatever is written in God’s Word is written for our instruction—and the whole of it is profitable—either for reproof, or for consolation, or for edification in righteousness. No Truth of God’s Word ought to be withheld, but every portion of it preached in its own proper order!

Some men purposely confine themselves to four or five topics continually. Should you step into their chapel you would naturally expect to hear them preaching, either from this, “Not of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God,” or else, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” You know that the moment you step in, you are sure to hear nothing but Election and high Doctrine that day! Such men also err quite as much as others, if they give too great prominence to one Truth to the neglect of the others. Whatever is here to be preached, all in whatever name you please—write it high, write it low—the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible, is the standard of the true Christian! Alas, alas, many make an iron ring of their doctrines and he who dares to step beyond that narrow circle is not reckoned orthodox. God bless heretics, then! God send us more of them! Many make theology into a kind of tread wheel consisting of five doctrines which are everlastingly rotated. For they never go on to anything else. There ought to be every Truth preached. And if God has written in His Word that, “he that believes not is condemned already,” *that* is as much to be preached as the Truth that “there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ.” If I find it written, “O Israel, you have destroyed yourself”—that man’s condemnation is his own fault—I am to preach that as well as the next clause, “In Me is your help found.” We ought, each of us who are entrusted with the ministry to seek to preach all Truth. I know it may be impossible to tell you all of it. That high hill of Truth has mists upon its summit. No mortal eye can see its pinnacle. Nor has the foot of man ever trod it. But yet let us paint the mist if we cannot paint the summit. Let us depict the difficulty, itself, if we cannot unravel it! Let us not hide anything—if the mountain of Truth is cloudy at the top—let us say, “Clouds and darkness are around Him.” Let us not deny it. And let us not think of cutting down the mountain to our own standard because we cannot see its summit or cannot reach its pinnacle. He who would preach the Gospel must preach all the Gospel. He who would have it said he is a faithful minister must not keep back any part of Revelation!

**2.**Again—am I asked what it is to preach the Gospel? I answer *to preach the Gospel is to exalt Jesus Christ*. Perhaps this is the best answer that I could give. I am very sorry to see very often how little the Gospel is understood, even by some of the best Christians. Some time ago there was a young woman under great distress of soul. She came to a very pious Christian man who said, “My dear girl, you must go home and pray.” Well, I thought within myself, that is not the Bible way at all. It never says, “Go home and pray.” The poor girl went home. She did pray and she still continued in distress. He said, “You must wait, you must read the Scriptures and study them.” That is not the Bible way! That is not exalting Christ. I find a great many preachers are preaching that kind of Doctrine. They tell a poor convicted sinner, “You must go home and pray and read the Scriptures. You must attend the ministry.” And so on. Works, works, works—instead of, “By Grace are you saved through faith,” If a penitent should come and ask me, “What must I do to be saved?” I would say, “Christ must save you—believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” I would neither direct to prayer, nor reading of the Scriptures nor attending God’s House—but simply direct to faith—the naked faith on God’s Gospel! Not that I despise prayer—that must come *after* faith. Not that I speak a word against the searching of the Scriptures—that is an Infallible mark of God’s children. Not that I find fault with attendance on God’s Word—God forbid! I love to see people there. But none of those things are the way of salvation. It is nowhere written— “He that attends Chapel shall be saved,” or, “he that reads the Bible shall be saved.” Nor do I read—“He that prays and is baptized shall be saved.” But, “he who *believes*”—he who has a naked faith on the “Man. Christ Jesus”—on His Godhead, on His Manhood, is delivered from sin. To preach that faith, alone, saves is to preach God’s Truth! Nor will I for one moment concede to any man, the name of a Gospel minister if he preaches anything as the plan of salvation except faith in Jesus Christ. Faith, faith, nothing but faith in His name. But we are, most of us, very much muddled in our ideas. We get so much work stored into our brain, such an idea of merit and of doing worked into our hearts, that it is almost impossible for us to preach Justification by Faith clearly and fully. And when we do, our people won’t receive it. We tell them, “Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” But they have a notion that faith is something so wonderful, so mysterious, that it is quite impossible that without *doing* something else, they can ever get it. Now, that faith which unites to the Lamb is an instantaneous gift of God and he who believes on the Lord Jesus is that moment saved, without anything else whatever!

Ah, my Friends, do we not need more exalting Christ in our preaching and more exalting Christ in our living? Poor Mary said, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” And she might say so, nowadays, if she could rise from the grave. Oh, to have a Christexalting ministry! Oh, to have preaching that magnifies Christ in His Person, that extols His Divinity, that loves His Humanity! To have preaching that shows Him as Prophet, Priest and King to His people! To have preaching whereby the Spirit manifests the Son of God unto His children—to have preaching that says, “Look unto Him and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Calvary preaching, Calvary theology, Calvary books, Calvary sermons! These are the things we need and in proportion as we have Calvary exalted and Christ magnified, the Gospel is preached in our midst!

**3.**The third answer to the question is—*to preach the Gospel is to give every class of character his due*. “You are only to preach to God’s dear people if you go into that pulpit,” said a deacon once to a minister. Said the minister, “Have you marked them all on the back, that I may know them?” What is the good of this large Chapel if I am only to preach to God’s dear people? They are few enough. God’s dear people might be held in the vestry. We have many more here besides God’s dear people and how am I to be sure, if I am told to preach only to God’s dear people, that somebody else won’t take it to himself? At another time someone might say, “Now, be sure you preach to sinners. If you do not preach to sinners, this morning, you won’t preach the Gospel. We shall only hear you once. And we shall be sure you are not right if you do not happen to preach to sinners this particular morning, in this particular sermon.” What nonsense, my Friends! There are times when the children must be fed and there are times when the sinner must be warned. There are different times for different objectives. If a man is preaching to God’s saints—if it so happens that little is said to sinners—is he to be blamed for it? At another time when he is not comforting the saints, he should direct his attention specially to the ungodly! I heard a good remark from an intelligent friend of mine the other day. A person was finding fault with “Dr. Hawker’s Morning and Evening Portions” because they were not calculated to convert sinners. He said to the gentleman, “Did you ever read ‘Grote’s History of Greece’?” “Yes.” “Well, that is a shocking book, is it not? For it is not calculated to convert sinners.” “Yes, but,” said the other, “‘Grote’s History of Greece’ was never meant to convert sinners.” “No,” said my friend, “and if you had read the preface to ‘Dr. Hawker’s Morning and Evening Portion,’ you would see that it was never meant to convert sinners but to feed God’s people! And if it answers its end the man has been wise though he has not aimed at some other end.” Every class of person is to have his due. He who preaches solely to saints at all times does not preach the Gospel. He who preaches solely and only to the sinner and never to the saint does not preach the whole of the Gospel. We have amalgamation here. We have the saint who is full of assurance and strong. We have the saint who is weak and low in faith. We have the young convert. We have the man halting between two opinions. We have the moral man. We have the sinner. We have the reprobate. We have the outcast. Let each have a word. Let each have a portion of meat in due season. Not at every season, but in *due*season. He who omits one class of character does not know how to preach the entire Gospel. What? Am I to be put into the pulpit and to be told that I am to confine myself only to certain Truths to comfort God’s saints? I will not have it so! God gives men hearts to love their fellow creatures and are they to have no development for that heart? If I love the ungodly, am I to have no means of speaking to them? May I not tell them of judgment to come, of righteousness and of their sin? God forbid I should so stultify my nature and so brutalize myself as to have a tearless eye when I consider the loss of my fellow creatures. Must I stand and say, “You are dead, I have nothing to say to you”? Must I preach, in effect, if not in words, that most damnable heresy that if men are to be saved they will be saved—that if they are not to be saved they will not be saved? So, then, they must sit still and do nothing whatever? And that it matters not whether they live in sin or in righteousness—some strong fate has bound them down with adamantine chains? And their destiny is so certain that they may live on in sin? I believe their destiny *is* certain—that as Elect, they will be saved and if not Elect, they are damned forever! But I do not believe the heresy that follows as an inference that therefore men are irresponsible and may sit still! That is a heresy against which I have always protested as being a doctrine of the devil and not of God at all!

We believe in destiny—we believe in Predestination. We believe in Election and non-election—but, notwithstanding that, we believe that we must preach to men, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, but believe not on Him and you are damned.”

**4.**I had thought of giving one more answer to this question but time fails me. The answer would have been something like this—that to preach the Gospel is not to preach certain truths *about*the Gospel, not to preach *about* the people, but to preach *to* the people. To preach the Gospel is not to talk about what the Gospel is, but to *preach* it into the heart, not by your own might, but by the influence of the Holy Spirit—not to stand and talk as if we were speaking to the angel Gabriel and telling him certain things, but to speak as man to man and pour our heart into our fellow’s heart. This I take it, is to preach the Gospel and not to mumble some dry manuscript over on Sunday morning or Sunday evening. To preach the Gospel is not to send a curate to do your duty for you. It is not to put on your fine gown and then stand and give out some lofty speculation. To preach the Gospel is not, with the hands of a bishop, to turn over some beautiful specimen of prayer and then to go down again and leave it to some humbler person to speak. No. To preach the Gospel is to proclaim with trumpet tongue and flaming zeal the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus so that men may hear and understanding, may turn to God with full purpose of heart! This is to preach the Gospel.

**II.**The second question is—How IS IT THAT MINISTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GLORY? “For though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glorify in.” There are some weeds that will grow anywhere. And one of them is Pride. Pride will grow on a rock as well as in a garden. Pride will grow in the heart of a shoe-black as well as in the heart of an alderman. Pride will grow in the heart of a servant girl and equally as well in the heart of her mistress. And pride will grow in the pulpit. It is a weed that is dreadfully rampant. It needs cutting down every week or else we would stand up to our knees in it! This pulpit is a shocking bad soil for pride. It grows terribly. And I scarcely know whether you ever find a preacher of the Gospel who will not confess that he has the greatest temptation to pride. I suppose that even those ministers of whom nothing is said but that they are very good people and who have a City Church, with some six people attending it, have a temptation to pride. But whether that is so or not, I am quite sure wherever there is a large assembly and wherever a great deal of noise and stir is made concerning any man there is a great danger of pride. And, mark you, the more proud a man is, the greater will be his fall at last. If people will hold a minister up in their hands and not keep hold of him, but let him go, what a fall he will have, poor fellow, when it is all over! It has been so with many. Many men have been held up by the arms of men, they have been held up by the arms of *praise* but not of *prayer*. These arms have become weak—and down they have fallen! I say there is temptation to pride in the pulpit. But there is no ground for it in the pulpit. There is no soil for pride to grow on. But it will grow without any. “I have nothing to glorify of.” But, notwithstanding, there often comes in some reason why we should glory, not real, but apparent only to ourselves!

**1.**Now, how is it that a true minister feels he has “nothing to glorify of.” First, *because he is very conscious of his own imperfections*. I think no man will ever form a more just opinion of himself than he who is called constantly and incessantly to preach. Some man once thought he could preach and on being allowed to enter the pulpit he found his words did not come quite so freely as he expected. In the utmost trepidation and fear, he leaned over the front of the pulpit and said, “My Friends, if you would come up here it would take the conceit out of you all.” I verily believe it *would* out of a great many, could they once try themselves whether they could preach. It would take their critical conceit out of them and make them think that after all it was not such easy work! He who preaches best, feels that he preaches worst. He who has set up some lofty model in his own mind of what eloquence should be and what earnest appeal ought to be, will know how much he falls below it. He, best of all, can reprove himself when he knows his own deficiency. I do not believe when a man does a thing well, that therefore he will glory in it. On the other hand, I think that he will be the best judge of his own imperfections and will see them most clearly. *He*knows what he ought to be— other men do not. They stare and gaze and think it is wonderful, when he thinks it is wonderfully absurd and retires wondering why he has not done better! Every true minister will feel that he is deficient. He will compare himself with such men as Whitefield, with such preachers as those of Puritan times and he will say, “What am I? Like a dwarf beside a giant, an anthill by the side of the mountain.” When he retires to rest on Sunday night, he will toss from side to side on his bed because he feels that he has missed the mark, that he has not had that earnestness, that solemnity, that death-like intenseness of purpose which became his position. He will accuse himself of not having dwelt enough on this point, or for having shunned the other, or not having been explicit enough on some certain subject, or expanded another too much. He will see his own faults, for God always chastises His own children at nighttime when they have done something wrong. We need not others to reprove us. God, Himself, takes us in hand. The most highly honored before God will often feel himself dishonored in his own esteem.

**2.**Again—another means of causing us to cease from all glory is the fact that God reminds us that all our gifts are borrowed. And strikingly have I, this morning, been reminded of that great Truth—that *all our gifts are borrowed—*by reading in a newspaper to the following effect—

“Last week, the quiet neighborhood of New Town was much disturbed by an occurrence which has thrown a gloom over the entire neighborhood. A gentleman of considerable attainment who has won an honorable degree at the university, has for some months been deranged. He had kept an academy for young gentlemen, but his insanity had obliged him to desist from his occupation and he has for some time lived alone in a house in the neighborhood. The landlord obtained a warrant of ejectment. And it being found necessary to handcuff him, he was, by sad mismanagement compelled to remain on the steps, exposed to the gaze of a great crowd, until at last a vehicle arrived which conveyed him to the asylum. One of his pupils (says the paper) is Mr. Spurgeon.”

The man from whom I learned whatever of human learning I have, has now become a raving lunatic in the Asylum! When I saw that, I felt I could bend my knees with humble gratitude and thank my God that not yet had my reason reeled—not yet had those powers departed! Oh, how thankful we ought to be that our talents are preserved to us and that our mind is not gone! Nothing came nearer and closer to me than that. There was one who had taken all pains with me—a man of genius and of ability. And yet there he is! How fallen! How fallen! How speedily does human nature come from its high estate and sink below the level of the brutes! Bless God my Friends, for your talents! Thank Him for your reason! Thank Him for your intellect! Simple as it may be, it is enough for you, but if you lost it, you would soon mark the difference. Take heed to yourself lest in anything you say, “This is Babylon that I have built.” Remember, both trowel and mortar must come from Him. The life, the voice, the talent, the imagination, the eloquence—all are the gifts of God! And he who has the greatest gifts must feel that unto God belongs the shield of the mighty, for He has given might to His people and strength to His servants!

**3.**One more answer to this question. Another means whereby God preserves His ministers from glorying is this—*He makes them feel their constant dependence upon the Holy Spirit*. Some do not feel it, I confess. Some will venture to preach without the Spirit of God, or without entreating Him. But I think that no man who is really commissioned from on high will ever venture to do so. He will feel that he needs the Spirit. Once, while preaching in Scotland, the Spirit of God was pleased to desert Me— I could not speak as usually I have done. I was obliged to tell the people that the chariot wheels were taken off. And that the chariot dragged very heavily along. I have felt the benefit of that ever since. It humbled me bitterly, for I could have crept into a nutshell and I would have hidden myself in any obscure corner of the earth. I felt as if I should speak no more in the name of the Lord and then the thought came, “Oh, you are an ungrateful creature—has not God spoken by you hundreds of times? And this once, when He would not do so, will you upbraid Him for it? No, rather thank Him, that a hundred times He has stood by you—and, if once He has forsaken you, admire His goodness, that thus He would keep you humble.” Some may imagine that lack of study brought me into that condition, but I can honestly affirm that it was not so. I think that I am bound to give myself unto reading and not tempt the Spirit by unthought-of effusions. Usually, I deem it a duty to seek a sermon of my Master and implore Him to impress it on my mind. But on that occasion, I think I had even prepared more carefully than I ordinarily do, so that unpreparedness was not the reason. The simple fact was this—“The wind blows where it wishes.” And winds do not always blow hurricanes. Sometimes the winds themselves are still. And, therefore, if I rest on the Spirit, I cannot expect I should always feel His power alike.

What could I do without the Celestial influence, for to that I owe everything? By this thought, God humbles His servants. God will teach us how much we need it. He will not let us think we are doing anything ourselves. “No,” He says, “you shall have none of the glory. I will take you down. Are you thinking ‘I am doing this’? I will show you what you are without Me.” Out goes Samson. He attacks the Philistines. He fancies he can slay them. But they are on him. His eyes are out. His glory is gone because he trusted not in his God, but rested in himself!

Every minister will be made to feel his dependence upon the Spirit. And then will he, with emphasis, say, as Paul did, “If I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glorify of.”

**III.**Now comes the third question, with which we are to finish—WHAT IS THAT NECESSITY WHICH IS LAID UPON US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL?

**1.**First, *a very great part of that necessity springs from the call, itself*— If a man is truly called of God to the ministry, I will defy him to withhold himself from it! A man who has really within him the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit calling him to preach cannot help it. He must preach. As fire within the bones, so will that influence be until it blazes forth. Friends may check him, foes criticize him, despisers sneer at him—the man is indomitable. He must preach if he has the call of Heaven. All earth might forsake him. But he would preach to the barren mountaintops! If he has the call of Heaven—if he has no congregation—he would preach to the rippling waterfalls and let the brooks hear his voice. He could not be silent. He would become a voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare you the way of the Lord.” I no more believe it possible to stop ministers than to stop the stars of Heaven. I think it no more possible to make a man cease from preaching, if he is really called, than to stop some mighty waterfall by seeking, with an infant’s cup, to drink its waters! The man has been moved of Heaven, who shall stop him? He has been touched of God, who shall impede him? With an eagle’s wings he must fly—who shall chain him to the earth? With seraph’s voice he must speak, who shall stop his lips? Is not His Word like a fire within me? Must I not speak, if God has placed it there? And when a man does speak as the Spirit gives him utterance, he will feel a holy joy akin to Heaven. And when it is over, he wishes to be at his work again and longs to be once more preaching. I do not think young men are called of God to any great work who preach once a week and think they have done their duty. I think if God has called a man, He will impel him to be more or less constantly at it and he will feel that he must preach among the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ!

**2.**But another thing will make us preach—we shall feel that woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel. And that is *the sad destitution of this poor fallen world.*Oh, Minister of the Gospel! Stand for one moment and think of your poor fellow creatures! See them like a stream, rushing to eternity—ten thousand fly to their endless home each solemn moment fly! See the termination of that stream, that tremendous waterfall which dashes streams of souls into the pit of Hell? Oh, Minister, think of the fact that men are being damned each hour by thousands and that each time your pulse beats, another soul lifts up its eyes in Hell, being in torments! Think how men are speeding on their way to destruction, how “the love of many waxes cold” and “iniquity does abound.” I say, is there not a necessity laid upon you? Is it not woe unto you if you preach not the Gospel? Take your walk one evening through the streets of London when the dusk has gathered and darkness veils the people. Mark you not yon profligate hurrying on to her accursed work? See you not thousands and tens of thousands annually ruined? Up from the hospital and the asylum there comes a voice, “Woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Go to that huge place built around with massive walls, enter the dungeons and see the thieves who have for years spent their lives in sin. Wend your way, sometimes, to that sad square of Newgate and see the murderer hanged. A voice shall come from each house of correction, from each prison, from each gallows, saying, “Woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Go to the thousand deathbeds and mark how men are perishing in ignorance, not knowing the ways of God! See their terror as they approach their Judge never having known what it was to be saved, not even knowing the way. And as you see them quivering before their Maker, hear a voice, “Minister, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Or take another course. Travel round this great metropolis and stop at the door of some place where there is heard the tinkling of bells, chanting and music—where the whore of Babylon has her sway and lies are preached for the Truths of God! And when you come home and think of Popery and Puseyism, let a voice come to you, “Minister woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” Or step into the hall of the infidel where he blasphemes your Maker’s name. Or sit in the theater where plays, libidinous and loose, are acted and from all these haunts of vice there comes the voice, “Minister, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.” And take your last solemn walk down to the chambers of the lost. Let the abyss of Hell be visited and stand and hear—

***“The sullen groans, the hollow moans,***

***And shrieks of tortured ghosts.”***  
Put your ear at Hell’s gate and for a little while listen to the commingled screams and shrieks of agony and feel the despair that shall never end. And as you come from that sad place with that doleful music still frightening you, you will hear the voice, “Minister! Minister! Woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.”

Only let us have these things before our eyes and we must preach. *Stop preaching*?*Stop preaching*? Let the sun stop shining and we will preach in darkness! Let the waves stop their ebb and flow and still our voice shall preach the Gospel! Let the world stop its revolutions, let the planets stay their motion—we will still preach the Gospel. Until the fiery center of this earth shall burst through the thick ribs of her brazen mountains we shall still preach the Gospel! By God’s Grace, till the universal conflagration shall dissolve the earth and matter shall be swept away, these lips, or the lips of some others called of God shall still thunder forth the voice of Jehovah. We cannot help it. “Necessity is laid upon us, yes woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel.”

Now, my dear Hearers, one word with you. There are some persons in this audience who are verily guilty in the sight of God because they do *not* preach the Gospel. I cannot think how, out of the fifteen hundred or two thousand persons now present within the reach of my voice, there are none who are qualified to preach the Gospel besides myself. I have not so bad an opinion of you as to conceive myself to be superior in intellect to one half of you—or even in the power of preaching God’s Word. And even supposing I should be, I cannot believe that I have such a congregation that there are not among you many who have gifts and talents that qualify you to preach the Word. Among the Scotch Baptists it is the custom to call upon all the Brothers to exhort on the Sabbath morning. They have no regular minister to preach on that occasion but every man preaches who likes to get up and speak. That is all very well, only, I fear, many unqualified Brothers would be the greatest speakers, since it is a known fact that men who have little to say will often keep on the longest. And if I were chairman, I should say, “Brother, it is written, ‘Speak to edification.’ I am sure you would not edify yourself and your wife. You had better go and try that, first, and if you cannot succeed, don’t waste our precious time.”

But still I say I cannot conceive but what there are some here this morning who are flowers “wasting their sweetness in the desert air, gems of purest ray serene,” lying in the dark caverns of ocean’s oblivion. This is a very serious question. If there is any talent in the Church at Park Street, let it be developed! If there are any preachers in my congregation let them preach! Many ministers make it a point to check young men in this respect. Here is my hand, such as it is, to help anyone of you if you think you can tell to sinners what a dear Savior you have found. I would like to find scores of preachers among you—would to God that all the Lord’s servants were Prophets! There are some here who ought to be Prophets, only they are half afraid—well, we must devise some scheme of getting rid of their bashfulness. I cannot bear to think that while the devil sets all his servants to work, there should be one servant of Jesus Christ asleep! Young man, go home and examine yourself. See what your abilities are and if you find that you have ability, then try in some poor humble room to tell to a dozen poor people what they must do to be saved. You need not aspire to become absolutely and solely dependent upon the ministry, but if it should please God, even desire it. He that desires a bishopric desires a good thing!

At any rate seek in some way to be preaching the Gospel of God. I have preached this sermon especially because I want to commence a movement from this place which shall reach others. I want to find some in my Church, if it is possible, who will preach the Gospel. And mark you, if you have talent and power, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel.

But oh, my Friends, if it is woe unto us if we preach *not* the Gospel, what is the woe unto *you* if you hear and receive not the Gospel? May God give us both to escape from that woe! May the Gospel of God be unto us the savor of life unto life and not of death unto death!

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1170 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“BY ALL MEANS, SAVE SOME”  
NO. 1170

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 26, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“That I might, by all means, save some.”  
1 Corinthians 9:22.~~***

THE Apostle speaks very broadly and talks about saving men. Some of our extremely orthodox Brothers would say at once, “*You*save men? How can man do that? The expression is inaccurate in the extreme. Is not salvation of the Lord from first to last? How can you, Paul, dare to speak of saving some?” Yet Peter spoke very much like this when he said, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Indeed, the expression is a little more bold, if anything, and if Peter were alive now he would be called to account. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said to him, “Take heed unto yourself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you.” This is another instance of language used in a popular sense by a man who had not the fear of critics before his eyes.

The Apostle did not intend to insinuate that *he* could save anybody by his own power and no one thought that he could. He used expressions without guarding them because he was writing to people who mixed candor with their knowledge of doctrine and would not willfully misunderstand him. He did not write for those who must have all the creed in every sermon and require all statements of the Truth of God to be cut into one shape. The doctrine that salvation is of God, alone, and is the work of the Holy Spirit was dear to him as life, itself, and having often proclaimed it, he was not afraid of being misunderstood.

Our testimony, also, has, for many years, been clear upon this point, and therefore we shall venture to be as accurately inaccurate as was the Apostle—and to speak of saving souls and winning souls after the manner of ordinary speech. The expression used gives great prominence to *instrumentality* and this is the use and habit of Scripture. There is not much danger, just now, of exaggerating the power of instrumentality and looking to men instead of their Master. The danger seems to lie in the opposite direction—in the habit of depreciating both an organized Church and a recognized ministry. We have frequently heard it said of certain revivals that no particular person was engaged in them, neither evangelist nor minister had a hand in the work. This is thought to be a recommendation but, indeed, it is not.

I fear that many hopeful beginnings have come to a sudden collapse because faithful and holy ministers have been despised and a slur has been cast upon ordinary instrumentalities. Men talk thus under the notion that they are honoring God, but they are off the track altogether—for God still owns and blesses His chosen ministers and is honored thereby. And as He still works by them He would not have us speak disparagingly of them. The topic of this morning is this—it has pleased God to save

souls by His people and, therefore, He places in them a sacred longing to save some by all means. He might, if He had pleased, have called all His chosen to Himself by a Voice out of the excellent Glory, just as He called Saul, the Persecutor.

Or He might have commissioned angels to fly throughout the length and breadth of the world and carry the message of mercy. But in His inscrutable wisdom He has been pleased to bring men to Himself by *men*. The Atonement is complete and the Spirit’s power is fully given—all that is needed is that men be led to *believe* for the salvation of their souls—and this part of salvation is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the ministries of men! Those who have, themselves, been quickened, are sent to prophesy upon the dry bones. In order that this Divine arrangement may be carried out, the Lord has implanted in the hearts of all genuine Believers a passion for the salvation of souls. In some this is more lively than in others, but it ought to be a leading feature in the character of every Christian.

I shall speak upon this sacred instinct and deal with it thus—First, *why is it implanted in us*? Secondly, *how does it exercise itself*? Thirdly, *why is it not more largely manifested*? And fourthly, *how can it be quickened and made more practically efficient*?

**I.**WHY IS THIS PASSION FOR SAVING OTHERS IMPLANTED IN THE BREASTS OF THE SAVED? For three reasons, I think, among many others. Namely, for God’s Glory, for the good of the Church, and for the profiting of the individual. It is implanted there, first, *for God’s Glory*. It is greatly to the Glory of God that He should use humble instruments for the accomplishment of His grand purposes. When Quintin Matsys had executed a certain wonderful well-cover in iron, it was the more notable as a work of art because he had been deprived of the proper tools while he was executing it, for I think he had little more than his hammer with which to perform that wonderful feat in metal.

Now, when we look at God’s work of Divine Grace in the world, it glorifies Him the more when we reflect that He has achieved it by instruments which, in themselves, would rather hinder than promote His work. No man among us can help God! It is true He *uses* us, but He could do better without us than with us! By the direct Word of power He could do, in a moment, that which, through the weakness of the instrument, now takes months and years—yet He knows best how to glorify His own name. He puts a longing to save others into our souls, that He may get Glory by using us, even *us* who have little fitness for such work except this passion which He has implanted in our breasts. He graciously uses even our weak points and makes our very infirmities to illustrate the Glory of His Grace— blessing our poorest sermons, prospering our most feeble efforts—and driving us to see results even from our stray words.

The Lord glorifies Himself by making our feebleness to be the vehicle of His power—and to this end He makes us pant for a work far out of our reach—and sets our hearts a-longing to “save some.” It brings Glory to God, also, that He should take sinful men such as we are and make us partakers of His Nature—He does this by giving us fellowship in His heart of compassion—communion in His overflowing love. He kindles in our breasts the same fire of love which glows in His own bosom. In our own little way we look down upon the prodigal sons and see them a great way off, and have compassion on them, and would gladly fall on their necks and kiss them. The Lord loves men, however, after a *holy* fashion. He desires their sanctification and their salvation by that means. And when we desire the good of our fellow men by means of their conversion, we are walking side by side with God. Every real philanthropist is a copy of the Lord Jesus, for though it is too low a term to apply to His infinite excellence, yet, truly, the Son of God is the grandest of all philanthropists!

Now, that God should, by the power of His matchless Grace, produce in such cold hearts as ours a burning passion for the salvation of others is a singular proof of His Omnipotent power in the world of the mind. To change sinful men so that they pant after the increase of holiness! To render stubborn wills eager for the spread of obedience and to make wandering hearts earnest for the establishment of the abiding kingdom of the Redeemer—this is a mighty feat of the Divine Grace of God! That a perfect angel should cleave the air to perform His message is a simple enough matter—but that a Saul of Tarsus, who foamed at the mouth with enmity to Christ—should live and die for the winning of souls to Jesus is a memorable illustration of the Grace of God!

In this way the Lord gets great Glory over the archenemy, the Prince of the power of the air, for He can say to Satan, “I have defeated you, not by the sword of Michael, but by the tongues of men. I have conquered you, O you enemy, not with thunderbolts, but with the earnest words and prayers and tears of these, My humble servants. O My adversary, I have pitted against you feeble men and women, into whom I have put the love of souls, and these have torn away from you province after province of your dominions! These have snapped the fetters of the bandaged ones. These have burst open the prison doors of those who were your captives.” How illustriously is this Truth of God seen when the Lord seizes the ringleaders of Satan’s army and transforms them into captains of His own host! Then is the enemy smitten in the house of his former friends!

Satan desired to sift Peter as wheat, but Peter sifted him in return on the day of Pentecost! Satan made Peter deny his Master, but when restored, Peter loved his Lord all the more—and all the more earnestly did he proclaim his Master’s name and Gospel! The fury of the foe recoils on himself! Love conquers and where sin abounded Grace does much more abound! As for Saul, who persecuted the saints, did not he become the Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, laboring more than any other for the good cause? Beloved, the ultimate triumph of the Cross will be the more admirable because of the manner of its achievement! Good will conquer evil—not by the assistance of governments and the arms of potentates, not by the prestige of bishops and popes and all their pompous array—but by hearts that burn, souls that glow, eyes that weep and knees that bend in wrestling prayer! These are the artillery of God! By using such weapons as these He not only foils His foes, but triumphs over them—confounding the mighty by the weak, the wise by the simple—and the things which are by the things which are not!

Next, the passion for saving souls is implanted for *the Church’s good—* and that in a thousand ways, of which I can only mention a few. First there can be no doubt that the passion for winning souls expends the Church’s energy in a healthy manner. I have observed that Churches which do not care for the outlying population speedily suffer from disunion and strife. There is a certain quantity of steam generated in the community—and if we do not let it off in the right way, it will work in the wrong way—or blow up altogether and do infinite mischief. Men’s minds are sure to work and their tongues to move—and if they are not employed for good purposes they will assuredly do mischief! You cannot unite a Church so completely as by calling out all its forces for accomplishing the Redeemer’s grand object. Talents unused are sure to rust and this kind of rust is a deadly poison to peace—a bitter irritant which eats into the heart of the Church. We will, therefore, by all means, save some, lest by some other means we become disunited in heart.

This passion for saving souls not only employs, but also draws forth the strength of the Church. It awakens her latent energies and arouses her noblest faculties. With so Divine a prize before her, she girds up her robes for the race—and with her eyes upon her Lord, presses forward to the goal. Many a commonplace man has been rendered great by being thoroughly absorbed by a noble pursuit—and what can be nobler than turning men from the road which leads to Hell? Perhaps some of those ignoble souls who have lived and died like dumb, driven cattle, might have reached the majesty of great fires if a supreme intent had fired them with heroic zeal and developed their concealed endowments. Happy is the man whose task is honorable, if he does but honorably fulfill it. Lo, God has given to His Church the work of conquering the world, the plucking of brands from the burning, the feeding of His sheep and lambs! And this it is which trains the Church to deeds of daring and to nobility of soul.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, this common passion for souls knits us together! How often do I feel a fresh bond of union with my beloved Brethren and fellow workers when I find that I was the means of the conviction of a sinner, whom one of them comforted and led to the Savior? And thus we have a joint possession in the convert! Sometimes I have been blest of God to the salvation of my hearer, but that hearer was first brought here by yonder friend—and so we become sharers in the joy! Communion in service and success welds the saints together and is one of the best securities for mutual love. And, moreover, when new converts are brought into the Church, the fact that they are brought in by instrumentality tends to make their fusion with the Church an easy matter.

It is in this case much the same as with our families. If God had been pleased to create each of us as individual men and women and drop us down somewhere on the earth. And if were left to find our way to somebody’s house and unite with his family, I daresay we should have had to wander long before we should have been welcomed! But now we come as little ones to those who rejoice to see us! And they sing, “Welcome, welcome, little stranger!” We become, at once, parts of the family because we have parents and brothers and sisters—and these make no debate about our introduction and consider it no trouble to receive us—though I fear we have never duly rewarded them for their pains.

So is it in the Church—if God had converted all men one by one, by His Spirit, without instrumentality, they would have been separate grains of sand, hard to unite into a building and there would have been much difficulty in forming them into one body. But now we are *born* into the Church, and the pastor and others look upon those converted under their instrumentality as their own children whom they love in the Lord. And the Church, having shared in the common service by which they are converted, feels, “These belong to us, these are our *reward.*” And so they are taken cordially into the Christian family. This is no small benefit, for it is at once the joy and the strength of the Church to be made one by vital forces, by holy sympathies and fellowships.

We have spiritual fathers among us whom we love in the Lord and spiritual children whose welfare is our deepest concern. We have Brothers and Sisters to whom we have been helpful, or who have been helpful to us, whom we cannot but commune with in heart. As a common desire to defend their country welds all the regiments of an army into one, so the common desire to save souls makes all true Believers akin to each other! But this passion is most of all for *the good of the individual possessing it*. I will not try, this morning, to sum up, in the short time allotted to me, the immense benefits which come to a man through his laboring for the conversion of others, but I will venture this assertion—no man or woman in the Church of God is in a healthy state if he or she is not laboring to save some.

Those who are laid aside by suffering are taking their part in the economy of the household of Christ. But with that exception, he that does not work, neither shall he eat. He that does not water others is not watered himself. And he who cares not for the souls of others may well stand in jeopardy about his own. To long for the conversion of others makes us Godlike! Do we desire man’s welfare? God does! Would we gladly snatch them from the burning? God is daily performing this deed of Divine Grace! Can we say that we have no pleasure in the death of him that dies? Jehovah has declared the like with an oath! Do we weep over sinners? Did not Jehovah’s Son weep over them? Do we lay out ourselves for their conversion? Did He not die that they might live?

You are made Godlike when this passion glows within your spirit. This is a vent for your love to God as well as your love to men. Loving the Creator, we pity His fallen creatures and feel a benevolent love towards the work of His hands. If we love God, we feel as He does, that judgment is strange work and we cannot bear that those whom He has created should be cast away forever. Loving God makes us sorrow that all men do not love Him, too. It frets us that the world lies in the Wicked One, at enmity to its own Creator, at war with Him who, alone, can bless it. O Beloved, you do not love the Lord at all unless you love the souls of others!

Trying to bring others to Christ does us good by renewing in us our old feelings and reviving our first love. When I see an inquirer penitent for sin, I remember the time when I felt as he is feeling. And when I hear the seeker for the first time say, “I do believe in Jesus,” I remember the birthday of my own soul, when the bells of my heart rang out their merriest

peals because Jesus Christ had come to dwell within me! Soul-winning keeps the heart lively and preserves our warm youth to us! It is a mighty refresher to decaying love. If you feel the chill of skepticism stealing over you and begin to doubt the Gospel’s power, go to work among the poor and ignorant, or comfort souls in distress. And when you see the brightness of their countenances as they obtain joy and peace in believing, your skepticism will fly like chaff before the wind!

You must believe in the cause when you see the result! You cannot help believing when the evidence is before your eyes! Work for Jesus keeps us strong in faith and intense in love to Him. Does not this holy instinct draw forth all the faculties of a man? One strong passion will frequently bring the whole man into play, like a skillful minstrel whose hand brings music from every chord. If we love others, we shall, like Paul, become wise to attract them, wise to persuade them, wise to convince them, wise to encourage them. We shall learn the use of means which had lain rusted and discover in ourselves talents which otherwise had been hidden in the ground if the strong desire to save men had not cleared away the soil!

And I will add here that love to souls will, in the end, bring to everyone who follows it up, the highest joy beneath the stars. What is that? It is the joy of knowing that you have been made the spiritual parent of others! I have tasted of this stream full often, by God’s Grace, and it is Heaven below! The joy of being saved one’s self has a measure of selfishness about it, but to know that your fellow men are saved by your efforts brings a joy pure, disinterested and heavenly—of which we may drink the deepest draughts without injury to our spirits. Yield yourselves, Brothers and Sisters, to the Divine appetite for doing good! Be possessed with it and eaten up by it—and the best results must follow! Let this be, from now on, your aim, “That I may, by all means, save some.”

**II.**How DOES THIS PASSION EXERCISE ITSELF? Differently in different persons, and at different periods. At first it shows itself by *tender anxiety*. The moment a man is saved he begins to be anxious about his wife, his child, or his dearest relative. And that anxiety leads him, at once, to pray for them. As soon as the newly opened eye has enjoyed the sweet light of the Sun of Righteousness it looks lovingly round on those who were its companions in darkness—and then gazes up into Heaven with a tearful prayer that they, also, may receive their sight. Hungry ones, while they are eating the first mouthful at the banquet of Free Grace, groan and say, “Oh, that my poor starving children could be here to feed on the Savior’s love with me.”

Compassion is natural to the new-born nature—as common humanity makes us pity the suffering—so renewed humanity makes us pity the sinful. This, I say, happens at the very dawn of the new life. Further on in the heavenly pilgrimage this passion manifests itself in the *intense joy* exhibited when news reaches us of the conversion of others. I have often seen, at Church meetings and missionary meetings, a hearty and holy joy spread throughout an audience when some new convert, or returned missionary, or successful minister, has given details of the wonders of Saving Grace. Many a poor girl who could do but little for the Savior has, nevertheless, shown what she would have done if she could, by the tears of joy which have streamed down her cheeks when she has heard that sinners have been led to Jesus. This is one of the ways in which those who can personally do little can share in the joy of the most useful, yes, can have fellowship with Jesus Himself!

The hallowed instinct of soul-winning also shows itself in *private efforts, sacrifices, prayers and agonies* for the spread of the Gospel. Well do I remember when I first knew the Lord, how restless I felt till I could do *something* for others. I did not know that I could speak to an assembly and I was very timid as to conversing upon religious subjects. And therefore I wrote little notes to different persons setting forth the way of salvation. I dropped these written letters with printed tracts into the post, or slipped them under the doors of houses, or dropped them into areas—praying that those who read them might be aroused as to their sins and moved to flee from the wrath to come. My heart would have burst if it could not have found some vent!

I wish that all professors kept up their first zeal and were diligent in doing little things as well as greater things for Jesus, for often the lesser agencies turn out to be as effectual as those which operate upon a larger area. I hope that all of you young people who have been lately added to the Church are trying some mode of doing good, suitable for your capacity and position, that, by all means, you may save some! A word may often bless those whom a sermon fails to reach. And a personal letter may do far more than a printed book. As we grow older and are more qualified, we shall take our share in the more *public agencies* of the Church. We shall speak for Jesus before the few who meet at the cottage Prayer Meeting. We shall pray *with*, as well as *for* our families, or we shall enlist in the Sunday school, or take a tract district. Ultimately the Lord may call us to plead His cause before hundreds or thousands—and so beginning with littles our latter end, by His Grace, shall greatly increase.

There is one point in which zeal for the salvation of others will show itself in all who possess it, namely, in *adapting ourselves to the condition and capacity of others for their* good. Notice this in Paul. He became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. He became a Jew to the Jews. When he met with them he did not rail at their ceremonies, but endeavored to bring out their spiritual meaning. He did not preach against Judaism, but showed them Jesus as the Fulfillment of its types. When he met with a heathen he did not revile his gods, but taught him the true God and salvation by His Son. He did not carry about with him one sermon for all places, but adapted his speech to his audience.

What a very wonderful address that was which Paul delivered to the council of philosophers upon Mars’ Hill. It is most courteous throughout and it is a pity that our translation somewhat destroys that quality, for it is eminently conspicuous in the original. The Apostle began by saying, “You men of Athens, I perceive that you are, on all points, very Godfearing.” He did not say, “Too superstitious,” as our version has it! That would have needlessly provoked them at the outset. He went on to say, “For as I passed through the city and observed your sacred things, I found an altar bearing the inscription, ‘To an unknown God.’ What, therefore,

you worship without knowing it, that I announce unto you.”

He did not say, “Whom you ignorantly worship.” He was far too prudent to use such an expression! They were a collection of thoughtful men, of cultured minds—and he aimed at winning them by courteously declaring to them the Gospel. It was most skillful on his part to refer to that inscription upon the altar and equally so to quote from one of their own poets. If he had been addressing Jews, he would neither have quoted from a Greek poet nor referred to a heathen altar—his intense love for his hearers taught him to merge his own peculiarities in order to secure their attention.

In the same manner we also sink ourselves and instead of demanding that others submit to us, we cheerfully submit to them in all unessential matters, that we may gain their favorable consideration of the claims of Jesus. Mark you, there was never a man more stern for principle than Paul. In things where it was necessary to take his stand he was firm as a rock. But in merely personal and external matters he was the servant of all. Adaptation was his *forte*. Beloved, if you have to talk to children, be children—do not expect them to be men. Think *their* thoughts, feel *their* feelings and put truth into their words. You will never get at their hearts till your heart is in sympathy with their childhood. If you have to comfort the aged, enter, also, into their infirmities and do not speak to them as if they were still in the full vigor of life. Study persons of all ages and be as they are—that they may be led to be Believers—as you are.

Are you called to labor among the educated? Then choose out excellent words and present them apples of gold in baskets of silver. Do you work among the illiterate? Let your words be as goads—speak their mother tongue, use great plainness of speech so that you may be understood—for what good is it to speak to them in an unknown tongue? Are you cast among people with strange prejudices? Do not unnecessarily spar with them, but take them as you find them. Are you seeking the conversion of a person of slender understanding? Do not inflict upon him the deeper mysteries, but show him the plain man’s pathway to Heaven in words which he who runs may read! Are you talking with a friend who is of a sorrowful spirit? Tell him of your own depressions. Enter into his griefs and so raise him up as you were raised. Like the good Samaritan, go where the wounded man lies and do not expect him to come to you.

A real passion for winning souls reveals the many sides of our manhood and uses each one as a reflector of the Divine light of Truth. There is a door to each man’s heart and we have to find it and enter it with the right key, which is to be found somewhere or other in the Word of God. All men are not to be reached in the same way, or by the same arguments—and as we are, by all means, to save some, we must be wise to win souls—wise with wisdom from above. We desire to see them conquered for Christ, but no warrior always uses the same strategy—there is, for one, open assault, for another a siege—for a third an ambush, for a fourth a long campaign.

On the sea there are great rams which run down the enemy, torpedoes under water, gunboats and steam frigates. One ship is broken up by a single blow. Another needs a broadside. A third must have a shot between wind and water. A fourth must be driven on shore. Even thus must we adapt ourselves and use the Sacred Force entrusted to us with grave consideration and solemn judgment, looking ever to the Lord for guidance and for power. All the real power is in the Lord’s hands! We must put ourselves fully at the disposal of the Divine Worker, that He may work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure—so shall we, by all means, save some.

**III.**WHY IS NOT THIS PASSION MORE LARGELY DEVELOPED AMONG CHRISTIANS? The preacher needs not answer that question— each of his hearers may do that for himself. Why is it that we do not yearn more over the perishing souls of men? Is it not that we have but very little Grace? We are dwarfish Christians with little faith, little love, little care for the Glory of God—and therefore with little concern for perishing sinners. We are spiritually naked and poor. We are spiritually miserable when we might be rich and increased in goods if we had but more *faith*. That is the secret of the matter and is the fountain of all the mischief.

But if we must come to particulars, do you not think that men are careless about the souls of others because they have fallen into *one-sided views of Gospel doctrines* and have turned the Doctrines of Grace into a couch for idleness to rest upon? “God will save His own,” they say. Yes, but His own do not talk in that fashion. They are not like Cain, who said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Unquestionably the Lord will see that His own elect are called in due season, but He will do this by the preaching or teaching of the Word. Predestination is not a legitimate reason for inaction! Men do not consider it so in other matters, why, then, in religion? Except the Lord prospers us in business all our efforts are in vain—and yet we do not say—“I shall have as many pounds in my pocket as God intends I shall have, and therefore I need not work or trade.”

No, men save their fatalism to play the fool only with *spiritual* things! In all other things they are not such idiots as to suffer predestination to paralyze their minds! But here, since idleness needs an excuse for itself, they dare to abuse this sacred Truth of God to cripple their consciences! In some professors downright *worldliness*prevents their seeking the conversion of others. They are too fond of gain to care for saving souls, too busy about their farms to sow the seed of the Kingdom, too much occupied with their shops to hold up the Cross before the sinner’s eyes, too full of worldly care to care for the salvation of the lost! Covetousness eats up the very soul of many. They have far more business than they can manage without injury to their spiritual health—and yet they are eager after more. Prayer Meetings are neglected, the class in the school is given up, efforts for the poor and ignorant are never made—and all because they are so taken up with the world and its cares. This age is peculiarly tempted in that direction and it needs strong piety to be able to love the souls of men practically.

With some I fear that the cause of indifference is *lack of faith*. They do not believe that God will bless their efforts and, therefore, they make none. They have a vivid recollection of far-gone times when they tried to be useful and failed. So, instead of past failure being made a reason for double exertion in the present, to make up for lost time, they have given up labor for the Lord as a bad case and do not attempt anything more. It

is to be feared that with many Church members the reason for the absence of this passion is that they love ease and are worm-eaten with *indolence*. They say, “Soul, take your ease! Eat, drink, and be merry. Why trouble yourself about others?” “Send the multitude away,” said the disciples. They did not want to be worried with them.

True, the people were very hungry and weary and it was a painful thing to see them fainting. But it was easier to forget their needs than to relieve them! London is perishing—millions are dying in their sins! The *world* still lies in the Wicked One and Sloth calls Forgetfulness to her aid to ignore the whole matter! Such people do not want to be made uncomfortable— neither do they wish to spend and be spent for the glory of Christ. The secret of it all is that the great majority of Christians are *out of sympathy with God* and out of communion with Christ. Is not this an evil? O eyes that never wept over dying men, do you expect to see the King in His beauty? O hearts that never throbbed with anxiety for those that are going down to the Pit—do you hope to leap for joy at the Master’s coming? O lips that never speak for Jesus, how will you answer to the searching questions of the Last Great Day?

I beseech you, Christian people, if you have grown indifferent to the conversion of those around you, search out the secret reason! Find what is the worm at the root of your piety—and in the name of Christ seek to be delivered from it!

**IV.**How CAN THIS PASSION BE MORE FULLY AROUSED? First, it can be done by our *obtaining a higher life*. The better man shall do the better deed—the stronger in Divine Grace, the stronger to save some. I do not believe in a man’s trying to pump himself up beyond his level. The man must be up and then all that comes out of the man will have risen. If love to God glows in your soul, it must show itself in your concern for others. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good. It will not do for you to begin a more earnest career by stimulating yourself to a hectic zeal which will come and go like the flush on the consumptive’s cheek—the life within must be *permanently* strengthened—and then the pulsing of the heart and the motion of the whole man will be more vigorous.

More Divine Grace is our greatest need. This being granted, it will greatly help us to care for the conversion of sinners if we are *fully cognizant of their misery and degradation*. How differently one feels after seeing with ones own eyes the poverty, filth and vice of this city. I wish some of you respectable people who have never seen any part of London except the broad thoroughfares, would take a stroll down the courts which open into the narrow side streets. I would like you to go down courts such as Queen Victoria never saw, and alleys far from green. Ladies, you may leave some of that finery at home. And Gentlemen, you may put away your pocket handkerchiefs and your purses, unless you would like to empty them out among the wretched beings you will meet.

There are sights to be seen close to our own homes which might well make our hearts bleed and harrow up our spirits. When you have seen them, you will begin to feel aright towards the sinful. We sit at home comfortably at our fires in the winter time and think the weather is not so very cold. But if we go out and see the poor shivering in their rags, or find them cowering over their empty grates, we begin to think that cold is a greater evil than we dreamed! We come here, to this place of worship, and while we are listening to the Word we forget the destitution of those who hear it not. Why, at this very moment around the doors of the gin palaces and public houses of London there are thousands standing waiting till the blessed hour of one—when they can obtain the cheering draught which their souls thirst after! The assemblies now tarrying for the god Bacchus can be counted by the thousands!

What have these men been doing with the Sabbath hours up till now? Reading the Sunday newspaper, lying in bed, or loafing about their little gardens in their shirt sleeves. That is the occupation of hundreds of thousands this day all around us and at our doors! Have we done our best to bring them to the House of Prayer? Hundreds of thousands near by have never heard the Gospel in their lives—and never think of entering places where it is preached! Of course, if they had lived in Calcutta we should have thought about them! Because they are living in London close to us shall we neglect them?

One of the best things that could be done for us all would be to go round to houses in the worst parts of the city for one week with a city Missionary. Then we might see for ourselves what is to be seen! Then would sin and poverty become palpable and stand out in grim reality! Your fellow countrymen, men born of women who are of the same flesh and blood as yourselves—are living in daily neglect of your dear Savior, living in jeopardy of their immortal souls—if you did but realize this it would quicken you, by all means, to save some! Brethren, the strongest argument I have ever seen for the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is an argument which is often used against it. They say, “If the eternity of future punishment is true, we wonder that believers in it can rest in their beds, or eat their meals—for the truth is so horrible that it ought to stir them to incessant efforts to deliver others from going into this boundless misery.”

It *is* true and spoken of by a Prophet, and that is one reason why I believe the doctrine, because it has a tendency, if anything has, to move us to compassion and rouse us to action. If the advocate of other views is prepared to teach me a doctrine which will make me think more lightly of sin and make me feel more easy about the damnation of my fellow men, I do not want his doctrine, for I am too careless now, and have a dread of being more so! If, with the most terrible argument for incessant sorrow for the ruin of the souls of my hearers, I cannot be as tender as I would, what should I be if I could lay the flattering unction to my soul that, after all, it was of smaller consequence than I had thought whether they were damned or saved? Ah, dear Friends, can you bear to think of it, that all around you there are men and women who will, in a few years, suffer the terrible wrath of God and be banished forever from His Presence? If you could but realize Hell and its horrors, you might be stirred, by all means, to save some.

Many other things might move us, but certainly this last ought to do it.

A sense of *our own solemn obligations* to the Grace of God should arouse all our energies. If we are what we profess to be—saved men redeemed by the heart’s blood of the Son of God—do we not owe something to Christ for this? Shall we be easy till we have found many jewels for His crown? Can we be content while so many myriads are ignorant of Him, or opposed to Him? If you love Him, what will you do for Him? Show Him a proof of your love—and the best proof you can give is your own personal holiness and persevering effort to gather in His redeemed. Brother, Sister, do something for Jesus! Do not talk about it—do it!

Words are leaves— *actions* are fruits. Do something for Jesus! Do something for Jesus, today! Before the sun goes down think of some one action which may tend to the conversion of some one person—and do it with all your might! Let the object of the effort be your child, your servant, your brother, your friend—but make the effort today! Having done it today, do it tomorrow and every day—and doing it in one way, do it another way! And doing it in one state of heart, do it in another! Let your joy enchant, let your sorrow arouse, let your hope attract! Let your changeful moods help you to attack sinners from different quarters, as your varying circumstances bring you into contact with differing persons.

Be always awake! Turn yourself about like a gun on a swivel to reach persons who are found in any direction—so that some may fall wounded by the Gospel’s power. By all means, save some! God grant it may be so! And, oh, that some might be saved this morning by simply believing in Christ Jesus, for that is the way of salvation! Jesus puts away sin wherever there is a simple trust in Him! May seekers exercise that trust now and live forever. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Isaiah 6; 1 Corinthians 9.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—176, 353, 358.**

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SOUL SAVING OUR ONE BUSINESS  
NO. 1507

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” 1 Corinthians 9:22.*

IT is a grand thing to see a man thoroughly possessed with one master passion. Such a man is sure to be strong and if the master principle is excellent, he is sure to be excellent, too. The man of one objective is a man, indeed. Lives with many aims are like water trickling through innumerable streams, none of which is wide enough or deep enough to float the merest cockleshell of a boat. But a life with one objective is like a mighty river flowing between its banks, bearing to the ocean a multitude of ships and spreading fertility on either side. Give me a man not only with a great objective in his soul, but thoroughly possessed by it—his powers all concentrated and he on fire with vehement zeal for his supreme objective— and you have put before me one of the greatest sources of power which the world can produce!

Give me a man engrossed with holy love as to his heart and filled with some masterly celestial thought as to his brain and such a man will be known wherever his lot may be cast and I will venture to prophesy that his name will be remembered long after the place of his sepulcher shall be forgotten. Such a man was Paul. I am not about to set him upon a pedestal, that you may look at him and wonder, much less that you may kneel down and worship him as a saint. I mention Paul because what he was, we ought, every one of us to be. And though we cannot share in his office, not being Apostles and though we cannot share in his talents or in his inspiration, yet we ought to be possessed by the same spirit which actuated him and, let me also add, we ought to be possessed by it in the same degree!

Do you object to that? I ask you what was there in Paul, by the Grace of God, which may not be in you? And what had Jesus done for Paul more than for you? He was divinely changed and so have you been if you have passed from darkness into marvelous light! He had much forgiven and so have you, also, been freely pardoned. He was redeemed by the blood of the Son of God and so have you been—at least you profess to have been. He was filled with the Spirit of God and so are you if you are truly such as your Christian profession makes you out to be. Owing, then, your salvation to Christ, being debtors to the precious blood of Jesus and being quickened by the Holy Spirit, I ask you why there should not be the same fruit from the same sowing?

Why not the same effect from the same cause? Do not tell me that the Apostle was an exception and cannot be set up as a rule or model for common folk, for I shall have to tell you that we must be such as Paul was if we hope to be where Paul is. Paul did not think that he had attained,

neither was already perfect. Shall we think him to be so? Shall we think him to be so as to regard him to be matchless and so be content to fall short of what he was? No! Let it be our incessant prayer, as Believers in Christ, that we may be followers of Paul so far as he followed Christ! And where he failed to set his feet in his Lord’s footprints, may we even outstrip him and be more zealous, more devoted to Christ than even the Apostle of the Gentiles! O that the Holy Spirit would bring us to be like our Lord Jesus Himself!

At this time I shall have to speak to you upon *Paul’s great objective* in life. He tells us it was to “save some.” We will then look into Paul’s heart and show you a few of *the great reasons which made him think it so important that at least some should be saved*. Then, thirdly, we will indicate *certain of the means which the Apostle used to that end.* We will speak with this end in view—that *you*, my dear Hearers, may seek to “save some.” That you may seek this because of potent reasons which you cannot withstand and that you may seek it with wise methods such as shall, in the end, succeed.

**I.**First, then, Brothers and Sisters, WHAT WAS PAUL’S GREAT OBJECTIVE IN HIS DAILY LIFE AND MINISTRY? He says it was to save some. There are ministers of Christ present, at this hour, together with City Missionaries, Bible-Women, Sunday school teachers and other workers in my Master’s vineyard. And I make bold to enquire of each one of them—is this your objective in all your Christian service? Do you, above all things, aim at saving souls? I am afraid that some have forgotten this grand objective. But, dear Friends, anything short of this is unworthy to be the great end of a Christian’s life!

I fear there are some who preach with the view of *amusing* men and as long as people can be gathered in crowds and their ears can be tickled and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content and folds his hands and goes back self-satisfied. But Paul did not lay himself out to please the public and collect the crowd! If he did not save them, he felt that it was of no use to interest them. Unless the Truth of God had pierced their hearts, affected their lives and made new men of them, Paul would have gone home crying, “Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

It seems to be the opinion of a large party in the present day that the objective of Christian effort should be to*educate* men. I grant you that education is, in itself, an exceedingly valuable thing, so valuable that I am sure the whole Christian Church rejoices greatly that at last we have a national system of education which only needs to be carefully carried out and every child in this land will have the keys of knowledge in his hand. Whatever price others may set upon ignorance, we are promoters of knowledge—and the more it can be spread, the better shall we be pleased. But if the Church of God thinks that it is sent into the world merely to train the mental faculties, it has made a very serious mistake, for the objective of Christianity is *not* to educate men for their secular callings, or even to train them in the politer arts or the more elegant professions, or to enable them to enjoy the beauties of Nature or the charms of poetry.

Jesus Christ came not into the world for any of these things, but He came to seek and to save that which was lost! And on the same errand has He sent His Church—and she is a traitor to the Master who sent her if she is beguiled by the beauties of taste and art to forget that to preach Christ and Him Crucified is the *only* objective for which she exists among the sons of men! The business of the Church is salvation! The minister is to use all means to save some! He is no minister of Christ if this is not the one desire of his heart. Missionaries sink far below their level when they are content to civilize—their first objective is to *save*. The same is true of the Sunday school teacher and of all other workers among children—if they have merely taught the child to read, to repeat hymns and so forth, they have not yet touched their true vocation. We must have the children *saved*! At this nail we must drive and the hammer must come down upon this head always—if by all means I may save some—for we have done nothing unless some are saved!

Paul does not even say that he tried to *moralize* men. The best promoter of morality is the Gospel. When a man is saved, he becomes moral—he becomes more—he becomes holy. But to aim *first* at morality is altogether to miss the mark! If we did attain it—and we shall not—yet we should not have attained that for which we were sent into the world! Dr. Chalmers’ experience is a very valuable one to those who think that the Christian ministry ought to preach up mere morality, for he says that in his first parish he preached morality and saw no good whatever arising out of his exhortations. But, as soon as he began to preach Christ Crucified, then there was a buzz and a stir and much opposition—but Grace prevailed!

He who wishes for perfumes must grow the flowers. He who desires to promote morality must have men saved. He who wants motion in a corpse should first seek life for it and he who desires to see a rightly ordered life should first desire an inward renewal by the Holy Spirit. We are not to be satisfied when we have taught men their duties towards their neighbors, or even their duties towards God—this would suffice for Moses, but not for Christ! The Law came by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. We teach men what they ought to be, but we do far more—by the power of the Gospel applied by the Holy Spirit, we make them what they ought to be by the power of God’s Spirit. We put not before the blind the things that they ought to *see*, but we open their eyes in the name of Jesus! We tell not the captive how free he ought to be, but we open the door and take away his fetters! We are not content to tell men what they must be, but we show them how this character can be *attained* and how Jesus Christ freely presents all that is essential to eternal life to all those who come and put their trust in Him.

Now observe, Brothers and Sisters, if I, or you, or any of us, or all of us, shall have spent our lives merely in amusing men, or educating men, or moralizing men—when we shall come to give an account at the Last Great Day, we shall be in a very sorry condition and we shall have but a very sorry record to render. For of what use will it be to a man to be educated

when he comes to be *damned*? Of what service will it be to him to have been amused when the trumpet sounds and Heaven and earth are shaking and the Pit opens wide her jaws of fire and swallows up the unsaved soul? Of what use, even, to have moralized a man if he is still on the left hand of the Judge and if, “Depart, you cursed,” shall be his portion? Blood red with the murder of men’s souls will be the skirts of professing Christians unless the drift and end and aim of *all* their work has been to “save some.”

Oh, I beseech you, especially you, dear Friends, who are working in Sunday and Ragged Schools and elsewhere, do not think that you have done *anything* unless the children’s souls are saved! Settle it that this is the top and bottom of the business and throw your whole strength in the name of Christ and by the power of the Eternal Spirit into this one objective—if by any means you may save some and bring some to Jesus that they may be delivered from the wrath to come! What did Paul mean by saying that he desired to *save*some? What is it to be saved? Paul meant by that nothing less than *that some should be born again—*for no man is saved until he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus! The old nature cannot be saved—it is dead and corrupt. The best thing that can be done with it is to let it be crucified and buried in the sepulcher of Christ.

There must be a new nature implanted in us by the power of the Holy Spirit or we cannot be saved. We must be as much new creations as if we had never been—we must come a second time as fresh from the hand of the Eternal God as if we had been molded today by Divine wisdom as Adam was in Paradise! The Great Teacher’s words are, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound thereof, but you cannot tell where it comes nor where it goes; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” “Except a man is born again from above he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This, then, Paul meant, that men must be new creatures in Christ Jesus and we must never rest till we see such a change worked upon them! This must be the objective of our teaching and of our praying, indeed, the objective of our *lives*, that “some” may be regenerated.

He meant, in addition to that, *that some might be cleansed from their past iniquity through the merit of the atoning Sacrifice of the Son of God*. No man can be saved from his sin except by the Atonement. Under the Jewish Law it was written, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” That curse has never been reversed and the only way to escape from it is this—Jesus Christ was made a curse for us, as it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” Now, he who believes in Jesus, who puts his hand upon the head of Jesus of Nazareth, the Scapegoat of His people, has lost his sins! His faith is sure evidence that his iniquities were of old laid upon the head of the great Substitute. The Lord Jesus Christ was punished in our place and we are no longer obnoxious to the wrath of God. Behold, the sin-atoning Sacrifice is slain and offered on the Altar and the Lord has accepted it—and is so well pleased that He has declared that whoever believes in Jesus is fully and eternally forgiven!

Now, we long to see men thus forgiven. We pine to bring the prodigal’s head to the Father’s bosom, the wandering sheep to the Good Shepherd’s shoulder, the lost piece of money into the owner’s hands and until this is done, nothing is done! I mean, Brothers and Sisters, nothing *spiritually*, nothing *eternally*, nothing that is worthy of the agony of a Christian’s life, nothing that can be looked upon as deserving of an immortal spirit’s spending all its fires upon it. O Lord, our soul yearns to see Jesus rewarded by the salvation of the blood-bought. Aid us to lead souls to Him!

Once more. When the Apostle wished that he might save some he meant that being regenerated and being pardoned, *they might also be purified and made holy,* for a man is not saved while he lives in sin. Let a man say what he will, he cannot be saved from sin while he is the slave of it! How is a drunk saved from drunkenness while he still riots as before? How can you say that the swearer is saved from blasphemy while he is still profane? Words must be used in their true meaning. The great objective of the Christian’s work should be that some might be saved from their sins—purified and made white—and made examples of integrity, chastity, honesty and righteousness as the fruit of the Spirit of God. And where this is not the case we have labored in vain and spent our strength for nothing.

Now, I declare before you all that I have, in this house of prayer, never sought anything but the conversion of souls. And I call Heaven and earth to witness—and your consciences, too—that I have never labored for anything except the bringing of you to Christ that I might present you, at last, unto God accepted in the Beloved! I have not sought to gratify depraved appetites either by novelty of doctrine or ceremony, but I have kept to the simplicity of the Gospel. I have kept back no part of God’s Word from you, but I have endeavored to give you the whole counsel of God. I have sought out no fineries of speech, but have spoken plainly and right straight at your hearts and consciences. And if you are not saved, I mourn and lament before God that up to this day, though I have preached hundreds of times to you, yet I have preached in vain!

If you have not closed in with Christ. If you have not been washed in the fountain filled with blood, you are waste pieces of soil from which no harvest has yet come. You tell me, perhaps, that you have been kept from a great many sins; that you have learned a great many Truths of God by coming here. So far so good! But can I afford to live for this, merely to teach you certain Truths or keep you back from open sins? How could this content me if I knew all the while that you were still unsaved and must, therefore, after death, be cast into the flames of Hell? No, Beloved, before the Lord I count nothing to be worthy of your pastor’s life, soul and energy but the winning of you to Christ! Nothing but your salvation can ever make me feel that my heart’s desire is granted!

I ask every worker here to see to this, that he or she never turns aside from shooting at this target and at the center of this target, too, namely, that we may win souls for Christ and see them born to God and washed

in the fountain filled with blood! Let the workers’ hearts ache and yearn— and their voices cry till their throats are hoarse—but let them judge that they have accomplished *nothing* whatever until, at least, in some cases, men are really saved! As the fisherman longs to take fish in his net. As the hunter pants to bear home his spoil. As the mother pines to clasp her lost child to her bosom, so do we faint for the salvation of souls! And we must have them, or we are ready to die. Save them, O Lord, save them for Christ’s sake!

But now we must leave that point for another.  
**II.**THE APOSTLE HAD GREAT REASONS FOR SELECTING SUCH AN OBJECTIVE IN LIFE. Were he here I think he would tell you that his reasons were something of this kind. To save souls! *If they are not saved, our God is greatly dishonored*! Did you ever think over the amount of dishonor that is done to the Lord our God in London in any one hour of the day? Take, if you will, this prayer hour, when we are gathered here ostensibly to pray. If the thoughts of this great assembly could all be read, how many of them would be dishonoring to the Most High? But outside of every house of prayer, outside of every place of worship of every kind, think of the thousands and tens of thousands, the *hundreds* of thousands, who have all this day neglected the very semblance of the worship of the God who has made them and who keeps them in being!  
Think of how many times the door of the gin-palace has swung on its hinges during this holy hour! Think how many times God’s name has been blasphemed at the drinking bar! There are worse things than these, if worse can be, but I shall not lift the veil. Transfer your thoughts to an hour or so later, when the veil of darkness has descended. Shame will not permit us even to think of how God’s name is dishonored in the persons of those whose first father was made after the image of God, but who pollute themselves to be the slaves of Satan and the prey of bestial lusts! Alas! Alas for this city! It is full of abominations of which the Apostle said, “It is a shame, even, to speak of those things which were done of them in secret.”  
Christian men and women, nothing can sweep away the social evil but the Gospel! Vices are like vipers and only the voice of Jesus can drive them out of the land! The Gospel is the great besom with which to cleanse the filthiness of this city but nothing else will avail. Will you not, for God’s sake, whose name is every day profaned, seek to save some? If you will enlarge your thoughts and take in all the great cities of the Continent— yes, further still—take all the idolaters of China and India, the worshippers of the false prophet and the Antichrist, what a mass of provocation have we here! What a smoke in Jehovah’s nose must this false worship be! How He must often put His hand to the hilt of His sword as though He would say, “Ah! I will ease Myself of My adversaries.” But He bears it patiently. Let us not become indifferent to His longsuffering, but day and night let us cry unto Him and daily let us labor for Him if by any means we may save some for His Glory’s sake.

Think, dear Friends, also, of *the extreme misery of this, our human race*. It would be a very dreadful thing, tonight, if you could get any idea of the aggregate of the misery of London at the present moment in the hospitals and the workhouses. Now, I would not say half a word against poverty—wherever it comes, it is a bitter ill—but you will mark as you notice carefully, that while a few are poor because of unavoidable circumstances, a very large mass of the poverty of London is the sheer and clear result of profuseness, lack of forethought, idleness and, worst of all, drunkenness. Ah, that *drunkenness*! That is the master evil! If drink could be gotten rid of, we might be sure of conquering the very devil himself! The drunkenness created by the infernal liquor dens which plague the whole of this huge city is appalling!

No, I did not speak in haste, or let slip a hasty word. Many of the liquor dens are nothing less than *infernal—*in some respects they are worse, for Hell has its uses as the Divine protest against sin—but as for the gin palace there is nothing to be said in its favor. The vices of the age cause three-fourths of all the poverty! If you could look at the homes tonight, the wretched homes where women will tremble at the sound of their husband’s foot as he comes home, where little children will crouch down with fear upon their little heap of straw because the human brute who calls himself, “a man,” will come reeling home from the place where he has been indulging his appetites—if you could look at such a sight and remember that it will be seen 10,000 times over tonight, I think you would say, “God help us, by all means, to save some.” Since the great axe to lay at the root of the deadly upas tree is the Gospel of Christ, may God help us to hold that axe there and to work constantly with it till the huge trunk of the poison tree begins to rock to and fro and we get it down and London is saved—and the world is saved from the wretchedness and the misery which now drips from every branch!

Again, dear Friends, the Christian has other reasons for seeking to save some—chiefly because *of the terrible future of impenitent souls*. That veil which hangs before me is not penetrated by every glance, but he who has his eyes touched with heavenly eye-salve sees through it and what does he see? Myriads upon myriads of spirits in dread procession passing from their bodies and passing—*where*? Unsaved, unregenerate, unwashed in precious blood, we see them go up to the solemn bar where, in silence, the sentence comes forth and they are banished from the Presence of God— banished to horrors which are not to be described nor even to be imagined! This, alone, were enough to cause us distress day and night! This decision of destiny has about it a terrible solemnity.

But the Resurrection trumpet sounds! Those spirits come forth from their prison. I see them returning to earth, rising from the Pit to the bodies in which they lived! And now I see them stand—multitudes! Multitudes! Multitudes! Multitudes—in the Valley of Decision. And HE comes with the crown upon His head and the books before Him, sitting on a Great White Throne. And there they stand as prisoners at the bar! My vision now perceives them—how they tremble! How they quiver like aspen leaves in the gale! To where can they flee? Rocks cannot hide them!

Mountains will not open their bowels to conceal them! What shall become of them? The dread angel takes the sickle, reaps them as the reaper cuts up the tares for the oven—and as he gathers he casts them down where despair shall be their everlasting torment! Woe is me, my heart sinks as I see their doom and hear the terrible cries of their too-late awaking!

Save some, O Christians! By all means save some! By yonder flames and outer darkness and the weeping and the wailing and the gnashing of teeth, seek to save some! Let this, as in the case of the Apostle, be your great, your ruling objective in life, that by all means you may save some! For, oh, if they are saved, *observe the contrast*. Their spirits mount to Heaven and after the Resurrection their bodies ascend, also, and there they praise redeeming love! No fingers more nimble on the harp strings than theirs! No notes more sweet than theirs, as they sing, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, be Glory forever and ever.” What bliss to see the once rebellious brought home to God and heirs of wrath made possessors of Heaven!

All this is involved in salvation. O that myriads may come to this blessed state. “Save some”—oh, some at least! Seek that some may be there in Glory! Behold your Master! He is your Pattern. He left Heaven to save some. He went to the Cross, to the grave, to “save some.” This was the great objective of His life, to lay down His life for His sheep. He loved His Church and gave Himself for it, that He might redeem her unto Himself. Imitate your Master! Learn His self-denial and His blessed consecration if by any means you may save some! My soul yearns that I personally may “save some,” but broader is my desire than that. I would have *every one of you*, my beloved Friends, associated here in Church fellowship, to become spiritual parents of children for God!

Oh, that each of you might “save some!” Yes, my venerable Brothers and Sisters, you are not too old for service. Yes, my young Friends, you young men and maidens, you are not too young to be recruits in the King’s service! If the kingdom is ever to come to our Lord and, come it will, it never will come through a few ministers, missionaries, or evangelists preaching the Gospel. It must come through each of *you* preaching it—in the shop and by the fireside—when walking abroad and when sitting in the chamber. You must, all of you, be always endeavoring to “save some.” I would enlist you all afresh tonight and bind anew the King’s colors upon you! I would that you would fall in love with my Master all over again and enter a second time upon the love of your espousals!

There is a hymn of Cowper’s which we sometimes sing ***—  
“O for a closer walk with God!”***  
May we get to have a closer walk with Him and if we do, we shall also feel a more vehement desire to magnify Christ in the salvation of sinners. I would like to press the inquiry upon my hearers tonight, you who are saved—How many others have you brought to Christ? You cannot do it by yourself, I know, but I mean how many has the Spirit of God brought by you? How many, did I say? Is it quite certain that you have led *any* to Jesus? Can you remember *one*? I pity you, then! “Write,” said Jeremiah, “Write that man childless.” That was considered to be a fearful curse! Shall I write you childless, my beloved Friends? Your children are not saved, your wife is not saved and you are spiritually childless! Can you bear this thought? I pray you wake from your sleep and ask the Master to make you useful.

“I wish the saints cared for us sinners,” said a young man. “They do care for you,” answered one, “care very much for you.” “Why don’t they show it, then?” he asked, “I have often wished to have a talk about good things, but my friend, who is a member of the Church, never broaches the subject and seems to study how to keep clear of it when I am with him.” Do not let them say this about you! Tell them about Christ and things Divine and make this your resolve, every one of you, that if men perish they shall not perish for lack of *your* prayers, nor for lack of *your* earnest and loving instructions! God give you Grace, each one of you, to resolve, by all means, to save some and then to carry out your intentions!

**III.**But my time is almost gone and therefore I have to mention, in the last place, THE GREAT METHODS WHICH THE APOSTLE USED. How did he, who so longed to, “save some,” set about it? Why, first of all, *by simply preaching the Gospel of Christ*. He did not attempt to create a sensation by startling statements. Neither did he preach erroneous doctrine in order to obtain the assent of the multitude. I fear that some evangelists preach what, in their own minds, they must know to be untrue. They keep back certain doctrines, not because they are untrue but because they do not give scope enough for their ravings and they make loose statements because they hope to reach more minds. However earnest a man may be for the salvation of sinners, I do not believe that he has any right to make any statement which his sober judgment will not justify.

I think I have heard of things said and done at revival meetings which were not according to sound doctrine, but which were always excused by “the excitement of the occasion.” I hold that I have no right to state false doctrine even if I knew it would save a soul! The supposition is, of course, absurd! But it makes you see what I mean. My business is to bring to bear upon men, not falsehood, but the Truth of God and I shall not be excused if, under *any* pretense, I palm a lie upon the people. Rest assured that to keep back any part of the Gospel is not the right, nor the true method for saving men. Tell the sinner all the doctrines. If you hold Calvinistic doctrine, as I hope you do, do not stutter about it, nor stammer over it, but speak it out! Depend upon it, many revivals have been worthless because a full-orbed Gospel was not proclaimed.

Give the people every Truth of God, every Truth of God baptized in holy fire, and each Truth will have its own useful effect upon the mind. But the great Truth is the Cross, the Truth that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Brethren, keep to that! That is the bell for you to ring. Ring it, man! Ring it! Keep on ringing it! Sound forth that note upon your silver trumpet, or if you are only a ram’s horn, sound it forth and the walls of Jericho will come down! Alas for the fineries of our “cultured” modern divines. I hear them crying out and denouncing my oldfashioned advice. This talking about Christ Crucified is said to be archaic, conventional and antique—and not at all suitable to the refinement of this wonderful age!

It is astonishing how learned we have all grown lately. We are getting so very wise, I am afraid we shall ripen into fools before long, even if we have not arrived at it already! People need “*thinking*” nowadays, so it is said, and the working men will go where *science* is deified and profound “thought” is enshrined. I have noticed that as a general rule wherever the new “thinking” drives out the old Gospel there are more spiders than people—but where there is the simple preaching of Jesus Christ, the place is crowded to the doors! Nothing else will crowd a meeting house, after all, for any length of time, but the preaching of Christ Crucified!

But as to this matter, whether it is popular or unpopular, our mind is made up and our foot is put down. We have no doubts or questions as to our own course. If it is foolish to preach up Atonement by blood, we will be fools! And if it is madness to stick to the old Truths of God just as Paul delivered them, in all their simplicity, without any refinement, or improvement, we mean to stick to it even if we are put in the stocks as being incapable of progressing with the age, for we are persuaded that this “foolishness of preaching” is a Divine ordinance and that the Cross of Christ which stumbles so many and is ridiculed by so many more, is still the power of God and the wisdom of God! Yes, just the old-fashioned Truth of God—if you believe, you shall be saved—we will stick to that and may God send His blessing upon it according to His own eternal purpose.

We do not expect this preaching to be popular, but we know that God will justify it before long. Meanwhile, we are not staggered because— ***“The Truths we love, a sightless world blasphemes As childish dotage and delirious dreams!  
The danger they discern not they deny—  
They laugh at their only remedy—and die.”***

Next to this, *Paul used much prayer*. The Gospel alone will not be blessed. We must *pray* over our preaching. A great painter was asked what he mixed his colors with and he replied he mixed them with brains. That is well for a painter, but if anyone should ask a preacher what he mixes the Truth of God with, he ought to be able to answer—with *prayer*, much prayer. When a poor man was breaking granite by the roadside, he was down on his knees while he gave his blows and a minister passing by, said, “Ah, my Friend, here you are at your hard work! Your work is just like mine—you have to break stones, and so do I.” “Yes,” said the man, “and if you manage to break stony hearts, you will have to do it as I do— down on your knees.” The man was right. No one can use the Gospel hammer well except he is much on his knees. But the Gospel hammer soon splits flinty hearts when a man knows how to pray. Prevail with God and you will prevail with men. Fresh from the closet to the pulpit let us come, with the anointing oil of God’s Spirit fresh upon us. What we receive in secret, we are to cheerfully dispense in public. Let us never venture to speak for God to men until we have spoken for men to God! Yes, dear Hearers, if you want a blessing on your Sunday school teaching, or any other form of Christian labor, mix it up with fervent intercession!

And then observe one other thing. *Paul went to his work always with an intense sympathy for those he dealt with—a sympathy which made him adapt himself to each case*. If he talked to a Jew, he did not begin at once blurting out that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, but he said he was a Jew, as Jew he was. He raised no questions about nationalities or ceremonies. He wanted to tell the Jew of Him of whom Isaiah said, “‘He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” in order that he might believe in Jesus and so be saved. If he met a Gentile, the Apostle to the Gentiles never showed any of the squeamishness which might have been expected to cling to him on account of his Jewish education. He ate as the Gentile ate and drank as the Gentile did. He sat with him and talked with him. He was, as it were, a Gentile with him.

He never raised any question about circumcision or uncircumcision, but solely wishing to tell him of Christ who came into the world to save both Jew and Gentile and to make them one. If Paul met with a Scythian, he spoke to him in the barbarian tongue and not in classic Greek. If he met a Greek, he spoke to him as he did at the Areopagus, with language that was fitted for the polished Athenian. He was all things to all men, that he might, by all means, save some! So with you, Christian people— your one business in life is to lead men to believe in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit—and every other thing should be made subservient to this one objective. If you can but get them saved, everything else will come right in due time.

Mr. Hudson Taylor, a dear man of God, who has labored much in Inland China, finds it helpful to dress as a Chinaman and wear a pigtail. He always mingles with the people and, as far as possible, lives as they do. This seems to me to be a truly wise policy. I can understand that we shall win upon a congregation of Chinese by becoming as Chinese as possible and, if this is the case, we are bound to be Chinese to the Chinese to save the Chinese! It would not be amiss to become a Zulu to save the Zulus, though we must mind that we do it in another sense than Colenso did. If we can put ourselves on a level with those whose good we seek, we shall be more likely to effect our purpose than if we remain aliens and foreigners and *then* talk of love and unity.

To sink myself to save others is the idea of the Apostle. To throw overboard all peculiarities and yield a thousand indifferent points in order to bring men to Jesus is our wisdom if we would extend our Master’s kingdom! Never may any whim or conventionality of ours keep a soul from considering the Gospel—that were horrible, indeed. Better far to be personally inconvenienced by compliance with indifferent things, than to retard a sinner’s coming by quarrelling about trifles. If Jesus Christ were here today I am sure He would not put on any of those gaudy rags in which the Puseyite delights himself. I cannot imagine our Lord Jesus Christ dressed out in that style. Why, the Apostle tells our women that they are to dress themselves modestly and I do not think Christ would

have His ministers set an example of tomfoolery!

But yet, even in dress, something may be done on the principle of our text. When Jesus Christ was here, what dress did he wear? To put it in plain English, He wore a smock frock. He wore the common dress of His countrymen—a garment woven from the top throughout, without seam— and I think He would have His ministers wear clothes which are most like the clothes which their hearers wear in common—and so, even in dress, associate with their hearers and be one among them. He would have you teachers, if you want to save your children, talk to them like children and make yourselves children if you can. You who want to get at young peoples’ hearts must try to be young. You who wish to visit the sick must sympathize with them in their sickness. Get to speak as you would like to be spoken to if *you* were sick. Come *down* to those who cannot come up to you.

You cannot pull people out of the water without stooping down and getting hold of them. If you have to deal with bad characters you must come down to them, not in their *sin*, but in their roughness and in their style of language so as to get a hold of them. I pray God that we may learn the sacred art of soul-winning by adaptation. They called Mr. Whitefield’s chapel at Moorfields, “The Soul Trap.” Whitefield was delighted and said he hoped it always would be a soul trap! Oh that all our places of worship were soul traps and every Christian a fisher of men, each one doing his best, as the fisherman does, by every art and artifice, to catch those they fish for! Well may we use all means to win so great a prize as a spirit destined for eternal weal or woe!

The diver plunges deep to find pearls and we may accept any labor or hazard to win a soul. Rouse yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters, for this God-like work and may the Lord bless you in it! I commend these wandering thoughts to your earnest attention. I pray the ungodly to think of what their ruin will be unless they come to Jesus and trust in Him. And I ask Believers to be doubly earnest, from this time forth, in laboring to save the souls of men! And may God send us such a blessing that we shall not have room to receive it! Amen.

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THE HEAVENLY RACE  
NO. 198

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 11, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
ON THE GRAND STAND, EPSOM RACE-COURSE.~~***

***~~“So run, that you may obtain.”  
1 Corinthians 9:24.~~***

WE are continually insisting upon it from day to day that salvation is not of works, but of grace. We lay this down as one of the very first doctrines of the Gospel. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” “By grace are you saved, through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.” But we find that it is equally necessary to preach the absolute necessity of a religious life for the attainment of Heaven at last. Although we are sure that men are not saved for the sake of their works, yet are we equally sure that  
no man will be saved without them. And he who leads an unholy life, who neglects the great salvation, can never inherit that crown of life which fades not away.

In one sense, true religion is wholly the work of God. Yet there are high and important senses in which we must ourselves “strive to enter in at the strait gate.” We must run a race. We must wrestle even to agony. We must fight a battle before we can inherit the crown of life. We have in our text the course of religion set down as a race. And inasmuch as there are many who enter upon a profession of religion with very false motives, the Apostle warns us that although all run in a race, yet all do not obtain the prize. They all run, but only one is rewarded.

And he gives us, therefore, the practical exhortation to run that we may obtain. For unless we are the winners we had better not have been runners at all. For he that is not a winner is a loser. He who makes a profession of religion and does not at last obtain the crown of life, is a loser by his profession. For his profession was hypocrisy or else formality and he had better not have made a profession, than fall therein. And now, in entering upon the text, I shall have to notice *what it is we are to run for*. “So run that you may *obtain.*” Secondly, the *mode of running*, to which we must attend—“So run that you may obtain.” And then I shall give a few *practical exhortations* to stir those onward in the heavenly race who are flagging and negligent, in order that they may at last “obtain.”

**I.** In the first place, then, WHAT IS IT THAT WE OUGHT TO SEEK TO OBTAIN?  
Some people think they must be religious, in*order to be respectable*. There are a vast number of people in the world who go to Church and to Chapel, because everybody else does so. It is disreputable to waste your Sundays, not to be found going up to the House of God, therefore they take a pew and attend the services and they think they have done their duty. They have obtained all that they sought for, when they can hear their neighbors saying, “Such-and-Such is a very respectable person. He is always very regular at his Church. He is a very reputable person and exceedingly praiseworthy.” Verily, if this is what you seek after in your religion, you shall get it. For the Pharisees who sought the praise of men “had their reward.”  
But when you have gotten it, what a poor reward it is! Is it worth the drudgery? I do not believe that the drudgery to which people submit in order to be called respectable is at all compensated by what they gain. I am sure, for my own part, I would not care a solitary rap what I was called, or what I was thought of. Nor would I perform anything that was irksome to myself for the sake of pleasing any man that ever walked beneath the stars, however great or mighty he may be. It is the sign of a fawning, cringing spirit, when people are always seeking to do that which renders them respectable. The esteem of men is not worth the looking after and sad it is that this should be the only prize which some men put before them, in the poor religion which they undertake.  
There are people who go a little farther. They are not content with being considered respectable, but they want something more. They *desire to be considered pre-eminently saints*. These persons come to our places of worship and after a little time they venture to come forward and ask whether they may unite with our Churches. We examine them and so hidden is their hypocrisy that we cannot discover its rottenness. We receive them into our Churches. They sit at the Lord’s Supper. They come to our Church meetings—perhaps, they are even voted into the deacon’s office. Sometimes they attain to the pulpit, though God has never called them and preach what they have never felt in their hearts.  
Men may do all this merely to enjoy the praise of men. And they will even undergo some persecution for the sake of it—because to be thought a saint, to be reckoned by religious people to be everything that is right and proper—to have a name among the living in Zion—is to some persons a thing exceedingly coveted. They would not like to be set down among the “chief of sinners,” but if they may have their names written among the chief of *saints* they will consider themselves exceedingly exalted. I am afraid we have a considerable admixture of persons of this sort in our Churches who only come for the mere sake of keeping up their religious pretensions and obtaining a religious status in the midst of the Church of God.  
“Verily, I say unto you *they have* their reward,” and they shall never have any but what they obtain here. They get their reward for a little time. For a short time they are looked up to. But perhaps even in this life they stumble and down they go. The Church discovers them and they are sent out like the ass stripped of the lion’s skin to browse once more among their native nettles, no longer to be glorious in the midst of the Church of the living God.  
Or perhaps, they may wear the cloak until the last day of their lives and then death comes and strips them of all their tinsel and gewgaw. And they who acted upon the stage of religion as kings and princes are sent behind the stage to be unrobed and to find themselves beggars to their shame and naked to their eternal disgrace. It is not this which you and I would seek after in religion. Dearly Beloved, if we do run the race, we would run for a higher and more glorious prize than any of these things.  
Another set of people take up with religious life for *what they can get by it*. I have known trades-people attend Church for the mere sake of getting customers of those who went there. I have heard of such things as people knowing which side their bread was buttered and going to that particular denomination, where they thought they could get the most by it. Loaves and fishes drew some of Christ’s followers and they are very attracting baits, even to this day. Men find there is something to be gotten by religion. Among the poor it is, perhaps, some little charity to be obtained and among those that are in business, it is the custom which they think to get. “Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” For the Church is never foolish and suspicious. We do not like to suspect our fellow creatures of following us from sordid motives.  
The Church does not like to think that a man would be base enough to pretend to religion for the mere sake of what he can get and, therefore, we let these people easily slip through and they have their reward. But ah, at what a price they buy it! They have deceived the Lord’s servants for gold and they have entered into His Church as base hypocrites for the sake of a piece of bread. And they shall be thrust out at last with the anger of God behind them, like Adam driven out of Eden, with the flaming Cherubim with a sword turning every way to keep the tree of life. And they shall forever look back upon this as the most fearful crime they have committed— that they pretended to be God’s people when they were not and entered into the midst of the fold when they were but wolves in sheep’s clothing.  
There is yet another class and when I have referred to them I will mention no more. These are the people who take up with religion for the sake of *quieting their conscience* and it is astonishing how little of religion will sometimes do that. Some people tell us that if in the time of storm men would pour bottles of oil upon the waves, there would be a great calm at once. I have never tried it and it is most probable I never shall, for my organ of credulity is not large enough to accept so extensive a statement. But there are some people who think that they can calm the storm of a troubled conscience by pouring a little of the oil of a profession about religion upon it. And it is amazing how wonderful an effect this really has.  
I have known a man who was drunk many times in a week and who got his money dishonestly and yet he always had an easy conscience by going to his Church or Chapel regularly on the Sunday. We have heard of a man who could “devour widows’ houses”—a lawyer who could swallow up everything that came in his way and yet he would never go to bed without saying his prayers. And that stilled his conscience. We have heard of other persons, especially among the Romanists, who would not object to thieving, but who would regard eating anything but fish on a Friday as a most fearful sin, supposing that by making a fast on the Friday, all the iniquities of all the days in the week would be put away.  
They want the outward forms of religion to keep the conscience quiet. For Conscience is one of the worst lodgers to have in your house when he gets quarrelsome—there is no abiding with him. He is an ill bed-fellow—ill at lying down and equally troublesome at rising up. A guilty conscience is one of the curses of the world—it puts out the sun and takes away the brightness from the moonbeam. A guilty conscience casts a noxious exhalation through the air, removes the beauty from the landscape, the glory from the flowing river, the majesty from the rolling floods. There is nothing beautiful to the man that has a guilty conscience. He needs no accusing— everything accuses him.  
Hence people take up with religion just to quiet them. They take the Sacrament sometimes. They go to a place of worship. They sing a hymn now and then, they give a guinea to a charity. They intend to leave a portion in their will to build almshouses. And in this way Conscience is lulled asleep and they rock him to and fro with religious observances till there he sleeps while they sing over him the lullaby of hypocrisy and he wakes not until he shall wake with that rich man who was here clothed in purple, but in the next world did lift up his eyes in Hell, being in torments, without a drop of water to cool his burning tongue.  
What, then, is it, for which we ought to run in this race? Why Heaven, eternal life, justification by faith, the pardon of sin, acceptance in the Beloved and glory everlasting. If you run for anything else than salvation, should you win, what you have won is not worth the running for. Oh, I beseech everyone of you, make sure work for eternity, never be content with anything less than a living faith in a living Savior. Rest not until you are certain that the Holy Spirit is at work in your souls. Do not think that the outside of religion can be of use to you. It is just the inward part of religion that God loves. Seek to have a repentance that needs not to be repented of—a faith which looks alone to Christ and which will stand by you when you come into the swellings of Jordan.  
Seek to have a love which is not like a transient flame, burning for a moment and then extinguished—but a flame which shall increase and increase and still increase—till your heart shall be swallowed up therein and Jesus Christ’s one name shall be the sole object of your affection. We must, in running the heavenly race, set nothing less before us than that which Christ did set before Him. He set the joy of salvation before Himself and then He did run, despising the Cross and enduring the shame. So let us do. And may God give us good success, that by His good Spirit we may attain unto eternal life, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord!  
**II.**Thus have I noticed what it is we are to run for. And now the Apostle says, “So run that you may obtain.” I shall notice some people who never will obtain and tell you the reason why and in so doing, I shall be illustrating THE RULES OF THE RACE  
There are some people who certainly never will obtain the prize, because they are not even *entered*. Their names are not down for the race and therefore it is quite clear that they will not run, or if they do run, they will run without having any warrant whatever for expecting to receive the prize. There are some such here this afternoon—who will tell you themselves—“We make no profession, Sir, none whatever.” It is quite as well, perhaps, that you do not—because if you did, you would be hypocrites and it is better to make no profession at all than to be hypocrites. Still, remember, your names are not down for the race and therefore you cannot win. If a man tells you in business that he makes no profession of being honest, you know that he is a confirmed rogue.  
If a man makes no profession of being religious, you know what he is— he is irreligious—he has no fear of God before his eyes, he has no love to Christ, he has no hope of Heaven. He confesses it himself. Strange that men should be so ready to confess this. You don’t find persons in the street willing to acknowledge that they are confirmed drunkards. Generally a man will repudiate it with scorn. You never find a man saying to you, “I don’t profess to be a chaste living man.”  
You don’t hear another say, “I don’t profess to be anything but a covetous wretch.” No—people are not so fast about telling their faults—and yet you hear people confess the greatest fault to which man can be addicted— they say, “I make no profession”—which means just this—that they do not give God His due. God has made them and yet they won’t serve Him. Christ has come into the world to save sinners and yet they will not regard Him. The Gospel is preached and yet they will not hear it, they have the Bible in their houses and yet they will not attend to its admonitions—they make no profession of doing so.  
It will be short work with them at the last great day. There will be no need for the books to be opened, no need for a long deliberation in the verdict. They do not profess to be pardoned. Their guilt is written upon their own foreheads—their brazen shamelessness shall be seen by the whole world as a sentence of destruction written upon their very brows. You cannot expect to win Heaven unless your names are entered for the race. If there are no attempts whatever made, even at so much as a profession of religion, then, of course, you may just sit down and say, “Heaven is not for me. I have no part nor lot in the inheritance of Israel, I cannot say that my Redeemer lives. And I may rest quite assured that Tophet is prepared of old *for me*. I must feel its pains and know its miseries. For there are but two places to dwell in hereafter and if I am not found on the right hand of the Judge, there is but one alternative—namely, to be cast away forever into the blackness of darkness.”  
Then there is another class whose names are down, but they *never started right*. A bad start is a sad thing. If in the ancient races of Greece or Rome a man who was about to run for the race had loitered, or if he had started before the time it would not matter how fast he ran, if he did not start in order. The flag must drop before the horse starts, otherwise even if it reaches the winning post first, it shall have no reward. There is something to be noted, then, in the starting of the race. I have known men run the race of religion with all their might and yet they have lost it because they did not start right.  
You say, “Well, how is that?” Why, there are some people who on a sudden leap into religion. They get it quickly and they keep it for a time and at last they lose it because they did not get their religion the right way. They have heard that before a man can be saved it is necessary that, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, he should feel the weight of sin—that he should make a confession of it—that he should renounce all hope in his own works and should look to Jesus Christ alone. They look upon all these things as unpleasant preliminaries and therefore, before they have attended to repentance, before the Holy Spirit has wrought a good work in them, before they have been brought to give up everything and trust to Christ—they make a profession of religion.  
This is just setting up in business without a stock in trade and there must be a failure. If a man has no capital to begin with, he may make a fine show for a little time, but it shall be as the crackling of thorns under a pot—a great deal of noise and much light for a little time—but it shall die out in darkness. How many there are who never think it necessary that there should be heart work within! Let us remember, however, that there never was a true new birth without much spiritual suffering, that there never was a man who had a *changed* heart without his first having a *miserable* heart.  
We must pass through that black tunnel of conviction before we can come out upon the high embankment of holy joy. We must first go through the Slough of Despond before we can run along the walls of Salvation. There must be plowing before there is sowing. There must be many a frost and many a sharp shower before there is any reaping. But we often act like little children who pluck flowers from the shrubs and plant them in their gardens without roots—then they say how fair and how pretty their little garden is—but wait a little while and their flowers are withered, because they have no roots. This is an the effect of not having a right start, not having the “root of the matter.”  
What is the good of outward religion, the flower and the leaf of it, unless we have the “root of the matter” in us—unless we have been dug into by that sharp iron spade of conviction and have been plowed with the plow of the Spirit and then have been sown with the sacred seed of the Gospel, in the hope of bringing forth an abundant harvest? There must be a good start—look well to that, for there is no hope of running unless the start is right.  
Again, there are some runners in the heavenly race who cannot win because they *carry too much weight*. A light weight, of course, has the advantage. There are some people who have an immensely heavy weight to carry. “How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of Heaven!” What is the reason? Because he carries so much weight. He has so much of the cares and

pleasures of this world. He has such a burden that he is not likely to win, unless God should please to give him a mighty mass of strength to enable him to bear it.  
We find many men willing to be saved, as they say. They receive the Word with great joy, but by-and-by thorns spring up and choke the Word. They have so much business to do. They say they must live. They forget they must die. They have such a deal to attend to, they cannot think of living near to Christ. They find they have little time for devotions. Morning prayer must be cut short, because their business begins early. They can have no prayer at night, because business keeps them so late. How can they be expected to think of the things of God? They have so much to do to answer this question—“What shall I eat? What shall I drink? With what shall I be clothed?”  
It is true they read in the Bible that their Father who is in Heaven will take care of them in these things if they will trust Him. But they say, “Not so,” those are enthusiasts according to their notions who rely upon Providence. They say the best Providence in all the world is hard work. And they say rightly, but they forget that into the bargain of their hard work, “it is in vain to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness. For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”  
You see two men running a race. One of them, as he starts, lays aside every weight, he takes off his garment and away he runs. There goes the other poor fellow, he has a whole load of gold and silver upon his back. Then around his loins he has many distrustful doubts about what shall become of him in the future, what will be his prospects when he grows old and a hundred other things. He does not know how to roll his burden upon the Lord. See how he flags, poor Fellow, and how the other distances him, leaves him far behind, gains the corner and is coming to the winning post.  
It is well for us if we can cast everything away except that one thing needful and say, “This is my business—to serve God on earth—knowing that I shall enjoy Him in Heaven.” For when we leave our business to God, we leave it in better hands than if we took care of it ourselves. They who carve for themselves generally cut their fingers. But they who leave God to carve for them, shall never have an empty plate. He who will walk after the cloud shall go aright, but he who will run before it shall soon find that he has gone a fool’s errand. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.” “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing.”  
Our Savior said, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” “Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them, are you not much better than they?” “Trust in the Lord and do good and verily you shall be fed.” “His place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him. His waters shall be sure.” “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” Carry the weight of this world’s cares about you and it will be as much as you can do to carry them and to stand upright under them—but as to running a race with such burdens, it is just impossible.  
There is also another thing that will prevent man’s running the race. We have known people who stopped on their way to *kick their fellows*. Such things sometimes occur in a race. The horse, instead of speeding onwards to the mark, is of an angry disposition and sets about kicking those that are running beside him—there is not much probability of his coming in first. “Now they that run in a race all run, but one receives the prize.” There is one however who never gets it and that is the man who always attends to his fellow creatures instead of himself.  
It is a mysterious thing that I never yet saw a man with a hoe on his shoulder, going to hoe his *neighbor’s* garden. It is a rarity to see a farmer sending his team of horses to plow his neighbor’s land. But it is a most singular thing that every day in the week I meet with persons who are attending to other people’s *character*. If they go to the House of God and hear a trite thing said, they say at once, “How suitable that was for Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown.” The thought never enters their head, how suitable it was to themselves.  
They lend their ears to everybody else, but they do not hear for themselves. When they get out of Chapel, perhaps as they walk home, their first thought is, “Well, how can I find fault with my neighbors?” They think that putting other people down is going up themselves (there never was a greater  
mistake). They think that by picking holes in their neighbor’s coat they mend their own. They have so few virtues of their own that they do not like anybody else to have any—therefore they do the best they can to despoil everything good in their neighbor. And if there is a little fault, they will look at it through a magnifying glass—but they will turn the glass the other way when they look at their own sins.  
Their own faults become exceedingly small while those of others become magnificently great. Now this is a fault not only among professing religious men, but among those who are not religious. We are all so prone to find fault with other people instead of attending to our own affairs. We attend to the vineyards of others, but our own vineyard we have not kept. Ask a worldly man why he is not religious and he tells you, “Because Soand-So makes a profession of religion and is not consistent.” Is that any business of yours? To your own Master you must stand or fall and so must he. God is their judge and not you.  
Suppose there are a great many inconsistent Christians—and we are compelled to acknowledge that there are—so much the more reason why you should be a good one. Suppose there are a great many who deceive others—so much the more reason you should set the world an example of what a genuine Christian is. “Ah, but,” you say, “I am afraid there are very few.” Then why don’t *you* make one? But after all, is that your business? Must not every man bear his own burden? You will not be judged for other men’s sins, you will not be saved by their faith, you will not be condemned for their unbelief.  
Every man must stand in his own proper flesh and blood at the bar of God to account for the works done in his own body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil. It will be of little avail for you to say at the Day of Judgment, “O Lord, I was looking at my neighbors. O Lord, I was finding fault with the people in the village. I was correcting their follies.” But thus says the Lord—“Did I ever commission you to be a judge or a divider over them? Why, if you had so much time to spare and so much critical judgment, did you not exercise it upon yourself? Why did you not examine yourself, so that you might have been found ready and acceptable in the Day of God?” These persons are not very likely to win the race, because they turn to kicking others.  
Again, there is another class of persons who will not win the race— namely, those who, although they seem to start very fair, very soon *loiter*. They dart ahead at the first starting and distance all the others. There they fly away as if they had wings on their heels. But a little further on in the race, it is with difficulty that with whip and spur they are to be kept going at all and they almost come to a standstill. Alas, this race of persons is to be discovered in all our Churches. We get young people who come forward and make a profession of religion and we talk with them and we think it is all well with them and for a little while they do run well. There is nothing wanting in them. We could hold them up as patterns for the imitation of others.  
Wait a couple of years. They drop off just by little and little. First, perhaps, there is the attendance on a week-day service neglected—then it is altogether discontinued. Then one service on Sabbath. Then perhaps family prayer, then private prayer—one thing after another is given up—until at last the whole edifice which stood upright and looked so fair, having been built upon the sand, gives way before the shock of time and down it falls and great is the ruin thereof.  
Remember, it is not *starting* that wins the race—it is running all the way. He that would be saved must hold on to the end—“He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.” Stop and loiter in the race before you have come to the end thereof and you have made one of the greatest mistakes that could possibly occur. On, on, on! While you live—still onward, onward, onward! For until you come to the grave, you have not come to your resting place. Until you arrive at the tomb, you have not come to the spot where you may cry, “Halt!” Ever onward if you would win. If you are content to lose, if you would lose your own soul, you may say, “Stop,” if you please. But if you would be saved evermore, be on, on, till you have gained the prize.  
But there is another class of persons who are worse than these. They start well, too, and they run very fast at first, and at last they leap *over* the posts and rails. They *go quite out of the course*altogether and you do not know where they are gone. Every now and then we get such people as this. They go out from us, because they are not of us, for had they been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. I might point out in my congregation on the Sabbath-Day, a man whom I saw start myself.  
I saw him running so well I almost envied him the joy he seemed always able to preserve, the faith which ever seemed to be so buoyant and full of jubilee. Alas, just when we thought he was speeding onwards to the prize, some temptation crossed his path and he turned aside. Away he is scrambling far over the heath, out of the path of right and men say, “Aha, aha, so would we have it. So would we have it.” And they laugh and make merriment over him, because, having once named the name of Jesus Christ, he has afterwards gone back again and his last end is worse than the first.  
Those whom God starts never do this, for they are preserved in Christ Jesus. Those who have been “entered” in the great roll of the Covenant before all eternity shall persevere, by the aid of the good Spirit. He that began the good work in them, shall carry it on even unto the end. But, alas, there are many who run on their*own* account and in their *own* strength. And they are like the snail, which as it creeps, leaves its life as a trail upon its own path. They melt away. Their nature decays. They perish and where are they? Not in the Church, but lost to all hope. They are like the dog that returned to his vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. “The last end of that man shall be worse than the first.”  
I do not think I shall now mention any other class of persons. I have brought before you the rules of the race, if you would win. If you would “so run that you may obtain,” you must first of all take care to start well. You must keep to the course. You must keep straight on. You must not stop on the road, or turn aside from it, but, urged on by Divine Grace, you must ever fly onwards, “like an arrow from the bow, shot by an archer strong.” And never rest until the march is ended and you are made pillars in the house of your God, to go out no more forever.  
**III.**But now I am about to give you some few reasons to URGE YOU ONWARD IN THE HEAVENLY RACE—those of you who are already running.  
One of my reasons shall be this—“*We are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses*.” When zealous racers on yonder heath are flying across the plain, seeking to obtain the reward, the whole heath is covered with multitudes of persons who are eagerly gazing upon them and no doubt the noise of those who cheer them onward and the thousand eyes of those who look upon them, have a tendency to make them stretch every nerve and press on with vigor. It was so in the games to which the Apostle alludes.  
There the people sat on raised platforms, while the racers ran before them and they cried to them and the friends of the racers urged them forward and the kindly voice would ever be heard bidding them go on. Now, Christian Brethren, how many witnesses are looking down upon you? Down, do I say? It is even so. From the battlements of Heaven the angels look down upon you and they seem to cry today to you with sweet, silvery voice, “You shall reap if you faint not. You shall be rewarded if you continue steadfast in the work and faith of Christ.”  
And the saints look down upon you—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Martyrs and confessors and your own pious relatives who have ascended to Heaven look down upon you and if I might so speak, methinks sometimes you might hear the clapping of their hands when you have resisted temptation and overcome the enemy. And you might see their suspense when you are lagging in the course and you might hear their friendly word of caution as they bid you gird up the loins of your mind and lay aside every weight and still speed forward, never resting to take your breath, never staying for a moment’s ease till you have attained the flowery beds of Heaven where you may rest forever. And remember, these are not the only eyes that are looking upon you. The whole world looks upon a Christian— he is the observed of all observers—in a Christian every fault is seen.  
A worldly man may commit a thousand faults and nobody notices him. But let a Christian do so and he will very soon have his faults published to the wide world. Everywhere men are looking at Christians and it is quite right that they should do so. I remember a young man, a member of a Christian Church, who went to a public hall of the lowest character. And he was no sooner mounting up the stairs, than one of them said, “Ah, here comes the Methodist. We will give it to him.” As soon as they had him in the room, they first of all lead him up and down to let everybody see the Methodist who had come among them and then they kicked him down the stairs.  
I sent them my respectful compliments for doing so, for it served him right. And I took care that he was kicked down stairs in another sense afterwards and kicked out of the Church. The world would not have him and the Church would not have him. The world then looks upon you. It never misses an opportunity of throwing your religion in your teeth. If you don’t give sixteen ounces to the pound of morality—if you don’t come up to the mark in everything—you will hear of it again.  
Don’t think the world is ever asleep. We say, “as sound asleep as a Church,” and that is a very good proverb. But we cannot say, “as sound asleep as the world” for it never sleeps. It always has its eyes open, it is always watching us in all we do. The eyes of the world are upon you. “We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses.” “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” And there are darker and yet more malignant eyes that scowl upon us. There are spirits that people of this air, who are under the prince of the power of the air, who watch every day for our failures—  
And alas, those spiritual creatures are not all good. There are those that are not yet chained and reserved in darkness, but who are permitted by God to wander through this world like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour, ever ready to tempt us. And there is one at the head of them called Satan, *the enemy* and you know *his* employment. He has access to the Throne of God and he makes most horrid use of it, for he accuses us day and night before the Throne. The accuser of the Brethren is not yet cast down—that is to be in the great day of the triumph of the Son of Man—but as Jesus stands as our Advocate before the Throne, so does old Satan first watch us and tempt us and then stands as our accuser before the bar of God. O my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have entered into this race and have commenced it, let these many eyes urge you forward—  
***“A cloud of witnesses around  
Hold you in full survey;  
Forget the steps already trod,  
And onward urge your way.”***

***“Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, Both when we wake and when we sleep.”***

And now a more urgent consideration still. Remember, your race is win or lose—death or life, Hell or Heaven, eternal misery or everlasting joy. What a stake that is for which you run! If I may so put it, you are running for your life. And if that does not make a man run, nothing will. Put a man there on yonder hill and put another after him with a drawn sword seeking his life. If there is any run in him you will soon see him run. There will be no need for us to shout out to him, “Run, man, run” for he is quite certain that his life is at hazard and he speeds with all his might— speeds till the veins stand like whipcords on his brow and a hot sweat runs from every pore of his body—and still flees onward.

Now, he looks behind and sees the Avenger of Blood speeding after him. He does not stop. He spurns the ground and on he flees till he reaches the City of Refuge, where he is safe. Ah, if we had eyes to see and if we knew who it is that is pursuing us every second of our lives, how we should run! O man, Hell is behind you, sin pursues you, evil seeks to overtake you. The City of Refuge has its gates wide open. I beseech you, rest not till you can say with confidence, “I have entered into this rest and now I am secure, I know that my Redeemer lives.”

And rest not even then, for this is not the place for rest. Rest not until your six days work is done—and your heavenly Sabbath is begun. Let this life be your six days of ever-toiling faith. Obey your Master’s commandment, “labor therefore to enter into this rest,” seeing that there are many who shall not enter in, because through their want of faith they shall not be able. If that does not urge a man to speed forward, what can?

But let me picture yet one more thing. And may that help you onward! Christian, run onward, for remember *who it is that stands at the winning post*. You are to run onward, always looking unto Jesus, then Jesus must be at the end. We are always to be looking forward and never backward. Therefore Jesus must be there. Are you loitering? See Him with His open wounds. Are you about to leave the course? See Him with His bleeding hands. Will not that constrain you to devote yourself to Him? Will not that impel you to speed your course and never loiter until you have obtained the crown?

Your dying Master cries to you today and He says. “By My agony and bloody sweat. By My Cross and passion—onward! By My life, which I gave for you. By the death which I endured for your sake—onward!” And see! He holds out His hand, laden with a crown sparkling with many a star and He says, “By this crown—onward!” I beseech you, onward, my Beloved. Press forward, for “I know that there is laid up for me a crown of life which fades not away and not for me only, but for all them that love His appearing.”

I have thus addressed myself to all sorts of characters. Will you this afternoon take that home to yourself which is the most applicable to your case? Those of you who make no profession of religion, are living without God and without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel—let me affectionately remind you that the day is coming when you will *want* religion. It is very well now to be sailing over the smooth waters of life, but the rough billows of Jordan will make you want a Savior. It is hard work to die without a hope—to take that last leap in the dark is a frightful thing, indeed.

I have seen the old man die when he has declared he would not die. He has stood upon the brink of death and he has said, “All dark, dark, dark! O God, I cannot die.” And his agony has been fearful when the strong hand of the Destroyer has seemed to push him over the precipice. He lingered shivering on the brink and feared to launch away. And frightful was the moment when the foot slipped and the solid earth was left and the soul was sinking into the depths of eternal wrath.

You will want a Savior then, when your pulse is faint and few. You will need an angel then to stand at your bedside—and when the spirit is departing, you will need a sacred convoy to pilot you through the dark clouds of death and guide you through the iron gate and lead you to the blessed mansion in the land of the hereafter. Oh, “seek you the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

O Lord, turn us and we shall be turned. Draw us and we will run after You. And Yours shall be the glory. For the crown of our race shall be cast at Your feet and You shall have the glory forever and ever.

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A CAUTION TO THE PRESUMPTUOUS  
NO. 22

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 13, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12.~~***

IT is a singular fact, but nevertheless most certain, that the vices are the counterfeits of virtues. Whenever God sends from the mint of Heaven a precious coin of genuine metal, Satan will imitate the impress and utter a vile production of no value. God gives love, it is His Nature and His Essence. Satan also fashions a thing which he calls love, but it is lust. God bestows courage. And it is a good thing to be able to look one’s fellow in the face, fearless of all men in doing our duty. Satan inspires foolhardiness, styles it courage and bids the man rush to the cannon’s mouth for “bubble reputation.” God creates in man holy fear. Satan gives him unbelief and we often mistake the one for the other. So with the best of virtues, the saving Grace of faith—when it comes to its perfection it ripens into confidence—and there is nothing so comfortable and so desirable to the Christian as the full assurance of faith. Hence, we find Satan, when he sees this good coin, at once takes the metal of the bottomless pit of Hell, imitates the heavenly image and superscription of assurance and palms upon us the vice of presumption!

We are astonished, perhaps, as Calvinistic Christians, to find Paul saying, “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” But we need not be astonished. We have a great right to believe that we stand if we think we stand through the power of God. But we cannot be too confident of the might of the Most High because there is a thing so near akin to true confidence that unless we use the greatest discernment we cannot tell the difference. *UNHOLY PRESUMPTION*—it is against that which I am to speak this morning. Let me not be misunderstood. I shall not utter one word against the strongest faith. I wish all Little-Faiths were StrongFaiths, that all Fearings were made Valiant-for-Truth and the Ready-toHalts, Asahel’s Nimble-of-Foot—that they might all run in their Master’s work. I speak not against strong faith or full assurance. God gives it to us—it is the holiest, happiest thing that a Christian can have—and there is no state so desirable as that of being able to say, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” It is not against that I speak. I warn you against that evil thing—a false confidence and presumption which creeps over a Christian like the cold death sleep on the mountaintop—from which, if he is not awakened, as God will see that he shall be, death will be the inevitable consequence. “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

I shall this morning attempt first, *to find out the character*. Secondly, *to show the danger* and thirdly *to give the counsel*. The character is the man who thinks he stands. The danger is that he may fall. And the counsel is, “let him take heed.”

**I.**My first business shall be to FIND OUT THE CHARACTER intended by the presumptuous man, the man who thinks he stands. I could find a multitude of such if I might search the wide world over. I could find men in business filled with an arrogant hardihood, who, because they have in one speculation been successful, will wade far out into the stormy sea of this contending life, risk their all—and lose it, too. I might mention others who, presuming upon their health, are spending their years in sin and their lives in iniquity because they think their bones are iron and their nerves, steel, and “all men mortal but themselves.” I might speak of men who will venture into the midst of temptation, confident in their boasted power, exclaiming with self-complacency, “Do you think I am so weak as to sin? Oh, no, I shall stand. Give me the glass. I shall never be a drunkard. Give me the song. You will not find me a midnight reveler. I can drink a little and then I can stop.” Such are presumptuous men. But I am not about to find them there. My business, this morning, is with God’s Church! The fanning must begin with the floor, the winnowing must try the wheat. So we are to winnow the Church this morning to discover the presumptuous. We need not go far to find them. There are in every Christian Church—men who think they stand, men who vaunt themselves in fancied might and power. They are children of nature finely dressed, but not the living children of the living God. They have not been humbled or broken in spirit, or if they have, they have fostered carnal security until it has grown to a giant and trampled the sweet flower of humility under its foot. They think they stand. I speak now of *real* Christians, who, notwithstanding, have grown presumptuous and indulge in a fleshly security. May my Master awaken such, while in preaching I endeavor to go to the core and root of the matter. For a little while I will expatiate upon the frequent causes of presumption in a Christian.

**1.**And first, a very common cause is continued *worldly prosperity*. Moab is settled on his lees, he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Give a man wealth. Let his ships continually bring home rich freights. Let the winds and waves appear to be his servants, to bear his vessels across the bosom of the mighty deep. Let his lands yield abundantly. Let the weather be propitious to his crops and the skies smile pleasantly upon his enterprise. Let the bands of Orion be loosed for him. Let the sweet influence of the Pleiades descend upon him. Let uninterrupted success attend him. Let him stand among men as a successful merchant, as a princely Dives, as a man who is heaping up riches to a large extent, who is always prospering—or, if not wealth, let him enjoy continued health. Let him know no sickness. Allow him with braced nerve and brilliant eyes to march through the world and live happily. Give him the buoyant spirit. Let him have the song perpetually on his lips and his eyes are always sparkling with joy—the happy, happy man who laughs at care and cries, “Begone, dull care, I pray you be gone from me.” I say the consequence of such a state to a man, let him be the best Christian who ever breathed—will be presumption! And he will say, “I stand.” “In my prosperity,” says David, “I said, I shall never be moved!” And we are not much better than David, nor half as good. If God should always rock us in the cradle of prosperity—if we were always candled on the knees of fortune—if we had not some stain on the alabaster pillar, if there were not a few clouds in the sky, some specks in our sunshine—if we had not some bitter drops in the wine of this life, we would become intoxicated with pleasure, we would dream, “we stand.” And stand we would, but it would be upon a pinnacle. Stand we might, but like the man asleep upon the mast, each moment we would be in jeopardy! We bless God, then, for our afflictions! We thank Him for our depressions of spirit. We extol His name for the losses of our property. For we feel that had it not so happened to us, had He not chastened us every morning and vexed us every evening, we might have become too secure. Continued worldly prosperity is a fiery trial. If it is so with any of you, apply this Proverb to your own state, “As the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold—so is a man to his praise.”

**2.**Again,*light thoughts of sin*will engender presumption. When we are first converted, our conscience is so very tender that we are afraid of the slightest sin. I have known young converts almost afraid to proceed a step lest they should put their feet in the wrong direction. They will ask advice of their minister and difficult cases of moral casuistry will they bring before us, such as we hardly know how to answer. They have a holy timidity, a godly fear lest they should offend God. But alas, very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world! The sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in after life, too pliant, too easily yielding. It is sadly true that even a Christian will grow by degrees so callous that the sin which once startled him and made his blood run cold does not alarm him in the least. I can speak from my own experience. When first I heard an oath, I stood aghast and knew not where to hide myself. Yet now I can hear an imprecation or blasphemy against God and though a shudder still runs through my veins, there is not that solemn feeling, that intense anguish which I felt when first I heard such evil utterances. By degrees we get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. The men who work in those huge vessels, the hammering of which causes immense noise, cannot, at first, sleep, for the continual din in their ears, but, by-and-by, they, when they are used to it, think nothing of it. So with sin. First, a little sin does startle us. Soon we say, “Is it not a little one?” like Lot did of Zoar. Then there comes another, larger and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard it as but a little ill. And then you know, there comes an unholy presumption and we think we stand. “We have not fallen,” we say, “we only did such a little thing. We have not gone astray. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright in the main. We might have uttered one unholy word, but as for the most of our conversation, it was consistent.” So we palliate sin. We throw a gloss over it, we try to hide it. Christian, beware! When you think lightly of sin, you have become presumptuous! Take heed, lest you should fall. Sin—a little thing? Is it not a poison? Who knows its deadliness? Sin—a little thing? Do not the little foxes spoil the vines? Sin—a little thing? Does not the tiny coral insect build a rock that wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin—a little thing? It girded *His* head with thorns that now is crowned with Glory! Sin—a little thing? It made *Him* suffer anguish, bitterness and woe till He endured, “All that Incarnate God could bear, with strength enough and none to spare.”

It is not a little thing, Sirs! Could you weigh it in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent and abhor the least appearance of evil. But alas, loose thoughts of sin often beget a presumptuous spirit— and we think we stand!

**3.**A third reason is often *low thoughts of the value of religion*. We, none of us, value religion enough. Religious furor, as it is called, is laughed at everywhere. But I do not believe there is such a thing as religious furor at all. If a man could be so enthusiastic as to give his body to be burned at the stake—pour out his drops of blood and turn each drop into a life—and then let that life be slaughtered in perpetual martyrdom—he would not love his God too much! Oh, no, when we think that this world is but a narrow space, that time will soon be gone and we shall be in the forever of eternity. When we consider we must be either in Hell or in Heaven throughout a never-ending state of immortality, how, Sirs, can we love too much? How can we set too high a value on the immortal soul? Can we ask too great a price for Heaven? Can we think we do too much to serve that God who gave Himself for our sins? Ah, no! And yet my Friends, most of us do not sufficiently regard the value of religion. We cannot, any of us, estimate the soul rightly. We have nothing with which to compare it. Gold is sordid dust, diamonds are but small lumps of congealed air that can be made to melt away. We have nothing with which to compare the soul—therefore we cannot tell its value. It is because we do not know this, that we presume. Does the miser who loves his gold let it be scattered on the floor that his servant may steal it? Does he not hide it in some secret place where no eyes shall behold it? Day after day, night after night, he counts out his treasure because he loves it. Does the mother trust her baby by the riverside? Does she not, in her sleep, think of it? And when it is sick, will she leave it to the care of some poor nurse who may allow it to die? Oh, no! What we love, we will not wantonly throw away. What we esteem most precious, we will guard with the most anxious care!  
So, if Christians knew the value of their souls, if they estimated religion at its proper rate, they never would presume. But low thoughts of Christ, low thoughts of God, mean thoughts of our souls’ eternal state— these things tend to make us carelessly secure. Take heed, therefore, of low ideas of the Gospel, lest you be overtaken by the Evil One!

**4.**But again, this presumption often springs from *ignorance of what we are and where we stand*. Many Christians have not yet learned what they are. It is true, the first teaching of God is to show us our own state but we do not know that thoroughly till many years after we have known Jesus Christ. The fountains of the great deep within our hearts are not broken up all at once. The corruption of our soul is not developed in an hour. “Son of man,” said the angel of Ezekiel, “I will show you the abominations of Israel.” He then took him in at one door where he saw abominable things and stood aghast. “Son of man, I will show you greater abominations than these.” Then he takes him into another chamber and Ezekiel says, “Surely I have now seen the worst.” “No,” says the angel, “I will show you greater things than these.” So, all our lifelong the Holy Spirit reveals to us the horrid abomination of our hearts! I know there are some here who do not think anything about it—they think they are goodhearted creatures. Good hearts, have you? *Good* hearts? Jeremiah had a better heart than you, yet he said, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” No, the black lesson cannot be learned in a night. God alone knows the evil of the heart. And Young says, “God spares all eyes but His own that awful sight—the vision of a human heart.” If we could but see it, we would stand aghast. It is ignorance of this that makes us presume. We say, “I have a good nature, I have a good disposition. I have none of those hot and angry passions that some have, I can stand secure. I have not that dry, tinder heart that is on fire in a moment. My passions are weakened, my powers for evil are somewhat taken down and I may stand safely.” Ah, you little know that it is when you talk like this that you presume, O worm of the dust! You are not yet free from an evil nature, for sin and corruption remain in the heart even of the regenerate. And it is strangely true, though it appears a paradox, as Ralph Erskine said, that a Christian sometimes thinks himself—

***“To good and evil bent***

***And both a devil and a saint.”***  
There is such corruption in a Christian that while he is a saint in his life and justified through Christ, he seems a devil sometimes in imagination and a demon in the wishes and corruptions of his soul. Take heed, Christian, you have need to be upon the watch tower. You have a heart of unbelief—therefore watch both night and day!

**5.**But to finish this delineation of a presumptuous man. *Pride*is the most pregnant cause of presumption. In all its various shapes it is the fountain of carnal security. Sometimes it is *pride of talent*. God has endowed a man with gifts. He is able to stand before the multitude or to write for the many. He has a discerning mind, he has a judgment and such like things. Then he says, “As for the ignorant, those who have no talent, they may fall. My Brother ought to take care—but look at me. How am I wrapped in grandeur!” And thus in his self-complacency he thinks he stands. Ah, those are the men who fall! How many that flamed like comets in the sky of the religious world have rushed into space and been quenched in darkness! How many a man who has stood like a prophet before his fellows and who would exclaim as he wrapped himself in his conceit, “I, only I am alive. I am the only Prophet of God.” And yet that only prophet fell! His lamp was quenched and his light put out in darkness. How many have boasted of their might and dignity and have said, “I have built this mighty Babylon,” but then they thought they stood and they fell at once. “Let him that thinks he stands,” with the proudest talents, “take heed lest he fall.” Others have the *pride of Grace*. That is a curious fact. But there is such a thing as being proud of Grace. A man says, “I have great faith, I shall not fall. Poor Little-Faith may, but I never shall.” “I have fervent love,” says another man, “I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray. As for my Brother over there, he is so cold and slow, he will fall, I dare say.” Says another, “I have a most burning hope of Heaven and that hope will triumph. It will purge my soul from sense and sin, as Christ the Lord is pure. I am safe.” He who boasts of Grace, has little Grace to boast of! But there are some who do, who think their graces shall keep them, knowing not that the stream must flow constantly from the fountainhead, otherwise the bed of the brook shall soon be dry and you shall see the pebbles at the bottom. If a continuous stream of oil comes not to the lamp, though it burn brightly, today, it shall smoke tomorrow and noxious will be the scent. Take heed that you neither glory in your talents nor in your Graces!

Many are still worse. They think they shall not fall because of their *privileges*. “I take the Sacrament, I have been baptized in an orthodox manner, as written in God’s Word. I attend such-and-such a ministry. I am well fed. I am fat and flourishing in the courts of my God. If I were one of those starved creatures who hear a false gospel. I might possibly sin, but oh, our minister is the model of perfection! We are constantly fed and made fat—surely we shall stand.” Thus in the complacency of their privileges they run down others, exclaiming, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.” Take heed, presumption, take heed!

Pride comes before a fall—and a haughty spirit is the usher of destruction. Take heed, watch your footsteps, for where pride creeps in it is the worm at the root of the gourd, causing it to wither and die. “Let him that thinks he stands,” because of pride of talent, or Grace, or privilege, “take heed lest he fall.”

I hope I have touched some here. I trust the lancet has been sharp. I have taken the scalpel and I hope I have discovered something. O you presumptuous ones! I speak to you and I shall do so while next I warn you of your danger.

**II.**I shall be more brief on the second point—THE DANGER. He who thinks he stands is in danger of a fall. The true Christian cannot possibly suffer a *final* fall, but he is very much disposed to a foul fall. Though the Christian shall not stumble so as to destroy his life, he may break his limbs. Though God has given His angels charge over him—to keep him in all his ways—yet there is no commission to keep him when he goes astray. And when he is astray he may thrust himself through with many sorrows.

**1.**I must now try and give you the reason why a man who thinks he stands is more exposed to the danger of falling than any other.  
First, because *such a man in the midst of temptation will be sure to be more or less careless*. Make a man believe he is very strong and what will he do? The fight is thickening around him. Yet he has his sword in his scabbard. “Oh,” he says, “my arm is nimble and strong. I can draw it out and strike home.” So perhaps he lies down in the field, or slothfully sleeps in his tent. “For,” he says, “when I hear enemies approaching, such is my prowess and such my might that I can mow them down by thousands. You sentinels watch the weak! Go to the Ready-to-Halts and the Fearings and awaken them. But I am a giant. And let me once get this old Toledo blade in my hand, it will cut through body and soul. Whenever I meet my enemies I shall be more than conqueror.” The man is careless in battle. He lifts up his helmet, as it is said Goliath did and then a stone pierces his forehead. He throws away his shield and then an arrow penetrates his flesh. He will put his sword into his scabbard—then the enemy smites him—and he is ill prepared to resist. The man who thinks he is strong, is off his guard. He is not ready to ward off the strokes of the Evil One—and then the poison enters his soul.  
**2.**Again,*the man who thinks he stands will not be careful to keep out of the way of temptation*, but rather will run into it. I remember seeing a man who was going to a place of worldly amusement—he was a professor of religion—and I called to him, “What are you doing there, Elijah?” “Why do you ask me such a question as that?” he asked. I said, “What are you doing here, Elijah? Are you going in *there?”* “Yes,” he replied, with some sort of blush, “but I can do that with impunity.” “I could not,” I said, “If I were there, I know I would commit sin. I would not care what people said about it—I always do as I like, as far as I believe it to be right. I leave the *saying*to anybody who likes to talk about me. But this is a place of danger and I could not go there with impunity.” “Ah,” he said, “I can. I have been, before, and I have had some sweet thoughts there. I find it enlarges the intellect. You are narrow-minded. You do not get these good things. It is a rich treat I assure you. I would go if I were you.” “No,” I said, “it would be dangerous for me—from what I hear, the name of Jesus is profaned there. And there is much said that is altogether contrary to the religion we believe. The persons who go there are none of the best and it will surely be said that birds of a feather flock together.” “Ah, well,” he replied, “perhaps you young men had better stay away. I am a strong man, I can go.” And off he went to the place of amusement. That man, Sirs, was an apple of Sodom! He was a professor of religion. I guessed there was something rotten at the core from that very fact. And I found it so by experience, for the man was a downright sensualist even then. He wore a mask, he was a hypocrite and had none of the Grace of God in his heart. Presumptuous men will say they can go into sin—they are so full of moral strength. But when a man tells you he is so good, always read his words backwards and understand him to mean that he is as bad as he can be. The self-confident man is in danger of falling because he will even *run into* temptation in the confidence that he is strong and able to make his escape!  
**3.**Another reason is that *these strong men sometimes will not use the means of Grace* and, therefore, they fall. There are some persons here, who, very likely, never attend a place of worship. They do not profess to be religious and I am sure they would be astonished if I were to tell them that I know some professedly religious people, accepted in some Churches as being true children of God, who yet make it a habit of staying away from the House of God. They conceive they are so advanced that they do not need it. You smile at such a thing as that. They boast such deep experience within. They have a volume of sweet sermons at home and they will stop and read them. They need not go to the House of God, for they are fat and flourishing. They conceit themselves that they have received food enough seven years ago, to last them the next ten years! They imagine that old food will feed their souls now. These are your presumptuous men. They are not to be found at the Lord’s Table, eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ in the holy emblems of bread and wine. You do not see them in their closets. You do not find them searching the Scriptures with holy curiosity. They think they stand—they shall never be moved—they fancy that means are intended for weaker Christians. And leaving those means, they fall. They will not have the shoe to put upon the foot and, therefore, the flint cuts them. They will not put on the armor and, therefore, the enemy wounds them— sometimes well-near unto death! In this deep quagmire of neglect of the means, many a haughty professor has been smothered.  
**4.**Once more, the man who is self-confident runs a fearful hazard, because *God’s Spirit always leaves the proud*. The gracious Spirit delights to dwell in low places. The Holy Dove came to Jordan. We read not that it ever rested on Bashan. The man upon the white horse rode among the myrtle trees—not among the cedars. The myrtle trees grew at the foot of the mountains. The cedars on the summit! God loves humility. He who walks with fear and trembling, fearing lest he should go astray—that man the Spirit loves. But when once pride creeps in and the man declares, “Now I am in no danger,” away goes the Dove. It flies to Heaven and will have nothing to do with him. Proud Souls, you quench the Spirit. You arrogant men, you grieve the Holy Spirit. He leaves every heart where pride dwells—that evil spirit of Lucifer He abhors. He will not rest with it. He will not tarry in its company. Here is your greatest danger, you proud ones—that the Spirit leaves those who deny their entire dependence on Him.  
**III.**The third point is THE COUNSEL. I have been expounding the text—now I want to enforce it. I would, if my Lord would allow me, speak home to your souls and so picture the danger of a presumptuous man, that I would make you all cry out to Heaven that sooner might you die than presume. That sooner might you be found among those who lie prostrate at the foot of Christ, trembling all their lives, than among those who think they stand and, therefore, fall! Christian, the counsel of Scripture is—“Take heed.”  
**1.**First, take heed, because *so many have fallen*. My Brothers and Sisters, could I take you into the wards of that hospital where lie sick and wounded Christians, I could make you tremble. I would show you one, who, by a sin that occupied him not a single moment, is so sorely broken that his life is one continued scene of misery. I could show you another one, a brilliant genius, who served his God with energy who is now—not a priest of the devil it is true, but almost that—sitting down in despair because of his sin. I could point you to another person who once stood in the Church, pious and consistent, but who now comes up to the same House of Prayer as if he were ashamed of himself. He sits in some remote corner and is no longer treated with the kindness he formerly received— the Brothers and Sisters, themselves, being suspicious because he so greatly deceived them and brought such dishonor upon the cause of Christ. Oh, do you know the sad pain which those who fall, endure? Could you tell how many have fallen (and have not perished, it is true), but still have dragged themselves along in misery throughout their entire existence, I am sure you would take heed. Come with me to the foot of the mountain of Presumption. See there the maimed and writhing forms of many who once soared with eagles’ wings in the airy regions of selfconfidence, yet there they lie with their bones broken and their peace destroyed. There lies one who has immortal life within him. See how full of pain he appears. And he looks like a mass of helpless matter. He is alive, it is true, but just barely alive. You know not how some of those enter Heaven who are saved, “so as by fire.” One man walks to Heaven. He keeps consistent. God is with him and he is happy all his journey through. Another says, “I am strong, I shall not fall.” He runs aside to pluck a flower. He sees something which the devil has laid in his way. He is caught, first, in this sin and then in that trap. And when he comes near the river, instead of finding before him that stream of nectar of which the dying Christian drinks, he sees fire through which he has to pass, blazing upon the surface of the water! The river is on fire and as he enters it, he is scorched and burned. The hand of God is lifted up saying, “Come on, come on.” But as he dips his foot in the stream, he finds the fire kindling around him and though the hand clutches him by the hair of the head and drags him through, he stands upon the shore of Heaven and cries, “I am a monument of Divine Mercy, for I have been saved so as by fire.” Oh, do you want to be saved by fire, Christians? Would you not rather enter Heaven singing songs of praises? Would you not glorify Him on earth and then give your last testimony with, “Victory, victory, victory, unto Him that loved us”? Would you not rather shut your eyes on earth and open them in Heaven? If you would do so, presume not! “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”  
**2.**Once more, my Brothers and Sisters, take heed, because *a fall will so much damage the cause of Christ*. Nothing has hurt religion one-half, or one thousandth part, so much as the fall of God’s people. Ah, when a true Believer sins, how will the world point at him. “That man was a deacon, but he knows how to charge exorbitantly. That man was a professor, but he can cheat as well as his neighbors. That man is a minister and he lives in sin.” Oh, when the mighty fall—it is, “rejoice fir tree, for the cedar has fallen”—how does the world exult! They chuckle over our sins, they rejoice over our faults. They fly around us and if they can see one point where we are vulnerable, how they will say, “See these holy people are no better than they should be.” Because there is one hypocrite, men set down all the rest the same. I heard one man say, a little while ago, that he did not believe there was a true Christian living because he had found out so many hypocrites. I reminded him that there could be no hypocrites if there were no genuine ones. No one would try to forge bank notes if there were no genuine ones. No one would think of passing a bad sovereign if there were no sterling coin. So the fact of their being some hypocrites proves that there are some genuine characters. But let those who are so, take heed. Let them always, in their conduct, have the ring of true gold. Let your conversation be such as to become the Gospel of Christ—lest by any means the enemy get the advantage over us and slander the name of Jesus. And especially is this incumbent upon the members of our own denomination, for it is often said that the Doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively that those high Doctrines which we love and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones! I do not know who has the hardihood to make that assertion when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitfield who, in successive ages, were the great exponents of the system of Grace! Or what will he say of those Puritans whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing! But now *we* are looked upon as the heretics and *they* the orthodox! *We*have gone back to the old school, *we* can trace our descent from the Apostles. It is that vein of free Grace running through the sermonizing of Baptists which has saved us as a denomination. Were it not for that, we would not stand where we are. We can run a golden link from here up to Jesus Christ Himself through a holy succession of mighty fathers who all held these glorious Truths! And we can say to them, where will you find holier and better men in the world? We are not ashamed to say of ourselves that however much we may be maligned and slandered, you will not find a people who will live closer to God than those who believe that they are saved, not by their works, but by free Grace alone. But, oh, you Believers in free Grace, be careful. Our enemies hate the Doctrine. And if one falls, “Ah there,” they say, “see the tendency of your principles?” No, we might reply, see what is the tendency of *your*doctrine! The exception in our case proves the rule is true, that after all, our Gospel does lead us to holiness. Of all men, those have the most disinterested piety, the most sublime reverence, the most ardent devotion who believe that they are saved by Grace, without works, through faith and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God! Christian take heed, lest by any means Christ should be crucified afresh and should be put unto an open shame.  
And now, what more can I say? Oh you, my Beloved, you, my Brothers and Sisters, think not that you stand, lest you should fall. Oh you fellow heirs of everlasting life and Glory—we are marching along through this weary pilgrimage. And I, whom God has called to preach to you, would turn affectionately to you little ones and say, take heed lest you fall. My Brothers and Sisters, stumble not. There lies the sin, there the snare. I am come to gather the stones out of the road and take away the stumbling blocks. But what can I do unless, with due care and caution, you yourselves walk guardedly? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, be much more in prayer than ever. Spend more time in pious adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Let your conversation be fragrant of Heaven. Let your hearts be perfumed with affection for men’s souls. So live that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. And when that happy day shall come when He whom you love shall say, “Come up higher,” let it be your happiness to hear Him say, “Come My Beloved, you have fought a good fight, you have finished your course and henceforth there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness that fades not away.” On, Christian, proceed with care and caution! On with holy fear and trembling! On yet, with faith and confidence, for you shall not fall. Read the next verse of this very Chapter—“He will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape.”  
But I have some here, perhaps, who may never hear my voice again. And I will not let my congregation go, God helping me, without telling them the way of salvation. Sirs, there are some of you who know you have not believed in Christ. If you were to die, where you now sit you have no hope that you would rise among the glorified in bliss. How many are there here who, if their hearts could speak, must testify that they are without God, without Christ, and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel? Oh, let me tell you, then, what you must do to be saved. Does your heart beat high? Do you grieve over your sins? Do you repent of your iniquities? Will you turn unto the living God? If so, this is the way of salvation—“Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved.” I cannot reverse my Master’s order—He says, “believes,” and then “baptized.” And He tells me that, “He that believes *not* shall be *damned*.” Oh, my Hearers, your works cannot save you! Though I have spoken to Christians and exhorted them to live in good works, I talk not so to you. I ask you not to get the flower before you have the seed. I will not bid you get the roof of your house before you lay the foundation! Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Whoever here will now cast himself as a guilty worm, flat on Jesus—whoever will throw himself into the arms of Everlasting Love—that man or woman shall be accepted! They shall go through that door justified and forgiven, with their souls as safe as if they were in Heaven, without the danger of ever being lost. All this is through belief in Christ!  
Surely you need no argument. If I thought you did, I would use it. I would stand and weep till you came to Christ if I thought I was strong enough to fetch a soul to Jesus. If I thought that moral persuasion could win you, I would go round to each of your seats and beg of you in God’s name to repent. But since I cannot do that, I have done my duty when I have prophesied to the dry bones. Remember, we shall meet again. I boast of neither eloquence nor talent and I cannot understand why you come here. I only speak right on and tell you what I feel. But mark me— when we meet before God’s bar—however ill I may have spoken, I shall be able to say that I said to you, “Believe on the name of Jesus and you shall be saved.” Why will you die, O house of Israel? Is Hell so sweet, is everlasting torment so much to be desired that therefore you can let go of the glories of Heaven, the bliss of eternity? Men, are you to live forever? Or, are you to die like brutes? “Live!” you say. Well, then, are you not desirous to live in a state of bliss? Oh may God grant you Grace to turn to Him with full purpose of heart! Come, guilty Sinner, come! God help you to come and I shall be well repaid if but one soul is added to the visible fold of Jesus through anything I may have said. Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2603 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

COMFORT FOR THE TEMPTED  
NO. 2603

***~~A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 1, 1899. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1883.~~***

***~~“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”  
1 Corinthians 10:13.~~***

THE children of God are all subject to temptation—some of them are tempted more than others, but I an persuaded that there is not one, except those who are too young to be conscious of evil, who will enter Heaven without having endured some temptation. If anyone could have escaped, surely it would have been “the First-Born among many brethren,” but you will remember how He was led of the Spirit, straight from the waters of His Baptism, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And the Apostle Paul informs us that He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Truly, the Lord Jesus might say to us who are His followers, “If I, your Master and Lord, have been tempted, you must not expect to escape temptation, for the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.”

The fact that we are tempted ought to humble us, for it is sad evidence that there is sin still remaining in us. I am old enough to remember the times when we used to strike with a flint upon the steel in order to get a light in the morning, and I recollect that I always left off trying to produce a spark when I found that there was no tinder in the box. I believe that the devil is no fool and that if there is a man who has no tinder in the box—that is, no corruption in his nature—depend upon it, Satan will not long continue to tempt him! He does not waste his time in such a useless exercise. The man who believes that he is perfect can never pray the Lord’s Prayer—he must offer one of his own making, for he will never be willing to say, “Lead us not into temptation.” But, Beloved, because the devil thinks it worth his while to tempt us, we may conclude that there is something in us that is temptable—that sin still dwells there, notwithstanding that the Grace of God has renewed our hearts.

The fact that we are tempted ought also to remind us of our weakness. I referred just now to the model prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, which contains the sentence, “Lead us not into temptation.” The reason for presenting that petition must be because we are so weak and frail. We ask that we may not be burdened, for our back is not strong, and we plead that we may not have sin put before us in any of its enticing forms, for, oftentimes, the flesh borrows strength from the world and even from the devil! And these allied powers will be too much for us unless the Omnipotence of God shall be exerted on our behalf to hold us up lest we fall.

Some children of God, whom I know of, are very greatly troubled because they are tempted. They think they could bear trial if it were trial dissociated from sin, though I do not see how we can, as a general rule, separate trial from temptation, for every trial that comes to us has in it some kind of temptation or other, either to unbelief, or to murmuring, or to the use of wrong means to escape from the trial. We are tempted by our mercies and we are tempted by our miseries—that is, tempted in the sense of being tried by them—but, to the child of God, the most grievous thing is that, sometimes, he is tempted to do or say things which he utterly hates. He has set before him, in a pleasant aspect, sins which are perfectly abhorrent to him. He cannot bear the very name of them! Yet Satan comes and holds before the child of God the unclean meats which he will never touch. And I have known the devil to tempt the people of God by injecting into their mind blasphemous thoughts, hurling them into their ears as with a hurricane. Yes, even when you are in prayer it may happen to you that thoughts the very opposite of devotional, will come flocking into your brain. A little noise in the street will draw you off from communion with God and, almost before you are aware of it, your thoughts, like wild horses, will have gone galloping over hill and dale— and you hardly know how you shall ever catch them.

Now, such temptations as these are dreadfully painful to a child of God. He cannot bear the poisoned breath of sin and when he finds that sin stands knocking at his door, shouting under his window, pestering him day and night, as it has occurred with some—I hope not with many—then he is sorely beset and is grievously troubled. It may help such a person if I remind him that there is *no sin in being tempted*. The sin is that of the tempter, not of the tempted. If you resist the temptation, there is something praiseworthy about your action. There is nothing praiseworthy about the temptation—that is evil and only evil, but you did not tempt yourself—he or she that tempted you must bear the blame of the temptation. You are evidently not blameworthy for thoughts that grieve you—they may prove that there is sin still remaining in you, but there is no sin in your being tempted. The sin is in your *yielding* to the temptation, but blessed shall you be if you can stand up against it. If you can overcome it, if your spirit does not yield to it, you shall even be blessed through it! “Blessed is the man that endures temptation.” There is a blessedness even in the temptation and though for the present it seems not to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward, it yields blessed fruit to those who are exercised thereby.

Moreover, there are worse things in this world than being tempted with painful temptations. It is much worse to be tempted with a pleasant temptation—to be gently sucked down into the destroyer’s mouth—to be carried along the smooth current, afterwards to be hurled over the cataract. This is dreadful, but to *fight* against temptation—this is good. I say again that there are many worse things than to be tried with a temptation that arouses all the indignation of your spirit. An old divine used to say that he was more afraid of a sleeping devil than he was of a roaring one, and there is much truth in that observation, for, when you are left quite alone and no temptation assails you, you are apt to get carnally secure and to boastfully say, “I shall never be moved.” I think no man is in such imminent danger as the man who thinks that there is no danger likely to befall him, so that anything that keeps us on the watchtower, even though it is, in itself, evil, is, so far, overruled for good. The most dangerous part of the road to Heaven is not the Valley of the Shadow of Death—we do not find that Christian went to sleep there when the hobgoblins were all about him and when he found it hard to feel the path and stay on it—but when he and Hopeful came to the Enchanted Ground, “whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy.” Then were the pilgrims in great peril until Christian reminded his fellow traveler that they were warned by the shepherds not to sleep when they came to that treacherous part of the way.

I think, then, that to be tempted with painful temptations—those that goad the spirit almost to madness. Bad as that trial is—grievous as it is to be borne—may be, spiritually, not the worst thing that can possibly happen to us. Of all evils that beset you, always choose that which is less than another and, as this is less than something else might be, do not be utterly driven to despair if it falls to your lot to be tempted as many before you have been.

This will suffice by way of preface to a little talk about temptation with a view of comforting any who are sorely tempted of Satan. I know that I am speaking to many such and I would repeat to them the words of my text—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Remember, dear tried Friend, that you must not sit down in despair and say, “I am greatly tempted, now, and I am afraid that I shall be tempted worse and worse until my feet shall slide, and I shall fall and utterly perish.” Do not say as David did when he had been hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, “I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul,” but believe that the Lord, who *permits* you to be tempted, will deliver you in His own good time!

**I.**Here is your first comfort. THERE HAS BEEN A LIMIT IN ALL YOUR FORMER TRIALS. “There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.”

Temptation has sometimes laid hold of you, like a murderer takes a man by the throat, all of a sudden. It has seized you—perhaps that is as correct a word as I can use—temptation has seized you, unawares, pinioned you and seemed to grip you tightly. And yet, up till now, the temptations you have had to endure have only been such as are common to man!

First, *they are such as have been endured by your fellow Christians.* I know that you are tempted to think that you are a lone traveler on a road that nobody has ever traversed before you, but if you carefully examine the track, you can discover the footprints of some of the best of God’s servants who have passed along that wearisome way. It is a very dark lane, you say—one that might truly be called, “Cut-Throat Lane.” Ah, but you will find that Apostles have been along that way, confessors have been that way, martyrs have been that way—and the best of God’s saints have been tempted just as you now are. “Oh, but,” says one, “I am tempted, as you said a little while ago, with blasphemous and horrible thoughts.” So was Master John Bunyan. Read his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and see what he had to pass through. Many others have had a similar experience and among them are some of us who are alive to tell you that we know all about this special form of temptation, yet the Lord delivered us out of it.

“Oh, but,” says another tried soul, “I have been even tempted to selfdestruction!” That, also, has not been an unusual temptation, even to God’s dearest saints and, though He has preserved them and kept them alive, yet they have often felt like Job when he said, “My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life.” “Ah,” cries another, “I am tempted to the very worst sins, the foulest sins. I would not dare to even mention to you the abominations Satan tempts me to commit!” You need not tell me and I trust that you will be kept from them by the almighty power of God’s Holy Spirit, but I can assure you that even the saints in Heaven, if they could speak to you at this moment, would tell you that some of them were hard beset—even some of the bravest of them who walked nearest to God were hard beset by temptations which they would not have told to their fellow men, so troubled were they by them. Perhaps yet another friend says, “I have been actually tempted to selfrighteousness, which is as great a temptation as can befall a man whose whole confidence is in Christ.” Well, so was Master John Knox, that grand preacher of justification by faith. When he lay dying, he was tempted to glory in his own bravery for Christ—but he fought against that evil thought and overcame it—and so may you!

You think that when a man is very patient, he is not tempted to impatience? Brother, the Spirit of God says, by the pen of the Apostle James, “You have heard of the patience of Job.” I suggest to you this question— Have you not heard of the *impatience* of Job? You have heard, no doubt, of the strong faith of Peter. Have you never heard of Peter’s unbelief? God’s people usually fail in the very point for which they are most famous—and the man who has the greatest renown for any work of the Spirit of God in him, so far as the Bible biographies are concerned, has usually been the man who has made a failure at just the place where he thought he was strongest! “I have been reading the life of a good man,” you say, “and I am not like he.” Shall I tell you why? Because the *whole of his life* was not written! But when the Holy Spirit writes a man’s life, He tells it all. When biographers write the lives of good men, of course they do not put down their inward struggles and fears, unless the subject happens to be a man like Martin Luther, whose life seemed to be all an inward struggle and who, while he was brave on the outside, was often a trembler within! When they write my life, they will tell you that I had strong faith, but they will not tell you all about the other side of it. And then you will, perhaps, get to thinking, “Oh, I cannot reach even to such a height as Mr. Spurgeon attained!” That all comes of your not knowing the inside of us, for if you knew the inside and the outside of the man who walks nearest to God—if he is a sincere, true-hearted man, he will tell you that the temptations you have to endure are just such temptations as he has had and, as he expects to have again and again and that, as the Apostle says, “there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.”

Then, again, no *temptation has assailed you but such as fit for men to be tried with while they are in this state of trial*. This is not the time for the final victory, Brothers and Sisters, this is the hour of battle! And the weapons that are used against us are only such as have been employed against the armies of the faithful in all ages. You and I never were tempted as were the angels who kept their first estate and overcame the temptation. I cannot tell you how the Prince of Darkness was tempted, or how he went about tempting his fellow servants from their loyalty to the great King. But of this I am sure—you were never tried with a temptation suitable to an angel! Your temptation has only been such as is suitable to a *man*, and which as other men, like yourself, have overcome. Others have fought valiantly against similar temptations as yours and you must do the same, yes, and you *shall* do the same by the power of God’s Spirit resting upon you!

It is said, in the affairs of common life, that what man has done, man can do, and that is true with regard to the spiritual life. Temptations that have been grappled with by other men, can be grappled with by you if you seek the same source of strength and seek it in the same name as they did. The strength to overcome temptation comes from God, alone, and the conquering name is the name of Jesus Christ! Therefore, go forward in that strength and in that name against all your temptations. Up and at them, for they have been routed long before, and you shall rout them again! Tremble not to go from fight to fight and from victory to victory, even as did the others who have gone before you and who have now entered into their rest—

**“ *Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears.  
They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins, and doubts, and fears.”***

If you ask them from where their victory came, they ascribe it to the resources which are as open to you as they were to them—even to the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit and the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ! There has no temptation happened to you but such as human beings can grapple with and overcome by the help of God!

Again, there has no temptation ever happened to you but such as is common to man in this sense—*that Christ has endured it.* That great Head of manhood, that representative Man has suffered from the very temptation which is now pestering you. “In all their affliction—that is, the affliction of His people in the wilderness, which is just the same as yours if you are in the wilderness—“in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.” He was compassed with infirmity, “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” To repeat the text I have already quoted, and which is so suitable here, He “was, in all points, tempted like as we are.” “In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He, Himself, has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” He knows all about the case of each one of us and He knows how to deal with it, and how to bear us up and bear us through.

So you see, dear Friends, there has no temptation happened to you but such as is common to man in the sense of having been endured by men like yourselves, having been overcome by men such as you are and having been endured and vanquished by your blessed Representative, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Come, then, Beloved, let all mystery with regard to your temptations be banished! Mystery puts an edge upon the sword of trial. Perhaps the hand that wrote upon the wall would not have frightened Belshazzar if he could have seen the body to which that hand belonged. There is no mystery, after all, about your trouble! Though you did write it down as being bigger than any that ever happened to a human being, that is not the truth—you are not an emperor in the realm of misery! You cannot truly say, “I am the man that has seen affliction above all others,” for your Lord endured far more than you have ever done—and many of His saints, who passed from the stake to the crown, must have suffered much more than you have been called to undergo thus far.

**II.**Now let us turn to the second comfort revealed in our text. That is, THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful.”

Oh, what a blessed word is this, “God is faithful”! Therefore, *He is true to His promise*. Even Balaam said, “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: has He said, and shall He not do it ? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” One of God’s promises is, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” “God is faithful,” so He will fulfill that promise! Here is one of the promises of Christ, and Christ is God—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” “God is faithful,” so that promise shall be fulfilled! You have often heard this promise, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Do you believe it, or will you make God a liar? If you believe it, then banish from your mind all dark forebodings with this blessed little sentence, “God is faithful.”

Notice, next, that not only is God faithful, but *He is master of the situation, so that He can keep His promise*. Note what the text says. “Who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear.” Then you could not have been tempted if God had not allowed it to happen to you. God is far mightier than Satan. The devil could not touch Job except by Divine permission, neither can he try and tempt you except as God allows him. He must have a permit from the King of Kings before he can tempt a single saint! Why, Satan is not allowed to keep the key of his own house, for the keys of death and of Hell hang at the belt of Christ! And without God’s permission, the dog of Hell cannot even open his mouth to bark at a child of God, much less can he come and worry any of the sheep whom the Lord has called by His Grace into His fold! So, then, Beloved, you have great cause for comfort from the fact that the temptation that tries you is still under the control of the faithful Creator, “who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.”

That is a second reason for comfort—roll it under your tongue as a sweet morsel.  
**III.**The third comfort lies in THE RESTRAINT WHICH GOD PUTS UPON TEMPTATION. He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” The tide of trial shall rise to high-water mark and then God shall say, “Hitherto shall you come, but no further: and here shall your proud waves be stayed.”  
He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” That may apply, sometimes, to *the period when the temptation comes*. I have carefully watched how God times the trials of His people. If such-andsuch a trial had come to one of His children when he was young, I believe he could not have borne it. Or if he had lost some dear friend while he was, himself, sick, the double trouble would have crushed him. But God sends our trials at the right time and if He puts an extra burden on in one way, He takes something off in another. “He stays His rough wind in the day of the East wind.” It is a very simple thing to say, but it is true— if the wind blows from the North, it does not, at the same time, blow from the South. And if one set of troubles comes to a Christian, another set of troubles generally departs from him. John Bradford, the famous martyr, was often subject to rheumatism and depression of spirit—in which I can greatly sympathize with him—but when he was laid by the heels in a foul damp dungeon and knew that he would never come out except to die, he wrote, “It is an amazing thing that ever since I have been in this prison and have had other trials to bear, I have had no touch of my rheumatism or my depression of spirit.” Was not that a very blessed thing? And you will usually find that it is so—you shall not be tempted above what you are able to bear because God will permit the trial to come at a time when you are best able to stand up under it.  
There is also great kindness on God’s part*in the continuance of a trial*. If some of our trials lasted much longer, they would be too heavy for us to bear. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, our Lord said, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” And I have no doubt that, oftentimes, God makes quick work of His children’s trials because if they were continued longer, they would have not a good, but an evil effect upon us. If a child must be whipped, let not the punishment last as if he were a criminal who must be sentenced for a long period—let him have his chastisement and have done with it. So is it often in the discipline of God’s house, yet there are other trials which are protracted year after year because trial is an ingredient in their efficacy and they might not be blessed to us if they were shortened. In every case there is Infinite Wisdom which makes our troubles to be just as long as they are and no longer.  
So there is in the *number of the trials*. Blessed be God—  
***“If He ordains the number ten,  
They never can be eleven.”***  
If He intends His servants to pass through the fire and not through the water, Satan himself cannot make them go through the water! God counts the drops of bitter tonic that He administers to His ailing saints and not one drop more shall they possibly have than He measures out to them. So, dear tried children of God, you shall not be tempted above what you are able so far as the number of your temptations and trials is concerned.  
It is the same, also, *in the stress with which the temptation comes*. Have you ever seen a great tree in the full blast of a tremendous tempest? It sways to and fro and seems scarcely able to recover itself from the powerful blows of the storm, yet the roots hold it. But now comes another tornado and it seems as if the tree must be torn up out of the earth, but the strain ceases just in time for the old oak to rock back into its place, again. But if there were a pound or two more force in that tremendous blast, the tree would be laid prone upon the grass! But God, in His people’s case, at any rate, stops just at the right point. You may be tried till you have not an ounce of strength left. Sometimes, the Lord tests His people till it seems as if one more breath from Him would assuredly cause them to sink. Then it is that He puts under them the everlasting arms and no further trial is laid upon them. This is a blessed thing, for all of you have troubles of one sort or another, and you who are the people of God may take this text and rely implicitly upon it—“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able.”  
As for you who are *not* His people, I am very sorry for you. I am holding up these precious things, but they are not for you. God’s Word declares, “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.” If you have not God to flee to, what will you do when the storms beat upon your boat? To whom or where can you flee? As for the Christian, he can sing—  
***“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Your bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high!  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past  
Safe into the haven guide.  
Oh receive my soul at last!***  
But, poor dear souls who love not Christ, where can you find comfort in your seasons of sorrow and trial? You who have lost wife and children— you who are pinched with poverty—you who are racked with sickness and yet have no Savior, what can you do? Poor houseless people in a snowstorm—what can they do without even a bush to shelter them? That is your state and I grieve for you, and plead with you not to remain in such a pitiful condition a moment longer!—  
***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds.  
This is the welcome Gospel-day,  
Wherein free Grace abounds!***  
Oh, that your sense of need might drive you to accept Christ as your Savior this very hour! As for His believing people, there is this solid comfort for them—they shall never be tempted above what they are able.  
**IV.**The next comfort we gather from our text relates to THE PROVISION WHICH THE LORD MAKES FOR THE TEMPTED “God is faithful, who...will with the temptation also make a way to escape.”  
The Greek has it, “who will with the temptation also make *the* way to escape,” for *there is a proper way to escape from a temptation.*There are 20 improper ways and woe to the man who makes use of any of them! But there is only one proper way out of a trial and that is the straight way, the way that God has made for His people to travel. God has made *through*all trials the way by which His servants may rightly come out of them. When the brave young Jews were tried by Nebuchadnezzar, there was one way by which they might have kept out of the burning fiery furnace. They had only to bow their knees before the great image when the flute, harp, sackbut and psaltery sounded. That way of escape would never have answered, for it was not the right one! The way for them was to be thrown into the furnace and there to have the Son of God walking with them in the midst of the fire that could not hurt them! In like manner, whenever you are exposed to any trial, mind that you do not try to escape from it in a wrong way.  
Notice especially that *the right way is always of God’s making* and*,* therefore, any of you who are now exposed to temptation or trial have not to make your own way of escape out of it. God, and God alone, has to make it for you, so do not attempt to make it for yourselves. I knew a man who was in trouble because he was short of money—and the way he made for himself was to use somebody else’s money with which he had been entrusted. That was not God’s way of escape for him, so he only plunged himself into a worse trial than he was in before! I have known a man of business in great trouble and things were going wrong with him, so he speculated, gambled and ruined both his business and his personal character. That was not God’s way for him to escape from his troubles! Sometimes the best thing a man in trouble can do is to do nothing at all—but to leave all in the hands of God. “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”  
When the Israelites came out of Egypt, God led them in a way at which men might well have quibbled. There was nothing before them but the sea and behind them came Pharaoh in all his rage, crying, “I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.” Now, then, what was God’s way of escape for them? Right through the Red Sea! And on the other side they sang, when the Egyptians were drowned, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” It would have been a great pity if they had tried to escape by any way of their own, or had attempted to turn around and fight Pharaoh—that would not have done at all—but the Lord made for His people the very best way of escape that could possibly have been devised.  
Notice, also, that *the Lord makes the way of escape “with the temptation*.” He suffered the trial to come and, at the same time He made the way of escape from it. God has planned it all, my Brothers and Sisters, how you, His champion, shall go forth and fight valiantly in His strength—and how He will be your shield and your exceedingly great reward. He will lead you into the dangerous situation, but He can see the way out of it as well as the way into it, and He will take you safely through. Did not the Psalmist sing, “To Him which led His people through the wilderness: for His mercy endures forever”? He not only led them *into* the wilderness, but He led them *through* it, blessed be His holy name! And if He has brought you into the wilderness of trouble and affliction, He made the way out of it at the same time that He made the trouble. “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself, also, in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass.” “Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and all else that you need shall be added unto you. Keep clear of the sin of the temptation and you need not fear the sorrow of the temptation. If the trials do not drive you to your own devices, but drive you to your knees, they will, after all, be blessings to you.  
That is the fourth comfort, that God has made the way of escape for His people out of their trials. “Well, then,” says someone, “I shall escape from this trial.” Wait a moment, my Friend, and listen to the closing words of the text, with which I will conclude my discourse.  
**V.**This is the last point of comfort, THE SUPPORT WHICH GOD SUPPLIES IN THE TRIAL—“that you may be able to bear it.”  
God’s way of escape from trial is not for His people to avoid it, so as not to pass through it, but such an escape as leads them *through* the trouble and out at the other end—not an escape *from* the Red Sea, but an escape *through*the Red Sea from a still greater trial! If you, Beloved, are exposed to trial or temptation, you are to be made able to bear it. Now, pray, before you leave this building, that this last word, upon which I have not time to enlarge, may be fulfilled in your experience—“that you may be able to bear it.”  
Suppose you are to be poor. Well, if God has so appointed it, you *will* be poor, therefore pray that you may be able to bear it. With honest industry and stern integrity, struggle to attain to a better position, but, if all your efforts fail, then say to the Lord, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Perhaps your dear child is dying, or your wife is sickening. You dread the thought of losing them and you would willingly give your life, if you could, for them. Well, do all you can for their recovery, for life is precious, and any money spent to save it will be well spent. But, if health is not to be granted to them, pray that you may be able to bear even that heavy trial. It is wonderful how God helps His people to bear troubles which they thought would crush them. I have seen poor feeble women that I thought would die under their bereavement, become brave and strong! And I have seen men who were faint-hearted in the prospect of trouble, nevertheless bless the Lord for it when the blow has actually fallen! And you may do the same.  
Suppose you are to be sick. Well, that is a sore trial and I know that, personally, I would do anything I could to escape from the affliction that often besets me, but if it must not be, then I must change my note and pray that I may be able to bear it. I had a letter from a man of God, this morning, which sustained me very much. He said, “My dear Brother, I was sorry to hear that you were again in pain and depressed in spirit, and so forth, but, as I remembered how God had blessed you in so many ways, I thought to myself, ‘Perhaps Mr. Spurgeon would not have kept to preaching the Doctrines of Grace, and would not have been so able to comfort God’s poor people if he did not get these smart touches sometimes.’ So,” he said, “I congratulate you upon these trials!” And I accepted the congratulations. Will not you do the same, my afflicted Brother or Sister? Pray, “Lord, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me,” but, if it must not, then here comes that other form of comfort, “that I may be able to bear it.”  
And remember, dear Friends, while I tell you to make this passage into a prayer, it is really a *promise*, and there is no prayer like a promise that is turned, as it were, roundabout, and cut prayer-wise! God Himself has said, by His inspired Apostle, that He “will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Up with the banners, then! Forward, whatever obstructs the way! Let us sing, with good old John Ryland—  
***“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I’ll follow where He goes!  
‘Hinder me not,’ shall be my cry,  
Though earth and Hell oppose!”***  
The immortal life within us can never be destroyed! The Divine Nature, which God, the Holy Spirit, has implanted, shall never be trodden under foot! “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. When I fall, I shall arise. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.”  
But, oh, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry am I, from the bottom of my soul, for you who know not the Lord, for this comfort is not for you! Seek Him, I pray you! Seek Him as your Savior. Look to Him and trust in Him—and then all the blessings of the Everlasting Covenant shall be yours, for the Father has given Him to be a Leader and Commander unto the people, and they that look to Him, and follow Him, shall live forever and ever! God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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COMFORT FOR TRIED BELIEVERS  
NO. 2912

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1904.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1876.~~***

***~~“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”  
1 Corinthians 10:13.~~***

THIS verse immediately follows the warning to “him that thinks he stands” to “take heed lest he fall.” None of us know what stuff we are really made of until we are tried and tested. It is a very easy thing to imagine yourself to be strong, but it is a very different matter to find that you have sufficient strength when you actually need it. It has even been found possible, in these modern days, for some Brothers and Sisters to believe themselves to be perfect—to believe that sin is entirely conquered within them—but I will guarantee you that you will find that the *practice* of perfection is not nearly so common as the *profession* of it—and nothing like so easy. And I will venture to go even further and say that if you watch those in whom sin is said to be dead, you will find that if it is dead, it is not buried—and that it smells remarkably like other dead things which ought to be buried! It is possibly worse than when it was alive, for it has become alive again in an even worse sense with a double putridity. Let no one of us imagine himself to be perfect, or to be immune against the temptations of Satan or even the grosser vices to which the flesh is prone. It may only need for you to be attacked at a certain point and in a certain way and you will be overcome even as others have been. Your wisest way is to believe yourself neither to be wise nor strong and, therefore, to lie humbly at His feet who can make you both wise and strong—and to look away from yourself up to Him who will keep the feet of His saints. It ought to cool the hot blood of self-conceit in any man to remind him that although he thinks that he stands, it is simply because he has not been tempted as others have been who have fallen! Or if he has been tempted in a way which overthrew them, while he has stood fast, yet, if the temptations were still further increased and he were left to himself, he would find that at the last the fierce wind from the Pit would sweep him off his feet even as it has swept off other men who thought that *they* could never be moved.

After the Apostle Paul had, by this warning, rebuked the boastings of these who thought they were standing securely, he thought of the far larger number of persons who never think that they can stand, but who are in constant terror lest they should fall. They say they are not the people of God yet, in almost the next breath they say they are afraid that they will lose what they just said they did not have! They sometimes hope that they are saved, yet they quickly doubt if it is so with them—and they are troubled with the fear that even though they are saved, they may yet fall and perish! Their feelings are a strange mingle-mangle of incorrect caution and incorrect doubt! And Paul seems to me in this verse to give them a cordial by which their fainting spirits may be revived. And I would like to pass it on to any of you who also need it. You may be tried in two senses—trial will come, and the trial will often be a temptation, while the temptation will always be a trial

**I.**Now comes in the comfort—and the first comfort, even in great trouble, is that WE HAVE NOT, AFTER ALL, BEEN TRIED IN ANY VERY UNUSUAL WAY—“There has no temptation (or trial) taken you but such as is common to man.”

You may think, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that you have been tried more than others, but it is only your lack of knowledge of the trials of others which leads you to imagine that your trials are unique. There are many others besides you in the furnace and in quite as hot a part of it as that in which you are now placed. Note what Paul says—“There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” It is a *human* temptation, not a superhuman one, which has assailed you. That is to say, one which can be withstood by men—not one that must inevitably sweep them away. You have never been tempted with an angelic temptation. Satan has tempted you, young man, but not with the same temptation with which he allured the angels who kept not their first estate. There may be other orders of intelligence for whom there are other forms of temptation because their intellects are superior to yours—but God has allowed you to be assailed in a way which is suitable as a test to you as a man. The trials that have come upon you have been moderated to your capacity as a man. The Lord knows that you are but animated dust, so He has not permitted you to be treated as if you were made of steel or iron. He has, Himself, dealt with you as an earthen vessel—a thing of clay in which He has caused life to dwell. He has not broken you with His rod of iron as He would have done if He had struck you with it.

“But I am very sorely tempted,” says one. Yes, perhaps you are, but the Lord has given you the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness to let you see that you have not been tempted more than they were. “Ah,” says another, “but I find myself placed in a very peculiar position where I am greatly tried. I have to labor hard and I have much difficulty in earning my daily bread—and I am beset with trials of many kinds.” Well, dear Friend, even though what you say is perfectly true, I am not certain that your position is any more likely to bring temptation than was that of the children of Israel in the wilderness. “Ah,” you say, “but they had not to work to earn their bread. The manna came to them every morning and they had only to gather it to eat it. They were not engaged in commercial transactions. There were no markets in the desert—no Corn Exchange, no Stock Exchange, no Smithfield, no Billingsgate—no taking down the shutters in the morning and putting them up again at night—and going a great part of the day without any customers. They were separated from all other nations and were in a peculiarly advantageous position.”

Yet, dear Friends, you need not wish to be placed in such a position because, advantageous as it was, in some respects the Israelites there were evidently tempted to all sorts of sins and fell into them very grievously. Having often read the story of their 40 years’ sojourn in the wilderness, you know their sad history. With so favorable a position granted to them under the Lord’s own special guardianship and enriched with many choice mercies, we might have expected that they would have been free from temptation—or, at any rate, that they would not have fallen into its snare! Yet it was not so, for the devil can tempt in the wilderness quite as well as in the city, as we know from the experience of Christ, Himself! The devil would tempt you even if your bread was given to you every morning instead of your having to earn it. He would tempt you if you had no business to attend to and never had to go into the world to meet with your fellow men. In fact, the story of the Israelites teaches me that it is best for you to work and best for you to be poor—and best for you not to make money as fast as you would like—and best for you to be surrounded by cares of various kinds. I think I judge rightly that the people of God, the saved ones, do not fall into such gross sins as the Israelites did in the wilderness. So that the saints’ position, though it may appear worse than that of Israel, is really better.

To what, my dear Brothers and Sisters, are you tempted? *Are you tempted to lust after evil things*? They lusted after the meat that was not suitable to the climate, nor good for their health—and they despised the manna which was the very best food they could have! Do you ever get a craving for what you ought not to desire? Are you growing covetous? Do you long for ease? Do you wish for wealth? Do you love pleasure? Well, dear Friends, this temptation has happened to others before it happened to those people in the wilderness! You are not the first to be tempted in that fashion and if Divine Grace has helped others to overcome the covetous desire and the lusting of the spirit, it can help you to do the same! But, mark also that if others have fallen through such temptations and perished in the wilderness, you, too, apart from Divine Grace, will do the same! Therefore have you urgent need to cry to the Strong for strength lest you also should fall even as they did.

*Are you tempted to idolatry* ? It is a very common temptation to make an idol of a child, or of some particular pursuit in which you are engaged. Is there anything in the world that is so dear to you that the very thought of losing it makes you feel that you would rebel against God if He took it away from you? Remember what John was inspired to write. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” But if you are tempted to idolatry, do not forget that this is a thing that is common to men. In the wilderness the Israelites were tempted to set up a golden calf and to worship it—and even to practice other idolatrous rites which were too foul for me to describe. They were tempted to idolatry, so it is not an uncommon temptation. And if you are also tempted in a similar fashion, you must cry to God for Grace to resist and to overcome the temptation.

Are you tried, sometimes, even with that terrible temptation which is mentioned in the verse where Paul says, “*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed”?* Has strong passion sometimes suggested to you that which your soul abhors? Have you been, at times, forced to the very brink of that dread abyss of uncleanness till you have had to cry with the Psalmist, “My feet were almost gone! My steps had well-near slipped”? Ah, this temptation, also, is not uncommon to men! And even those who live nearest to God and are the most pure in heart sometimes have to blush before the Lord that such evil suggestions should ever come into their minds.

And have you, too, been *tempted “to tempt Christ*, as some of them were also tempted and were destroyed by serpents”? They wanted God to change His plans and purposes concerning them. They found fault with Him and said that He had brought them into the wilderness to destroy them. Do you feel that your present troubles are too severe—that they should not have been sent to you—at least not as many and as heavy as they are? If so and if you feel that you have a cause for complaint against the Most High—and that you want Him to change His methods of dealing with you so as to suit your whims and fancies—alas, sad as such a state of mind is, it is only too “common to man.”

And possibly you may also have been *tempted to murmur*, “as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” I must withdraw that word, “possibly,” for I am greatly afraid that many professing Christians *do* murmur and that they do not always realize what a gross sin it is to murmur, seeing that it is an act of distinct rebellion against God. But, should you at any time feel a murmuring spirit rising up within your heart, you must not say, “This is a trial which nobody else has ever experienced.” Alas, it is a very human temptation which is exceedingly “common to man.”

So, summing up all that I have been saying and looking around this congregation and upon all of you who know the Lord—although it would be impossible for me to recount all the different forms of temptation and trial through which you have gone, yet this is a matter of fact—“there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” We are all in the same boat, Brothers and Sisters, as far as temptation and trial are concerned. We are all warring the same warfare. Your duty may call you to one part of the field and mine may call me to another part, but the bullets whiz by me as well as by you. There is no nook so quiet but it has its own special dangers and there is no Valley of Humiliation so lowly but it has its peculiar temptations. Sins are everywhere! They sit down with you at your board and they go with you to your bed. Snares are set for you in your home and in the street—in your business and in your recreations. Snares are not absent from your pains and they are abundant in your pleasures. Everywhere and under all circumstances, we must expect to be tried—this experience is common to men! The remembrance that it is so ought to be somewhat of a comfort to us in every time of trial and temptation.

**II.**But secondly, in our text we have a far better source of comfort than that—it is this—“BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL.” There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able.”

“God is faithful.” Oh, how I love those words! They sound in my heart like heavenly music. “GOD is faithful.” You are not faithful, my Brother or Sister—at least I know I am not, in the full sense of the term, faithful—full of faith and faithful. “But”—oh, that blessed “*but*”—“*but* GOD is faithful”! “If we believe not, yet He abides faithful”—always true to every promise He has made—always gracious to every child whom He has adopted into His family—“a very present help in trouble”—preserving us from sinking in our seas of trouble and delivering us from the trouble when it has accomplished the purpose for which it was sent.

“God is faithful”—faithful to that first promise of His which came into your soul when you yielded yourself to Jesus and He whispered to your heart, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Do you remember that promise? And has not the Lord been faithful to it? “God is faithful” also to that promise which He made of old concerning His Son, Jesus Christ—“He shall see His seed.” He has seen His seed in you and He will see you to be His seed forevermore.

“God is faithful” to all His promises! And in your experience, my Brother or Sister, He has been faithful to the promises which met your case in all your changing circumstances. Has He not been faithful? Can you put your finger upon a single page of your diary and say, “God was unfaithful this day”? Your friend who ate bread with you has lifted up his heel against you, but has your God forsaken you? Even your own children have been unkind and ungrateful to you, but has the Lord ever treated you ill? Where you had the most hope among your earthly friends and acquaintances, you have had the most disappointments—but has Jesus ever been a wilderness to you? “All men are liars,” you have said in the bitterness of your spirit when you have trusted in them and they have failed you in the time of trial! But have you ever found Christ false to His Word? Can you not join your testimony with that of all the saints above and the saints below and say with Paul, “God is faithful”?

Even if any of you are looking forward to a dreaded sickness, or to a painful operation, or to business losses which may sink you from your present comfortable position to one of great trial and poverty—think of this blessed Truth of God—“God is faithful.” The whole world may reel to and fro like a drunken man, but the Rock of Ages stands secure! The shooting stars of temporary prosperity may die out in everlasting night, but God is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “God is faithful.” Whatever your future trials are to be, put this short sweet sentence into your mouth and keep it there as a heavenly lozenge which shall sustain you at all times. Make it also into a jubilant refrain and, as you go on your way, sing again and again, “God is faithful.” Trials and temptations will assail you, “but God is, faithful.” Friends will fail and forsake you, “but God is faithful.” Wealth may be lost and property may vanish, “but God is faithful.” What more do you need than this, soldiers of Christ? Here you have breastplate, helmet, sword, shield, spear—yes, the whole panoply of God!

**III.**The third comfort for a tried and tempted Believer arises from GOD’S POWER, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able.”

God, then, has power to limit temptation! It is clear, from the Book of Job, that Satan could not tempt or try the Patriarch except by Divine permission and, even then, his power was limited. Nor can he tempt us unless God allows him to do so. Although the devil had great power over the elements, so that he brought disaster upon poor Job, yet there was a very definite limit to his chain, even when the Lord let him loose, to a certain extent. And when God set up his barriers, Satan could not go beyond them. You remember that the Lord first said to Satan, concerning His servant Job, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself put not forth your hand.” When the devil again intruded himself among the sons of God, the Lord let out more links of his chain, but there was still a most emphatic limit to his power over the Patriarch, “Behold, he is in your hands, but spare his life.” The devil would have liked to kill Job outright, but he could go no further than the Lord allowed him to go and God still has unlimited power over the devil and over every form of temptation or trial that can ever come upon you.

If the Lord appoints for you 10 troubles, He will not suffer them to be increased to eleven. If He ordains that you shall be in trouble for six years, you will not be in it for six years and a day, but when the allotted time has expired, you shall come out of it. Nothing can resist the might of the Omnipotent Jehovah, “who make the clouds His chariot: who walks upon the wings of the wind.” He can put a bit in the mouth of the tempest and rein in the rushing steeds of the storm—and the fiercest of your trials and temptations must feel the force of His overruling and restraining hand! When you are on the dunghill, remember that God is on His Throne. Well did the Psalmist sing, “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice.” But much more may His own people rejoice because His sovereignty is pledged to defend them! Why, if all the armies of the devil were let loose upon a single saint who felt himself to be weak as a worm and the Lord said to them, “I am his defense and you shall not touch him,” they could not touch him! And he would be able to say with the utmost confidence, “Greater is He that is for me than all that can be against me.” The adversaries of the righteous may rage as much as they will, but they will have to spend their strength in raging—for that is all they can do against God’s people without His express permission!

Not a hair of their head can be scorched by the fires of persecution unless the Lord allows it. The waters of the Red Sea cannot drown them— they march between the watery walls dry shod. The lions cannot devour them—Daniel enjoyed a good night’s rest even in the lions’ den. Even the waves of the sea become the servitors of the saints, for, “Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights,” in preparation for future service for God. All His people are kept by His almighty power! How greatly this ought to comfort you who are sorely tried! Every twig of the rod of correction has been made by God and every stroke of it is counted by Him. There is not a drop more gall in your cup than the Lord has ordained. He has weighed, in the scales of the sanctuary, every ingredient of your medicine and mixed it with all His Infallible skill so that it may produce the cure of all your ills. Should not this make you rejoice in the Lord all the day long, and in the night seasons as well?

**IV.**Fourthly, not only should tried Believers rejoice in God’s power, but they should also rejoice in GOD’S JUDGMENT, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able.”

Who beside God knows how much we are able to are? Our consolation arises from the fact that God knows exactly how much we*can* bear. We have no idea, ourselves, what we can bear. I have many a time heard a person say, “If such-and-such a thing were to happen, it would break my heart and I would die.” Well, that very thing has happened, but the person concerned did not break his heart and he did not die! On the contrary, he behaved himself as a Christian in a trial should. God helped him wondrously and he played the man, became more than conqueror and was the brighter and the braver, ever afterwards, for all the affliction through which he had passed. Brother, your own strength, in some respects, is greater than you think and, in other respects, it is less than you think—but God knows just how much you can bear, so leave yourself in His hands!

I have known some people who have wished for trouble—it is a great pity that anybody should be so foolish as that. I remember one who used to think that he was not a child of God because he had not had much trouble. He used to fret all day long because he had nothing really to make him fret! I once heard a woman in the street say to her child who was screaming lustily, “If you cry for nothing, I’ll give you something to cry for.” So, when a man wants trouble, he will probably get it, but it is a very silly child or man who asks for the rod! Be content to have as little of it as you really must—you will have quite enough of it before you get to Heaven. Do not ask for it—you will have it in due time. God knows, to an ounce, just what His children and His servants can carry and He never overloads them. It is true that He sometimes sends them more trouble than they could have carried by themselves, but then, as He increases the weight of their burden, He also increases the strength of the back upon which He places it!

I have often admired the loving-kindness of the Lord to many of my own flock and have noted the great joy that our young Christians have had for a number of years. I have observed how remarkably God has preserved them from temptation without and from trials within. The Lord does not send His young children out to battle. He does not intend such little boats as these to go far out to sea. He will not overdrive these lambs. Yet the advanced Christians are just as happy as the young people are and they are stronger and more fit for stern service and more able to sympathize with others who are in trouble because of what they have, themselves, passed through. As they have grown stronger, God has given them more fighting to do for Him, while the raw recruits have been kept at home to be drilled and disciplined. You know that when there is a desperate fight being waged and the issue of the battle seems in doubt, the commander orders “the old guard” to the front. That is part of the privilege of being an old guardsman—to go into the hottest place on the field of battle. And it is one of the privileges of the advanced children of God to be tempted more than others and to suffer more than others. If I could have any trial or temptation which, otherwise, would fall upon a young Brother who has only known the Lord a week or two, I would gladly say, “Let me have it.” It might stagger him and I would be sorry for him to be staggered by it, so I will willingly endure it. You tried Believers must not imagine that God does not love you as much as He did in the days of your spiritual youth when He did not test you as He does now. He loves you quite as much as He did then and He trusts you even more than He did then because He has made you stronger than you used to be! He gives you the honor and privilege of marching with the vanguard of His army, or leading the forlorn hope, or standing foot to foot with old Apollyon!

God knows exactly how much temptation or trial you can bear and He will not suffer the trial to go beyond that point. But, mark you, it will go right up to that point, for there is no such thing in the world as faith that runs to waste! For every grain of faith that God gives, He usually gives the equivalent trial of some sort or other, for, if faith could ever be in excess, it would degenerate into fanaticism, or some other unholy thing. If the Lord supplies us at our back door, as it were, with His good treasure, we are to dispose of it in our front shop in our holy trading for Him.

**V.**Fifthly, our text seems to intimate that GOD HAS IN STORE SOMETHING TO GO WITH OUR TEMPTATIONS—“He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

You know how you treat your own child. There is a dose of nasty medicine to be taken and the little one does not like it. The very sight of the spoon and cup makes him afraid. But mother says, “Now, Johnny, take this medicine and then you shall have this lump of sugar, or this fruit, to take away the taste of it.” And when God sends a trial or trouble to one of His children, He is sure to have a choice sweetmeat to go with it. I have heard a child say, “I do not mind taking the medicine so long as I get the sugar.” And I have known some of the Lord’s people say, “We will willingly bear sickness, pain, bereavement, temptation and persecution if we may but have our Savior’s Presence in it all.” Some of us will never forget our experiences in sickness when our pain has been sharpest and worst—it has also been sweetest and best at the same time! What do I not personally owe to the file, the anvil and the hammer in my Master’s workshop? I have often said, and I say again that the best piece of furniture in my house is the cross of affliction. I have, long ago, learned to prize it and to praise God for it—and for that which has come to me with it—for I have often found that with the trial the Lord has made a way of escape and that I have been able to bear it.

Even with the temptation to sin, the Lord often sends to the tempted soul such a Revelation of the sinfulness of sin and of the beauty of holiness, that the poison of the temptation is quite neutralized. Even with temporal trials, the Lord often gives temporal mercies. Sometimes, when He has been pleased to take away a man’s wealth, He has restored to Him His health and so the man has been a distinct gainer. I have known several instances in which that has occurred. And when one dear child has been taken away out of a family, there has, perhaps, been the conversion of another of the children which has been a wonderful compensation for the trial. And oftentimes trouble has been attended with an unusual delight in the Lord. The Word of God has been peculiarly sweet at such a time and the minister has seemed to preach better than he ever did before—his message exactly fitting your condition just then. You have been surprised to find that the bitterness which came with the trouble has passed away almost before you were aware of it! And, as death is swallowed up in victory, like one bitter drop in a glass of water, so your trouble has been diluted with sweet wine and you have swallowed it and have scarcely tasted its bitterness. Thus the Lord, by His Grace, and Presence, and comfort, has made you so glad that you have hardly known that you have been in such trouble because of the superabounding mercy which came with it! Ought not that comfort us and make us ready for whatever the Lord pleases to send to us or to permit to come upon us?

**VI.**Now notice, in the last place, that GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE FOR HIS PEOPLE—“He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

I will read that over again. “He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape”—“that you may get out of it?” Oh, no!—“That you may not have to endure it”? Oh, no!—“*That you may be able to bear it*.” That is a curious way to escape, is it not? Here is your way of retreat blocked up and the opposing army is in front of you—yet you are to escape. You say to the Lord, “Which way am I to run?” But the Lord replies, “You must not run away. Your way to escape is to cut a road right through your adversaries.” That is a singular way to escape, but it is the most glorious way in the whole world. The best way for an army to escape is by conquering its foe. It is not the best way for the pilgrim to go, to the right into the dark mountains, or to the left into the thick forest to escape from his enemies—the best way for him to escape is to go straight forward, despite all his adversaries—and that is the only right way for you to escape.

Now, beloved Brother or Sister, you may, at this moment, be expecting some very heavy affliction and you have been asking the Lord to make a way of escape for you. You have said, “Oh, that I might not have to come to that hour of trial!” But you *will* have to come to it. “But cannot that dear one’s life be spared?” I hope it may, but it is possible that it may not. “Then how am I to have a way of escape?” Your way of escape is not to avoid the trial, but *to be able to bear it*. What a mercy it is that God, though He will not let His people escape trial, will really let them escape, for this is a way of escape for them and the best way of escape, too! It is a way of escape from all the sin of the temptation and from all the evil of the trial—you must have the trial, but you will only have the beneficial part of it! Brother, you must be plunged into that sea of sorrow, but it will not drown you, it will only wash and cleanse you. Sir, you must go into that fire—your Lord has so ordained it—yet you are going to escape the fire. Do you ask, “How can that be?” Why, thus—none of your gold shall be destroyed, only the dross shall be consumed and you shall be all the purer for passing through the fire! So again I say that this is the very best way to escape, for if we could escape in any other way, we would lose all the benefit of the trial!

What shall I say, then, in closing, but this, Brothers and Sisters? Are you troubled just now and are you inclined to despair? Take wise counsel—the storms that are beating about your boat are only such as beat about your Master’s vessel and the ships and boats in which His Apostles sailed across the sea of old. The storms are not Supernatural—they are not beyond what believers in Jesus are able to bear. Put your vessel’s head to the wind like a brave sailor! Do not try to avoid that fierce blast. Sail in its very teeth, for there is a power within you which can overcome all the winds and the waves, for is not the Lord, Himself, with you as your Captain? And is not the Holy Spirit with you as your Pilot? And have you not a faithful God to trust to in the stormiest night you will ever know? True, your foes are many and mighty, but face them like a man! Have no thought of turning back and flinging away your shield, but resolve, in the mighty power of faith, that since the Lord has said that, “as your days, so shall your strength be,” to the end you shall endure and that, with Job, you will say, “Though He slay me, yet, will I trust, in Him.”

It will not be easy to keep that resolve, yet the Lord deserves that we should keep it. Think of yourself, beloved Brother, in the worst conceivable condition and then know that there is no sufficient reason, even in such a condition as that, for you to doubt your God! Suppose you were brought to your last penny, yet remember that there was a time when you were not worth a penny—a time when you could not put food into your own mouth and could not put on your own garments. You were cast upon God in your first childhood and He took care of you then—and if you grow to be a child again and the infirmities of age increase and multiply, He who was so good at the beginning will be quite as good at the end! Remember His ancient promise, “Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.” Such a promise as this, if God the Holy Spirit will bless it, will make the most tried Believer rejoice in the Lord and go on his way defying every foe who may be in his path!

What I cannot understand is what people do who have not a God to trust to. I often go to see poor sick people, full of aches and pains, and it charms me to hear them talk of the goodness of the Lord to them. In talking, this week, with one of our Brothers who is very sick and ill, he spoke with such holy joy and boasting of the Lord’s goodness to him that I could not help saying that it would take a great many infidel arguments to make me doubt the power of true religion after I had listened to him! I like to see God’s tried people dying full of joy, praising and blessing the name of the Lord who is their All-in-All in their most trying hour! It is not so with all of you—then what do you do when trial comes without a God to help you? You have not much of this world’s goods and you have to work hard, yet when you die, you have no Home to go to, you have no hope of going to Heaven. Oh, you poor No-Hopes!

“Oh,” says one, “we are not all poor! Some of us are quite well-to-do.” But you are poor, for all that, even if you have all your heart can wish for here. If you have not a God, where do you carry your troubles and your griefs, for I am sure that you have some? O my dear Friend, may the Lord make you feel that you cannot do without Him! And when your heart has come to this resolve, “I cannot do without my God, I will not try to do without Him. I feel that I must have Him,” then you shall have Him! He waits to be gracious and He has said, “They that seek Me early shall find Me.” May you seek Him now and find Him—and to Him shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13.***

**Verses 1-4.***Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.*You see, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, that the possession of privileges is not everything. Paul would not have us to be ignorant that all those who were with Moses in the wilderness had privileges of a very high order. Did they not all pass through the Red Sea and so escape from their powerful and cruel foes? Did they not all drink of water which gushed forth from the flinty Rock? Were they not all fed with manna from Heaven? Yet their privileges did not save them, for while they had the five privileges mentioned in these four verses, they fell into the five great sins of which we are about to read. And so their privileges, instead of being a blessing to them, only increased their condemnation!

**5, 6.***But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples.*Or warnings, for just as they were overthrown in the wilderness, so may we be, notwithstanding all the Gospel privileges which we enjoy, if we are not true Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! If the life of Christ is not in our souls, all the privileges of the Church of God cannot save us. “These things were our examples.”

**6-11.***To the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur you, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for example.*The Apostle has told us that before, but he tells it to us again, to warn us, by these beacons, lest we come to a similar destruction to that which fell on those ancient unbelievers.

**11, 12.***And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* We also are to take heed lest we fall, especially those of us who think we are standing securely! You have seen how terrible was the fate of those unbelievers in the wilderness who never entered into Canaan, but left their carcasses in the desert! Now Paul urges us, with such beacons to warn us, to take heed lest we also fall as they did.

**13.***There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.*O Lord, fulfill Your gracious purpose unto Your servants! Hold us up, lest we fall! We are very weak! Keep us, for your dear Son’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST NO. 2572

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 29, 1893.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1856.~~***

***~~“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”  
1 Corinthians 10:16.~~***

THERE is one great difference between Christ, as the Founder of the Christian religion, and all mere men who have attempted to fashion a system of belief. The difference is not merely that Christ’s was a true religion and theirs a false one, but there is another distinction. All false prophets have sought to keep their disciples at a distance and to impress upon them not merely a high estimation of their importance, but also a superstitious reverence for their person. Yes, and sometimes altogether putting aside the thought of allowing any of their disciples to hold communion with them. Look at the false prophet, Mohamed, and you will see how he kept himself aloof from his disciples. He taught them to regard him as something superior to themselves. And the caliphs, to this day, and all those who take to themselves the titles of his successors, endeavor to invest themselves with solemn pomp and state. They forbid all to approach them without certain salaams and salutations—they never allow their followers to hold fellowship with them.

It was also so with the old Pagan priests. They bade the worshippers fall down before them, but they never permitted them to come near to them and hold fellowship with them. They were for driving the people away and, in fact, the whole system of their religion depended upon the eminence of one who kept himself distinct from every other man. They were to be looked up to as a god, being regarded as a personage above all the rest, with whom they might, on no pretense whatever, hold any communion at all! Look at the “Pope,” that great antichrist and false prophet! Does he encourage any to stand on friendly terms with him? Is he at all times accessible? Ah, no! He surrounds himself with cardinals and bishops and keeps himself distinct from others. It must not be expected that a “Pope” is to be seen by everybody, nor can it be supposed that he should herd with common men. It is very much the same with the bishops of another church that we know. How they labor to put men away from them with their pomp, their tinsel, their gewgaws, and their parade!

Christ, as the great Founder of a new dispensation, revealed the idea of communion with Himself on the part of everyone of His disciples and, today, instead of endeavoring to keep His followers at a distance, He is always striving to bring them near to Him. He blames them not for familiarity, but because they are not familiar enough! He does not praise them because they stand at a respectful distance, but He praises Enoch because he walks with God. And He loves John because he lays his head on the bosom of his Savior. Christ, our Master, loves to have all His followers live near Him! He loves to have them in sympathy with Him. He loves to make them feel that while He is their superior and their King, He is also as their fellow, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, in ties of blood, one with them! One objective of Christ’s religion is to bring all His disciples into union and communion with its great Founder that they may have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Our present subject is the Doctrine of Fellowship with Christ. We think there are four degrees of fellowship with Christ. The first is *the fellowship of communion.* The second, *the fellowship of sympathy.*The third, *the fellowship of unity.* And the fourth will be *the fellowship of Heaven.*

**I.**The first grade of communion with Christ is that with which all Believers commence, and without which they cannot attain to any other. It is THE FELLOWSHIP OF COMMUNION.

Probably a large proportion of those here who love the Savior will not be able to go much farther with me than with regard to the fellowship of communion. Let me explain myself. I meet with one or two of you, I talk with you, we discourse with one another. In Scripture phraseology it might be said, we “commune with each other,” “we hold communion with one another.” So, Beloved, there are times when Christ and His people meet—when He talks to them and they talk to Him and so, “commune with Him.” That is the fellowship of communion. Let me show you how we enter into it.

We enjoy this kind of communion when, by *faith,* we lay hold of Christ and when Christ, in honoring faith, lays hold of us. And when, under sorrows and troubles, we go and tell our Master what our sorrows and troubles are. We are talking with Him while He cheers us, reminds us of His promises, speaks to our heart with that sweet voice which lays our fears in their graves and makes our tears to dry. It is then that we hold with Him a fellowship of communion—the communion of faith. Mark you, this is no mean attainment, to be able to take Christ’s arm, to command His ear, to possess His heart and to feel that when our lips speak to Him, His lips reply to us. It is only by His Grace that when we look at Him and are lightened, that lightening comes from the fact that He looks at us— and that we are cheered by knowing that the reason of our cheerfulness is because His right hand is under our head and His left hand embraces us.

It is a privilege for which angels might barter their crowns, to be allowed to talk with Christ as Faith does, for Faith asks of Christ and Christ gives to Faith! Faith pleads promises and Christ fulfills promises! Faith rests wholly upon Christ and Christ lays all His honor upon the head of Faith and is content to let Faith wear His own diadem. Yes, He uncrowns Himself to put His crown upon the head of Faith! You young Believers know how sweet it is, by holy assurance, to come near your Master. You put your hand into His side and you say, “My Lord, and my God.” You know what it is to throw your arms around Him and to receive that gracious smile from Him, without which your spirits could not rest. That is the communion of faith, the communion which we have by faith in Jesus Christ.

There is, too, a communion in *prayer*which is called the communion of conversation, for, in prayer, what do I do? If I pray aright, I talk to God! And if I pray with faith, what does Christ do, but talk with me? In prayer, the heart of man empties itself before God and then Christ empties His heart out to supply the needs of His poor believing child. In prayer, we confess to Christ our needs and He reveals to us His fullness. We tell Him our sorrows, He tells us His joys. We tell Him our sins, He shows to us His righteousness. We tell Him the dangers that lie before us, He tells us of the shield of Omnipotence with which He can and will guard us. Prayer*talks with God*, yes, it walks with Him and he who is much in prayer will hold very much fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Then, again, there is a fellowship of communion which we derive from *meditation.*When we sit down and in thought see Christ in Gethsemane, and witness the blood-red drops wetting the soil. When we look upon Him shamed, spit upon, mocked and buffeted. When we view Him on Golgotha and hear His death-shriek startling the darkness—then our heart goes out after Him and we love Him. While He holds up His hands and says, “These were pierced for you,” we hold up our hearts and say, “Here are our hearts, Lord, take and seal them; they are Yours because bought with Your precious blood.”

Have you never felt the sweet communion of meditation? Many Christians know little about it. They have so much occupation, such a perpetual whirl of business, that they have not half-an-hour to spend in meditation upon God. Beloved, you will never hold much personal communion with the Savior unless you have a place where you can sit down and—

***“View the flowing  
Of His soul-redeeming blood,  
With Divine assurance knowing  
That He made your peace with God.”***

You cannot expect to talk much to Christ unless your mind is freed from the cares of earth. Oh, ‘tis then that Christ descends and talks with His children—and gives us sweet communion with Him—and fellowship in meditation on His sufferings! Children of God, you know this! All of you who are His people have had some taste of this communion of conversation with God. You know much more of it than I can tell. Alas! Alas, that the great majority of the people of God are far enough from understanding even this first and faintest form of communion with Jesus Christ!

Let me make one or two remarks here, before we pass away from this communion of conservation. I would not have you despise this fellowship because you have not attained to the rest I am about to mention, but, dear Friends, take care that you hold communion with Christ. There is a ladder between the Believer’s soul and Heaven—mind that you tread its rungs very often. There is a road between Mansoul and the Celestial City—let the track be hard-beaten with the hoofs of the steeds of prayer! Let the chariots of praise whirl along the highway to Glory! Do not let your Jesus live a day without a line from you—and do not be happy if you live a day without a word from Him! I marvel at some professors who can live weeks and months quite satisfied without holding this fellowship with Christ. What? A wife happy if her husband smiles not on her? And is not Christ my Husband and shall I be blessed, shall I be easy, if He shuts His mouth and speaks not a word to me? Can I be content if I have not one smile all day long? Is Christ my Brother and shall I be willing to live without the assurance of my Brother’s love to me? Can I be content to pass a week without knowing that my Brother’s heart is still beating with affection towards me? Verily, Christians, I marvel at you! And angels marvel, too, that you can be so foolish, so stolid, so stone-like, as to live days beyond number without holding even this most common of all communions with our Lord Jesus Christ!

Stir yourselves up, Beloved! You have a ticket to admit you to the King’s Palace—why do you not enter? You have an invitation to the wedding feast—why do you not go? You have constant access to the banqueting house—why do you not go and feast on Divine Love? There are the “apples of gold in baskets of silver”—why do you not go and take them? There is Christ’s open heart! There are His open hands! His open eyes! His open ears! Will you not go to Him who stands ready and waiting to bless you? And you*,*too, poor Sinner—I have often thought that a true description of Christ on the Cross would be a fine sermon to illustrate that hymn—

***“Come and welcome, Sinner come!”***

Do you not see the Savior there? He has His arms stretched out, as though He had them wide open to take a big sinner in. There are His hands nailed fast, as if they intended to wait there till you were brought to Him! His head is hanging down, as if He had stooped to kiss you. And there are His feet pouring out streams of blood, as if His very blood would run after you, if you would not come after Him! Verily, if you saw Christ by faith, each bleeding wound and quivering atom of His body would say to you—

***“Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”***  
Much more do they say to *you,*beloved children of God, “Come to your Savior and hold this fellowship of conversation with Jesus Christ your Lord.”

**II.**Now we have done with the lowest grade of fellowship and we pass on to another—THE FELLOWSHIP OF SYMPATHY.  
Let me tell you what I mean by this expression. I said before that if we meet two or three friends and converse together, that is communion. But there was one friend there who had a lofty project in hand and, though I talked to him, I did not share his views and I did not wish to see his project accomplished. Therefore I did not enjoy such deep communion with him as I might otherwise have done. Another of my friends was exceedingly sick, but I was not suffering, just then, so that when he spoke of his illness, I could not commune with him as fully as I could have wished to do. There was Another who was upbraided, scorned and spit upon— but I was not assailed in the same way and, therefore, I had only partial communion with Him and that not of the deepest kind. I could not say that I had complete fellowship with Him in His sufferings. But, Christians, some of you have climbed another step on the heavenly ladder of communion—you have come to hold communion with Christ in sympathy!  
Here I must divide this head of my discourse into two or three points. Some of us have known what it is to hold communion with Christ in sympathy when we have *suffered just like Christ.* Did you ever find a friend fail you—a friend of whom you expected far better things, at whose table you had often sat, who had walked to the House of God with you— and with whom you had held sweet converse? Did you not find him, all of a sudden, unaccountably lifting up his heel against you and doing all he could to bring despite and injury to you? Did you not press your hand to your burning brow and say, “Ah! Christ had His Judas and now I can hold communion with Christ, because my friend has deserted me, too. And I can sympathize with Christ in the desertion of men”?  
Did you ever have a false report spread about you? Possibly, somebody said you were “a drunk and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Or, perhaps, someone said that on such-and-such a night you committed such-and-such an act. Or, if they could not stain your character by charging you with immorality, they said that you were insane! And did not your spirit, at first, beat high with passion as you thought that you would answer the calumny? But, in a moment, you put your hand to your heart, as you said, “Ah! He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” And did you not sit down and say, “Now I can hold fellowship with Christ in my reproaches. Now I can bear a part in the brunt of the battle. Now I can feel as He did, when He, too, was oppressed by wicked men”?  
Some of you, also, have been exceedingly poor. Here and there, one could say, “I have not a place where to lay my head,” and looking down on your ragged garments, you may have thought, “Ah, now I know how Jesus felt when He said, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.’ And so,” you thought, “I am holding the fellowship of sympathy with Him in His poverty.”  
There was a time, too, *when you prayed and received no answer—*your agonized spirit went backward and forward many times while you cried to God, but no reply came. In the intensity of your importunity, you could almost have “sweat, as it were, great drops of blood,”*as* Jesus did! Yet God did not answer you. Rising from your knees, you only rose to fall down upon them, again, and, at last, you clasped your hands in agony and said, “O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” And you started up, for you thought you heard your Lord say those words in tones of deeper woe and greater agony than you had ever dreamed of! And you said, “Ah! I, in my humble measure, have held fellowship with Him whose bloody sweat has made Him always memorable, and whose agony in Gethsemane helped to make Him my Savior.”  
And, perhaps, too, you have known what it is, at times, to lose the sight of the Countenance of God. You have said, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come, even, to His seat!” Your heart melted with agony because God seemed to frown on you. Your prayers were rejected. You had no light of His Countenance. You had no peace, no light, no love, no joy, no God—and you cried, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken me?” And then you remembered that Christ said those words, too, and that you were holding communion of *sympathy* with Him, for you were feeling just as He felt—you had entered into a part of His agony, you had drunk some drops of the awful cup which He drained to its dregs, you had dived a little into the sea without a bottom, into which Christ plunged—you had the fellowship of sympathy, for you suffered with Him.  
That is the most wonderful fellowship in the world, the fellowship of fellow-suffering. Those two holy martyrs who were burned at Oxford have this link forever between them because they were burned in the same fire. Oh, what sweet fellowship they had because they were to die together! Nothing makes us love Christ like feeling the same whip on our shoulder which Christ had on His, to be pierced with the same nails, to be spit upon by the same mouths and to suffer, though in a very humble degree, the same kind of sufferings which Christ Himself endured! O wondrous Grace, that we should be allowed to share in our body the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ!  
Some of us are not called to suffer so much as to serve. And we, too, have our*communion with Christ in labor.* See the Sunday school teacher who takes the little children on his knee as he teaches them. Though some laugh, he seems to say, as did his Lord, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” There is the same spirit in the servant as there was in his Master—and he is holding communion with Christ in labor! See the faithful evangelist. He is in an open field and he is preaching to the people with hands uplifted and with an earnestness that makes him eloquent. Look! He has concluded. He feels a sweet stillness in his soul. He knows not the reason of it, but it is because he has been having communion with Christ and has felt, in a measure, as Christ did, when we have wept over your poor dying souls. When, on our bended knees we have asked God for your salvation. When we have groaned and cried to bring you near to God. When, with most impassioned supplication we have wrestled for your souls—then, Beloved, we think we have had some communion with Christ, for —  
***“Cold mountains and the midnight air  
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.”***  
He, too, wept over Jerusalem and said, “If you had known, even you, at least in this, your day, the things which belong unto your peace but now they are hid from your eyes.” Laboring Christians have sympathy with Christ and when they work with might and main, with good intentions, with earnest desires, with cries and tears, they can say*,*“O Lord, we have entered into fellowship with You!”  
So too, we have fellowship with Christ, a heavenly*fellowship of desire,* when we neither suffer nor work with Him, but yet sympathize with Him. Perhaps you are not often sick, but you often feel a fellowship of compassionate pity and love. You are not persecuted—you almost wish you were. Perhaps you have very little talent and you cannot labor for Christ, but you have sometimes said, as you have trodden the way to this Chapel, “What would I not give to see sinners saved? Oh, I think I would be willing to die if I might but have my son and my daughter converted to God.” Do you know that, just at that moment, you were holding communion with Christ, for you felt just as Christ did, who loved us with a love so pure and so perfect, that He gave up His body to death that He might redeem us from Hell? You have, perhaps, also said to Jesus, sometimes, “I have but little that I can give to You but—  
**‘*Had I ten thousand hearts, dear Lord,  
I’d give them all to Thee!  
Had I ten thousand tongues, they all  
Should join the harmony.’”***  
Ah, you had fellowship with Christ, then, for you desired to do all that you could for the extension of His Kingdom!  
I will show how we hold *fellowship with Christ in our designs.*You see two men in a court of justice. One man stands there to be tried—there is every probability that he will be condemned. There is a person in court who is about to plead—he is a barrister, but, besides that, he is a friend of the prisoner. The man is being tried for his life. Do you see the awful agony on his face? But up rises his advocate and you notice that as he pleads, he turns his eyes towards the prisoner at the bar. And when he sees the tears start from the poor man’s eyes, out comes an eloquent period! There is a sigh just heaved by the culprit—look how the counselor waxes hot. The prisoner begins to weep excessively and hides his face. Do you notice how the advocate gets more fiery and more zealous as he proceeds, and how much more pathetic his speech becomes, and how earnestly he pleads as his tongue is set at liberty? Why is that? Because he is in fellowship with the poor man! He feels for him! He is not *talking to him*—that would only be the fellowship of conversation—he is*feeling* with him and their hearts are near akin. Even supposing they have not seen each other before, if they feel for one another, they are nearer akin than blood-relationship could make them!  
Beloved, when you see a minister pleading with souls as if he were pleading for himself. When you hear him contending for Jesus Christ’s Divinity as much as if he were contending for his own honor, that minister is holding communion with Christ! And when you see a saint speaking to a poor sinner of the Redeemer’s death and pointing to his wounds, why*,*every drop of Calvary’s blood seems to make the man speak more eloquently and every groan he thinks he hears makes him urge his plea in more desperate earnestness with men! This, Beloved, is sympathy with Christ, fellowship with Him—and that I call a higher grade of communion than the fellowship of conversation. I hope some of you have arrived at it. If you have, you will be more useful than those who only understand the fellowship of conversation. God grant to us all the fellowship of fellowfeeling, the fellowship of *sympathy with Christ*!  
**III.**The third point is THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITY.  
Do you see this hand? Do you see this brow? This hand and this brow are more nearly allied together than my brother’s heart and mine, although he loves me with all his heart and would plead for me even to the death. But this hand and this brow have not only a communion of fellowfeeling, they have the *same* feeling. The members of the body have positively the same feeling—so Christ’s mystical members feel the same emotion as He does.  
You ask, “Do Christians ever arrive at this stage of fellowship?” Yes, certainly they do—the Supper of the Lord was intended to set forth that highest grade of communion which Christians ever hold with their Master here below. It is not a communion with Him in His sufferings, it is not a communion with Him in His service, but it is *a communion with Himself.*You Believers are invited *spiritually* to eat the flesh of Christ, and *spiritually* to drink His blood—and that is a nearer, clearer fellowship than any of which we have spoken of before because it brings you into positive unity with Him. It makes you feel that you are not only pleading for Him as your Friend, but that you are a *part of Him*, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Many hearers of the Gospel do not understand this great mystery. Some even think it is profanity to talk of this oneness with Christ. It *would* be the very height of profanity for a man to say, “I am one with Christ,” if the Scripture did not warrant him in saying so! To call oneself, “a friend of God,” would be blasphemous presumption—but Scripture says that Believers *are* His friends and, therefore, there is no blasphemy in repeating the declaration.  
Some may think it is absurd to talk of our being “one with the Savior.” It is not absurd, because it is Scriptural. We *are* so and we feel, when we drink the wine, that the blood of the Savior is spiritually in our veins, as well as in His—that we are brethren in ties of blood. I hope we shall be able to say that we were one with Him when He died, one with Him when He rose, one with Him when He triumphed over the grave, one with Him when He ascended up on high, one with Him, now, and one with Him eternally! I believe that not a few of us will get so near to Christ that we shall not only lay our heads on His bosom, but shall do more than that— we shall not put our heart *against* His heart, but right *into* His heart— and we shall feel as much one with Christ as the little drop of dew is with the stream into which it falls. I hope we shall be as much a portion of Christ, while we sit around the Communion Table, as the particle of flesh is of the body and shall feel that each pulse that beats in Him also throbs through our frame—that the blood of Christ runs through our veins! That each sigh we heave, He heaves, and that each groan we utter, He utters! I hope we shall hear Him say—  
***“I feel at My heart all your sighs and your groans, For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones. In all your distresses your Head feels the pain, Yet all are most needful, not one is in vain,”***Beyond this, the Christian cannot survive on earth! It is the highest style of communion, till—  
***“That happy hour of full discharge  
Shall set his ransomed soul at large!  
Unbind his soul and drop his clay,  
And speed is wings far, far away”—***  
up where Christ dwells!  
And there, Beloved, we shall know communion with Christ in a sense which only folly will labor to depict, for wisdom’s self knows nothing of it! There at His feet we will sit and on His breast we will lean! There from His lips will we hear sweet music, from His mouth we will breathe perpetual balm, from His eyes we will draw Divine Light! We will press His hand inside these palms. We will kiss Him with these very lips. We will put ourselves within His arms we will abide all day close by our Beloved. We will talk with Him. We will be with Him wherever He goes. And He shall lead His sheep “unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”  
**IV.**This fellowship, of which I have been speaking, is a steppingstone to that best*,*that beatified fellowship which we shall have in a few more years—THE FELLOWSHIP OF HEAVEN.  
O Christians do you ever imagine how sweet it will be to be with your Lord? I sometimes think to myself—Oh, how strange it will seem, to have a crown upon this head, to have sandals of gold on these feet, to have a vesture of white on this poor body, to have rings of everlasting love decorating these fingers, to have a harp, over which my delighted fingers shall run, making it emit the sweetest melody in praise of Jesus! And to have a throne on which to sit to judge the tribes of Israel. To have songs more melodious than music ever evoked, perpetually rolling from my lips! To have my heart brimful of bliss and my soul baptized in love and glory! Above, beneath, around, within, without, EVERYWHERE, it is Heaven! I breathe Heaven, I drink Heaven, I feel Heaven, I think Heaven, everything is Heaven!  
Oh, “what must it be to be there?” To be there is to be with Christ! Wait but a little while, Dearly-Beloved, and you shall realize what Paul meant when He said, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Soon, World, I shall say farewell to you! Soon, beloved Friends, I shall, for the last time, shake hands with you! Soon, these eyes shall see their last dim mists, there last tears shall have been wiped away forever! My last sighs shall have been wafted away by the breath of God and there, ah, there! God knows how soon, there— ***“Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in”  
—***I shall be with Him forever!  
Do you believe that concerning yourselves, my dear Christian Brothers and Sisters? Then, why are you afraid to die? Why are you so often fearing? What? Men and women, Brothers and Sisters, do you believe that in a few more days you will be in Heaven—and see all you love and all you live for here below? Do you believe that in a few more months or years, you will clasp your Savior and be blessed forever? Why, Beloved, it is enough to make you leap for joy and clap your hands in ecstasy! What? You are troubled? You are desponding? No, go your way, eat your bread with joy, be happy all your life, for you know that your Redeemer lives and though after your flesh, worms shall destroy this body, yet in your flesh you shall see God!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31.***

**Verses 12, 13.***For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*Oh, what a sacred oneness that is which subsists between all the Lord’s people! We are not simply Brothers and Sisters, but we are one! We are not allied by affinity, but by actual identity! We are parts of the same body. We are brought into spiritual membership with each other as real and as effectual as that membership which subsists between the various parts of the body. Yet we are not all alike, although we are all of one body. Some are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are bond, some are free. And yet, in some things, we are all alike, for we have all been baptized by one Spirit. And, moreover, we have all been made to drink into one Spirit—we have had one spiritual baptism, and we have had one spiritual drinking. Would to God that we felt more one, that our hearts beat more in tune with each other, that we had a sympathy with each other in woes and sufferings, that we had a fellow feeling with all who love the Lord and could at all times weep with those that weep, as well as rejoice with those that rejoice

**14, 15.***For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body—is it, therefore, not of the body?*Do not be comparing yourself with others and saying, “Ah, if I were such-and-such a person, I might then think myself to be part of Christ’s body.” No, you might not, even if you were just like he. As there are only certain members of a sort in a man’s body, so, by a parity of reasoning, there would not be more than a certain number of members alike in the mystical body. We do not imagine that there will be many members of this body, the Church, of one class, or of one character—so that, if you are different from others, you are fulfilling a different office in the body. You may, from that fact, draw an inference of comfort rather than one of sorrow and despondency. Even should you say, “Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, are you therefore not of the body?” Oh, no! You are still of the body, even though you do not think that you are.

**16, 17.***And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were am eye, where were the hearing?*If we were all preachers. If we could all see into God’s Truth and set it forth in a public manner, where should we get our congregations?

**17.***If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*There must be different members to fill different offices. If we were all so one that there was no distinction, whatever. If we were all of one rank, all of one age, all of one standing, the body would be incomplete.

**18-21.***But now has God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*Brothers and Sisters, you sometimes think there are some belonging to the Church whom we could well spare. But there is not one superfluous member in the whole body! If they are truly united to Christ, they have all their offices, all their places. There is not a poor old woman who has not been able to get up to the House of Prayer for several years, who is not of some use to the Church, for she lies upon her bed and there she intercedes with God! There is not a member of the Church so humble, so illiterate, so uninstructed, that he or she may not be of essential service to the whole body. There is some little part, my Brother or Sister, which you are to take in the great Church of Christ. You may not be always able to tell what it may be, but still there is a place for you to fill! There is a linchpin in a chariot—who thinks much about or thanks that pin? Indeed, it is so very small and insignificant, who would imagine it is necessary to the locomotion or speed? The wheels carry it around, but who would suppose that if it were taken away, the wheel would fly off? Perhaps you are like one of these little linchpins which keep the wheel right. You may not know what use you are, but, possibly, you prevent someone else from turning aside. Let us each keep in our station, endeavoring, God helping us, to exert the influence which He has given us.

**22-24.***No, much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need but God both tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked.*A moment’s thought will tell you that those parts of our frame which are most tender are the most necessary parts; and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these, by clothing them more than other parts, we bestow more abundant honor. And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, for our comely parts have no need of being covered and, therefore, we leave them exposed.

**25.***That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care, one for another.*We have heard this text urged by some who are in the Church of England as a proof that we are wrong in departing from it. They tell us that there should be no schism in the body. We beg to tell them that there *is* no schism in the body that we know of! We do not belong to their body and, therefore, we make no schism in that body—we are quite clear of them. We have neither stick, nor stone, nor part, nor lot in their State Establishment! Therefore we do not create a schism in the body. When they divide themselves into Puseyites and Evangelicals, they make a schism in their own body, but, as long as we are all united, as long as the members of a church walk together in unity, there is no schism in the body. We are different bodies altogether! They say that a schismatic is one who departs *from* a Church, and makes a rent *from* it. By no means! A schismatic is one who makes a rent *in* it, not *from* it. We, I say, are not schismatics. Those who are in the Church of England and yet do not agree with its fundamental principles and its Articles of Faith, they are schismatics! But we are not.

**26.***And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.*Is that true of our churches? I am afraid not. The members of the one Church of Christ have not been brought to that unity of feeling and sympathy which they ought to have.

**26-30.***Or one member is honored, al1 the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God has set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?* God intended that there should be different offices in His Church. Let us look on each other as being different and yet united in the common faith of Christ.

**31.***But covet earnestly the best gifts.* I would not wish you, Brothers, to repress your aspirations after these blessings. I am most anxious that you should earnestly desire and seek to possess a large share of all these spiritual endowments.

**31.***And yet show I unto you a more excellent way.* Which is, holding the Truth of God in love and walking in charity, one toward another.  
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COMMUNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE  
NO. 3295

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1912.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT A COMMUNION SERVICE AT MENTONE,  
ON A LORD’S-DAY AFTERNOON IN DECEMBER, 1882.~~***

***~~“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”  
1 Corinthians 10:16, 17.~~***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on verse 16 is #2572, Volume 44— FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST—  
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

I will read you the text as it is given in the Revised Version—“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?” That is to say, is it not one form of expressing the communion of the blood of Christ? “The bread,” or as it is in the margin, “the loaf which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ seeing that we, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf.” The word, “loaf,” helps to bring out more clearly the idea of unity intended to be set forth by the Apostle .

It is a lamentable fact that some have fancied that this simple ordinance of the Lord’s Supper has a certain magical, or at least physical power about it, so that by the mere act of eating and drinking this bread and wine, men can be made partakers of the body and blood of Christ! It is marvelous that so plain a symbol should have been so complicated by genuflection, adornments and technical phrases! Can anyone see the slightest resemblance between the Master’s sitting down with the 12 and the “mass” of the Roman community? The original rite is lost in the superimposed ritual! Superstition has produced a sacrament where Jesus intended a fellowship. Too many who would not go the length of Rome, yet speak of this simple feast as if it were a dark and obscure mystery. They employ all manner of hard words to turn the children’s bread into a stone! It is not the Lord’s Supper, but the “Eucharist.” We see before us no plate, but a “paten.” The cup is a “chalice,” and the table is an “altar.” These are incrustations of superstition, whereby the blessed ordinance of Christ is likely to be again overgrown and perverted!

What does this Supper mean? It means communion—communion with Christ, communion with one another!  
What is communion? The word breaks up easily into union, and its prefix *com,* which means *with,* “union with.” We must, therefore, first enjoy union with Christ and with His Church or else we cannot enjoy communion. Union lies at the basis of communion. We must be one with Christ in heart, soul and life—baptized into His death, quickened by His life—and so brought to be members of His body, one with the whole Church of which He is the Head. We cannot have communion with Christ until we are in union with *Him*. And we cannot have communion with the Church till we are in vital union with it.  
**I.**The teaching of the Lord’s Supper is just this—that while we have many ways of COMMUNION WITH CHRIST, yet the receiving of Christ into our souls as our Savior is the best way of communion with Him.  
I said, dear Friends, that we have many ways of communion with Christ. Let me show you that it is so.  
Communion is ours by *personal union*with the Lord Jesus. We speak with Him in prayer, and He speaks with us through the Word. Some of us speak more often with Christ than we do with wife or child—and our communion with Jesus is deeper and more thorough than our fellowship with our nearest friend. In meditation and its attendant thanksgiving we speak with our risen Lord. And by His Holy Spirit He answers us by creating fresh thought and emotion in our minds. I like sometimes, in prayer, when I do not feel that I can say anything, just to sit still and look up—then faith spiritually catches sight of the Well-Beloved and hears His voice in the solemn silence of the mind. Thus we have union with Jesus of a closer sort than any words could possibly express. Our soul melts beneath the warmth of Jesus’ love and darts upward her own love in return. Think not that I am dreaming, or am carried off by the memory of some unusual rhapsody—no, I assert that the devout soul can converse with the Lord Jesus all day and can have as true fellowship with Him as if He still dwelt bodily among men! This thing comes to me, not by the hearing of the ears, but by my own personal experience—I know of a surety that Jesus manifests Himself unto His people as He does not unto the world!  
Ah, what sweet communion often exists between the saint and the Well-Beloved, when there is no bread and wine upon the table, for the Spirit Himself draws the heart of the renewed one and it runs after Jesus, while the Lord, Himself, appears unto the longing spirit! “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Do *you*enjoy this charming union?  
Next, we have communion with Christ *in His thoughts, views and purposes,* for His thoughts are our thoughts according to our capacity and sanctity. Believers take the same view of matters as Jesus does—that which pleases Him pleases them, and that which grieves Him grieves them, also. Consider, for instance, the greatest theme of our thought, and see whether our thoughts are not like those of Christ. He delights in the Father, He loves to glorify the Father—do not we? Is not the Father the center of our soul’s delight? Do we not rejoice at the very sound of His name? Does not our spirit cry, “Abba Father”? Thus it is clear that we feel as Jesus feels towards the Father and so we have the truest communion with Him. This is but one instance—your contemplations will bring before you a wide variety of topics wherein we think with Jesus. Now, identity of judgment, opinion and purpose forms the highway of communion—yes, it is *communion*.  
We have also communion with Christ *in our emotions.* Have you never felt a holy horror when you have heard a word of blasphemy in the street? Thus Jesus felt when He saw sin and bore it in His own Person— only He felt it infinitely more than you do. Have you never felt, as you looked upon sinners, that you must weep over them? Those are holy tears and contain the same ingredients as those which Jesus shed when He lamented over Jerusalem. Yes, in our zeal for God, our hatred of sin, our detestation of lies, our pity for men, we have true communion with Jesus.  
Further, we have had fellowship with Christ *in many of our actions.* Have you ever tried to teach the ignorant? This Jesus did. Have you found it difficult? So Jesus found it. Have you strived to reclaim the backslider? Then you were in communion with the Good Shepherd who hastens into the wilderness to find the one lost sheep—finds it, lays it upon His shoulders and brings it home rejoicing! Have you ever watched over a soul night and day with tears? Then you have had communion with Him who has borne all our names upon His broken heart and carries the memorial of them upon His pierced hands! Yes, in acts of selfdenial, liberality, benevolence and piety, we enter into communion with Him who went about doing good. Whenever we try to disentangle the snarls of strife and to make peace between men who are at enmity, then are we doing what the great Peacemaker did and we have communion with the Lord and Giver of peace! Wherever, indeed, we co-operate with the Lord Jesus in His designs of love to men, we are in true and active communion with Him.  
So it is *with our sorrows.*Certain of us have had large fellowship with the Lord Jesus in affliction. “Jesus wept.” He lost a friend and so have we. Jesus grieved over the hardness of men’s hearts—we know that grief. Jesus was exceedingly sorry that the hopeful young man turned away and went back to the world—we know that sorrow. Those who have sympathetic hearts and live for others readily enter into the experience of “the Man of Sorrows.” The wounds of calumny, the reproaches of the proud, the venom of the bigoted, the treachery of the false and the weakness of the true—we have known in our measure and therein have had communion with Jesus.  
Nor this only—we have been with our Divine Master *in His joys.* I suppose there never lived a happier man than the Lord Jesus. He was rightly called, “the Man of Sorrows,” but He might with unimpeachable truth have been called “the Man of Joys.” He must have rejoiced as He called His disciples and they came to Him—as He bestowed healing and relief and gave pardon to penitents, and breathed peace on Believers. His was the joy of finding the sheep and taking the piece of money out of the dust. His work was His joy—such joy that for its sake He endured the Cross, despising the shame! The exercise of benevolence is joy to loving hearts—the more pain it costs, the more joy it is. Kind actions make us happy and in such joy we find communion with the great heart of Jesus.  
Thus have I given you a list of windows of agate and gates of carbuncle through which you may come at the Lord. But *the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper sets forth a way which surpasses them all.*It is the most accessible and the most effectual method of fellowship. Here it is that we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus by receiving Him as our Savior. We, being guilty, accept of His Atonement as our sacrificial cleansing and in token thereof, we eat this bread and drink this cup. “Oh,” says one, “I do not feel that I can get near to Christ. He is so high and holy—and I am only a poor sinner.” Just so. For that very reason you can have fellowship with Christ in that which lies nearest to His heart! He is a Savior and to be a Savior there must be a sinner to be saved! Be you that one, and Christ and you shall at once be in union and communion—He shall save and you shall be saved! He shall sanctify and you shall be sanctified—and two shall thus be one! This Table sets before you His great Sacrifice. Jesus has offered it—will you accept it? He does not ask you to bring anything—no drop of blood, no pang of flesh—all is here and your part is to come and partake of it, even as of old the offerer partook of the peace offering which he had brought and so feasted with God and with the priest. If you work for Christ, that will certainly be some kind of fellowship with Him, but I tell you that the communion of receiving Him into your inmost soul is the nearest and closest fellowship possible to mortal man! The fellowship of service is exceedingly honorable when we and Christ work together for the same objectives! The fellowship of suffering is exceedingly instructive, when our heart has engraved upon it the same characters as were engraved upon the heart of Christ. But still, the fellowship of the soul which receives Christ and is received by Christ is closer, more vital, more essential than any other! Such fellowship is eternal! No power upon earth can henceforth take from me the piece of bread which I have just now eaten! It has gone where it will be made up into blood, nerve, muscle and bone. It is *within* me, and *of* me. That drop of wine has coursed through my veins and is part and parcel of my being! So he that takes Jesus by faith to be his Savior has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from him. He has received Christ into his inward parts and all the men on earth, and all the devils in Hell cannot extract Christ from him! Jesus said, “He that eats Me, even he shall live by Me.” By our sincere reception of Jesus into our hearts, an indissoluble union is established between us and the Lord—and this manifests itself in mutual communion. To as many as received Him, to them has He given this communion, even to them that believe on His name!  
**II.**I have now to look at another side of communion, namely, THE FELLOWSHIP OF TRUE BELIEVERS WITH EACH OTHER. We have many ways of communing, the one with the other, but there is no way of mutual communing like the common reception of the same Christ in the same way! I have said that there are many ways in which Christians commune with one another—and these doors of fellowship I would mention at some length.  
Let me go over much the same ground as before. We commune *by holy converse.*I wish we had more of this. Time was when they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another. I am afraid that now they more often speak one *against* another. It is a grievous thing that full often love lies bleeding by a brother’s hand. Where we are not quite so bad as that, yet we are often backward and silent—and so miss profitable converse. Our clannish reserve has often made one Christian sit by another in utter isolation, when each would have been charmed with the other’s company. Children of one family need not wait to be introduced to each other— having eaten of this one bread, we have given and received the token of brotherhood. Let us therefore act consistently with our relationship and fall into holy

conversation next time we meet! I am afraid that Christian brotherhood in many cases begins and ends inside the place of worship. Let it not be so among us! Let it be our delight to find our society in the circle of which Jesus is the center and let us make them our friends who are the friends of Jesus. By frequent united prayer and praise, and by ministering, the one to the other, the things which we have learned by the Spirit, we shall have fellowship with each other in our Lord Jesus Christ!  
I am sure that all Christians have fellowship together in their *thoughts*. In the essentials of the Gospel we think alike—in our thoughts of God, of Christ, of sin, of holiness, we keep in step. In our intense desire to promote the Kingdom of our Lord we are as one. All spiritual life is one. The thoughts raised by the Spirit of God in the soul of men are never contrary to each other. I say not that the thoughts of all professors *agree*, but I do assert that the minds of the truly regenerate in all sects and in all ages are in harmony with each other—a harmony which often excites delighted surprise in those who perceive it! The marks that divide one set of nominal Christians from another set are very deep and wide to those who have nothing of religion but the name. Yet living Believers scarcely notice them. Boundaries which separate the cattle of the field are no division to the birds of the air! Our minds, thoughts, desires and hopes are one in Christ Jesus—and herein we have communion.  
Beloved Friends, our *emotions* are another royal road of fellowship. You sit down and tell your experience and I smile to think that you are telling mine! Sometimes a young Believer enlarges upon the sad story of his trials and temptations, imagining that nobody ever had to endure so great a fight, when all the while he is only describing the common adventures of those who go on pilgrimage and we are all communing with him! When we talk together about our Lord, are we not agreed? When we speak of our Father and all His dealings with us, are we not one? And when we weep, when we sigh, when we sing and when we rejoice—are we not all akin? Heavenly fingers touching like strings within our hearts bring forth the same notes, for we are the products of the same Maker and tuned to the same praise! Real harmony exists among all the true people of God—Christians are one in Christ!  
We have communion with one another, too, in our *actions.* We unite in trying to save men—I hope we do. We join in instructing, warning, inviting and persuading sinners to come to Jesus. Our life-ministry is the same—we are workers together with God. We live out the one desire, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.”  
Certainly we have much communion, one with the other, in our *sufferings.* There is not a poor sick or despondent saint upon the earth with whom we do not sympathize at this moment, for we are fellow members and partakers of the sufferings of Christ. I hope we can each one say— ***“Is there a lamb in all Your flock,  
I would disdain to feed?  
Is there a foe, before whose face,  
I fear Your cause to plead?”***  
No, we suffer with each other, bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ. If we do not, we have reason for questioning our own faith! But if we do so, we have communion with each other.  
I hope we have fellowship in our *joys.* Is one happy? We would not envy him, but rejoice with him! Perhaps this spirit is not so universal as it should be among professors. Are we at once glad because another prospers? If another star outshines ours, do we delight in its radiance? When we meet a Brother with ten talents, do we congratulate ourselves on having such a man given to help us, or do we depreciate him as much as we can? Such is the depravity of our nature that we do not readily rejoice in the progress of others if they leave us behind—but we must school ourselves to this. A man will readily sit down and sympathize with a friend’s griefs, but if he sees him honored and esteemed, he is apt to regard him as a rival and does not readily rejoice with him. This ought not to be! Without effort we ought to be happy in our Brother’s happiness. If we are ill, be this our comfort, that many are in robust health! If we are faint, let us be glad that others are strong in the Lord! Thus shall we enjoy a happy fellowship like that of the perfected above.  
When I have put all these modes of Christian communion together, not one of them is so sure, so strong, so deep as communion in receiving the same Christ as our Savior and trusting in the same blood for cleansing unto eternal life! Here on the Table you have the tokens of the broadest and fullest communion. This is a kind of communion which you and I cannot choose or reject—if we are in Christ, it is and must be ours! Certain brethren restrict their communion in the outward ordinance, and they think they have good reasons for doing so. But I am unable to see the force of their reasoning, because I joyfully observe that these brethren commune with other Believers in prayer, praise, hearing of the Word and other ways! The fact is that the matter of real communion is very largely beyond human control and is to the spiritual body what the circulation of the blood is to the natural body—a necessary process not dependent upon volition. In perusing a deeply-spiritual Book of Devotion, you have been charmed and benefited, and yet upon looking at the title page, it may be you have found that the author belonged to the Church of Rome. What then? Why, then it has happened that the inner life has broken all barriers and your spirits have communed! For my own part, in reading certain precious works, I have loathed their Romanism and yet I have had close fellowship with their writers in weeping over sin, in adoring at the foot of the Cross and in rejoicing in the glorious enthronement of our Lord. Blood is thicker than water, and no fellowship is more inevitable and sincere than fellowship in the precious blood and in the risen life of our Lord Jesus Christ! Here, in the common reception of the one loaf, we bear witness that we are one. And in the actual participation of all the chosen in the one redemption that unity is in very deed displayed and matured in the most substantial manner. Washed in the one blood, fed on the same loaf, cheered by the same cup, all differences pass away, and “we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.”  
**III.**Now then, dear Friends, if this kind of fellowship is the best, LET US TAKE CARE TO ENJOY IT. Let us at this hour avail ourselves of it!  
Let us take care*to see Christ* in the mirror of this ordinances. Have any of you eaten the bread and yet have you not seen Christ? Then you have gained no benefit. Have you drank the wine, but have you not remembered the Lord? Alas, I fear you have eaten and drunk condemnation to yourselves, not discerning the Lord’s body! But if you did see through the emblems, as aged persons see through their spectacles, then you have been thankful for such aids to vision! But what is the use of glasses if there is nothing to look at? And what is the use of the communion if Christ is not in our thoughts and hearts?  
If you did discern the Lord, then be sure, again, to *accept Him.* Say to yourself, “All that Christ is to any, He shall be to me. Does He save sinners? He shall save me. Does He change men’s hearts? He shall change mine. Is He All-in-All to those who trust Him? He shall be All-in-All to me.” I have heard persons say that they do not know how to take Christ. What said the Apostle? “The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart.” If you have something in your mouth that you desire to eat, what is the best thing to do? Will you not swallow it? That is exactly what faith does. Christ’s Word of Grace is very near you—it is on your tongue—let it go down into your inmost soul! Say to your Savior, “I know I am not fit to receive You, O Jesus, but since You do graciously come to me as bread comes to the hungry, I joyfully receive You, rejoicing to feed upon You. Since You come to me as the fruit of the vine to a thirsty man, Lord, I take You willingly, and I thank You that this reception is all that You require of me. Has not Your Spirit so put it, ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name’”?  
Beloved Friends, when you have thus received Jesus, fail not to *rejoice in Him*as having received Him! How many there are who have received Christ, who talk and act as if they never had received Him! It is a poor dinner of which a man says, after he has eaten it, that he feels as if he had not dined! And is it a poor Christ of whom anyone can say, “I have received Him, but I am none the happier, none the more at peace.” If you have received Jesus into your heart, you *are* saved. You *are* justified. Do you whisper, “I hope so”? Is that all? Do you not *know*? The hoping and hopping of so many are a poor way of going—put both feet down and say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” You are either saved or not! There is no state between the two! You are either pardoned or condemned and you have good reason for the highest happiness or else you have grave causes for the direst anxiety. If you have received the Atonement, be as glad as you can be! And if you are still an unbeliever, rest not till Christ is yours!  
Oh, the joy of continually entering into fellowship with Christ in such a way that you never lose His empathy! Be this yours, Beloved, every day and all the day! May His shadow fall upon you as you are in the sun, or stray in the gardens! May His voice cheer you as you lie down upon the seashore and listen to the murmuring of the waves. May His Presence glorify the main solitude as you climb the hills! May Jesus be to you an all-surrounding Presence, lighting up the night, perfuming the day, gladdening all places and sanctifying all pursuits! Our Beloved is not a Friend for Lord’s-Days only, but for weekdays too! He the inseparable passion of His loving disciples. The who have had fellowship with His body and His blood at this Table may have the Lord as an habitual Guest at their own tables! Those who have met their Master in this supper room may expect Him to make their own chamber bright with His royal Presence! Let fellowship with Jesus and with the elect brotherhood be henceforth the atmosphere of our life, the joy of our existence! This will give us a Heaven below and prepare us for Heaven above!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MATTHEW 26:14-35.***

**Verses 14-16.***Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with Him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.* It was one of the twelve who went to the chief priests, to bargain for the price of his Lord’s betrayal! He did not even mention Christ’s name in his infamous question, *“What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?”* The amount agreed upon, *thirty pieces of silver,*was the price of a slave and showed how little value the chief priests set upon Jesus—and also revealed the greed of Judas in selling his Master for so small a sum. Yet many have sold Jesus for a less price than Judas received—a smile or a sneer has been sufficient to induce them to betray their Lord! Let us who have been redeemed with Christ’s precious blood, set high store by Him, think much of Him and praise Him much. As we remember with shame and sorrow these thirty pieces of silver, let us never undervalue Him, or forget the priceless preciousness of Him who was reckoned as worth no more than a slave.

**17, 18.***Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.*How truly royal was Jesus of Nazareth even in His humiliation! He had no home of His own wherein He could *“keep the Passover”*with His disciples. He was soon to be put to a public and shameful death, yet He had only to send two of His disciples *“into the city to such a man,”*and the guest chamber, furnished and prepared, was at once placed at His disposal! He did not take the room by arbitrary force, as an earthly monarch might have done, but He obtained it by the Divine compulsion of Almighty Love. Even in His lowest estate, our Lord Jesus had the hearts of all men beneath His control. What power He has now that He reigns in Glory!

**19.***And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.*If Christ’s disciples always loyally *did as Jesus appointed them,*they would always speed well on His errands. There are many more people in the world ready to yield to Christ than some of us think. If we would only go to them as Peter and John went to this man in Jerusalem, and say to them what “the Master says,” we would find that their hearts would be opened to receive Christ even as this man’s house was willingly yielded up at our Lord’s request!

**20, 21.***Now when the evening was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me*. Our Lord remained in seclusion until the evening and then went to the appointed place and sat down, or rather, reclined at the paschal table with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, “Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.” This was a most unpleasant thought to bring to a feast, yet it was most appropriate to the Passover, for God’s commandment to Moses concerning the first paschal lamb was, “With bitter herbs they shall eat it.” This was a painful reflection for our Lord, and also for His twelve chosen companion—“One of you,” and His eyes would glance round the table as He said it, “One of you shall betray Me.”

**22.***And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, each of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?* That short sentence fell like a bombshell among the Savior’s bodyguard! It startled them—they had all made great professions of affection for Him and, for the most part, those professions were true. *And they were exceedingly sorrowful—*and well they might be! Such a revelation was enough to produce the deepest emotions of sorrow and sadness. It is a beautiful trait in the character of the disciples that they did not suspect one another, but each of them enquired, almost incredulously, as the form of the question implies—*“Lord, is it I?”* No one said, “Lord, is it Judas?” Perhaps no one of the eleven thought that Judas was base enough to betray the Lord who had given him an honorable place among His Apostles. We cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren—but we may do great services by suspecting ourselves! Selfsuspicion is near akin to humility.

**23, 24.***And He answered and said, he that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.*A man may get very near to Christ, yes, may dip his hand in the same dish with the Savior, and yet betray Him. We may be high in office and may apparently be very useful, as Judas was—yet we may betray Christ. We learn from our Lord’s words that Divine decrees do not deprive a sinful action of its guilt—“*The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed*.” His criminality is just as great as though there had been no “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” *“It had been good for that man if he had not been born*.” The doom of Judas is worse than non-existence! To have consorted with Christ as he had done—and then to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies— sealed the traitor’s eternal destiny!

**25.***Then Judas which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.*Judas appears to have been the last of the twelve to ask the question, “is it I?” Those who are the last to suspect themselves are usually those who ought to be the first to exercise self-suspicion. Judas did not address Christ as, “Lord,” as the other disciples had done, but called Him, Rabbi—“Master.” Otherwise his question was like that of his eleven companions. But He received from Christ an answer that was given to no one else—He said unto him, “You have said.” Probably the reply reached his ears alone, and if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of his traitorous design might have driven him to repentance, but there was nothing in his heart to respond to Christ’s voice. He had sold himself to Satan before he sold his Lord.

**26-28.***And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*The Jewish Passover was made to melt into the Lord’s Supper, as the stars of the morning dissolve into the light of the sun.*As they were eating*, while the paschal supper was proceeding, Jesus instituted the new memorial which is to be observed until He comes again. How simple was the whole ceremony! *Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body*.” Christ could not have meant that the bread was His actual body, for His body was reclining by the table! But He intended that broken bread to*represent* His body which was about to be broken on the Cross. Then followed the second memorial, the cup, filled with “the fruit of the vine,” of which Christ said, “*Drink you all of it*.” There is no trace here of any altar or priest—there is nothing about the elevation or adoration of the “host.” There is no resemblance between the Lord’s Supper and the Romish “mass.” Let us keep strictly to the letter and spirit of God’s Word in everything, for if one adds a little, another will add more, and if one alters one point, and another alters another point, there is no telling how far we shall get from the Truth of God! The disciples had been reminded of their own liability to sin—now their Savior gives them a personal pledge of the pardon of sin, according to Luke’s record of His words, “This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.”

**29.***But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom.* Thus Jesus took the great Nazarite vow never to drink of the fruit of the vine till He should drink it new with His disciples in His Father’s Kingdom. He will keep His tryst with all His followers, and they, with Him, shall hold high festival forever!

**30.***And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*Was it not truly brave of our dear Lord to sing under such circumstances? He was going forth to His last dread conflict, to Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha—yet He went with a song on His lips! He must have led the singing, for the disciples were too sad to start the Hallel with which the paschal feast closed. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives*. Then came that desperate struggle in which the great Captain of our salvation wrestled even to a bloody sweat and prevailed.

**31, 32.***Then said Jesus unto them, All you shall be offended because of Me, this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*Observe our Lord’s habit of quoting Scripture! He was able to speak words of Infallible Truth, yet He fell back upon the Inspired Record in the Old Testament! His quotation from Zechariah does not seem to have been really necessary, but it was most appropriate to His prophecy to His disciples—*“All you shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad*.” Jesus was the Shepherd who was about to be smitten, but He foretold the scattering of the sheep! Even those leaders of the flock that had been first chosen by Christ and had been most with Him would stumble and fall away from Him on that dread night, but the Shepherd would not lose them—there would be a reunion between Him and His sheep—*“After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee*.” Once again He would resume, for a little while, the Character of their Shepherd-King, and with them He would revisit some of their old haunts in Galilee before He ascended to His heavenly home. “I will go before you,” suggests the idea of the Good Shepherd leading His flock after the Eastern manner. Happy are His sheep in having such a Leader! And blessed are they in following Him wherever He goes!

**33.***Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.*This was a very presumptuous speech, not only because of the self-confidence it betrayed, but also because it was a flat *contradiction* of the Master’s declaration! Jesus said, “All you shall be offended because of Me this night,” but Peter thought he knew better than Christ, so he answered, *“Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended*.” No doubt these words were spoken from his heart, but “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Peter must have been amazed, the next morning, as he discovered the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart as manifested in his triple denial of his Lord! He who thinks himself so much stronger than his brethren is the very man who will prove to be weaker than many of them, as did Peter, not many hours after his boast was uttered.

**34.***Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, That this night, before the cock crows, you shall deny Me thrice.*Jesus now tells His boastful disciple that before the next morning’s cockcrowing, he will thrice deny his Lord. Not only would he stumble and fall with his fellow disciples, but he would go beyond them all in his repeated denials of that dear Master whom he professed to love with as intense an affection as even John possessed. Peter declared that he would remain true to Christ if he were the only faithful friend left. Jesus foretold that of all the twelve, only Judas would exceed the boaster in wickedness!

**35.***Peter said unto Him, Though I shall die with You, yet will I not deny You. Likewise also said all the disciples.* Here again Peter contradicts his Master straight to His face. It was a pity that he should have boasted once after his Lord’s plain prophecy that all the disciples would that night be offended. But it was shameful that Peter should repeat his selfconfident declaration in the teeth of Christ’s express prediction concerning him! He was not alone in his utterance, for *likewise also said all the disciples*. They all felt that under no circumstances could they deny their Lord. We have no record of the denial of Christ by the other ten Apostles, although they all forsook Him and fled, and thus practically disowned Him. Remembering all that they had seen and heard of Him, and especially bearing in mind His most recent discourse, the communion in the upper room, and His wondrous intercessory prayer on their behalf, we are not surprised that they felt themselves bound to Him forever. But, alas, notwithstanding their protests, the King’s Prophesy was completely fulfilled, for that night they were all “offended.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #2638 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER  
NO. 2638

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1899.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 4, 1882.~~***

***~~“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance~~***

***~~of Me. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.~~***

WE have no respect whatever for the ordinances of men in religion. Anything that is only invented by churches, or councils, is nothing whatever to us. We know of two ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ—the Baptism of Believers and the Lord’s Supper. And we utterly abhor and reject all pretended “sacraments” of every kind. And because we observe these two ordinances, and these two, only, we are the more concerned that they should be properly used and duly understood, and that they should minister to the edification of those who participate in them. We would have those who are baptized understand what is meant by that expressive rite—that they, being dead with Christ, should also be buried with Him and rise with Him into newness of life. And when we observe the Lord’s Supper, we feel a deep and earnest desire that none should come to the Table in ignorance of the significance of the observance—or that, at least, ignorance may not be an occasion of eating unworthily—but that we may comprehend what we are doing and understand the spiritual meaning of this pictorial instruction by which the Lord Jesus Christ would, even until the end of the age, remind His Church of His great Sacrifice upon the Cross.

**I.**So, first, I will speak briefly concerning THE FORM OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.  
We do not think that it is at all material where that supper is held. It is just as valid and helpful in your own private apartments, in your bedroom, or in your parlor, as it is in any place where Christians usually congregate. We do not attach so much importance as some people do to the *time* when it is observed, but we are astonished that High Churchmen should be opposed to evening communion, for, if any definite time for partaking of it can be quoted from Scripture, it certainly is the evening! I should like to ask the Ritualists whether they can find any instance, either in holy or profane things, of a supper being eaten before breakfast—until they invented that absurd practice! There is no time that is more like the first occasion when the Master celebrated the ordinance with His disciples than is the evening of the day. Then it was that He gathered the 12 Apostles together and instituted this blessed memorial feast! At Emmaus, too, it was at the close of the day that He was made known to His two disciples in the breaking of bread. It must be sheer superstition, utterly unwarranted by Holy Scripture, which tells us that the Lord’s Supper can only be properly received *in the morning* and that we ought not to eat anything before we partake of the sacred emblems! We reject all such nonsense, for we find no authority for it in the only standard which we recognize, that is, the Inspired Word of God! Let us see what it teaches us concerning this ordinance.  
We learn, first, that *the Lord’s Supper should begin with thanksgiving*. So the Master Himself evidently commenced it—“He took bread and gave thanks.” All through the Supper, the emotion of gratitude should be in active exercise. It is intended that we should give thanks for the bread— at the same time giving still more emphatic thanks for the sacred body which it *represents*. Then we should also give thanks for the cup and for that most precious blood which is therein *represented* to us. We cannot rightly observe the Lord’s Supper unless we come to the table, blessing, praising, magnifying and adoring our Savior—praising Him even for instituting such a festival of remembrance—such a memorial ordinance to help our frail memories! And praising Him yet more for giving us so blessed a thing to remember as His own great Sacrifice for our sin.  
After the thanksgiving, it is very clear that our Divine Lord*broke the bread*. We scarcely know what kind of bread was used on that occasion. It was probably the thin passover cake of the Jews, but there is nothing said in Scripture about the use of leavened or unleavened bread and, therefore, it matters not which we use! Where there is no ordinance, there is no obligation and we are, therefore, left free to use the bread which it is our custom to eat. When the Master had broken the bread, *He gave it to His disciples*, and said, “Take, eat.” And they all participated in eating it. And this, mark you, is essential to the right observance of the Lord’s Supper, so that, when the priest, in celebrating “mass,” takes the wafer, which is not bread and which he does not break, but which he, himself, eats whole, there is no Lord’s Supper there! Whatever it may be called, it is not the Lord’s Supper. In the eating of the bread, there must be the participation of such a number of faithful, godly disciples of Christ as may be present, or else it is not the ordinance which the Lord instituted.  
That being done, the next thing was that, “*After the same manner also He took the cup.*” That is to say, after the same manner of thanksgiving, blessing God for the fruit of the vine, which was henceforth to be the emblem of His poured-out blood. Even so should we. It is no vain thing to praise the Lord, though we do it twice, thrice—yes, and ten thousand times! Well did the Psalmist say, “Praise you the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.” Especially comely is it for us to praise our God when we are calling to remembrance the unspeakable gift of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son!  
Then came the partaking of the cup—the fruit of the vine—of which the Master expressly said, “Drink you all of it.” Hence, when the Church of Rome takes away the cup from the people and denies it to them, there is no observance of the Lord’s Supper, for another essential part of the ordinance is left out. It may be the “mass,” or it may be anything else, but it is not the Supper of the Lord! There must be a participation by all the faithful in the cup, as well as in the bread, otherwise the Lord’s death is not shown, or proclaimed according to Christ’s most holy and blessed command.  
Further, in order that this may be the Lord’s Supper in very truth, *it must be observed in remembrance of Christ*, who said to His disciples, “This do in remembrance of Me.” From which we learn that only those who *know Him* must come to His Table, for how shall we remember what we never knew? And how shall we remember Him with whom we have never spoken and in whom we have never believed? You are not to come to the Lord’s Supper to *get* faith—you must have faith, first—or else you have no right to draw near to this sacred spot. What do you do here? If you suppose that this is a *saving* ordinance, I must say to you what Christ said to the Sadducees, “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” Salvation comes to us through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and it is *the result of the effectual working of the Spirit of God within us*! This Supper is a most instructive ordinance for those who are saved, but those who are not born again and are not, by Divine Grace, members of the Lord’s family, have no right here. They who ate the Passover were such as were born in the priest’s house, or bought with the priest’s money—and if you have been born in Christ’s house, or bought with Christ’s blood—if you know, by blessed experience, the meaning of regeneration and redemption, then you may come to the Communion Table. But, if not, as the Passover was only intended for Israel, so is this supper a family feast for those who belong to Jesus Christ—no others may come to it! If they do come, it will be at the peril of eating and drinking unworthily since they are unable to discern the Lord’s body.  
I have thus given you a very brief account of the form of observing the Lord’s Supper, as we find it in the New Testament. You notice that I have not said anything about a chalice, or a paten, or about consecrating the elements, or uplifting the host and all that Romish rubbish of which some people think so much. The reason for my silence is that there is nothing about these things in the Bible. “To the Law, and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Clear away all the additions of superstition—they are but the dust and the rust which have accumulated during the ages and they spoil and mar the purity of Christ’s own ordinance! Our great concern must be to observe it *exactly* as He has delivered it to us, in accordance with His own injunction, “This do in remembrance of Me”—not something else in its place.  
**II.**Now, secondly, from our text I gather THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.  
First, *because it was revealed by the Lord Himself*. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.” Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all accessible to Paul and, though they had not then written their Gospels, yet he could have learned from *them* how the Savior instituted the Supper. But, as if Christ would not let it be secondhand, He was pleased to declare to Paul, personally—to Paul, himself—directly and distinctly, how the Supper should be celebrated. The Apostle says, “I have received of the Lord”—not, “*we*”—not, “I and the rest of the Apostles and disciples,” but—“I have received of the Lord,” indicating a definite *personal* Revelation from Christ as to this matter. After the Lord Jesus had gone up into Glory, His Revelations were but few, yet this was one of them. He would have His disciples, therefore, pay due attention to this important matter which He thus especially revealed to Paul. O Beloved, I often tremble for those who tamper with the ordinances of Christ—they alter them, or shift them out of their proper places—and then say that their alterations are unimportant! Mary said to the servants at Cana of Galilee, “Whatever He says unto you, do it.” And we have need of the same command today! We must not alter anything that Christ has ordained, for, “where the word of a king is, there is power” and, in the Word of the King of Kings, there is power to condemn those who alter His Word. Whatever Christ has commanded is to be obeyed by us—and as He took special pains concerning this ordinance, to make a distinct Revelation over and above the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the four Evangelists, we may be certain that He intended to surround this Supper with the utmost solemnity and authority.  
I have already referred to the next point, but it is so important that I remind you, again, that *this Supper was commanded by the Lord*. He said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” And again, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” If I love Christ, I am bound to keep His commandments—and among the rest of His commandments, this one in which He, here, says, “This do.” I might have thought, from the conduct of some professing Christians, that Jesus must have said, “This *do not,*” but as He said, “This do you,” where shall I find an apology for those who either never have done it at all, or, being His people, do it so seldom that He could not say to them, “This do you, as *often* as you drink it,” but He might rather say, “This do you as*seldom* as you drink it,” since the idea of frequency does not enter into their observance of it? But, dear Friends, what Christ revealed and commanded, it is incumbent upon His own beloved ones to obey!  
Notice, again, that *this supper was instituted by Christ, Himself, and He, Himself, first set the example for its observance*. As to Baptism, you remember how He said, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness,” and so He set us the example in that matter. And, in the Supper, it was He who first blessed and broke the bread. It was He who first passed the cup and said, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” If He had given the command and the Apostles had been the first to attend to it, it would have been binding upon us, but, inasmuch as, in *addition* to giving the command concerning it, He, Himself, set the example of observing it—sitting at the center of the table, with the 12 all around Him—I think He has put a special halo about this ordinance and we must, by no means forget, or neglect, or despise it.  
Remember, too, that *He established it on a very special occasion*. To my mind, it is very touching to read, “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread.” I cannot help noticing that the Apostle is very particular to say here, “The Lord Jesus.” Very often He uses the name, “Christ,” in speaking of the Savior. But here it is, “the Lord Jesus,” to show the awe and reverence which the Apostle felt as, by faith, he saw the Master at the first Communion Table. Paul could not forget that, though Jesus was then Lord of All, He was that same night betrayed. He that ate bread with Him lifted up his heel against Him and sold Him for 30 pieces of silver! Yet, even while the anticipation of that betrayal and all which it involved was tearing His heart asunder, He remembered us and established this ordinance that, by refreshing our memories concerning His blessed Self, we might not be left to play the traitor, too, but might be kept steadfast in every time of trial. O Brothers and Sisters, it seems to me that we must be especially careful to observe such an ordinance as this, instituted when our Savior’s heart was breaking with anguish on our behalf!  
And remember, too, the importance of the ordinance, because of *the peculiar personal motive with which it was instituted—*“This do in remembrance”—of what? Of Christianity and its doctrines and practices? No. But, “in remembrance of *Me*.” You know how tenderly a thing comes home to you if a dying husband says, “This do, my beloved one, in remembrance of me, when I am dead and gone.” You never fail to do that, I am sure, if it is in your power. You know how it is with a friend who has gone from you and who has left you some forget-me-not. You treasure it with the utmost care. The memento is very precious for your friend’s sake and our dear Lord and Master has put about this Supper all the loveliness of His personality, all the graciousness of His affection for us and all the tenderness that ought to be in our love to Him. If there is anything that He bids you do, you ought to do it—but when it is something to be done *in remembrance of Him*, you must do it—your love impels you to do it! Are you not ashamed if you are not doing it in the most loving, humble, grateful and earnest manner possible, as becomes the memory of Him who loved you and gave Himself for you? I would not like to have to urge any Christian to come to the Communion Table—I feel as if I would do nothing to spoil the perfect spontaneity of it. If you do not love Him, do not come to His Table! But if you love Him, come because you love Him. Come because you remember Him and because you wish to be helped to remember Him yet more. If there is nothing about Him that you wish to remember, do not dare come! But, if He is precious to your soul, your transport and your trust. If His very name is music to your ears, honey to your mouth and joy to your heart, then you do not need me to press you to come to His Table, but you will come because He says, “This do you in remembrance of Me.”  
There is one more thing which adds to the importance of this Supper and that is, *it is to be observed*

*“till He comes*.” It is not an ordinance, then, for the first Christian centuries, alone, to be, as it were, the bridge between the ceremonialism of the Old Testament and the spirituality of the New Testament. No, it is intended to be celebrated “till He comes.” We must keep on gathering at His Table, giving thanks, breaking bread and proclaiming His death till the trumpet of the archangel shall startle us— and then we shall feel it to be truly blessed to be found obediently remembering Him when He puts in His appearance at the last! As He comes to us, we shall say, “Blessed Master, we have done as You did bid us. We have kept alive Your memory in the world to ourselves and to those who looked on as we broke the bread and drank of the cup in Your name. And now we rejoice to see You in Your Glory.” I do not know that the meeting between Christ and His people could happen at a better time than if He were to come when they were gathered at His Table, obeying His command and showing His death “till He comes.”  
Thus I have tried, as briefly as I could, to give instruction as to the importance of this Supper. I hope that the Holy Spirit will press home the Truth of God upon the hearts of any who have not observed this ordinance, before, and that He will lead them to ask if they are, indeed, Believers in Jesus, and lovers of the Lord, how they can justify themselves for their disobedience to what Christ has so expressly commanded!  
**III.**But now, thirdly, let us enquire, IN WHAT SPIRIT OUGHT WE TO COME TO THIS TABLE?  
I should say, first, that we are bound to come in the spirit of *deep humility*. Brothers and Sisters, to my mind, it is a very humbling thing that we should need anything to help us to remember Christ. I see no better evidence of the fact that we are not yet perfectly sanctified, for, if we were, we would need nothing to help us to remember Him. There is, alas, still an imperfection in our memory—and that strangest and saddest thing of all—in respect to Jesus Himself. It is extraordinary that we should ever require anything to help us to remember Him. Can He, to whom we owe so much, be ever forgotten by us? The fact that this ordinance is to be observed in remembrance of Him, “till He comes,” is a humbling proof that till that glorious event, His people’s memories will be faulty and they will need this double forget-me-not to remind them of Him who is their All-in-All.  
What do I see on that Table? I see bread there. Then I gather this humbling lesson—that I cannot even keep myself in spiritual food. I am such a pauper, such an utter beggar, that my own table cannot furnish me with what I need and I must come to the Lord’s Table—and I must receive, through Him, the spiritual nutriment which my soul requires. What do I see in the cup? I see the wine which is the token of His shed blood. What does that say to me but that I still need cleansing? Oh, how I rejoice in that blessed text in John’s first Epistle—“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” And then what follows? That we do not need to make any more confession of sin because we are quite cleansed from it? Nothing of the sort! “And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” We still need the cleansing fountain even when we are walking in the light, as God is in the light—and we need to come to it every day! And what a mercy it is that the emblem sets forth the constant provision of purifying blood whereby we may be continually cleansed! As we partake of this cup, we must do so humbly, for thus it becomes us to come to the Table of our Lord.  
But, next, we must come *very thankfully*. Some pull a long face when they think about coming to the Communion Table, like Mrs. Too-Good who is described in Rowland Hill’s *Village Dialogues*. She made a mistake about the week that the ordinance was to be observed, so she did not play cards during that week and kept herself wonderfully pure, poor old soul. And then, when she found, on Sunday, that she had made a blunder as to the time, she said she had wasted the whole week in getting ready! Ah, dear Friends, I hope we do not know anything of *that* method of keeping the sacred feast. We are to come in a very different frame of mind than that, for we are not coming to a funeral supper, but to the luxuries and dainties that become a marriage feast! Let us come, therefore, with thankfulness, as we say to one another concerning our Lord, “He is not here, for He is risen, glory be to His holy name!” These tokens of remembrance tell us that He has gone where it was expedient for Him to go, that the Holy Spirit might descend upon us. Therefore, Beloved, rejoice even because of the absence of your Lord, for it is well that He should be gone up into Glory. And, as we come to the Table, each one feeling what a sinner he is—how unworthy he is to come—how unfit he is to sit with saints—should not each heart say, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name”? Twice during the feast, special thanksgivings are to be presented—but all through the feast let the heart be full of holy gratitude and praise to God!  
But, we should certainly come to the Table *with great thoughtfulness*. There are some, we are told, who do not discern the Lord’s body—let us think and pray, lest we should be numbered with them. If there is no right thinking, there will be no true spiritual feeling and there will be no Lord’s Supper so far as you are concerned. Think of what your Savior suffered for you, what He has done for you and what He has gone to prepare for you! Let us remember that the bread sets forth the suffering of His body, that the wine typifies the blood of the Atonement whereby we are cleansed—that the two, apart—the body separated from the blood, form a most suggestive symbol of the matchless death whereby we are made to live! Think much at the Table, but think of nothing but Christ! Fix your thoughts entirely upon Him and so shall you eat of this bread and drink of this cup to your soul’s refreshment and profit!  
But come, also, *with great receptiveness*. It is a meal, you know. We receive the bread and the wine. So, come to the Table begging the Lord to give you the Grace to feed upon Himself spiritually, that you may, by faith, receive Him into your inward parts—that in your inmost soul you may have the virtue of His life and of His death! Come empty, therefore, for so you will be the better qualified to feed upon Him. Come hungering and thirsting—thus you will have the greater appetite for Christ. Receive Him in all His fullness by a wonderful faith that takes Him in to be a joy to the heart forever.  
That is the spirit, then, in which to come to the Lord’s Table. May the blessed Spirit be with you, dear Brothers and Sisters, that all who do come to the Table may come in that humble, thankful, thoughtful, receptive style!  
**IV.**Now I finish my discourse by dwelling, for a minute or two, upon THE GREAT LESSONS WHICH THIS SUPPER INCIDENTALLY TEACHES.  
The first lesson is, that *Jesus is for us*. There has been a great dispute over this verse, “This is My body, which is broken for you.” The word, “broken,” appears in some of the ancient manuscripts, but it is, undoubtedly, an interpolation. It is absent from several of those manuscripts upon which we are obliged to rely for the correct text of the New Testament and, therefore, very properly, the Revised Version reads, “This is My body, which is for you.” And, to my mind, that rendering gives a new thought which is well worth having. “This is My body, which is for you.” That is to say, Christ is for you—does not the Supper, itself, say that? The bread represents His body for you—the wine represents His blood for you. We know that it is for you because you are going to eat it. There is nothing that is more certainly a man’s than what he eats or drinks. Our proverb says, “Possession is nine points of the law.” And I wonder how many points of the law it is when a man has eaten a thing up? There is no legal quibble that can deprive him of that. Whatever suit at law may be brought, there is no possibility of taking away from a man that which he has eaten and, in like manner, when we have really received Christ by faith, there is no possibility of robbing us of Him. “This is My body, which is for you.” Oh, what a blessed Doctrine! Lay hold of this great Truth of God, all that there is in Christ is for you! All the fullness of the Godhead is in Him, “and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Glory be to His name for this!  
The next lesson is that *His blood has sealed the Covenant*. “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” I wish I had an hour or two in which I might speak to you about the Covenant. It is no use to begin on that great subject in the few minutes we have left. There was a Covenant that cursed us—the Covenant of Works. There is another Covenant that has blessed the elect of God and shall bless them to all eternity—the Covenant of Grace—and this Covenant is signed, sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well—and for its seal it has the blood of God’s own Son! Therefore it shall stand fast forever and ever. So, as you partake of that cup, drink with joy because it reminds you that God has made with you “an everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure.” Oh, I am certain that if you know the music of that word, “Covenant,” you will enjoy coming to the Table, even if nothing but that one word shall be brought to your memory!  
The third great Doctrine that is taught by this Supper is that *Believers feed on Christ Himself*. Sometimes they forget this and they try to feed on doctrines. They will make as great a mistake as if the Jew, when he went up to the tabernacle, had tried to feed on the curtains, or the altar, or the golden tongs! What did he have for food? Why, the peace-offering! When he drew near to his God, he fed on the sacrifice—and the true food of a Believer is Christ Jesus, Himself! Feed on Him, then, Beloved. We cannot *literally* eat His body or drink His blood—we would be worse than cannibals to attempt such a thing! But we *can* do it, and we *must* do it *spiritually*, by having our hearts and our minds resting upon what Christ is and what He has done, and so feeding upon our Lord Jesus Christ.  
I have finished when I have mentioned one more lesson which is to be learned from this ordinance. It is clear, from this Supper, that *the way to remember Christ is to feed on Him again and again*. Is it not a strange thing that if I have had a great mercy, the way to remember that mercy is to come to God and get another mercy? If Christ was ever sweet to my taste, the way to perpetuate that sweetness is to come and taste Him again! Dear Brothers and Sisters, do not try to live upon your old experiences! Even the best kind of bread will not stay fresh very long—it soon gets musty if you lay it by. You need to have bread constantly coming fresh from the oven. Even the manna, which came down from Heaven, could not be kept, lest it should breed worms—and so it is with the food for your souls. Do not try to live on moldy experiences.  
More than 30 years ago I had great joy in the Lord when first I knew Him. I am very glad that I can remember it, but that recollection is of little use to me when I get depressed in spirit. No, then I need the Lord to come to me again as He came then. You came to Jesus Christ, did you not, as a poor, empty sinner, ever so many years ago? Then, come again in the same way! Come to Christ every day as you came to Him the first day! “Oh, but I was only a sinner then!” Well, you are not much more than that now! And you will find it the safest thing to come just as you came at first. “Well, but am I not an experienced saint by this time?” Yes, yes, I daresay you are, but I find that whenever I have on the one robe of my experience, I am like the lady at court with a long train—somebody is sure to step on it—and then it gets torn. I like to come to Jesus Christ just as I came at first.  
Suppose that the devil says to me, “You are no child of God.” I have often said to him, “You do not know much about that matter, though you know that you are not one, yourself.” “But,” he says, “you do not know the Lord.” “Ah, then,” I ask him, “what am I?” He answers, “You are a great black sinner!” Then, like Luther, I cut off his head with his own sword, just as David did with Goliath, for I say to him, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and I am going off to the sinners’ Savior, just to trust in Him as I did at the first!” And the devil generally departs when I tell him that. There is nothing that is so soulstrengthening as taking another look at the bronze serpent, or having another plunge in the fountain filled with blood, or feeding, once again, on the inexhaustible provision that is stored up for us in the Person of our Lord!  
If any of you who have come to the Table of the Lord are not believers in Christ, never dare to come again while you are in that state! You have no right here unless you are resting in Jesus and trusting in Him! This is the proof of your being new creatures in Christ Jesus. But if you have the faintest, feeblest faith in Jesus, come and welcome! If you are trusting in your own merits, go to your own table—if you think there will be some *merit* in your coming to the Communion Table, do not dare to come, for that were to turn the ordinance upside down! You are not to bring something, but to *receive* something. May you who love the Lord find Him to be very precious to you and may those of you who do not know Him, seek Him at once, not at the Table, but at the Mercy Seat and at the Cross! Trust in Jesus, for so you shall be saved, and then you shall have the right of entry to the Lord’s House—and you shall have the privilege of sitting at His Table and of enjoying every other blessing which is the portion of the chosen family. The Lord make it to be so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34; LUKE 22:14-24.***

The members of the Church at Corinth abounded in gifts and, therefore, they thought it right for each one to speak to edification. They had no pastoral oversight whatever—acting, in this respect, like certain brethren whom we know nowadays. The result, however, was very deplorable. They do not appear to have been able to even conduct the Lord’s Supper without the most disorderly proceedings. Church discipline was utterly forgotten or neglected and it seems as if the two Epistles to the Corinthians are given to us as beacons to warn us against that form of worship, seeing that it produces such mischievous and sad results!

**1 Corinthians 11:17.***Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse.* It is a very bad state of things when we meet for worship and separate without any improvement, or, like these Corinthians, “come together, not for the better, but for the worse.”

**18.***For first of all, when you come together in the Church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*It was very gracious and kind on the Apostle’s part to put it so mildly—and he sets us the example of not believing anything against our brethren too quickly. “I partly believe it.”

**19-21.***For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating everyone takes before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk.*They seem to have regarded it as a common feast to which they brought their own provisions and, without waiting for each other, they disgraced the Table of the Lord by their scandalous proceedings.

**22.***What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* No doubt they hoped to be praised and expected that they had done everything in the right way! Perhaps they even believed that they were acting under the Inspiration of the Spirit and, therefore, could not do anything wrong. But the Apostle deals very faithfully with them and tells them how the Supper is to be celebrated. How much we have gained by the mistakes of others! As the Inspired Apostle is guided to inform us as to the right mode of observing this ordinance, we may almost be thankful that the Corinthians fell into error concerning it—as much as we may regret their faults on their own account.

**23, 24.***For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.*These are the words of the Lord Jesus, Himself, and therefore they come to us with all the weight of His Infallible authority! Then Paul continues—

**25, 26.***After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.* “Show” or, “proclaim.” The latter is the better word. “You do proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” That last phrase ought finally to settle the question of the perpetuity of the Lord’s Supper, which is to be observed “till He comes.”

**27.***Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*“Unworthily,” that is, in a thoughtless, careless way—or with a view to worldly gain, as some used to take it in order to obtain an office under government and as some, doubtless, do take it, to obtain the alms of the church. Such an unworthy participation is a sin against the very body and blood of the Lord!

**28.***But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*Paul does not say, “Let a man examine himself and then *not* eat or drink at the communion.” The examination should lead him to repentance, to faith and should then bring him to the Table of fellowship in the right state of mind and heart. The examination is not a door to shut him out from the ordinance, but a door at which he may pause awhile, to see whether he is in a right condition to enter. And if he is not, he should seek to be made so, and *then* enter.

**29.***For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*“Eats and drinks judgment to himself,” for “judgment” is the word here used by the Apostle.

**30.***For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*It appears that God visited this Church at Corinth with sickness, and took away many of the members by death because they had profaned the Lord’s Table and had walked in a disorderly manner before Him. Paul did not mean to say that these persons were lost—he intended to remind their fellow members and all who might read his Epistle, that God visits Churches after this fashion with discipline and chastening because of the unseemly conduct which is always so offensive to Him.

**31, 32.***For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*So, you see, that chastening process, which is going on in the Church, is all in love—“that we should not be condemned with the world”—just as a father exercises discipline in his household and uses chastisement that his children may never disobey the laws of the realm. They will never come before the police court, for they are kept under proper control at home and are tutored and trained by their father’s wise government. So we come not under the judgment of the Law of God, as the world, itself, comes—we come under the disciplinary treatment of the great Head of the Church, even the Lord Jesus Christ!

**33, 34.***Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.* Now let us read Luke’s account of the institution of this Supper. As we do so, it will be well for us to remember that Luke was a friend and intimate companion of Paul.

**Luke 22:14-16***And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*This was to be the last occasion on which our Lord and His disciples would thus meet.

**17, 18.***And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.*That was the *Passover* cup. Now the Passover melts into the Lord’s Supper and, henceforth, the Lord’s Supper remains and the Passover has passed away.

**19-21.***And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table.*What a sobering, saddening effect this must have had upon those who were at that festival! We have reason to fear that it will be true of our gathering, also. There were only 12 Apostles, yet there was a Judas among them. We shall have many hundreds at our observance of the ordinance—may we not fear that there will be many a Judas, too? Can we expect that we shall have a better selection of professed followers of Christ than the Lord had made for His Apostles?

**22-24.***And truly the Son of Man goes, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed! And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*That had been their question among themselves, but now they have another enquiry, of quite a different sort, to answer. It was wise of the Master to give them a heart-searching question to drive out that question of ambition which had filled them with pride and contention. Oh, if any of us ever had such a thought as that in our bosom—which of us is greatest?—who can speak the best?—who can serve God the most?—who can take the lead?—let all such questions be set aside while we sorrowfully entertain the other sad enquiry—which of us will betray our Lord? God grant that none of us may ever do so!

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—938, 282, 942.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST  
NO. 2

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 7, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“This do in remembrance of Me.”  
1 Corinthians 11:24.~~***

IT seems, then, that Christians may forget Christ. The text implies the possibility of forgetfulness concerning Him whom gratitude and affection should compel them to remember. There could be no need for this loving exhortation if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous and our remembrance superficial in its character, or changing in its nature. Nor is this a bare supposition—it is, alas, too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It seems at first sight too gross a crime to lay at the door of converted men. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb should ever forget their Ransomer—that those who have been loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should ever forget that Son. But if startling to the ear, it is, alas, too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the fact. Forget Him who never forgot us? Forget Him who poured His blood forth for our sins? Forget Him who loved us even to the death? Can it be possible? Yes, it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault of all of us—that we can remember anything except Christ. The Object which we should make the monarch of our hearts is the very thing we are most inclined to forget. Where one would think that memory would linger and unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder—*that* is the very spot which is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness—the place where memory too seldom looks. I appeal to the conscience of every Christian here—can you deny the truth of what I utter? Do you not find yourselves forgetful of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart and you are unmindful of Him upon whom your affection ought to be set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should have your eye steadily fixed upon the Cross. It is the incessant round of world, world, world—the constant din of earth, earth, earth, that takes away the soul from Christ. Oh, my Friends, is it not too sadly true that we can recollect anything but Christ and forget nothing so easy as Him whom we ought to remember? While memory will preserve a poisoned weed, it suffers the Rose of Sharon to wither.

The cause of this is very apparent—it lies in one or two facts. We forget Christ because regenerate persons as we are—still corruption and death remain even in us. We forget Him because we carry about with us the old Adam of sin and death. If we were purely new-born creatures, we would never forget the name of Him whom we love. If we were entirely regenerated beings, we would sit down and meditate on what our Savior did and suffered. As He is. All He has gloriously promised to perform. And never would our roving affections stray, but stay centered, nailed, fixed eternally to one Object—we should continually contemplate the death and sufferings of our Lord. But alas, we have a worm in the heart, an abode of pests, a morgue within. Lusts, vile imaginations and strong evil passions like wells of poisonous water send out streams of impurity. I have a heart, which God knows I wish I could wring from my body and hurl to an infinite distance. I have a soul which is a cave of unclean birds, a den of loathsome creatures where dragons haunt and owls congregate, where every evil beast dwells—a heart too vile to have a parallel—“deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” This is the reason why I am forgetful of Christ. Nor is this the sole cause. I suspect it lies somewhere else, too. We forget Christ because there are so many other things around us to attract our attention, “But,” you say, “they ought not to do so, because though they are around us, they are nothing in comparison with Jesus Christ—though they are in dread proximity to our hearts, what are they compared with Christ?” But do you know, dear Friends, that the nearness of an object has a very great effect upon its power? The sun is many, many times larger than the moon, but the moon has a greater influence upon the tides of the ocean than the sun, simply because it is nearer and has a greater power of attraction. So I find that a little crawling worm of the earth has more effect upon my soul than the glorious Christ in Heaven. A handful of golden earth, a puff of fame, a shout of applause, a thriving business, my house, my home will affect me more than all the glories of the upper world. Yes, than the Beatific Vision itself—simply because earth is near and Heaven is far away. Happy day, when I shall be borne aloft on angels’ wings to dwell forever near my Lord—to bask in the sunshine of His smile and to be lost in the ineffable radiance of His lovely Countenance. We see, then, the cause of forgetfulness. Let us blush over it. Let us be sad that we neglect our Lord so much. And now let us attend to His Word, “This do in remembrance of Me,” hoping that its solemn sounds may charm away the demon of base ingratitude.

We shall speak, first of all, *concerning the blessed Object of memory*. Secondly, *upon the advantages to be derived from remembering this Person*. Thirdly*the gracious help, to our memory—“*This do in *remembrance* of*Me*.” And fourthly, *the gentle command*, *“This do*in remembrance of Me.” May the Holy Spirit open my lips and your hearts, that we may receive blessings.

**I.**First of all, we shall speak of THE GLORIOUS AND PRECIOUS OBJECT OF MEMORY—“This do in remembrance of *Me*.” Christians have many treasures to lock up in the cabinet of memory. They ought to remember their *election—*“Chosen of God before time began.” They ought to be mindful of their *extraction*, that they were taken out of the miry clay, hewn out of the horrible pit. They ought to recollect their *effectual calling*, for they were called of God and rescued by the power of the Holy Spirit. They ought to remember their *special deliverances*—all that has been done for them and all the mercies bestowed on them. But there is One whom they should embalm in their souls with the most costly spices— One who, above all other gifts of God, deserves to be had in perpetual remembrance. *One*, I said, for I mean not an act, I mean not a deed. But it is a *Person* whose portrait I would frame in gold and hang up in the stateroom of the soul. I would have you earnest students of all the *deeds* of the conquering Messiah. I would have you conversant with the *life* of our Beloved. But O forget not His *Person*. For the text says, “This do in remembrance of ME.” It is Christ’s glorious Person which ought to be the object of our remembrance. It is His image which should be enshrined in every temple of the Holy Spirit.

But some will say, “How can we remember Christ’s Person when we never saw it? We cannot tell what was the peculiar form of His visage. We believe His countenance to be fairer than that of any other man— although through grief and suffering more marred—but since we did not see it, we cannot remember it. We never saw His feet as they trod the journeys of His mercy. We never beheld His hands as He stretched them out full of loving kindness. We cannot remember the wondrous intonation of His language, when in more than seraphic eloquence He awed the multitude and chained their ears to Him. We cannot picture the sweet smile that always hung on His lips, nor that awful frown with which He dealt out anathemas against the Pharisees. We cannot remember Him in His sufferings and agonies for we never saw Him.” Well, Beloved, I suppose it is true that you cannot remember the *visible* appearance, for you were not then born. But do you not know that even the Apostle said though He had known Christ after the flesh, yet, thenceforth after the flesh He would know Christ no more. The natural appearance, the race, the descent, the poverty, the humble garb—they are nothing in the Apostle’s estimation of His glorified Lord. And thus, though you do not know Him after the flesh, you may know Him after the spirit! In this manner you can remember Jesus as much now as Peter, or Paul, or John, or James, or any of those favored ones who once trod in His footsteps, walked side by side with Him, or laid their heads upon His bosom. Memory annihilates distance and leaps over time and can behold the Lord, though He is exalted in glory!

Ah, let us spend five minutes in remembering Jesus. Let us remember Him in His *Baptism*, when descending into the waters of Jordan, a voice was heard, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Behold Him coming up dripping from the stream. Surely the conscious water must have blushed that it contained its God. He slept within its waves a moment—to consecrate the tomb of Baptism—in which those who are dead with Christ are buried with Him. Let us remember Him in the *wildernes*s, where He went straight from His immersion. Oh, I have often thought of that scene in the desert, when Christ, weary and worn, sat down, perhaps upon the gnarled roots of some old tree! Forty days had He fasted. He was hungry. Then in the extremity of His weakness there came the evil spirit. Perhaps he had veiled his demon royalty in the form of some aged pilgrim and taking up a stone, said, “Wayworn Pilgrim, if you are the Son of God, command this stone to be made bread.” I think I see him, with his cunning smile and his malicious leer, as he held the stone and said, “If”—blasphemous if—“If you are the Son of God, command that this stone shall become a meal for me and You, for both of us are hungry and it will be an act of mercy. You can do it easily, speak the word and it shall be like the bread of Heaven. We will feed upon it and You and I will be friends forever.” But Jesus said—and O how sweetly did He say it—“Man shall not live by bread alone.” Oh, how wonderfully did Christ fight the Tempter! Never was there such a battle as that. It was a duel foot to foot—a single-handed combat—when the champion lion of the Pit and the mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah fought together. Splendid sight! Angels stood around to gaze upon the spectacle, just as men of old did sit to see the tournament of noted warriors. There Satan gathered up his strength. Here Apollyon concentrated all his Satanic power that in this giant wrestle he might overthrow the Seed of the woman! But Jesus was more than a match for him. In the wrestling He gave him a deadly fall and came out more than a conqueror. Lamb of God! I will remember Your desert strivings when next I combat with Satan. When next I have a conflict with roaring Diabolus, I will look to Him who conquered once and for all and broke the dragon’s head with His mighty blows!

Further, I beseech you remember Him in all *His daily temptations* and hourly trials, in that life-long struggle of His through which He passed. Oh, what a mighty tragedy was the death of Christ! And His life, too! Ushered in with a song, it closed with a shriek, “It is finished!” It began in a manger and ended on a Cross—but oh, the sad interval between! Oh, the black pictures of persecution when His friends abhorred Him. When His foes frowned at Him as He passed the streets. When He heard the hiss of calumny and was bitten by the foul tooth of envy. When slander said He had a devil and was mad—that He was a drunken man and a wine-bibber—and when His righteous soul was vexed with the ways of the wicked. Oh, Son of God, I must remember You. I cannot help remembering You, when I think of those years of toil and trouble which You did live for *my* sake! But do you know my chosen theme—the place where I can always best remember Christ? It is a shady garden full of olives. O that spot! I would that I had eloquence, that I might take you there. Oh, if the Spirit would but take us and set us down hard by the mountains of Jerusalem, I would say, See, there runs the brook of Isedron, which the King, Himself, did pass. And there you see the olive trees. Possibly, at the foot of that olive tree lay the three disciples when they slept. And there, ah, there, I see drops of blood! Stand here, my Soul, a moment. Those drops of blood—do you behold them? Mark them. They are not the blood of wounds—they are the blood of a Man whose body was then unwounded. O my Soul, picture Him when He knelt down in agony and sweat—sweat because He wrestled with God—sweat because He agonized with His Father. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” O Gethsemane! Your shades are deeply solemn to my soul. But ah, those drops of blood! Surely it is the climax of the height of misery. It is the last of the mighty acts of this wondrous Sacrifice. Can love go deeper than that? Can it stoop to greater deeds of mercy? Oh, had I eloquence I would bestow a tongue on every drop of blood that is there—that your hearts might rise in mutiny against your languor and coldness and speak out with earnest burning remembrance of Jesus. And now, farewell, Gethsemane.

But I will take you somewhere else where you shall still behold the “Man of Sorrows.” I will lead you to Pilate’s hall and let you see Him endure the mockeries of cruel soldiers—the smiting of mailed gloves, the blows of clenched fists. The shame, the spitting, the plucking of the hair—the cruel buffetings. Oh, can you not picture the King of Martyrs stripped of His garments—exposed to the gaze of fiend-like men? See you not the crown about His temples, each thorn acting as a lancet to pierce His head? Stare you not at His lacerated shoulders and the white bones starting out from the bleeding flesh? Oh, Son of Man! I see You scourged and flagellated with rods and whips! How can I cease to remember You? My memory would be more treacherous than Pilate, did it not ever cry, *Ecce Homo—* “Behold the man.”

Now, finish the scene of woe by a view of Calvary. Think of the pierced hands and the bleeding side. Think of the scorching sun and then the entire darkness. Remember the broiling fever and the dread thirst. Think of the death shriek, “It is finished!” and of the groans which were its prelude. This is the Object of memory. Let us never forget Christ. I beseech you, for the love of Jesus, let Him have the chief place in your memories. Let not the Pearl of Great Price be dropped from your careless hand into the dark ocean of oblivion.

I cannot, however, help saying one thing before I leave this head—and that is, there are some of you who can very well carry away what I have said because you have read it often and heard it before. But still you cannot spiritually remember anything about Christ because you never had Him manifested to you—and what we have never *known—*we cannot remember. Thanks be unto God, I speak not of you all, for in this place there is a goodly remnant according to the election of Grace and to them I turn. Perhaps I could tell you of some old barn, hedge-row, or cottage. Or if you have lived in London, about some attic, or some dark lane or street, where first you met with Christ. Or some chapel into which you strayed and you might say, “Thank God, I can remember the seat where first He met with me and spoke the whispers of love to my soul and told me He had purchased me”—

***“Do mind the place, the spot of ground,***

***Where Jesus did you meet!”***  
Yes, and I would love to build a temple on the spot and to raise some monument there—where Jehovah-Jesus first spoke to my soul and manifested Himself to me. But He has revealed Himself to you more than once—has He not? And you can remember scores of places where the Lord has appeared of old unto you, saying, “Behold I have loved you with an everlasting love.” If you cannot all remember such things, there are some of you that can. And I am sure they will understand me when I say, come and do this in remembrance of Christ—in remembrance of all His loving visitations—of His sweet wooing words—of His winning smiles upon you—of all He has said and communicated to your souls. Remember all these things, tonight, if it is possible for memory to gather up the mighty aggregate of Grace. “Bless the Lord, O my Soul and forget not all His benefits.”

**II.**Having spoken upon the blessed Object of our memory, we say, secondly, a little upon THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM A LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST.

Love never says, “ *Cui bono*?” Love never asks what benefit it will derive from love. Love from its very nature is a disinterested thing. It loves for the creature’s sake it loves and for nothing else. The Christian needs no argument to make Him love Christ—just as a mother needs no argument to make her love her child. She does it because it is her nature to do so. The new-born creature must love Christ—it cannot help it. Oh, who can resist the matchless charms of Jesus Christ?—the fairest of ten thousand fairs, the loveliest of ten thousand loves! Who can refuse to adore the Prince of Perfection, the Mirror of Beauty, the Majestic Son of God? But yet it may be useful to us to observe the advantages of remembering Christ, for they are neither few nor small.

And first, remembrance of Jesus will tend to give you *hope when you are under the burden of your sins*. Let us notice a few characters here tonight. There comes in a poor creature. Look at him! He has neglected himself this last month. He looks as if he had hardly eaten his daily bread. What is the matter with you? “Oh,” he says, “I have been under a sense of guilt. I have been again and again lamenting, because I fear I can never be forgiven—once I thought I was good, but I have been reading the Bible and I find that my heart is ‘deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.’ I have tried to reform, but the more I try, the deeper I sink in the mire. There is certainly no hope for me. I feel that I deserve no mercy—it seems to me that God must destroy me, for He has declared, ‘The soul that sins it shall die.’ And die I must, be damned I must, for I know I have broken God’s Law.” How will you comfort such a man? What soft words will you utter to give him peace? *I*know! I will tell him to *remember Christ*. I will tell him there is One who paid the mighty debt of misery. Yes, I will tell you drunks, swearers—whatever you have been—I will tell you that there is One who for you has made a complete Atonement! If you only *believe*on Him you are safe forever. Remember Him, you poor dying, hopeless creature and you shall be made to sing for joy and gladness. Look, the man believes and in ecstasy exclaims, “Oh, come all you that fear God and I will tell you what He has done for my soul”—

***“Tell it unto sinners, tell,***

***I am, I am out of Hell.”***  
Hallelujah! God has blotted out my sins like a thick cloud! That is one benefit to be derived from remembering Christ. It gives us hope under a sense of sin and tells us there is mercy yet.

Now, I must have another character. And what does he say? “I cannot stand it any longer—I have been persecuted and ill-treated because I love Christ. I am mocked and laughed at and despised—I try to bear it, but I really cannot. A man will be a man—tread upon a worm and he will turn upon you. My patience altogether fails me. I am in such a peculiar position that it is of no use to advise me to have patience, for patience I cannot have. My enemies are slandering me and I do not know what to do.” What shall we say to that poor man? How shall we give him patience? What shall we preach to him? You have heard what he has to say about himself. How shall we comfort him under this great trial? If we suffered the same, what should we wish some friend to say to us? Shall we tell him that other persons have borne as much? He will say, “Miserable comforters are you all!” No, I will tell him, “Brother, you are persecuted, but remember the words of Jesus Christ, how He spoke unto us and said, ‘Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you.’” My Brother! Think of *Him*, who when He died, prayed for His murderers and said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” All you have to bear is as nothing compared with His mighty sufferings. Take courage—face it again like a man—never say die. Let not your patience be gone. Take up your cross daily and follow Christ. Let Him be your motto—set Him before your eyes. And, now, receiving this, hear what the man will say. He tells you at once—“Hail, persecution! Welcome shame! Disgrace for Jesus shall be my honor and scorn shall be my highest glory—

***‘Now, for the love I bear His name,  
What was my gain I count my loss,  
I pour contempt on all my shame,  
And nail my glory to His cross.’”***

There is another effect, you see, of remembering Christ. It tends to give us *patience under*persecution. It is a belt to brace up the loins so that our faith may endure to the end.

Dear Friends, I would occupy your time too much if I went into the several benefits. So I will only just run over one or two blessings to be received. It will give us strength in *temptation*. I believe that there are hours with every man when he has a season of terrific temptation. There was never a vessel that lived upon the mighty deep but sometimes it has to do battle with a storm. There she is, the poor ship, rocked up and down on the mad waves. See how they throw her from wave to wave, all toss her to mid-heaven. The winds laugh her to scorn. Old Ocean takes the ship in his dripping fingers and shakes it to and fro. How the mariners cry out for fear! Do you know how you can put oil upon the waters and all shall be still? Yes, one potent word shall do it. Let *Jesus* come. Let the poor heart *remember Jesus* and steadily, then, the ship shall sail, for Christ has the helm. The winds shall blow no more, for Christ shall bid them shut their mighty mouths and never again disturb His child. There is nothing which can give you strength in temptation and help you to weather the storm like the name of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God! Then again, what *comfort* it will give you on a sick bed—the name of Christ! It will help you to be patient to those who wait upon you and to endure the sufferings which you have to bear. Yes, it shall be so with you, that you shall have more hope in sickness than in health and shall find a blessed sweetness in the bitterness of gall. Instead of feeling vinegar in your mouth through your trouble, you shall find honey for sweetness in the midst of all the trial and trouble that God will put upon you— “For He gives songs in the night.”

But just to close up the advantages of remembering Christ—do you know where you will have the benefit most of all? Do you know the place where chiefly you will rejoice that you ever thought of Him? I will take you to it. Hush! Silence! You are going upstairs into a lonely room. The curtains hang down. Someone stands there weeping. Children are around the bed and friends are there. See that man lying there? That is yourself—look at how his eyes are your eyes—his hands are your hands. That is *yourself*—you will be there soon, Man! That is *yourself*—do you see it? It is a picture of *yourself*—those are your eyes that soon will be closed in death—your hands that will lie stiff and motionless—your lips that will be dry and parched, between which they will put drops of water. Those are your words that freeze in air and drop so slowly from your dying lips. I wonder whether you will be able to remember Christ there? If you do not, I will picture you. Behold that man, straight up in the bed— see his eyes starting from their sockets? His friends are all around, they ask him what he sees. He represses the emotion. He tells them he sees nothing. They know that there is something before his eyes. He starts again. Good God! What is that I see—I seem to see? That is it? Ah, one sigh! The soul is gone. The body is there. What did he see? He saw a flaming throne of judgments. He saw God upon it with His scepter. He saw books opened. He beheld the Throne of God and saw a messenger with a sword brandished in the air to smite him low. Man! That is *yourself*. There you will be soon. That picture is your own portrait. I have photographed you to the life. Look at it. That is where you shall be within a few years—yes, within a few days. But if you can *remember Christ*, shall I tell you what you will do? Oh, you will smile in the midst of trouble. Let me picture such a man. They put pillows behind him. He sits up in bed and takes the hand of the his loved one and says, “Farewell! Weep not for me! The kind God shall wipe away all tears from every eye.” Those round about are addressed, “Prepare to meet your God and follow me to the land of bliss.” Now he has set his house in order. It is done. Behold him, like good old Jacob, leaning on his staff, about to die. See how his eyes sparkle! He claps his hands—they gather round to hear what he has to say. He whispers, “Victory!” And summoning a little more strength, he cries, “Victory!” And at last, with his final gasp, “Victory, through Him that loved us!” And he dies. This is one of the great benefits to be derived from remembering Christ—to be enabled to meet death with blessed composure.

**III.**We are now arrived at the third portion of our meditations which is A SWEET AID TO MEMORY.  
At schools we use certain books, called “Aids to Memory.” I am sure they rather perplexed than assisted me. Their utility was equivalent to that of a bundle of canes under a traveler’s arm—true, he might use them one by one to walk with, but in the meantime he carried a host of others which he would never need. But our Savior was wiser than all our teachers and His remembrances are true and real aids to memory. His love tokens have an unmistakable language and they sweetly win our attention.  
Behold the whole mystery of the sacred Eucharist. It is bread and wine which are lively emblems of the body and blood of Jesus. The power to excite remembrance consists in the appeal thus made to the senses. Here the eye, the hand, the mouth find joyful work. The bread is tasted and entering within, works upon the sense of taste, which is one of the most powerful remembrances. The wine is sipped—the act is palpable. We know that we are drinking and thus the senses which are usually clogs to the soul become wines to lift the mind in contemplation. Again—much of the influence of this ordinance is found in its simplicity. How beautifully simple the ceremony is—bread broken and wine poured out. There is no calling *that* thing a chalice, *that* thing a paten and *that* a host. Here is nothing to burden the memory—here is the simple bread and wine. He must have no memory at all who cannot remember that he has eaten bread and that he has been drinking wine. Note again, the *mighty pregnancy* of these signs—how full they are of meaning. Bread broken—so was your Savior broken. Bread to be eaten—so His flesh is food, indeed. Wine poured out, the pressed juice of the grape—so was your Savior crushed under the foot of Divine Justice. His blood is your sweetest wine. Wine to cheer your heart—so does the blood of Jesus. Wine to strengthen and invigorate you—so does the blood of the Mighty Sacrifice. Oh, make that bread and wine to your souls tonight a sweet and blessed help of remembrance of that dear Man who once on Calvary died. Like the little ewe lamb, you are now to eat your Master’s bread and drink from His cup. Remember the hand which feeds you.  
But before you can remember Christ well here, you must ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I believe there ought to be a preparation before the Lord’s Supper. I do not believe in Mrs. Toogood’s preparation, who spent a week in preparing and then finding it was not the Ordinance Sunday, she said she had lost all the week. I do not believe in that kind of preparation. But I do believe in a holy preparation for the Lord’s Supper—when we can on a Saturday, if possible, spend an hour in quiet meditation on Christ and His Passion. When, especially on the Sabbath afternoon, we can devoutly sit down and behold Him—then these scenes become realities and not mockeries, as they are to some. I fear greatly that there are some of you who will eat the bread tonight and will not think about Christ—some of you who will drink the wine and not think of His blood—and vile hypocrites you will be while you do it! Take heed to yourselves, “He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks— what?—“damnation to himself.” This is plain English. Mind what you are doing! Do not do it carelessly. For of all the sacred things on earth, it is the most solemn. We have heard of some men banded together by draining blood from their arms and drinking it all round. That was most horrid, but at the same time most solemn. Here you are to drink blood from the veins of Christ and sip the trickling stream which gushed from His own loving heart. Is not that a solemn thing? Ought anybody to trifle with it? To go to church and take it for sixpence? To come and join us for the sake of getting charities? Away with it! It is an awful blasphemy against Almighty God and among the damned in Hell! Those shall be among the most accursed who dared thus to mock the holy ordinance of God. This is the remembrance of Christ. “This do in remembrance of Me.” If you cannot do it in remembrance of Christ, I beseech you, as you love your souls, do not do it at all! Oh, regenerate man or woman, enter not into the court of the priests, lest Israel’s God resent the intrusion.  
**IV.**And now to close up. Here is A SWEET COMMAND—“This do in remembrance of Me.” To whom does this command apply? “This do YOU.” It is important to answer this question—“This do YOU.” Who are intended? You who put your trust in Me. “This do you in remembrance of Me.” Well, now, you should suppose Christ speaking to you tonight. And He says, “This do you in remembrance of Me.” Christ watches you at the door. Some of you go home and Christ says, “I thought I said, ‘This do you in remembrance of Me.’” Some of you keep your seats as spectators. Christ sits with you and He says, “I thought I said, ‘This do you in remembrance of Me.’” “Lord, I know You did.” “Do you love Me, then?” “Yes, I love You. I love You, Lord, You know I do.” “But, I say, go down there— eat that bread, drink that wine.” “I do not like to, Lord. I should have to be baptized if I joined that Church and I am afraid I shall catch cold, or be looked at. I am afraid to go before the Church, for I think they would ask some questions I could not answer.” “What?” asks Christ, “Is this all you love Me? Is this all your affection to your Lord? Oh, how cold to Me, your Savior! If I had loved you no more than this, you would have been in Hell—if that were the full extent of My affection, I would not have died for you. Great love bore great agonies—and is this all your gratitude to Me?” Are not some of you ashamed, after this? Do you not say in your hearts, “it is really wrong”? Christ says, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” and are you not ashamed to stay away? I give a free invitation to every lover of Jesus to come to this table. I beseech you, deny not yourselves the privilege by refusing to unite with the Church. If you still live in sinful neglect of this ordinance, let me remind you that Christ has said, “Whoever shall be ashamed of Me in this generation, of him will I be ashamed, when I come in the Glory of My Father.” Oh, soldier of the Cross, act not the coward’s part!  
And not to lead you into any mistakes, I must just add one thing and then I have done. When I speak of your taking the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, do not imagine that I wish you for one moment to suppose that there is anything *saving* in it. Some say that the ordinance of Baptism is non-essential. So is the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper—it is nonessential, if we look upon it in the light of *salvation*. Be saved by eating a piece of bread? Nonsense, confounded nonsense! Be saved by drinking a drop of wine? Why, it is too absurd for common sense to admit any discussion upon! You know it is the blood of Jesus Christ. It is the merit of His agonies. It is the purchase of His sufferings—it is what *He did—*that alone can save us. Venture on Him—venture wholly—and then you are saved. Do you know, poor convicted Sinner, the way of salvation? If I ever meet you in the next world, you might, perhaps, say to me, “I spent one evening, Sir, in hearing you and you never told me the way to Heaven.” Well, you shall hear it—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in His name, find refuge in His Cross, rely upon the power of His Spirit, trust in His righteousness and you are saved beyond the vengeance of the Law, or the power of Hell. But trust in your own works and you are lost as sure as you are alive!  
Now, O ever glorious Son of God, we approach Your table to feast on the viands of Grace. Permit each of us, in reliance upon Your Spirit, to exclaim in the words of one of Your own poets—  
***“Remember You and all Your pains  
And all Your love to me?—Yes,  
While a pulse or breath remains,  
I will remember Thee.  
And when these failing lips grow dark  
And thought and memory flee  
When You shall in Your kingdom come,  
Jesus, remember me!”***

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3099 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT  
NO. 3099

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1908.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 5, 1874.~~***

***~~“This do in remembrance of Me.”  
1 Corinthians 11:24.~~***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage and verses before and after are as follows— Sermons #2, Volume 1—THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2368, Volume 39—THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS and #2638, Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER— Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THERE are some persons who do not consider the Lord’s Supper to be a Divine ordinance. They say that they cannot see where it is commanded in Scripture. I have long ago given up trying to understand other people’s understandings, for some of them are constructed upon such peculiar principles that I believe the Holy Spirit, Himself, could not put a Truth of God in such a form but that some people would understand Him to mean the very opposite of what He said! Now to me, Christ’s command to observe the Lord’s Supper seems to be so plain and so positive that it would take greater ingenuity than I possess to be able to justify myself, as a Christian, if I lived in neglect of the Communion! I know a good deal of what has been invented by others, but I cannot myself invent any syllogism, or argument, or reason by which I could set aside such a plain Divine precept as that which is recorded in this Chapter—“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” If Christ did not mean that we were to do this, and to do it in remembrance of Him, what did He mean? It seems to me to be very plain and positive that this is what He did mean and being so, the precept comes to Christians with very great force for it is issued upon the highest possible authority! It is not the Apostle Paul who tells us to do this in remembrance of Christ, but the Master, Himself, who says, “This do in remembrance of Me.” The utmost solemnity appertains to the Ten Commandments because they were issued by God Himself on Mount Sinai—and there is no less weight attaching to the command before us, since it was issued by the Son of God, Himself, who could truly say, “I and My Father are One.”

It also seems to me that this command derives singular solemnity from the occasion upon which it was given. If the issuing of the Law of God was specially solemn because “Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire,” I venture to say that the giving of this plain, positive command, “This do in remembrance of Me,” is none the less solemn because it was given by “the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed.” What other night, in the world’s history, can be more august and more solemn to Him and to us as Believers in Him, than that night when He went, with His disciples for the last time to Gethsemane? My Lord, as this command was given by You at such a special time, how dare I neglect it if I am indeed Your disciple? Let none of us who believe in Jesus, live in habitual disobedience to this command of His!

Let me make just one other introductory observation, namely, that this commandment was evidently not issued for one occasion only, for it is quoted by the Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians—and he adds these significant words, “For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He come.” The command, therefore, remains in force until the Second Advent—and until Christ, Himself, shall again appear upon this earth, these memorials of His passion are to be constantly before us!

**I.**I am going to remind you, first, of THE NEED OF SUCH COMMEMORATION OF CHRIST—“This do in remembrance of Me.”  
The need exists, first, *because of our forgetful memories.*Memory, in common with every other faculty, has been injured by the Fall. It is more retentive of that which is evil than of that which is good and, as you all know, far more easily recollects injuries than benefits. But it certainly does show the deep depravity of the human heart that we should ever be likely to forget our Lord. Have we not often sung—  
***“Gethsemane, can I forget?”***  
Yet we have practically forgotten Gethsemane and have omitted to act towards our Lord as we should have acted had Gethsemane been perpetually painted on our memories. Yes, we are apt to forget our truest Friend, our best Beloved, Jesus, in whom our souls delight! We do forget Him, and it ought to humble us when we remember that Christ knew what forgetful lovers we would be and, therefore, gave us this love-token, this double forget-me-not.  
Did there not also exist a need for this command in the fact of *our childish condition?* We are not, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what we shall yet be. We are, to a great extent, still underage. We are children of God and heirs of the Kingdom of God, but at present we are under tutors and governors. Now in a child’s book there should be pictures. We are not altogether little children—we have grown somewhat—and some Christians think we have grown so big that we do not need pictures, but Jesus knew that we should be, in many respects, little children or big children, so He has put two pictures in the Book which He has given to us because He would have us remember that we are not yet men, we have not yet come to our full estate. The two pictures are Believers’ Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Because I am a child, therefore must I still have emblems and tokens, for these are more powerful to my mind than mere words would be.  
No doubt, also, the two ordinances were left, and especially this one, *because we are yet in the body.*We are still linked with materialism. We are not yet purely spiritual and it is no use for us to pretend that we are. Some good people sit still till they are moved, which would be an admirable form of worship if we had not bodies. But, as long as we have bodies, there must be some kind of linking of the spiritual with the material, let the links be as few as they may. Christ has made two—they are enough, but they are none too many, for let it be remembered that there is a time coming when the material itself is to be lifted up and reunited with the spiritual! “The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And as if to teach us not to despise the material, not to consider everything that can be touched and seen as therefore foul and beneath the consideration of spiritual minds, our Lord has given us water in which we can wash, and bread and wine, the products of the earth, that, being yet earthy, we may anticipate the time when the earth shall shake off the slough which came upon her at the Fall and, as a new earth, with her new Heaven of pure blue over her, shall become a holy Temple of the Living God!  
I have often grieved over the fact that these two ordinances, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, have become nests in which the foul bird of superstition has laid her eggs. But the Lord foresaw that when He instituted them—yet I have often rejoiced, notwithstanding this drawback, that we are able, through these material symbols, to get nearer to Him whose body was material and is material, whose blood was real blood, who was born into this world of a virgin of real flesh and blood, was often weary and was, in fact, a Man such as we are, a real Man, who once on Calvary died—no phantom, no myth, no dream of history, but One who could have gripped my hand, as I, my Brother or Sister, can grip yours, and One who felt the nails that went through His hands as you and I would feel it if nails were driven through our hands! Therefore it is that we come to no shallow feast, but to a real one of bread and wine to make us feel that it was a real Christ who died for us and that this poor body, which is so real to us, is yet, after all, to be cleansed and purified by that great Sacrifice of His upon the Cross of Calvary!  
I hope I shall not be thought uncharitable if I suggest that the Lord’s Supper was given to us *for other reasons.*Some have said, “We do not need this memorial, for we can think of Christ through hearing about Him from ministers in the pulpit.” Yes, you can hear the ministers, but what can you hear from some of them? In many and many a case, you will hear what will do you little good, for the one thing that is absent from many a ministry, nowadays, is the clear proclamation of the great central Truth of God of the substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Earthly ministries are not to be relied upon, for almost all of them by degrees fall back from the faithfulness, seriousness, and earnestness with which they commenced. There is scarcely an instance in history in which human ministries have fully preserved their pristine purity, yet, wherever Christians have been able to meet together to observe this ordinance as a memorial of Christ’s death, they have always kept up a living testimony to Christ’s death! If ministries were silenced, or if ministers had lost their zeal, there was always this memorial ministry— the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine in remembrance of Christ!  
Somebody probably says, “But, surely, the Church would always keep Christ in memory.” Alas, alas, that which ought to be the very Glory of the earth-organized Christianity has full often become one of the main agents of evil in the earth! And therefore I bless God for an ordinance which is not a Church ordinance, or a minister’s ordinance. I hope none of you are under the impression that, at the close of the present service, I am going *to administer the Lord’s Supper.*God forbid that I should ever venture to do such a thing as that! No, it is you, or *we*, who come to the Lord’s Table to break bread and to drink of the cup—and we come together, not as a Church holding certain views, but we come simply as Christians to, “do this in remembrance” of the Savior who died for us! You may break bread wherever you will, wherever two or three Christians can meet together and if you truly love your Lord, the oftener you do this, the better. “This do you, as often as you drink it,” is no command addressed to an ecclesiastical organization concerning an ordinance to be administered by men who have the impertinence or impudence to call themselves priests, but a command to all Christians everywhere, on any day of the week, and in any place—beneath the blue sky of Heaven, or in a barn, or in a tavern if they happen to be tarrying there—to break a piece of bread in memory of their Lord’s broken body, and to drink of the cup in mutual loving memory of His precious blood poured out for them! And, mark you, if it should ever come to this, that ministries should fail, I mean what we usually consider to be ordained earthly ministries. And if churches should fail, there will still be found faithful followers of Christ— hunted and harried, it may be—to the very ends of the earth! And they will break the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Christ and so, till the trumpet sounds to announce His return, it shall be remembered that Jesus was Incarnate and that Jesus died, and that through Him we have access to the Father!  
Thus have I tried to show you why a commemoration feast was needed, but I do not pretend to know all the reasons for its institution, nor a tithe of them. Jesus said, “This do you in remembrance of Me”— and that is all the reason that any truly obedient child of God will ever need!  
**II.**Now, secondly, let me try to show you THE SUITABILITY OF THIS COMMEMORATION FOR THE PURPOSE INTENDED.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *this ordinance is in itself a very suitable commemoration of the death of Christ.*A crucifix might have been suggested as a means of keeping the death of Christ before us, but I need not remind you how that has become the very emblem of idolatry. I do not know of any memorial of Christ that could have been so suggestive and so admirable as the one which Christ has ordained. In itself it is admirable, for here is bread, the very staff of life—a fit token of that flesh of Christ which is, spiritually, “meat, indeed.” The fact of His Incarnation is most nourishing food to our hearts. We believe in Him as God, veiled in human flesh, and that great Truth of God, that wondrous fact is as much food for our souls as bread is for our bodies. Further, in this memorial we have the bread broken, indicating Christ’s sufferings and the breaking that He endured on our behalf. The bread is, in itself, a most appropriate memorial of suffering. Was it not wheat that was sown in a furrow in the field and there buried? Did it not spring up to be bitten by frosts, to be blown about by rough winds, to suffer all the extremities of climate, to be drenched by the rain and scorched by the sun, to be cut down by the sharp sickle, to be threshed, to be ground, to be kneaded, to be put into the oven, to be passed through I know not how many processes, any one of which might be a sufficient type of suffering? The suffering body of the Incarnate God is the spiritual food for our souls, but we must partake of it *if it is to nourish us.* This emblematic bread must not only be broken, but eaten—a significant type of our receiving Jesus by faith and depending upon Him, taking Him to be the nutriment of our new spiritual life. What can be more instructive than all this?  
Then there is the wine, “the fruit of the vine.” There are two tokens, you see, because the two represent death. The blood in the body is life, the blood out of the body is death, so the two emblems are separate, the wine in the cup and the bread yonder—these together indicate death. Water was not used, for water had been applied, in another way, in the other ordinance of Believers’ Baptism, and water would have been a pale, faint memorial of Him whose rich living blood could far better be set forth by the blood of the grape, trodden under foot of man and made to flow forth from the winepress. The wine is an admirable token of the blood of the atoning Sacrifice. Men need drink as well as food—therefore both are put upon the Communion Table to show a whole Christ as the true food of the soul. You have not to go to Christ for spiritual food and to go somewhere else for spiritual drink, but all you need you can find in Jesus, and find it in Jesus Crucified, in Jesus Sacrificed and put to death in your place. Surely the emblems themselves are most significant and suitable reminders of Christ’s death.  
And the whole ordinance is a most suitable memorial of Christ’s death because the Lord’s Supper *can be celebrated anywhere.*There is no climate where we cannot have bread and wine. There are no persons so poor that, among them, they cannot furnish the table with these simple emblems. It may be decorous to have a silver cup and plate, but it certainly is not necessary—any cup and plate will do. They talk of the “chalice” and “water’” in the strange ecclesiastical jargon that so-called “priests” use, but I say, “cup” and “plate.” They may be of any material, and the table of any sort. A cloth of “fair white linen” is decorous, but not necessary. Let there be but a table and bread and wine, and that is all that is required. And if half-a- dozen godly peasants, women in homespun and men in smock frocks, are gathered together in a cave, or under a wide-spreading beech, they can show forth Christ’s death “till He come.” But as for that man-millinery show over yonder, and that “altar” of theirs, and that bell and the people bowing down to worship Jack-inthe-Box—for I will give it no better name—all that is sheer idolatry! It is no memorial of Christ! It may be a memorial of the devil, and of the way in which he turns Christianity into Popery, puts Christ off the Throne and sets up a man who calls himself infallible! But wherever the bread is broken and the wine is poured out by true Believers in memory of Christ, there His command is obeyed.  
The Lord’s Supper is also a suitable memorial *because it can be frequently celebrated.*You may break this bread and drink of this cup as often as you please. A costly rite could only be performed now and then, but this ordinance can be observed in the morning and in the evening and every day of the week if you will—and very little expense will need to be incurred. To the end of this dispensation, there will be enough bread and wine and sufficient gracious men and women to come to the Table of their Lord and thus to keep up the recollection that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Mary, died on Calvary’s Cross, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” I devoutly thank my Lord and Master for giving me so cheap, so easy, so unostentatious and withal so significant and symbolic a memorial of the death He died for me and for all His people!  
**III.**Now, thirdly, and very briefly, let me speak of THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS CELEBRATION WAS ENTRUSTED. Who are to “do this in remembrance” of Christ?  
Well, first, if you look at the connection of our text, you will find that they are *persons who discern the Lord’s body.*That is to say, the persons who rightly come to this Table understand that this bread and this wine are types or emblems of Christ’s broken body and shed blood, And they are also persons who have the spiritual perception to discern that the Christ Incarnate, the Christ who died upon the Cross is very precious to them. I trust there will be many who will come to this Table, each one of whom will be able to say, “Ah, I know what a precious Christ He is! He is my joy, my hope, my delight, my All in All.” Come and welcome, all of you who can thus discern the Lord’s body. I know that you can do so, by the joy which this Communion gives you, by the sweetness which it leaves upon your spiritual palate when you feed upon it. You may certainly come, for you have the spiritual life which possesses the spiritual senses by which you discern the Lord’s body. Yes, you may come—no, more, you *must* come, for your Lord and Master said, “This do in remembrance of Me.”  
In the preceding chapter to that from which our text is taken, we are told that *those should come who have fellowship with Christ in so doing—* “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?...Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?...But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord’s Table, and of the table of devils.” So it seems to me that as the Jew, who ate of the sacrifices, had, at any rate, a nominal fellowship with the God of the altar, and as the heathen, who drank of the cup of devils, thereby had communion with devils; so none may come to the Lord’s Table but those who are prepared to acknowledge that they are in fellowship with the Lord. Is God your God? Is Christ your Savior? Do you avow yourself to be a disciple of Jesus and the child of God? If so, come and welcome to this Table! But if not, stand back, for you have no right to come here! If you do, you will bring upon yourself a curse, and not a blessing. But as for all of you who are trusting in the blood of Jesus, all of you to whom Christ is all your salvation and all your desire—all of you who call Jehovah your Father through faith in Jesus, all of you who are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—come to this Table and have fellowship with the God of Heaven and earth, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! But let no one else come. I am always sorry when persons are urged to come to the Communion Table as though they would receive some benefit from it although they were not converted, for there can, by no possibility, be any benefit to any who come to the Lord’s Table unless they are Believers in Jesus! God might bless the ordinance to their conversion, but in the nature of things it is highly improbable, for they would be acting in direct disobedience to His command! They have no right there and they will be far more likely to be blessed if they humbly stay away until they have believed in Jesus—and then they will have the right to come, the right given by His love.  
**IV.**Now, lastly, LET US CARRY OUT THE DESIGN OF THIS ORDINANCE.  
The Lord’s Supper is intended to remind us of Jesus. I am not going to preach now. I want you who can, to carry out the text—“This do in remembrance of Me.” Many of you are coming to the Table—*remember your Lord and Savior now.* Remember who He is and who He was. Remember Him, let Him stand before your mind’s eye now as the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” I do not appeal to your imagination, I appeal to your memory. You know—  
***“The old, old story,  
Of Jesus and His love.”***  
Recall it now. Remember that He died, for that is what you are especially bid to remember here. I have met with one, who was, I hope, a Christian, who said to me, “My confidence is in a glorified Savior.” But I could not help saying to him, “My confidence is in a Crucified Savior.” Christ Crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, for Christ could not have risen from the dead if He had not first died. Of what use would His plea be if He had not His blood to offer? Do not be led astray even by ideas about the Second Advent if they depreciate the death of Christ! Rejoice in Christ’s Second Coming and look and long for it, but remember that the basis of our hope lies in Christ Crucified. “We preach Christ Crucified” and as we have preached so have you believed, so let none turn you away from your confidence in Christ Jesus suffering in the sinner’s place, and—

***“Bearing, that we might never bear,***

***His Father’s righteous ire.”***  
“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” is a call from Christ upon the Cross. Remember that all your hope hangs upon Him who hung upon the Cross and died there. Remember that when He died, you died in Him, for “if One died for all, then were all dead.” And now you must “reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.”

Remember Him, I pray you, till your hearts grow warm and your love burns within you. Remember Him till you resolve to serve Him, till you go from this Table determined to die for Him if necessary. Remember Him till you also remember all His people, for it is not to one that He says, “This do you,” but, “This do in remembrance of Me,” is said to all His people, and it needs at least a little company to do this. Remember Him till all the Church militant, and the Church triumphant, too, seem gathered around your heart and you commune with the whole Church of Christ in Heaven and on earth! Remember Jesus till you feel that He is with you, till His joy gets into your soul and your joy is full. Remember Him till you begin to forget yourself and forget your temptations and your cares. Remember Him till you begin to think of the time when He will remember you and come in His Glory for you. Remember Him till you begin to be like He. Gaze upon Him till when you go down from this mount into the wicked world again, your face will glow with the Glory of having seen your Lord! I long to get to this Table again, though I have not been away from it any Sabbath for many a long day, for it has been my constant habit, wherever I have been, to get a few Christian friends together to break bread in remembrance of Christ. When I am with you, you know that I would never be absent on the first day of the week, from my Master’s Table unless there was something that absolutely prevented it and I trust you may come with as keen an appetite as I have now, and then you shall lack no stores for this feast! And may the Lord feed us with Himself to the full!

How sorry I am that there are many here who must not come to this Table, for they have never trusted in Christ! If it seems nothing to you now not to love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, remember that if you die in that state, a day will come when it will seem to you to have been the most horrible thing that ever happened that you should have lived and died without love to Him and trust in Him! God save you! Believe in Jesus now and you shall be saved now. Cast yourselves upon Him and He will not cast you away. So may He bless you, for His dear name’s sake! Amen and amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MARK 15:1-41; LUKE 8:1-3.***

Let us read again what we have often read before, that saddest of all stories which, nevertheless, is the fountain of the highest gladness—the story of our Savior’s death, as recorded by Mark.

**Mark 15:1.***And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.* “The whole council” could be there, so early in the morning, for such an evil purpose! Wicked men are very diligent in carrying out their sinful schemes, so, when Christ was to be murdered, His enemies were there, as Luke tells us, “as soon as it was day.” How much more diligent ought the followers of Christ to be to give Him their devoted service! It is a good thing to begin the day with united prayer and holy converse with His people. Let these wicked men who were so early in the morning seeking to secure the death of Christ make us ashamed that we are not more diligent in His blessed service.

**2, 3.***And Pilate asked Him, Are You the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto Him, You say it. And the chief priest accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing.* Silence was the best answer, the most eloquent reply that He could give to each accusers—they deserved no other answer. Moreover, by His silence, He was fulfilling the prophecy, “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.”

**4, 5.***And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answer You nothing? Behold how many things they witness against You. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.* You will often find that your highest wisdom, when you are slandered, will lie in the imitation of your Lord and Master. Live a blameless life, and it shall be the best reply to the false charges of the wicked.

**6-10.***Now at that feast He released unto them one prisoner, whomever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had always done unto these. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will you that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priest has delivered Him for envy.*And he therefore hoped that the people, who were not moved by the same envy, would have chosen to have Jesus set at liberty.

**11-13.***But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will you then that I shall do unto Him whom you call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him.* This was the very best reply to the charge of high treason, for if Jesus had really set Himself up as a king in the place of Caesar, the people, when they were thus publicly appealed to, would not have cried out, “Crucify Him.” If there had been any truth in the allegation that He was the ringleader of a sedition, the Jews would not have said again and again, “Crucify Him.” Thus Christ gave Pilate a much more effectual answer than if He had Himself spoken.

**14-16.***Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil has He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when He had scourged Him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium.* The hall of the Praetorian guard.

**16, 17.***And they called together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple.* The uniform of the Roman soldiers was purple, as if to indicate that they belonged to an imperial master. So when these soldiers, in mockery, put on our Lord the old cloak of one of their comrades, it sufficed to clothe Him with the royal purple to which, as King, He was fully entitled.

**17-19.***And platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshipped Him.* All this homage was paid to Him in mockery, yet what stern reality there was in that mockery! That band of soldiers really preached to Christ such homage as a whole world could give Him.

**20.***And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.* They “led Him out to crucify Him.” It seems as if Christ had to lean upon those who led Him. The word almost signifies as much as that. At least it might be the word employed concerning anyone leading a child or a sick man who needed support, for the Savior’s weakness must have been very apparent by that time. After the agony and bloody sweat in Gethsemane and the night and morning trials, and scourging, and mockery, and the awful strain upon His mind and heart in being made a Sacrifice for sin, it was no wonder that He was weak! Besides, He was not like the rough, brutal criminals that are often condemned to die for their crimes. He was a man of gentle mold and more delicate sensibilities than they were, and He suffered much more than any ordinary man would have done in similar circumstances.

**21.***And they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His Cross.* Christ could not bear it Himself. The soldiers saw that He was faint and weary, so they laid the Cross, or at least one end of it, on Simon’s

shoulders. [See Sermon #1853, Volume 31—UP FROM THE COUNTRY AND PRESSED INTO SERVICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

**22.***And they brought Him.* Here the word almost implies that they lifted Him and carried Him, for His faintness had increased. They “led Him out to crucify Him,” but now they bear Him.

**22.***Unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.*We sometimes speak of it as *Mount* Calvary, but it was not so—it was a little rising ground, the common place of execution, the Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalem.

**23.***And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not.* He did not wish to have His sufferings abated, but to bear them to the bitter end. Christ forbids not that pain should be alleviated in the case of others, wherever that is possible. But in His own case, it was not fit that it should be so relieved, since He was to bear the full brunt of the storm of vengeance that was due on account of sin.

**24.***And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.* Christ’s garments must go to His executioners in order to carry out the full shame associated with His death as well as to fulfill the prophecy, “They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

**25-27.***And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with Him they crucified two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left.* As if, in carrying out that ordinary etiquette which gives the central place to the chief criminal, they gave to Christ the place of greatest contempt and scorn.

**28.***And the Scripture was fulfilled, which said, And He was numbered with the transgressors.* You could not count the “transgressors” on those crosses without counting Him. There were three, and the One in the middle could not be passed by as you counted the others.

**29-32.***And they that passed by railed at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, You that destroy the Temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the Cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe. That is the world’s way—*“that we may see and believe.” But Christ’s way is, “Believe and you shall see.” Christ off the Cross is admired by worldlings, but Christ on the Cross is our hope and stay, especially as we know that this same Christ is now on the Throne waiting for the time when He shall return to claim as His own all who have trusted in the Crucified.

**32.***And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.* Out of their black hearts and mouths came words of ridicule and scorn even then.  
**33.***And when the sixth hour was come.*When the sun had reached the zenith, at high noon.  
**33-41.***There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, He calls Elijah. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let Him alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, He said, Truly this Man was the Son of God! There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him). And many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem.* We can read further about these gracious women if we turn to Luke 8.  
**Luke 8:1-3.***And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and strewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.* The previous Chapter tells how the woman in Simon’s house manifested her love to the Savior. She showed her love in one way, and in a very special way. But there were others who had similar affection for Him, who showed it in other ways. What is right for one person to do might not be a wise or right thing for everybody to do. Christ did not need His feet washed with tears every minute in the day, nor to have them anointed with even precious ointment very often. There are some Christians who ought to do and I trust will do, some extraordinary thing for Christ—something which shall need no apology from them because they are extraordinary persons, who used to be extraordinary sinners—and it would not be right for them to run in the ruts made by others—they ought to strike out a distinct pathway for themselves. Happy is the Church that has any such members! Happier still if it has many such. But there are others who love Christ just as truly, yet who must be content to show their love to Him in some other and apparently more common but, perhaps, in the long run, more useful way. These gracious women ministered to Christ of their substance. He was only a poor itinerant Preacher who needed daily sustenance. Some people say that every preacher ought to earn his own bread by trade or profession and preach freely, yet the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Preachers, did not do this.  
“Oh, but Paul did!” Yes, Paul attained to a very high honor. But we may be perfectly satisfied, as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attain to as high a degree of honor as our Master did and, inasmuch as He never did any carpentering after He began to preach, but gave His whole soul and being up to the work of preaching, He was fed and cared for by the kindness of these godly women who were glad to minister unto Him of their substance. “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.” So, as ministers of Christ, we need not be ashamed to minister spiritual things to the people and to receive of their carnal things in return. These women, though they did not wash Christ’s feet with their tears, nor anoint them with precious ointment, did well, for they “ministered unto Him of their substance.” Let us all do for Him all that we can.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3130 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“IN REMEMBRANCE”  
NO. 3130

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1909.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 5, 1873.~~***

***~~“This do in remembrance of Me...This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”  
1 Corinthians 11:24, 25.~~***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage and verses before and after, are as follows— Sermons #2, Volume 1—THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2307, Volume 39—THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS; #2638, Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER and #3099, Volume 54— THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT—  
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT is a wonderful proof of the deep depravity of human nature that men have made so much mischief out of the too symbolical ordinances which were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. You know how the ordinance of Believers’ Baptism has been perverted, twisted and turned aside altogether from its pristine use. And the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper has been quite as shamefully misrepresented. In neither case is there any excuse whatever for this perversion, for in each instance the regulations for its observance are perfectly simple and clear. In the institution of the Lord’s Supper there was not a solitary word said about the new rite being a sacrifice nor so much as a single syllable concerning an altar upon which it was to be offered. It was not instituted in the Temple at Jerusalem, but in the upper room of a private house. It was not ordained at a great Temple festival, but at the Passover Supper, when Christ and His disciples were gathered around a table to feast together according to the ancient Jewish custom. There was nothing said by our Lord about any repetition of His one great Sacrifice by the offering of the unbloody sacrifice of the “mass” of which the priests of Rome make so much. It is as simple and plain as it can possibly be—“This do in remembrance of Me.” Those who stumble here, stumble, surely, in the light—and their eyes must be blinded, for there are no stumbling blocks in the ordinance itself.

Observe that Christ does not prescribe anything in the Lord’s Supper by way of elaborate ceremonies. There is nothing at all resembling the various intricate rules that are laid down for the celebration of the “mass” in the Church of Rome, or even for the celebration of the communion in the Church of England. Nothing is here ordered to be done except the breaking of bread and the eating of it—and the pouring out of wine and the drinking of it. And these two things are to be done in *remembrance of Christ*. He has not even laid down any rule with regard to the posture that is to be assumed by communicants. I have no doubt whatever that the disciples were reclining around the supper table in the usual Oriental manner, but Christ does not say that we are to recline, or kneel, or stand, or sit for the right observance of the ordinance. Nothing appears to be really essential to the right celebration of this Supper by Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ but just this—“Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” How very little there is here of anything like a grand ceremony!

And yet, mark you, there is a certain rubric with regard to the *spiritual* part of the Lord’s Supper which is not left to anybody’s choice. It is essential—it is the very soul and marrow of the ordinance that we should remember Christ in it—“This do in remembrance of Me.” The external order may vary in certain respects, but the internal essence must be there, else you will have the mere dead carcass and you will have lost the soul, the spirit, the very life of the whole ordinance! Again and again our Savior says, “This do in remembrance of Me...This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” *To remember Christ, then, is the main point in the right observance of this ordinance*. To let the memory look Him in the face again, to put the finger once more into the print of the nails and to thrust the hand again into His side. Once again to adore the Savior whose head was crowned with thorns for us, but is now coroneted with Glory—to remember Him, to recall Him—that is our main business as we gather around His Table. May God graciously grant to us the Grace to attain to that which is the very essence, soul and life of the Lord’s Supper, that is, the remembrance of Christ!

**I.**And, first, let me remark, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that as we gather around the Lord’s Table, OTHER MEMORIES WILL COME, BUT THEY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CROWD OUT THE ONE MEMORY—“This do in remembrance of Me.”

Other memories will come—I am sure they will come to me and I believe that they will come also to my Christian Brothers and Sisters here. *You will remember well the time when you did not know Jesus*. With deep regret our memory will go back to the period when the little that we did know of Christ was misused. When we despised and rejected Him. When we had ill words for His people and hard words for everything that concerned Him. It is a profitable exercise for us to look unto the rock from which we were hewn and to the hole of the pit from which we were dug. That is not an ill memory with which to come to our Lord’s Table—with our eyes full of the tears of repentance for our past sin, yet rejoicing that we are now washed and cleansed, although once we were defiled and altogether unfit to occupy the children’s place!

Will you not remember, too, *the times when God’s Spirit first began to work upon you* and you hovered around the Cross and, in consequence, began also to hover around the Communion Table? Do you remember when you sat up in the gallery and looked down on the people of God who were gathered to remember their Lord in the observance of this ordinance? Your mother was there and perhaps your brothers and sisters were there. And maybe a wife was there, or a husband was there—and you felt the separation from them very sorely—and all the more because you feared that it might be the prelude to an eternal separation, when those who have been joined together by ties of blood must be separated from one another as far as Heaven is from Hell because they have never really been one in Christ Jesus! You remember the prayers that you used to put up, that you also might know Jesus as your Savior and might then be able to make a profession of your faith and come to His Table with your loved ones to remember Him. I remember well those times in my own experience. And as I recall them, I bless the Lord that He answered my prayers and set me, also, among His children.

Do you not also recollect *the time when you first came to His Table*? With some of you, it was in the first flush of your youth. You had heard of Jesus and believed on Him. Immediately you said, “I will be His disciple and I will take up His Cross and follow Him.” You joined His Church and then, when the hour came that you should, for the first time, enjoy the privilege of fellowship with Him at His Table, you reckoned on it with eager anticipation. And you came to your first Communion service with much prayer and holy longing that you might meet your Lord there. It was a very precious season to you. Since then, you may have had better times than that, but probably none that you remember better, and none in which there was a greater freshness about your heart’s affection for your Lord. The bloom was on the peach then— the dew of the morning was still on the field that the Lord had blessed. Possibly, some of that dew and that bloom has been brushed away by contact with the world, but it was very fresh and beautiful then. It cannot be unprofitable for you to remember the love of your espousals! And if that remembrance should lead you to do your first works with your first love, that memory will not be out of place even at your Lord’s Table!

And, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as we are coming again to the Communion Table at the close of this service, there are hallowed memories that come to me, just now, *of some who used to sit with us at this Table*, some officers of the Church who sat on this platform and many members of the Church who sat down there, and there, and there—good men and true, and holy women, and young saints who rejoiced in Christ, workers of different sorts, and sufferers of different kinds—persons of differing rank and degree, but “all one in Christ Jesus”—and now they are enjoying the higher fellowship in the Kingdom of their Father above! They were ready “to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better,” and that is now their blessed portion. I am sure that such memories as these must come to many of you, for some of you are occupying the very seats upon which they used to sit, or else next to you there sits one who did not sit there this time last year. Well, I do not think these are unprofitable memories, because they link us to those who have gone in to see the King—and help us to remember the mighty hosts of the redeemed who have triumphed through His Grace and are now with Him in His Glory! They also help us to realize the unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ, of which we sometimes sing—

***“One family we dwell in Him  
One Church above, beneath,  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death.”***

There also come to some of us the memories of *dear ones who are not here, though their hearts are here*, for sickness has detained them from the Communion Table these many days. Some of us who have experienced the bitterness of that deprivation feel intense sympathy with other sufferers who are kept away from the sacred feast. And we pray the Master to send home to each of them a blessing that shall fill their souls with rejoicing and their mouths with thanksgiving! As David ordained that those who tarried by the stuff should share equally with those who went down to the battle, so may those who are shut out from the public ministry and the observance of the ordinance with us here, have a special portion direct from the Master’s own hand and heart!

And as we sit here, some of us *think with great pleasure of those who are sitting with us*. I regret that we are so often tempted to remember the fault of our fellow Christians. Oh, may they be blotted from my memory forever! Let us treasure the virtues and excellences of our fellow members and search for signs of the Spirit’s work in them! And remembering our own imperfections and failures, let us not fix our eyes upon their defects. But there are many sitting with us here who are monuments of God’s Grace—and as we look at them, we recollect what God has done for their souls. Some dear Brothers and Sisters here have been made very useful to others during the past year. And if they turn their eyes a little, they can see many of their spiritual children sitting around them. I know that it is a joyous memory to them that the past year was a fruitful one in their portion of the Lord’s vineyard! And I also bless God as I look many of you in the face, for I know that there is a love between us which many waters cannot quench because in this place God first spoke to your souls by the ministry of His Word. These memories are profitable ones and we do well to remember those who form a part of the one mystical body of Christ. Is it not a part of our communion that the members of Christ’s body should commune with their follow members as well as with their glorious Head?

One dark memory, however, crosses my mind, as I have no doubt it often crossed the minds of those who were with Christ that night when He said, “This do in remembrance of Me,” and that was the *remembrance of Judas*. It was that sentence, “One of you shall betray Me,” that made the night so sorrowful to they who were in that upper room—and Judas has had many successors in the Church. There have been those even high in official standing who, nevertheless, have bartered their Lord and Master for paltry silver. Alas! Alas, alas, while we remember those who have done so, it will not be with the self-righteousness that makes us think we should never have done it, but with the sacred caution which enquires, “Lord, shall I, also, do this thing?” And with the holy prayerfulness that cries, “Hold You me up, and I shall be safe.”

Now I think all these memories are natural, allowable and profitable, but they must be kept in a secondary place, and they must never crowd out the remembrance of Christ! He did not say to His disciples, “This do you in remembrance of one another,” or, “in remembrance of your own conversion,” or, “in remembrance of your former state of sin.” No, He said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” So I claim the first place for remembrance of the Master—and I say to these other memories, “Stand back! Stand back and let Him fill the central position, let Him occupy the Throne! If you will, you may sit upon the steps of His grand Throne, but upon that Throne of God you must not sit—that is for Him who says to His disciples, ‘This do in remembrance of Me.’”

**II.**Note, next, that THIS ORDINANCE IS VERY HELPFUL TO THAT ONE SACRED MEMORY—the memory of Christ.  
The emblems upon the Table—covered up from your sight at present, but to be visible soon—*the bread and wine remind us that Jesus Christ was truly Man*. When He came upon this earth, He was no phantom. Even after His Resurrection, when His disciples supposed that they had seen a spirit, He said to them, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.” He took a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb and ate it in front of them. The Apostle John says that they had seen Him with their eyes and had handled Him with their hands. He was really God manifest in the flesh—and we are thankful that in this ordinance there are two material emblems set before us to remind us that although our holy religion is most deeply spiritual, yet it also touches the material, for Christ was verily bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—Man of the substance of His mother—and as such He lived and as such He really died.  
These signs being laid upon a table are meant to show us, next, *the familiarity of our blessed Lord with us*. The bread is not elevated so as to be exhibited to you while you bow down before it as if it were your God, nor is the wine in the cup lifted up as an object of adoration and worship—but both these emblems are placed upon the Table—the bread to be eaten and the wine to be drunk. This is to remind us that the Word of God, Incarnate, Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, was familiar with the sons of men. “He came unto His own.” He was a Man among men. He was with them at their feasts and He wept with them at their funerals. He suffered hunger, thirst, weariness and pain as we do. He spoke familiarly yet faithfully with the poor sinful woman at Sychar’s well. And He spoke in a similar style to the great multitude. He was no recluse! He was no Oriental potentate, guarded from the throng, but He was always among the people, healing their sicknesses and sympathizing with them in their sorrows!  
This is a great blessing to us because while Jesus thus comes near to us, we are thereby invited to draw near to Him. The bread is placed upon the Table, but the Table is not lifted up beyond our reach. And we are bid to gather round it and to eat the bread that is upon it—and so to have the most familiar acquaintance with that which is upon the Table. So, today, Jesus invites the sinful and the sorrowful to come to Him. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And as for His own people, He is so familiar with them that if there were anything He had not told them which was really for their good, He would tell them now. He said to His disciples concerning the many mansions in His Father’s house, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” And He also said to them, “Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” Jesus Christ is not like Moses, whose glory repelled—His Glory attracts! He is the Good Shepherd who delights to fold the lambs in His bosom. He is the Man among men who loves men and loves to have men about Him, for His delights are still as they have always been—with the sons of men.  
This Truth ought to help us to remember our Lord—that He is truly Man, a Man among us, near to us, to whom we are very dear and who should be, and I trust is, very dear to us! He is our Brother, yes, He is nearer even than a brother, for He is a part of ourselves! Have I exaggerated in using that expression? No, for is He not our Head and are we not “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones”? And should we not, therefore, rejoice that we are reminded of this great fact by the homely tokens which set Him forth so familiarly in this ordinance?  
Then you will note, by-and-by, that *the bread has to be broken and the wine poured forth to show the sufferings of the Savior*. The bread itself is a most impressive type of suffering. The corn is buried in the dark earth, pinched by many a frost when it peers above the ground and exposed to many trials before it comes to its full growth. When it is ripe, it is cut down with a sharp sickle, threshed with many a heavy blow, then ground in the mill, the flour kneaded into dough, pressed into the shape of loaves, thrust into a hot oven and baked—and then in this last process, broken. Our blessed Master seemed to be passing through all that experience in His lifetime on earth. He actually used some of the processes that I have described as pictures of Himself, as in that notable instance when He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth fruit.” Especially was that last part of the process—the breaking of the bread as a type of His sufferings—illustrated throughout His whole life. When did He not suffer? What sorrows were crowded into the three years of His public ministry! His life was one of constant suffering and then at the last came the great climax of it all—and none of us can fully tell what was meant by Gethsemane and its bloody sweat, by Gabbatha and its terrible flagellation, and by Golgotha and its cruel and shameful death upon the accursed tree. There is, also, another most suggestive symbol of Christ’s sufferings in the various processes that result in “the fruit of the vine” in the cup on the Communion Table. Both emblems impressively set forth our Savior’s sufferings.

But you have more than that, for *you have Christ’s death set forth in the instructive symbol of the bread separated from the wine*. To mix them in one cup would be to spoil the whole metaphorical teaching of the ordinance! The blood with the flesh is life, but the blood drained from the flesh is death. The blood is represented by the *wine by itself* in the cup— and the *bread by itself* represents the flesh. And the two emblems together set forth death—a violent death—such a death as Jesus died. Did you not sing of it just now—

***“See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”***

Never forget that the punishment for sin is not simply suffering, but death. “The soul that sins it shall die.” And it was not until Christ died that the debt, which was due from His people to the justice of God, was fully discharged. The two emblems in this ordinance, therefore, needed to be separate in order to set before us the death of our dear Lord and Savior—and so to help us to remember Him.

Then, *the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine symbolize our reception of Christ into our innermost selves*. After looking at the signs, they who commune eat and drink thereof to show, as in a figure, how Christ is received into the soul. Faith must be the mouth of the soul and into that mouth we must receive Christ Himself and live upon Him. That new life, which God has created within us, must be fed and sustained by the grand Truth of the Atonement of Christ, the wondrous Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice on behalf of all who believe in Him. There is a very important point of instruction there and I pray that none of you may ever miss it.

The thought also occurred to me that when the feast is over, and the bread is eaten, and the wine is drunk, no one ever says, “Where shall we find the bread for another observance of the Supper?” Or “From where shall we get wine that we may come again to celebrate this sacred feast?” No, for everybody knows that, practically, of bread there is no stint and of wine there is no limit—and so it seems as though, among other reasons, *these two emblems were selected to teach us, by their plenteousness, the all-sufficiency of Christ*. When we have spiritually fed upon Him tonight, there is as much for us to feed upon tomorrow! And when we have been drinking with joy in remembrance of Him, we may come and drink again and again, for this is a very sea of blessing of which we are bidden to drink. If you took a cupful of water from the sea, there would be so much the less there though none could tell the difference! But if you took an ocean full of love and joy out of the Redeemer, there would be none the less left in Him! It is true of His Grace that it is not diminished by all that His people receive of it and it never can be exhausted. ‘Tis pleasant to gather fruit where there are many heavily-laden trees and to receive money from a store in which there is much left after we have had all we need. And it is pleasant to come and feast at a table that is still richly laden after myriads have been fed at it and that is still as full as ever though ten thousand times ten thousand saints have here been feasted to the full!

Thus I think I have shown you, and I pray the Holy Spirit to show you that in this ordinance there is much to help us to remember our Lord and Savior.

**III.**But now, Beloved, in the third place, it may be useful to you if I call to your mind anew the fact THAT THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST IS, OF ITSELF, MOST NECESSARY FOR ALL BELIEVERS.

For, first, *the remembrance of Christ is the prolongation of the act of faith*. What is faith but the first look at Christ? And what is remembering Him but continuing to look at Him? At any rate, if it is not the same thing, the one act leads up to the other, for never did any soul truly remember Christ without its faith growing. Come, then, to the Lord’s Table, all you who are alive unto God through faith in Jesus Christ, and pray that here your faith may be greatly increased! You have believed on Him and He is made of God unto you, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” You have trusted in Him and you are pardoned, accepted, saved by Him. Come then to His Table, looking to Him as your Savior, looking to Him in whom you are accepted, looking to Him through whom you hope to enter into Heaven at the last! Let your remembrance be blessed to you as being the continuance of your first faith.

Then, next, *the remembrance of Christ is a very blessed stimulus to our love*. “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” some say. That is a questionable proverb in relation to our earthly friends, but I am sure that it never was true and never will be true with regard to Christ and His people! We must be with Him to really love Him—and the longer we are with Him, the more we shall love Him! And when we are with Him forever and forever without a break, then shall we love Him with all our heart, soul and strength—without coldness or chill forever. Remembrance of Christ will bring Him to you! It will hold up His portrait before your mind’s eye and enable you to see His heart beating with love to you! It will make you feel that He still loves you although He reigns exalted high, and then your love will flow out to Him more freely in return.

And, Beloved, there will be another good thing which will come out of this remembrance of Christ, for *it will be the suggestion to you of renewed hope*. When a man remembers that Jesus Christ is really his, then he says, “Have I such a Savior as this? Then, by-and-by, I shall be with Him where He is and I shall behold His Glory, for that is His prayer concerning me! His arm is strong enough to keep me. His heart is warm enough to love me. His eyes are bright enough to see me. I know that I shall be eternally saved by Him.”

It seems to me, also, that *coming to this Communion Table to remember Christ, if we really do remember Him, is like a recall*, as when you have heard the trumpet sound for the soldiers to come back to the standard. It is a recall from the world. It says to you, “Now forget your business, forget your pains, forget your family cares, forget everything but your Lord! Come back, poor perplexed Martha, and become like Mary and sit at Christ’s feet. This do in remembrance of Him.” It is a recall from self. You have been saying, “I have not grown in Grace as I hoped to do. My doubts are many, my sins innumerable, my spiritual state is not what I would like it to be.” Then come back from all that to your Lord—from the filthiness to the cleansing fountain, from the leprosy to the healing, from prison to the great Liberator, from your poverty to His wealth, from your lost estate to Him who is all your salvation and all your desire, and who says to you, “This do in remembrance of Me.” It calls you back from introspection, from looking within to looking away to your Lord, looking off unto Jesus!

And does not this remembrance call all of us back to our Lord from whatever we have been engaged in, even for His own name’s sake? Have we been engaged in controversy? Have we been fighting for liberty of worship, for the severance of Church and State, for Calvinistic Doctrine, for some view of the Second Advent, or for any particular form of Doctrine? Then I think I hear the voice of Jesus saying, “Come back, My child, from the battlefield on which you have been contending with a brave and true heart for the defense of My faith—come back to Me. I call you now not to remember Doctrine, but to remember Me. “This do in remembrance of Me.” So let us come together to His Table though we differ from one another in many respects. We can remember Him in unity here wherever else we may not be able to unite. And let us come back, too, from all our Christian labors. I would like to forget, at this Table, everything that is faulty in my own work, or in the work of my Brothers and Sisters, or in their characters—everything that might grieve, vex and annoy. We will try to put it all away from us, for just now our Lord’s command to us is, “This do in remembrance of Me.”

I said that this remembrance was like a recall, to summon the soldiers back to the standard. But it also seems to me *like the morning bugle sounding clearly throughout the camp to wake the soldiers*. “This do in remembrance of Me.” Christ has gone up into His Glory, away from the damps and mists of earth. Think, Beloved, of the Glory and brightness that abound where He stands, and of which He is the central sun! And from that glory, clear and shrill, as though it were the first notes from the archangel’s trumpet, I hear the message sounding again and again, “Remember Me! Remember Me! Remember Me in My Glory as well as in My shame! Remember Me in my triumph as well as in my warfare. ‘This do in remembrance of Me.’” If we have really believed in Jesus, let us come to His Table as though our communion here were the first course of that Everlasting Supper to which we shall sit down with Him above! Or, to change the figure and make it more correct, let this sad feast be, as one of the martyrs called it, the breakfast wherein we break the long fast of this world and feed on Heaven’s bread with Christ, knowing that we shall soon be at the great marriage supper of the Lamb, who shall know no end and where we shall feast forever in His sight!

Is it not true, then, that in this remembrance there is much that is precious, valuable and really necessary to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

**IV.**But now I must close by reminding you that THIS SYMBOLIC FESTIVAL IS HIGHLY BENEFICIAL IN REFRESHING OUR MEMORIES.  
I am sure *we need this Supper, though it is but a material feast, because we are yet in the body*. There are some people who, if they had the power, would be presumptuous enough to do away with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper because they have been so grossly misused. But if they could blot them out, it would be an irreparable loss to the Church of Christ. These ordinances are the only link between the spirituality of our faith and materialism—and we must remember that God has not flung away materialism as a thing that cannot be bettered. He did curse the earth, once, and it still brings forth thorns and thistles, but He does not mean it to always remain under the curse. There will come a time when there shall be a literal new Heaven and a new earth—and here, where sin has triumphed—Grace shall reign. Believers are still here in the body, but Paul’s words are as true, today, as when he wrote them, “Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” These very bodies of ours shall rise again from the grave! They may sleep in the dust for a while, but they shall come again from the land of their captivity and in our flesh shall we see God—and our body as well as our spirit shall enjoy an eternity of bliss with our Savior in His body as well as in His spirit in His great triumph! Of course it will not be such flesh as it now is, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. But still, it will be the same body, though it will have undergone a wonderful change. So I thank God for the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper because they teach me that nothing is common or unclean. They sanctify the rivers for me. They sanctify my daily bread for me. They make me feel not as if I lived, like a Brahmin, in a world where everything might pollute me, but like a Christian—in a world where Christ has lived and in a position in which everything may be to me “holiness unto the Lord” if my heart is right before Him!  
Not only is this symbolic festival beneficial to us because materialism still appertains to our bodies, but *it is specially so because Jesus appointed it*. He would never have appointed a needless ceremony! And He was no lover of useless ceremonies. He never wrote a Directorium (is not that the name of it?) giving instructions as to how to celebrate various ecclesiastical ceremonies! So, as He has ordained this memorial, He must have known that we needed it because of our forgetfulness. And we may be quite sure that as He has ordained it, He will make it answer the ends for which He instituted it!  
Besides, *experience has taught many of us how valuable this ordinance is*. I can bear my own witness that many and many a Sabbath, when I have found but little food for my own soul elsewhere, I have found it at the Communion Table. You know that sometimes we who preach the Gospel are not ourselves fed by it even when those who hear us may be feasting upon it—but the Master still presides at His own Table and He sees that the minister is fed as well as the rest of the communicants! I have been in a foreign land where there was no congregation to meet for public worship, but the two or three Believers who were there have always broken bread together each Sunday, and it has been to us quite a full service, most strengthening to the soul, when we have gathered around the Table of our Lord to do “this” in remembrance of Him!  
One other thing I will mention and that is how often has Christ set His seal to this Supper by *blessing it, not only to those who were doing it in remembrance of Him, but even to those who were only spectators*. It is an encouraging thought to us that the Spirit of God, while He has been hovering over the assembly of Believers in Jesus, has turned His eyes of pity upon those who were but observers looking on at the ordinance— and has made the symbols to be a sermon, and the communion service to be a most impressive discourse! And many there are now in Heaven who were led there through holy thoughts that were first implanted in their minds and hearts at the communion feast! And many others are on their way to Glory whose feet were first guided into the right road while they were watching others who had met together thus to remember their dear Lord and Savior! So prize this ordinance much, Beloved, because it is so highly beneficial to you in refreshing your memories and also because, incidentally, it may be made a means of blessing to others!  
I close by saying that *it is clear, from our Lord’s command, that attendance at this ordinance is binding upon all Christians*. “This do”—not, “This look at”—but, “This do in remembrance of Me.” All who truly love their Lord should hear Him say to them, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Some Believers neglect this ordinance. If any such are in this congregation now, I would say to them—Beloved Friends, you are losing a great blessing and you are disobedient to your Lord. Think what would happen if all other Believers were to do as you are doing. If they did (and they have as much right to do it as you have), then the Lord’s Supper would cease to be celebrated and this showing forth of Christ’s death which is to go on “till He comes,” would necessarily cease. Your abstaining from church membership and your neglect of the two ordinances appointed by Christ is an example which it would be disastrous for all others to follow! Do not imagine that this neglect on your part can be right, but end it at the first convenient opportunity. The observance of this ordinance will not save you. And if you are not already saved, you have no right to partake of it, but if you are saved, if you have really believed in Jesus, He says to you, “This do in remembrance of Me.”  
Remember, too, that *this ordinance is to be often observed by all Christians*. Our Lord said to His disciples, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” I will not say that Christ actually laid down the rule that it should be observed *often*, but it seems to me that His words imply that it should be. And as often as it is observed, it should be in remembrance of Him. Do not live month after month without remembering Christ by means of these outward signs which He has Himself appointed as His special memorial! Remember Him often! Pray that memory may always bear His image on its very front, but do not neglect the helpful ordinance which the Lord Himself instituted for you.

And then, last of all, *never come to this Table except it is with the solemn determination that you will remember Him*. You mock Christ if you regard this communion as anything other than the remembrance of Him. What is there in that bread? What is there in that wine? There is nothing whatever there but bread and wine after we have invoked a blessing upon them just as there was before! We pay these emblems no reverence of any kind, nor could we do so without being guilty of idolatry! There is nothing in the whole ordinance but a help to our memory and I have tried to explain to you how it does help the memory. But if you do not remember Jesus, if you have no faith in Him, if you do not love Him, if you do not cast yourselves wholly upon Him, what business have you at His Table? You have no part nor lot in this matter! Faith in Christ first, then Baptism, then the Lord’s Supper! But neither of these ordinances is for unbelievers— and whoever dares to observe them as an unbeliever, or to get others who believe not in Christ to observe them—is a profaner of the ordinances, a thief and a robber who is doing incalculable mischief to the souls of men! Come to Jesus first—believe in Him and you shall be saved. Go to the foot of the Cross, confessing your sins and trusting in Him who hung there—and then, after that, we are told to bid you remember all things that He has commanded you and to tell you that He has promised to be with us even to the end of the age!

Observe you, then, these things in their right order! Faith in Jesus first and then obedience to Jesus and the remembrance of Jesus in His own appointed way. If you miss the all-important matter of faith in Jesus, you have gained the chaff, but lost the wheat—you have gained the salt, but it has no savor—you have a name to live, but you have not life eternal! God grant that none of us may be found thus lacking the one thing necessary, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE LORD’S SUPPER—SIMPLE BUT SUBLIME!  
NO. 3151

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1909.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN THE YEAR 1866.~~***

***~~“This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:25, 26.~~***

[Mr. Spurgeon preached many times upon these and the preceding verses. The following sermons have already been published—#2, Volume 1—“THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST; #2307, Volume 39— THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE; #2595, Volume 44—WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS; #2638, Volume 45—THE RIGHT OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER; #2872, Volume 50—THE LORD’S SUPPER; #3099, Volume 54—THE DOUBLE FORGET-ME-NOT and #3130, Volume 55—“IN REMEMBRANCE”— Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT would be a waste of time and would tend to mar our fellowship with Christ, were I to attempt an enumeration of the errors and misapprehensions into which men have fallen concerning the objective of the Lord’s Supper. There are some communities of men among us—and they seem to be multiplying—who turn the Communion Table into an altar and convert the bread and wine, which are but a memorial, into the semblance of a sacrifice. I will only say that into their secret may we never enter and with their confederacy may we never be united, for their table is the table of idolatry, and their altar is little better than a sacrifice unto devils! Such offerings cannot be acceptable unto God, for those who observe them turn aside altogether from the simplicity of the Truth of God unto the cabalistic devices of Antichrist.

This simple feast of the Lord’s Supper, consisting of the breaking and eating of bread, and the pouring forth and drinking of wine, has two objectives upon its very surface. It is intended *as a memorial of Christ*, and it is intended as a shouting or a manifestation of our faith in Christ, and of Christ’s death, to others. These are the two objectives—“This do you in remembrance of Me”—and “Thus you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

**I.**First, then, WE VIEW THE SUPPER OF OUR LORD AS BEING A MEMORIAL OF HIM. And as such, *it is simple and very significant*.  
How plainly it sets forth Christ’s Incarnation! We take the bread. That bread, upon which we feed and which becomes assimilated with our flesh, is the type of the Incarnation of the Savior who veiled His Glory in our human clay. The same bread broken becomes the type of that body of the Savior rent and torn with anguish. We have there the nails, the scourge, the Cross—all set forth by that simple act of breaking the bread. And when the wine is poured out, there is no mystification, but rather the disclosure of a mystery. It represents the blood of Him who took blood in order that He might become one blood with us, His incarnate people and who, “being found in fashion as a Man,” “became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” So that just as the wine is pressed from the cluster and is poured forth into the cup, so was His blood pressed from Him in the winepress of Divine Wrath and poured forth that He might make Atonement for the sin of men. A child, standing by the Communion Table, and asking the question of his father, “What does this ordinance mean?” might very soon be told, “My Child, we break this bread to show how Jesus Christ’s body suffered. And we pour out this wine in token that Jesus Christ poured forth his heart’s blood for the sins of men.” It is marvelous that men should have added so many things of their own invention to screen and veil this very simple and, therefore, very sublime ordinance! Brothers and Sisters, let us come to those two symbols and here discern Christ’s body broken for our sin and view His blood streaming forth for our redemption!  
The type, however, is suggestive because it not only sets forth the suffering of Christ, but also the result of that suffering. It pictures the end as well as the means. That is to say, when I take that bread and eat it, and take that cup and drink from it, I bring to remembrance—to my own remembrance and the remembrance of those round about me—not merely the fact that Christ suffered, but that He suffered for me and that I had an interest in Him. Believe me, Beloved, this Truth of God is so simple, that while I speak, I can half fancy some of you saying, “Why does he not tell us something new?” But let me say to you, it is always a new Truth and there is no Truth which the Christian heart more readily forgets! Oh, that I could always feel that He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*! I know He did—it is long since I had a doubt about it—but I do not always remember it. Going abroad into the world, how apt we are to let the remembrance of the Savior’s love slip! The love of wife and husband follows us like our own shadow. The love of our dear child seems to encompass us like the atmosphere in which we live. But Jesus Christ is not visibly here and, therefore, the remembrance of Him requires spirituality of mind—and we are carnal—too often but babes in Grace, and so we forget His sufferings. And, worse still, we forget our interest in them! Oh, that I could have the Cross painted on my eyeballs that I could not see anything except through the medium of my Savior’s passion! O Jesus, set Yourself as a seal upon my hand and as a signet on my arm, and let me wear forever the pledge where it is conspicuous before my soul’s eyes! Happy is that Christian who can say, “I scarcely need that memorial.” But I am not such an one and I fear, my Brothers and Sisters, that the most of us need to be reminded by that bread and wine that Jesus died— and need to be reminded, by the eating and drinking of the same, that, He died *for us!*  
I do not want to say a word tonight that shall have any oratory in it— any elocutionary display about it. I want to speak so plainly that those of you who are not Christians will say that it was a dry and dull sermon! I do not care what you say, or what you feel—if I can get each Believer here to just think over this thought and remember it—“The Lord of Glory loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*. That head which now is crowned with Glory was once crowned with thorns—and crowned with thorns *for me*. He whom all Heaven adores, who sits upon the loftiest Throne in Heaven, once did hang upon the Cross in extreme agony for me—*for me*.” I know you are apt to think that He died for so many that He had not a special end to serve in redeeming you, but it has been very beautifully said that as the love of Christ is Infinite, if you divide the Infinite by any number you please, (I do not care what the divisor is, whether it is ten, or whether it is twenty million), the quotient is Infinite and so, if the love of Jesus Christ, Infinite as it is, can be supposed to be divided among us, we would, each one of, us have an Infinite Love! It is our arithmetic that teaches us this, but, oh, if we do but know by experience the infinite depth, the amazing abyss of the love of Jesus to each one of us, our souls will be comforted and rejoice with unspeakable joy! The sign, then, is significant.  
But, in the next place, it is worthy of notice that *the memorial which we are about to celebrate tonight is a joint one*. There is something painful, but pleasing, when the father dies, for the children come together at the funeral and go together to his grave. Many family heartbreaks have been healed when the various members of the family have joined in a memorial to their father. The poor man’s grave, especially, has much charm in it to me. Here come the sons and daughters and pool together their shillings to buy the grave and to buy the coffin. Often, over the rich men’s grave, there is a squabble as to who shall share his wealth—but there is not any such quarrel in this case. The man has died penniless and John, Mary and Thomas all come—and they all see who can do the most in providing their father’s grave. And if there is a tombstone, it is not only one who pays for it, but they all put their money together, so that Father’s memorial may be shared by them all! How I like that thought! So in this ordinance, “we being many are one bread,” and we being many are one cup. Brothers and Sisters, I cannot do without you! If I want to celebrate the Lord’s death, I cannot go into my chamber and take the piece of bread and the cup and celebrate the ordinance alone—I must have you with me! I cannot do without you! And you, the most spiritually-minded of you, if you shut yourselves up in a cell and try to play the monk and the super-excellent, cannot keep this ordinance! You must have fellowship with other Believers! You must come down among the saints, for our Savior has given us this memorial which cannot be celebrated except jointly, by the whole of us together! You Christians must come together to break this bread and to drink of this cup. “This do *you*, as often as *you*drink it, in remembrance of Me.” Did the Master foresee that we would be so apt to split up into sections? Did He know that we would be so apt to be individualized till we forgot to bear one another’s burdens? And did He, therefore, while He made Baptism the personal, solitary confession of faith, make this Communion to be a united joint memorial in order that we might be compelled to come together—might by sweet constraint be driven to meet in the same place with one accord, or else be unable to make a memorial of His death?  
It is a joint memorial. You have thought that over. Well, now, let us try and link hearts together. Are there any differences between us tonight? I am not conscious, my Beloved, of any difference with any one of you. If I were, I would seek Grace to shake it off. And if you tonight are conscious of anything against any Brother or Sister with whom you will commune at the Table, I pray you now to put it all away before you come here. Remember that you must eat and drink jointly with that very friend with whom you have offended now and, therefore, make up the offense, and so come together. God has forgiven you so much that you may well forgive your Brother this little, supposing him to have offended you. Come, then, together, Beloved—together let us keep the feast!  
At the same time, I must not forget to remind you that *while a united memorial, it is most distinctly a personal one*. There can be no Lord’s Supper, though we all meet, unless every man puts the bread into his mouth and unless each one of us, himself, drinks the wine. That cannot be done as a joint act. The bread is passed around and there must be a distinct reception on the part of every person here. So let us not lose ourselves in the crowd. We are drops in one great sea, but still we must remember that we are drops and, as no drop of the sea is without its salt, so let no one among us be without the salting influence of true communion with Jesus. Dear Friend, I cannot commune for you and you cannot commune for me. If you are all happy, I shall be glad, but it will be little benefit to me unless I can see the Savior, too, and so will it be with each one of you. Therefore let me pray you to cry unto God to give Divine Grace to you to now *personally* remember the Lord Jesus Christ—His love for you, His death for you, His rising for you. “He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*!” let that thought be uppermost in your mind just now.  
Yet further, I must not fail to remind you that *as a memorial of Christ, while it is very solemn, it is singularly happy*. Christ has ordained, as a memorial of His death, what? Why, a feast! Not a funeral, not a meeting together to sing dirges over His mangled body, or to go to a grave to weep! That might have been a memorial, but we have a better one—we have a happy one! It is very significant that after supper they sang a hymn. Singing *then*? Oh, yes, singing! Joy becomes a feast and joy is to attend our recollection of the woes of Jesus. The position which we ought to occupy at the Lord’s Table also suggests that Christ meant us to be happy. Did He ordain that we should kneel? No, there is not a hint of it! Did He intend us to stand? There is not a syllable about it! How was the Lord’s Supper originally received? The guests reclined around the table, leaning their heads in each other’s bosoms! It was the easy posture of the ordinary feaster in Oriental nations. The most proper posture for us, seeing that we could not well lie along, is to sit in the easiest posture conceivable. Choose for yourselves—never mind what people say about reverence! Familiarity with Jesus is the highest reverence! Put your body at the Communion Table into the easiest possible position in which you can rest and you have then reached Christ’s ideal.  
It is a feast where you are to be perfectly at ease, in contrast, mark you, with the Passover. There they stood, with their loins girt about, with their hats on and with their staves in their hands—and they ate like men in haste who had to go through the wilderness! Now, we have gone through the wilderness! We who have believed have entered into rest— our Passover has been eaten. We fear not the destroying angel—he has passed over us. We are out of Egypt, we have entered into Canaan and though the Canaanite is still in the land, we are driving him out. We are not now keeping the Passover with haste, and fear, and confusion—it is the Lord’s Supper of rest, and joy, and peace! For, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is a happy memorial! Joy becomes the face of everyone who shall come to the Table tonight, or at any other time!  
Well now, Brothers and Sisters, if to remember Christ is the objective of the Lord’s Supper, then you will not have come here to any purpose unless you remember Him! So I pray you to put away every other thought. Have you doctrinal difficulties? Leave them till tomorrow! Have you a sick child, or does business go amiss? Well you will not relieve your cares by violating this sacred hour. Let these burdens be cast on Him who cares for you! One thing you have to do with, it is Jesus Christ crucified—crucified for you, received by you. Now blot out the other stars and let one star alone shine in the sky—the Star of Bethlehem! Bid farewell to every love but the love of Jesus and to every fellowship but fellowship with Him. Ask the Lord to take your heart as an arrow and fit it to His bow—and shoot it right up to where Christ is in Heaven. “Set your affection on things above.” Many people misquote that, “Set your*affections*.” Paul wrote no such thing! “Set your affection”—tie your affections into one bundle and make them*one affection—*and then set it upon things above. Let your whole heart lie in the bosom of the Savior. I pray the Master that we may not, one of us, hold back—not even you, Mrs. Much-Afraid, nor you, Little-Faith. Nor you, Ready-to-Halt—may you forget your crutches and may you now remember only Him who is the Allin-All of both the strong and the weak—  
***“The strong, the feeble and the weak,  
Are one in Jesus now”***  
and let them know it as they sit here and remember Him!  
**II.**The second objective of this Communion Supper is THE SHOWING OF CHRIST’S DEATH TILL HE COMES.  
“Till He comes.” I must not say anything about that except that He will come! And I think that ought to be enough for Christians. To my great sorrow, I had sent to me this last week, two or three copies of a tract purporting, according to the title page to have been written by myself, prophesying the coming of the Lord in the year 1866. Now, you may expect to hear of me being in Bedlam [London insane asylum] whenever by my tongue or my pen, I give countenance to such rubbish! The Lord may come in 1866, and I shall be glad to see Him, but I do not believe He will. And one reason why I don’t believe He will, I have told you before—it is because all these false two-penny-halfpenny prophets say that He will. If they said He would not, I would begin to think He would, but inasmuch as they are all crying as one man that He will come in 1866, or 1867, I am inclined to think He will not come at any such time! It seems to me that there are a very great many prophecies which must be fulfilled before the coming of Christ—which will not be fulfilled in the next 12 months. And I prefer, Beloved, to stand in the position of a man who knows neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes— always looking for His appearing, but never interfering with those dates and figures which seem to me to be proper amusement for young ladies who have nothing to do, and who take to them instead of reading novels. And for certain divines who have exhausted their stock of knowledge about sound Doctrine and, therefore, make up and gain a little ephemeral popularity by shuffling texts of Scripture as the Norwood gypsies shuffled cards in days gone by! Leave the *prophets* to divide the *profits*which they get from simpletons—and as for you, watch for Christ’s coming, whether it shall be today, or tomorrow—and set no limits, and no dates, and no times! Only work while it is called today. Work so that when He comes, He may find you, as faithful servants, ready to come in to the wedding with Him. “Till He comes,” then, the Lord’s Supper is to be a showing forth of His death!  
Let us just notice how we show it forth.  
I think *we show it to ourselves*. The Lord’s Supper may be celebrated without any spectators. It should be in public where it can be, but if there are none to look on, it may be otherwise. In Venice, in Milan, in Paris and in other cities where Romanism prevails, five or six of us have met together in our room at our hotel and we have had the true Lord’s Supper there, though there were none to look on. And probably if there had been, in some cities where we have partaken of it, we might have been amenable to the law! ‘Tis a showing forth of Christ’s death to ourselves. We see the bread broken and see the wine poured out, and we ourselves see here, in symbol, Christ crucified! And we see as before our eyes, when we eat and drink, our interest in the Sacrifice offered upon Calvary!  
But next, *we show it to God*. We do, in effect, say before the allwitnessing Jehovah, “Great God, we break this bread in Your august Presence in token that we believe in Your dear Son. And we drink this wine here before You, You Searcher of Hearts, to solemnly say to You again, ‘We are Yours, bought with Jesus’ blood and washed clean in it.’” It is a showing of Christ’s death to God!  
Moreover, *it is a showing of it to our fellow Christians*. We say to those who sit with us, “Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us join together. We join with you, why don’t you join with us?” We say to you, ‘We love Him,’ and you say the same to us. Together we clasp hands and renew our Christian fellowship with one another through renewing our fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We do, as it were, teach one another, admonish one another and comfort one another when we thus show forth the Lord’s death.  
But besides showing forth Christ’s death to ourselves, to our God and to our fellow Christians, *we also show it to the world*. We do, in effect, say to the world, “Here we show that we believe in Him whom you crucified. He who went outside the camp, the Man of Nazareth, despised and rejected of men, is our Master. You may trust in your philosophies—we trust in Him. You may rely upon your own merits, sacrifices and performances, but as for us, His flesh and His blood are our dependence. As we eat this bread and drink of this cup, Christ Jesus is set forth to you as being All-in-All to us—the bread which sustains our spiritual life and the wine which gives us joy, sacred exhilaration and delight.”  
And then, in addition to saying this to the world, *we also say it to sinners* who may happen to be present, and to whom it may be blessed. How often within these walls has God blessed the breaking of bread to the conversion of souls! Let me refresh the memories of such. Some of you had been looking on from these galleries—you dared not come down with the people of God, but you did not want to leave. And so you sat and you looked on. And your mouths were watering, not for the bread and wine, but for Christ! You wanted Him and gradually you were like the robins in the cold wintry days. You first, as it were, tapped at the church’s windowpane very gently and you were afraid, so you stepped back again. But all the world was cold and there was not a crumb for you anywhere else. Then you saw the open window of a gracious promise, “He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out” and, pressed by absolute necessity, you came to Jesus! You came into the family circle of Jesus Christ’s people and you feasted-and tonight you are glad!  
Well, dear Friends, as we come together at the Table, we will be remembering any among the onlookers who are not yet brought to Christ. We will think of them and we will breathe this prayer, “Lord, save them! As we show forth Christ, help them to see Him. May they say, ‘Yes, His body was broken for sinners, His blood was poured out for sinners, so we will trust Him.’” And if they trust Him, they shall be saved!  
Well, now, may we accomplish these two designs—to remember Christ and to show His death. We can only do it by His Spirit. Let us, with bowed head, ask for that Spirit. Let us seek that we may worship Christ in spirit and in truth while we receive the outward symbols of His suffering.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *JOHN 17; 18:1-9.***

**Chapter 17:1.***These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son; that Your Son also may glorify You.*Christ’s great intercessory prayer begins with His appeal to His Father to glorify His Son. Christ knew all that He would have to suffer during that “hour” to which He had looked forward to from eternity, but His eyes could see beyond the gross with all its shame, the crown with all its glory! The Son being glorified, He would also glorify His Father and there is a wondrous Glory that comes to the Father through the death of His Son upon the Cross.

**2.***As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him*. [See Sermon #566, Volume 10—  
GENERAL AND YET PARTICULAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Some people seem unable to see that there is perfect harmony between the general and the particular aspects of Christ’s Atonement. As the one Mediator between God and men, He has absolute power over all men, to do with them as He wills, yet that power has a special relation to those whom His Father gave Him before the foundation of the world. And they are those who come to Him in accordance with His declaration, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

**3.***And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*[See Sermon #2396, Volume 41—ETERNAL  
LIFE!—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] So

that the only way to obtain eternal life is to know God the Father and God the Son—and the best way to know them is to ask God the Holy Spirit to teach us what is revealed concerning them in the Sacred Scriptures which He inspired holy men of old to write.

**4, 5.***I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify You Me with Yourself with the Glory which I had with You before the world was*. As Christ had carried out His Father’s will and done the work He had been sent to do, it was but right that He should go back to the Glory which He had, for a season, voluntarily laid aside. You notice that although He had not then died upon the Cross, He was so certain that He would there complete His great mediatorial work that He spoke of it as being already “finished.”

**6.***I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word*. No one but Christ could or would have borne such a testimony concerning His fickle, feeble followers. Happy will it be for us if He can also say concerning us who profess to be His disciples, “They have kept Your word.”

**7, 8.***Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me*. You see how the Truth reached these disciples. The Father gave the words to His Son in His mediatorial capacity. And He gave those words to His disciples—and they received them and believed that Christ was indeed the Sent One from the Father.

**9, 10.***I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are  
Mine; and I am glorified in them*. [See Sermon #2331, Volume 39—CHRIST’S PASTORAL PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See what perfect union there is between the Father and the Son, and note their mutual relationship to the chosen people, “They are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine.”

**11, 12.***And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled*. So it is clear that Judas was not among those who were given to Christ by His Father—if He had been, He also would have been “kept.”

**13.***And now come I to You.* Christ looked beyond all that was to happen to Him before He could return to His Glory and, as He saw His Father waiting to welcome Him, He cried “And now come I to You.” These might be appropriate words in the mouth of a dying Believer: “And now come I to You.”

**13, 14.***And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*Never did anyone more thoroughly mix with men than Christ did—and never had anyone greater sympathy with human beings than He had—yet everyone knows that He never was “of the world.” He was distinct from all who were round about Him and He says that His disciples were as He was. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Christ’s people have a life that others have not. They have a relationship to God that others have not. They are swayed by motives which others understand not and they are journeying onward toward a perfection to which others do not even desire to attain! So they are not of the world and the world treats them as speckled birds—and hates them even as it hated their Lord and Master.

**15.***I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You*

*should keep them from evil* . [See Sermons #47, Volume 1—CHRIST’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE; #2355, Volume 40—CHRIST’S NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE PRAYER and #2703, Volume 46— THE PRESERVATION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD—Read/download the entire sermons, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Christ did not pray that there might be monasteries and nunneries where His servants might be shut away from the world, nor even that His followers might die in early youth and go home to Heaven! He prayed that, remaining in the world for gracious purposes—to be its salt and its light—they might themselves be kept from the evil that is in the world. It would be a dreadful thing, indeed, if the chosen people of God were to be overcome by the world. So Christ prayed that His Father would keep them from the evil, for He well knew that they could not be kept from it by any power that was not Divine. There is no less power needed for the preservation of a Believer than for his regeneration. The sustaining of a Saint is a constant miracle which can only be worked by God Himself.

**16, 17.***They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth*. [See Sermon #1890, Volume 32—  
OUR LORD’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE’S SANCTIFICATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Some men tell us that the Truth of God is *in* the Word, but that the Word is not the Truth. I read, the other day, that we might regard the Bible as a casket which contained the jewel of the Truth, but was not itself the jewel. Christ did not talk in that fashion, for He said to His father, “Your Word is Truth.” This shows that God’s Word is not merely the casket of Truth, but is the Truth itself!

**18.***As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world*. They are sent ones, even as Christ was *the* Sent One. As He is the Christ, they are *Christ*ians, anointed with the same anointing as He Himself is and they should endeavor to be in all respects missionaries to the world, even as Christ was God’s great Missionary to the lost.

**19.***And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth*. “I set Myself apart wholly for them, that they also may be set apart for holy uses.”

**20.***Neither pray I for these alone.* “For these who are already saved by My Word.”  
**20.***But for them also which shall believe on Me through their word*. And so His blessed arm encircled not only the converts gathered to Him by His own personal ministry, but also those who should, in later days, be converted under His servants’ ministry! And it always seems to me to have been great condescension on His part to have said, “I pray for them also which shall believe on Me through *their* word.” We should have expected that He would have said, “through *My*word,” and indeed, it is His Word that leads sinners to repent and to believe! Yet Christ puts this honor upon those who speak His Word out of the fullness of their hearts. They have by *experience* made it their own, so He calls it theirs and gives them this honorable position as the messengers of the Gospel of salvation.  
**21.***That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me*. I wish that we could see more of this blessed unity, yet it does exist, even if we cannot see it. Wherever there is any true spiritual life—it matters not how much it may be marred by denominational divisions— there is and there always will be, an essential unity. All Christians are one family in Christ. I do not mean all who *call themselves Christians*, but all who really are Believers in Christ. The inner life is one, the source of that life is one, the nourishment of that life is one and the end of that life is one—so that all who possess it must be one—one in Christ and one with one another, even as Christ is One with the Father.  
**22, 23.***And the Glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.* That is the real secret of the saints’ unity—“I in them,” together with the everlasting Union of Christ Jesus with the Father—“and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.”  
**23.***And that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have*

*loved them as You have loved Me*. [See Sermon #1472, Volume 25—THE GLORY, UNITY AND TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is a great deep—the words are very simple and clear—but their meaning is unfathomable. Is it really true that the Father has loved His chosen ones as He has loved His only-begotten Son? It is such a wondrous thing that one might be willing to lie awake at night to meditate upon the amazing Truth here revealed in our Savior’s words—“You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

**24.***Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world*. [See Sermons #188, Volume 4—

THE REDEEMER’S PRAYER and #1892, Volume 32—WHY THEY LEAVE US—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Some foolish folk talk

about the saints being put away for a while into some purgatorial “limbo” in order that they may be made ready for Heaven but Christ speaks not so! He says, “I will that they...be with Me where I am.” We care not to answer curious questions about the disembodied state—it is enough for us that Christ knows all and that we shall be with Him forever!

What shall be the occupation of those who are with Christ? “That they may behold My Glory.” There will be something worth looking at, something to be delighted with forever and ever! “The glory which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” So God must have loved His people before the foundation of the world, for He has loved them as He has loved His Son! There was no beginning and there shall be no end to the Father’s love to His people! He says to each one of them, “I have loved You with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn You.” Here are waters to swim in—plunge into them and revel in the bliss they are meant to convey to all who are in Christ Jesus!

**25-26.***O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them*. [See Sermons #1378, Volume

23—THE RIGHTEOUS FATHER KNOWN AND LOVED and #1667, Volume 28—“LOVE AND I”—A MYSTERY—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] How

rich is this language! How musical! Surely, never did any human poem match this peerless prose of the Divine Teacher! And now, what a descent it is as we pass on to the next scene in His life!

**John 18:1, 2.***When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed*

*Him, knew the place.* [See Sermon #2767, Volume 48—JESUS IN GETHSEMANE— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He was fa

miliar with the Master’s place of retirement for private prayer and he had, doubtless, heard the Master pray there. Yes, and many a Judas knows the place where the saints meet for worship and knows the Communion Table, too, and knows some of the most hallowed gatherings of God’s people where they pour out their hearts in private prayer. And the pity is that knowing all that—the ancient Judas and the modern one do not savingly know the Master Himself!

**2.***For Jesus ofttimes resorted there with His disciples*. If ever any man might have lived without prayer, it was our Lord Jesus Christ! His Humanity was perfect, yet He abounded in prayer. And the nearer we grow to Christian perfection the more shall we pray. I heard of one who said that she was so perfectly acquiescent in the will of God that she had left off praying, she had got beyond that! What a fearful delusion! God save all of us from ever falling into it! Here is One who could say from His heart, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” He expressed in prayer His perfect acquiescence in His Father’s will. Did Christ, our Lord and Master pray so, and will any who profess to be His followers speak so presumptuously as to say that they can live without prayer? God forbid!

**3.***Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons*. What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the Garden of Gethsemane—“lanterns” to show them the way to the Sun of Righteousness. “Torches” with which to find out the bright Morning Star and, “weapons” with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose them with but His own innocence!

**4.***Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them, Whom do you seek?* It is a wonderfully suggestive thought that Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him. Martyrs and other sufferers for Christ’s sake have had some measure of foresight of what they had to endure, but none of them could have so exquisite a foretaste of everything as our blessed Lord had. He knew it all—every single atom of pain, anguish and heartbreak. He knew it all, yet He calmly “went forth” to meet it and said to those who came to drag Him away to His death, “Whom do you seek?”

**5, 6.***They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon, then, as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground*. “Jesus said unto them, I Am,” as though appropriating to Himself the name of Jehovah. And “they went backward, and fell to the ground,” astounded and confounded! Even though He restrained His Omnipotence, He claimed the Omnipotent name, I AM, and before the majesty of that name they prostrated themselves upon the ground!

**7-9.***Then asked He them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of them which You gave Me have I lost none.*[See Sermons

#2368, Volume 40—THE LIVING CARE OF THE DYING CHRIST and #2616, Volume 45—CHRIST’S CARE OF HIS DISCIPLES—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That was a very gracious saying of Christ’s, “If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way.” This is what Christ says on His people’s behalf to death and to the Law and the justice of God. And though this saying does not excuse the disciples’ flight, it does make some sort of apology for their going away, every man to his own home. Christ knew that they would be safer there. One of them followed Him afar off instead of going his way—and you know what came of it. There is a time for openly following Christ, but there is a time when Jesus says, “Let these go their way.” So, right to the end He takes care of His sheep and bids them scatter for a while now that the sword is about to enter their Shepherd’s heart.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2307 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREATEST EXHIBITION OF THE AGE  
NO. 2307

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 7, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 5, 1889.~~***

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

FIRST, let me say that the Lord’s Supper is nothing to us unless we partake of it as spiritual persons in a spiritual way. We must understand what we are doing in coming to the Communion Table. The mere mechanical celebration will be vanity. It may even be a sin. To observe this ordinance aright, you must bring your mind in an awakened state. You must come with holy faith, love and concentrated thought. I pray that we may so come, tonight. I know how mechanical we all get. We even stand up and sing and, oftentimes, we forget what we are singing while the sounds issue from our lips. We cover our eyes in prayer, but we do not always pray. There is such a thing as preaching from the mouth outward, instead of speaking from the heart. And I believe there is a kind of hearing which is dreadfully superficial and can do the hearer no good. Now, if you come to the Supper, tonight, bring your hearts with you! And if your hearts are warm with love to Christ, desire to have them yet more full of love to your Lord.

I remember reading of a Mr. Welch, a very devout minister of the Gospel in Suffolk, who was found weeping one day. And when he was asked by a brother minister why he wept, he said it was because he should love Christ more than he did. That was a very good reason for weeping. Now, let us love our Lord much, tonight, and if we cannot feel the glow of love as we wish to feel it, let us weep to think that it is so. May the Spirit of God come and put life into our Communion, that every child of God, here, may have real fellowship with Christ in the breaking of bread!

But now, let us get to our work. The Lord’s Supper, dear Friends, is, first of all, a memorial. “This do in remembrance of Me.” It is intended to keep alive in our own hearts and in the minds of others, the wondrous fact that the Son of God was here among men and laid down His life a Sacrifice for sin. It is well known that a custom, a rite, a festival, has a very great historical power to keep up in the minds of men the recollection of a fact—and our Lord has selected this common meal, this Supper, as a method by which men should be made to know to the very end of time that He died. There can be no doubt about the death of Christ because through long ages all history bears record that Christian men and women have met together—and have eaten bread and have drunk wine—to keep up the memory of His sufferings and death. This is better than if there had been a statue erected, or than if a document had been written, or than if a brass tablet had been inscribed. We are not without memorials of other sorts, especially are we not without *books*, but this perpetually celebrated feast—kept up without cessation, kept up in every country on the face of the earth—is one of the very best memorials that the death of Christ can have. All of you who come to the Table, tonight, will be helping to keep alive, in the memory of men, the great fact that Jesus died.

But the Lord’s Supper is more than a memorial, it is a fellowship, a communion. Those who eat of this bread, spiritually understanding what they do—those who drink of this cup, entering into the real meaning of that reception of the wine—do, therein, receive Christ *spiritually* into their hearts. Their heart, soul, mind feeds upon Christ, Himself, and upon what Christ has done. We do not merely record the fact, but we enjoy the *result* of it. We do not merely say that Christ died, but we desire to die with Him and to live only as the result of His having died! We take scot and lot with Christ as we come to the table. We say deliberately, “Yours are we, You Son of God, and all that we have. And You are ours and, in testimony thereof, we eat this bread and we drink of this cup to show that we are one with Yourself, partners with You in this great fellowship of love.”

Well, now, if you need a permanent memorial and a perpetual means of fellowship, it will be wise to have a rite or ceremony in which there shall also be a likeness to the fact that has to be remembered! This supper is, therefore, an exhibition, a showing, a setting forth, a proclamation of the *death of Christ*. That you may remember that Jesus died, there is something here that bears a resemblance to His death. That you may the better have fellowship with Him in His death, here is something which is a vivid picture of that death and which will help to bring it more clearly before your mind’s eyes. That is the subject for tonight’s meditation—this Supper as a showing forth, an exhibition of Christ’s death, “till He comes.”

In speaking of this exhibition, this showing forth, we will consider, first, *what it shows.* Secondly, *how it shows it.* And thirdly, *how long it is to show it*.

**I.**Thinking of this Supper that we are about to celebrate, we will consider, first, WHAT IT SHOWS. “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, *you do show the Lord’s death*.”

Brothers and Sisters, tonight we are to show, to exhibit, to demonstrate, to set forth, to symbolize, to represent, to picture the death of Christ! He lived, or He could not have died. That fact is, therefore, included in our confession of faith. But the point we especially set forth is this, that He died, He who was born at Bethlehem, the Son of Mary, and who lived here on earth, being also the Son of God, in due time, *died*! He gave His life a ransom for many. Why do we record that fact? To my intense grief, I have heard it said, even among a certain class of preachers, that we dwell too much upon the death of Christ. They ask why we do not talk more about His life. The death of a *man*, they say, is not so important, by a great many degrees, as his life. The Lord have mercy upon the miserable and ignorant men who talk in that fashion! But we have a reason for making so much of Christ’s death—the Lord has instituted no memorial of His life—the memorial that He has instituted is to keep before His people the perpetual remembrance of His *death*. And why is that the case?

I take it because *this is the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*! The doctrine that He died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,” is essential to the Gospel. Leave out the vicarious Sacrifice unto death, and you have left out the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! There are some Truths of God which ought to be preached in due proportion with other Truths, but if they are *not* preached, souls may be saved. But *this* is a Truth of God which *must* be preached and if it is left out, souls will *not* be saved! I should have more hope of the salvation of a man hearing a Romish priest, with all his superstition, if he preached the death of Christ, than I should of one hearing a Unitarian, with all his intelligence, if he left out the doctrine of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! “The blood is the life thereof.” “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Because the death of Christ is the *life* of the Gospel, therefore it is that there is an ordinance to set forth that death “till He comes.”

And this is the more so, in the next place, because *this is the point where the Gospel is always being assailed*. You shall find, in almost every controversy, that the fight thickens about the Cross. It is around the standard that the foemen cluster. There the sword rings upon the armor! There the loudest shout is heard! There you see the garment rolled in blood! So the Cross, the Cross is the standard of our Christianity! Round the Atoning Sacrifice the controversialists gather. They think they are aiming at other things, but the real password is, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the Divine Substitute for men.” If they could once get rid of the Doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice, they would destroy that which is the greatest tower of strength to the Gospel of Christ! But, thank God, they cannot get rid of the Cross! We can still sing—

***“The Cross it stands fast, Hallelujah!  
Defying every blast, Hallelujah!  
The winds of Hell have blown,  
The world its hate has shown,  
Yet it is not overthrown.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!  
It shall never suffer loss!***

Therefore, set forth the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ, Brothers and Sisters, in this ordinance, “till He comes.”

So well does this Supper set forth the death of Christ in that respect, that it has been argued by some Brethren that, if a man comes to the Communion Table, unless he is a great liar, he has already made a confession of faith in Christ. I will not go *that* length, but there is a good deal of truth in the argument. If you truly eat and drink of this Supper, you must believe in the Atoning Sacrifice—you come here under false pretences if you are not a believer in that, for, at the institution of this Supper, the Savior said, “This is My blood of the New Testament (or Covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The pardon of sin must be by the shedding of the blood of Christ—and if you reject the blood of Christ, you have rejected the true meaning of this Supper—and, certainly, you cannot come here with a clear conscience. This Supper, then, sets forth the great fact that Jesus died, and it is ordained to set that death forth because it is essential to the Gospel, and because it is the point which is most fiercely attacked.

And you will notice, Brothers and Sisters, according to our text, that this *showing of the death of Christ is to be kept up through every age “till He come*s.” It will not be needed after the Coming of Christ for reasons which we will speak of, by-and-by, but until then it will always be needed. Shall I always have to preach the Doctrine of Atonement? Yes, always. Shall we always have to set Christ forth evidently crucified among men? Yes, always. First, because we always need to have this Truth of God set forth. You and I, who are firm believers in this glorious Truth of God, yet cannot too often think upon it. I love to come every Lord’s-Day to the Communion Table—I should be very sorry to come only once a month, or, as some do, only once a year. I could not afford to come as seldom as that. I need to be reminded, forcibly reminded, of my dear Lord and Master very often. We do so soon forget and our unloving hearts so soon grow cold. How is it with you, my Brothers and Sisters? I know that it is thus with me. I sing, sometimes—

***“Gethsemane, can I forget?  
Or there Your conflict see,  
Your agony and bloody sweat,  
And not remember Thee!”***

But that is the point of my argument. We need to go often to Gethsemane and there see our Lord’s agony and bloody sweat, that we may remember Him. I suppose that, until we see His face, we shall never have one Communion too many, and we shall never have a thought of Christ that is superfluous. No, banish all poetic thought rather than that I should lose a thought of Him! Be gone the most delightful classical expression and the most charming thoughts of philosophers, if they would push out one thought of Jesus, for thoughts of Christ are golden thoughts—and thoughts of other things, however burnished by the wit and genius of men—are but poor metal compared with thoughts of Jesus! We need this Supper for ourselves, Brethren, and we should partake of it often, for that is what is meant by our Lord’s words, “As oft as you drink it.” We need that often we should eat this broad and drink this cup—and show His death for our own sins.

But this Supper is as much needed for the sake of others. We are to show Christ’s death that others may know about it, that others may be impressed by it, that others may be saved by it! I sometimes wonder, when I am talking to you upon this theme, that I do not preach much better. And yet, when I have done, I say to myself, “Well, how can there be anything better if one only tells the tale truly?” That God came here in human flesh and for our sins did serve, did die. That He bore the vengeance due to our guilt, the punishment which our transgressions had incurred. Brethren, that is poetry! It is *essential* poetry, even though I only put it into a child’s speech. It needs no garnishing. The face of perfect beauty must not be touched with Jezebel’s paints! And all the garnishing of eloquence that can be brought to such a fact as this is unnecessary, meretricious, and degrading. Oh, hear you the tale, and then, as you come to the Table, remember what it is that you set forth, and say to yourself, “I am, by this action, telling a story more wonderful than all the histories of men put together. I am showing to those who look on something which angels desire to look into, which the most wonderful intelligences will, throughout all the ages, study with ever-growing wonder and delight—God Incarnate, suffering in the sinner’s place!”

Show that forth, Brothers and Sisters, for it is worth the showing!

**II.**But now, secondly, having mentioned what it is that this Supper shows, let me prove to you HOW IT SHOWS IT.  
It does so, first, *very instructively in the emblems themselves*. We need to tell men and to tell our own hearts that Jesus died. Well, look, here is bread! Mark you, not a *wafer*, but a piece of household bread. And here is wine in a cup. Not wine and water, but the true juice of the grape, which our Lord called, “the fruit of the vine.” What then? Here are bread and the fruit of the vine, separately. Bread, representing the flesh of Christ, has a million sermons in it. Shall I tell you its story? It was a grain of wheat. They threw it into the ground, they buried it beneath the clods, it lay there exposed to winter’s cold. It sprang up and many a frost nipped it in the green blade. But then came spring weather and summer tide, and the wheat grew and grew on till it turned into the yellow golden grain. Look, they come along with a sharp sickle and cut it down! It must feel the keen edge. After cutting it down, they take it away in sheaves. They spread it out upon the barn floor. Here are flails which come hammering down upon it—in those olden times they used flails. Now they beat out the grain from the ear and now, when they have all the grain separated from the straw, it must be winnowed and the chaff must be blown away.  
Then they take this wheat and put it between two stones and grind it. Woe unto you, O Grain, you are ground into the finest flour! But it has not finished its history of suffering yet. When well ground and separated from the bran, it is taken and a woman kneads it with all her might, and makes it into dough. Nor is its suffering ended, yet, for she thrusts it into the oven! Now does it feel the heat of the fire and when the loaf is taken out of the oven, it is cut, or broken, and devoured. It is a story of suffering from the beginning to the end!  
Now take that cup and look into its ruddy depths. Do you see that vine yonder? You expected to find it festooned on trelliswork, a lovely object— but looking at it in the winter and spring, you say to yourself, “Is that a vine? It looks like an old, dead stick left in the ground.” Yes, it has been cut down. Did you not see the pruner’s knife? How sharply he cut! “Surely,” you said, “he is killing that vine.” No, vines are made to bear much fruit by being closely cut and pruned. But now it is summer and in the early months of autumn the vine is loaded with red grapes—and those grapes must be taken off the vine and severed from the branch. Look, they are throwing them into the winepress, heaps upon heaps! Look how they are piled up! And what happens now? Men leap in upon them and with their feet they tread the grapes. The blood of the grape runs out of the winepress, red like ruddy gore! This is the history of the wine of which you drink and so it comes to you. And, oh, I need not tell you of your Lord, how He was thrown into the winepress, and how He suffered even unto death! These elements of bread and wine are stories to you and emblems of *suffering*!  
You notice, too, that these emblems are separate. If I were to take the bread and crumble it into the cup, and then pass it to you that you might drink of that curious mixture, you would not celebrate the Lord’s death at all! It would not be possible, for it is the body with the blood *separated from it* that sets forth death! While the blood is in the veins, you have life, but when the blood is drawn away from the body, which is set forth to you in the pure white bread and in the red juice of the grape, then you have the picture of death—and in that way you show Christ’s sufferings and death in the celebration of this Supper.  
So much I have, I hope, made plain enough for all to understand.  
Now notice *the manner of the use of these two elements*, for the manner of their use vividly shows Christ’s death. I think it is in the Church Catechism that we are taught that the word, “sacrament,” means “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.” That definition will do for this ordinance, which is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace.  
It is very remarkable how the emblems before us appeal to our various senses. Notice, first, the Savior took the bread and the cup. You see them—they are before you, you can see them. After He had blessed them, He said, “Take.” Did you ever see, in a very Ritualistic church, that little game played by the priest with his napkin held out under the chin of the communicant and, telling him to open his mouth and popping the wafer in? This is not eating the Lord’s Supper, for the command at the institution of the Lord’s Supper was, “Take, eat.” It is essential that you *take it in your hand*. “Take, eat.” So there is another sense that is affected in this sacred exercise, that is, the sense of *touch*. Jesus took the bread and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, that they might employ the second sense. They had *seen*, now they *touched*. “Take, eat,” said the Lord, and they held it in their hands.  
Never do you have the Lord’s Supper without an appeal to the ears, for He said, “This is My body.” Whenever we break this bread, we say the same, “This bread is Christ’s body,” so there is an appeal to the ears. You put the bread and the wine into your mouth—there comes in your fourth sense, your *taste*, so that four senses are made to assist you in realizing that Christ did really die, that His death is no dream, no fiction! It is not merely a man in a book, but a living Man who died, a real Man who poured out His life unto death for you! I have said that four senses are appealed to, but I might add the sense of smell, also. There is an old proverb, “Nothing smells so sweet as bread,” and to a hungry man there is nothing so refreshing as the presence of bread which regales the nostril. The Lord has given us an ordinance, here, in which He brings our body to support our soul and to render vivid to our mind by at least four, if not all of our five senses, this most blessed fact, that Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, did really lay down His life a Sacrifice for us!  
But now I remind you of another thing. We show the death of Christ, in the next place, by *the mode of the disposal of this bread and this wine*, for these elements go into our bodies. They are received into the inner man and are digested and assimilated there, and taken up into our system to build us up. And herein we teach that Christ, dying for us, is to be received by faith into the heart. We are to believe in that death as being for *us*. We are to appropriate it as our own. We are to trust in it. We are to live upon it. It is to become part and parcel of our spiritual nature and we are to be built up, thereby, for Christ’s death on the Cross saves nobody to whom Christ does not come into the heart. If you do not believe, even Christ lifted up between earth and Heaven will not save you. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” But without receiving Him, Christ is dead in vain so far as you are concerned. You have no part nor lot in this matter. This fact, I say, we set forth by the method of the disposal of the emblems.  
And now, carefully note that *the spirit of this ordinance is also very instructive.* How does it begin? Jesus takes bread and blesses it. In other words, He *gives thanks*. It is very usual to call this ordinance the Eucharist, or, *the giving of thanks*. That is the spirit of it—it is all through a giving of thanks. Now, mark you, there is no reason to give thanks for the death of Christ unless it was an Atoning death and an expiation for sin. I should regret, infinitely regret, that a good man should die as Jesus died unless there was an end to be accomplished by it worthy of that death. The end of Christ’s death was that, dying for us, by the shedding of His blood, there might be *remission of sins*—and for that we may well give thanks! The Communion begins with thanksgiving, but how does it continue? It continues by our sitting at ease. There are some who think that to kneel at the Communion is the most reverent posture. So it is, and I doubt not that God accepts their reverence—but it is a most *unscriptural* posture! There is more presumption than reverence in it, for to alter the ordinance of Christ, even on the pretense of reverence, is not justifiable! When our Lord first of all instituted the Supper, they did not sit down as we do, but they reclined as the Orientals still do, at their ease, so much at their ease that the head of John was on the breast of Jesus.  
I cannot conceive anything more exactly the opposite of coming up to an altar rail and kneeling down, than this reclining upon couches with your head upon your next neighbor’s bosom! The fact is that it meant ease, it meant rest—and that is what the posture which we take up should mean. Our nearest approach to that which can be tolerated in our western clime is to sit as much as you can at ease, as a person in this country does at a banquet, as near an approach as possible to the method of the Oriental at his banquet. That is how the feast goes on—it began with a blessing, it proceeds with a restful posture. How does it end? After Supper they sang a hymn. It was not a dirge, it was not funeral—they *celebrated* the death of Christ, but not with funeral rites. They sang a hymn! It was joyous, probably part of the great Hallel of the Jewish Passover. This indicates to us and we set it forth, that the death of Christ is now a joyous event—that to the whole of His people it is not a thing to sigh over, but that, believing in Christ—it is a thing to thank God for, to be at ease about and to sing over! And we set that forth by the manner in which we partake of this Supper.  
One thing more we set forth. *The persons who come to the Table must be, according to Christ’s rule, believers in Him.* They, and they only, have a right to eat of this feast. Others eat and drink unworthily and drink and eat condemnation to themselves. We do, therefore, say, albeit that there is no limit to the value of the Sacrifice of Christ (that were inconceivable), yet He had a special objective in it and He died for a special people, which people are known by their being led to believe in Him, to unite with Him in a distinct affiance by trusting in Him. Not for you all will this avail, but for all of you that believe, for so it is written, “For God so loved the world,” so much and no more, “that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”—a universality which, nevertheless, has a specialty hidden in its inner self.  
Believe this, or else this death is not for you. Trust Christ, or else you shall have no share in the blessings which His death has purchased. And we set that forth when, gathering at the Table, we come as Believers, but we are obliged to tell others that if they are *not* Believers, they must not come—they have no right to come.  
**III.**My time has nearly gone, and therefore I must finish with the third point. We have seen what this Supper shows, and how it shows it. Now we are to consider HOW LONG IT IS TO SHOW IT.  
I have tried, as best I could, in a very simple way, to show how this Supper symbolizes and sets forth the death of Christ. How long are we to do it? “*Till He come*s.” Well, now, what does that teach us? When Jesus comes, we are to leave off observing the Lord’s Supper, but not till He comes.  
It teaches us, then, that *there will always be a value in Christ’s wondrous death*. God would not have us set forth a thing that is done with, a sucked orange, a mere shell out of which the seed is gone. If the death of Christ were not abundantly efficacious, still, He would not have us set it forth. But tonight we can sing, with as much meaning and force as ever we could—  
“***Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.”***  
It is nearly 1,900 years since Jesus was here and yet His blood is still powerful, His death can still take away sin! Come and try it, tonight, some of you who have never believed in Him! Tonight, I say, at the close of this—  
***“Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky.”***  
Come now, tonight, and yield yourself to the Lamb of God, and wash in His precious blood, and you shall be whiter than snow! The Communion Table is just now covered with a white cloth, but when it is uncovered, and you see the bread and the wine, they will say to you, “The Atonement is still existing, it is still efficacious, it is still full of power.” We celebrate the ordinance because Christ’s death is still available for all who trust to it.  
The next thing is, dear Friends, that by saying that we will partake of this Supper till Christ comes, we set forth our belief in the *perpetuity of this ordinance until the influence of Christ’s death shall have been infallibly secured*. We are now in a world where men forget and, as long as we are in such a world, we must keep this signpost, this direction to those who want to journey to Heaven! We must never take this signpost down till there will be no need of it because Christ will have come—and when He shall have come, Beloved, we shall not, even then, forget His death! When He shall come, do not think that we shall give up the Lord’s Supper because we give up thinking of Him. No, we shall give it up because we shall, then, *never* give up thinking of Him! He will be present with us and He, being present with us, we shall not need the help which now our weakness requires!  
So then, in closing, I say to you that this Supper is a window, a window of agate, and *the outlook of this Supper is the Second Coming of the lord from Heaven*. This Supper is also a gate of carbuncle and through this gate we are to watch for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from the Throne of His Glory to this earth. The Lord shall come. As surely as we are sitting here in this house, so surely will He, before long, appear a second time on earth, “without sin, unto salvation!” And we mean to keep up this feast “till He comes.”—  
***“See, the feast of love is spread.  
Drink the wine, and break the bread—  
Sweet memorials, till the Lord  
Calls us round His heavenly board.  
Some from earth, from Glory some,  
Severed only ‘Till He come!’”***  
Could you keep on feasting “till He comes,” my unsaved Hearer? I think that you had better weep and mourn, repent and believe, and so get ready for His appearance! But those who are ready may just keep on feasting upon Him and rejoicing in Him, till He puts in His last and glorious appearance! God help us to continue so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. *JOHN 16:1-20.***

This chapter contains some of the most precious Words that the Lord Jesus uttered before He died upon the Cross.  
**Verse 1.***These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended.* Or, as the Revised Version translates it, “be made to stumble.” Christ would not have His children stumble. There is an offense of the Cross, but He would not have us needlessly offended. How careful is our dear Savior not to give us offense! We ought to be very careful not to offend Him, but what condescension it is on His part that He should be careful of offending us, or of permitting us to be offended, or made to stumble!  
**2.***They shall put you out of the synagogues: yes, the time comes that whoever kills you will think that he dose God service.*Can you remain faithful to your Master, then, when you lose your position, or your character, or men put you out of the synagogue? When you nearly lose life, itself, and when they shall think they are doing God’s service by seeking to kill you, can you stand true to Christ, then? The Master knew that days of bitter persecution would soon come upon His followers, so He strengthened them against those evil times that were approaching.  
**3.***And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.* It is ignorance that makes men hate God’s people and His Son—“They have not known the Father, nor Me.” Truly did Paul say, “I did it ignorantly in unbelief,” and for such persecutors there is full and free forgiveness. When they turn unto the Lord, even this sin shall be forgiven them. But they will not forgive themselves for having committed it and, like Paul, they will count themselves the chief of sinners because they persecuted the Church of God.  
**4.***But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.* “You will then see My foresight, My care for you, My prophetic power. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will not be taken by surprise.” If any of you who have lately been converted should meet with great opposition, do not be surprised—Jesus has told you to expect it—and if the fire should get seven times hotter, count it no strange thing that the fiery trial has happened to you. It has happened unto others before you and will happen to others after you! Therefore be prepared for it.  
**4.***And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.* “While I was with you, you could run to Me and tell Me all about your trials and difficulties. If anybody was hard with you, I could come to your help and comfort you. You did not need to know these things, before, so I did not tell you of them. You need to know them, now, and now I tell you of them.”  
**5.***But now I go My way to Him that sent Me.* Christ was going to the Cross and to the grave, and afterwards to Heaven.  
**5.***And none of you asked Me, Where go you?* For lack of asking that question, Christ’s disciples were full of grief. Sometimes we do not ask enough questions. We ask too many questions of doubt—it would be well if we were to ask a few more questions of believing curiosity! There are some things that we ought to wish to know and Christ encourages His people to come to Him for information.  
**6.***But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart.* When a poor Christian friend is dying, you are full of sorrow because he is going away from you. Why do you not ask where he is going? If he is going Home to Heaven and to Glory, why, then, be comforted about him! You have no cause for distress on his account.  
**7.***Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away.* “It is better for yon that I should be absent than that I should be present.” Their Lord was their joy, their Leader, their Teacher, their Comforter. He is going away and He tells them that His absence will be a gain to them! “It is expedient for you that I go away.”  
**7.***For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.* Now, it is better for us to have the Comforter than to have Christ here in bodily Presence, for if Christ were here, tonight, in this Tabernacle, where could we put Him so as to be equally near, each one of us? I should certainly want Him up here on the platform! And you, up there in the top gallery, would say, “Well, we are a long way off—why should He not come up here?” You see, if it is bodily Presence that is enjoyed, some must be near, and some must be far off. But now that Christ has gone up to Heaven, His Spirit is here. Where is that Spirit? On the platform, I hope, and everywhere else! Any of you who desire Him, may have the Holy Spirit’s Presence. The Lord says,” I will put My Spirit within you.” Better than the bodily Presence of Christ is the real, though *spiritual*, Presence of the Holy Spirit.  
**8.***And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement.* What? A Comforter reprove? Yes. The Holy Spirit never comforts till He has reproved. There must be a reproof of sin before there can be comfort in Christ! And while the Spirit comforts saints, He reproves the world.  
**9.***Of sin, because they believe not on Me.*The greatest sin in all the world is not believing on Jesus. Our Lord did not say, “Of sin, because of the evil of drunkenness.” That is a great sin, a cursed sin and there are other great sins, but Christ said, “Of sin, because they believe not on Me.” That is the root sin, the foundation sin—the sin that keeps a man in his sin.  
**10.***Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more.* It is God’s Righteousness that takes Christ up to Heaven. He has been here. He has lived a perfect life. He has died a Sacrificial death and God has shown His acceptance of Him, for He has gone to His reward.  
**11.***Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.*When Christ came here, there was a crisis, a judgement. And sin was judged and condemned and the Prince of the world, the chief sinner in the world, received his deathblow—“the Prince of this world is judged.”  
**12.***I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them, now.* See how Christ teaches us slowly, wisely, prudently? There are some things which some of you young Christians do not know—you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf! Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them. Do not give him meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Savior’s way of imparting instruction? He teaches us much, but not too much at a time.  
**13.***Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide yon into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.*See, my dear

Brothers in the ministry, how little store the Holy Spirit sets by originality? We have men, nowadays, straining to be original! Strain the other way, for listen, “He shall not speak of Himself”—not even the Holy Spirit— “He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak.” He is the Repeater of the Father’s message, not the inventor of His own! So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a Gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, “He shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak”

**14.***He shall glorify Me.*The Holy Spirit does that. Therefore, surely we, who are the preachers of the Gospel, should aim at the same objective— “He shall glorify Me.” It should be our one desire to magnify and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ!

**14-16.***For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father has are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and you shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father.*That was a very simple statement! Every Sunday scholar understands it, now, but the 12 Apostles did not understand it when they heard it.

**17, 18.***Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He says unto us, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He says, A little while? we cannot tell what He says.* They said this “among themselves.” This was not a wise course, for what can ignorance learn from ignorance? Here were disciples questioning one another—none of them knew anything—and yet they were trying to teach one another. If they had all gone to their Master, how much more quickly would they have understood His words! Take everything to Jesus! Try everything by the Word of God. Do not believe what you hear because I say it, or because somebody else says it. Go to the Word of God to learn what you need to know, and to the Spirit of God to teach you the meaning of what you read!

**19, 20.***Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and you shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and you shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That you shall weep and lament.* Christ would die. He would go away and be unseen. On the Cross He would depart out of this life. In the tomb He would be hidden from His disciples—“You shall weep and lament.”

**20.***But the world shall rejoice.* But not for long—the world’s joy at Christ’s death was soon over.  
**20.***And you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* I think we may leave off our reading at this verse, with these words to flavor our mouth all this week—“Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” God grant that it may be so with many here present, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SEES AND SAYS

NO. 2595

***~~A SERMON  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 1, 1883.~~***

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

THERE is something very tender about the Supper which Christ has instituted, for it very specially concerns Himself. Other things set forth the Truths of God which He taught, or the blessings which He purchased, or the duties which He enjoined, but this Supper has mainly to do with our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. True, as we think and speak of it, we shall learn precious doctrine and we shall be incited to gracious practice, but the central thought at this Table is concerning our Lord, Himself, and that part of Himself which it is most easy for us to realize— His flesh, with which He touches us so tenderly, making Himself bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. His blood, which makes Him so near akin to us—

***“In ties of blood with sinners one.”***

It is very blessed not only to be reminded of Christ, but of that part of Christ to which we can most readily come. His Godhead is beyond us, but His Manhood is near to us, and I think that the tenderness of this Supper is greatly increased by the fact that it celebrates our Lord’s death. If anything concerning our departed friends specially touches our heart, it is their death. How lovingly we remember their last moments! Their final utterance sounds to us like the language of Prophets—words that were commonplace, before, become golden when spoken to us by loved ones as they leave us. The tears come readily enough to the eyes and the heart beats faster than usual when we begin to remember our well-beloved friends—and to remember them in the solemn moment of their death. At this Supper we shall not forget that our blessed Master is exalted and sits at the right hand of God. And we shall also, there, be forcibly reminded that He is coming a second time in the clouds of Heaven with all the pomp and glory of His Father’s court! Yet, the main intent of our gathering around this Table is to show forth His death. That is the principal point and, therefore, Beloved, collect all your thoughts into one thought, all your contemplations into one contemplation and lay the whole at the foot of the Cross as you “eat this bread, and drink this cup.”

To me, it is an exceedingly tender recollection that you and I should be called upon to keep up this memorial as if our Lord gave us this Supper with the commission that each one of us should see to it that His memory was always green—I was about to say, to keep His grave in order. But it is not so, He is not here, for He is risen! But, at least we are to keep the letters upon this monument always deeply carved and legible, showing forth His death that everyone who passes by—that everyone who rambles into the cemetery where men have slept and pauses at this open tomb, and asks who once slept here—may know from us that it was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man, our dear and ever-to-beadored Savior, who died, was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures!

You see, then, that this Supper concerns our Lord Jesus and it especially concerns His death. And you have to attend to this ordinance and so to freshen up the memorials of the departed One. Do you not think that it will help you to do it if you remember that He has not gone far away? Before I rose to speak to you, I thought within myself that I could hear His footsteps upon this platform—and I opened my eyes after my Brother’s prayer almost expecting to see the Master here! He is not here in that sense, though, if I said that He is here, who would dare to contradict me? He has so gone away as to be still present and He is still present so as to be absent! Make what you can of that riddle—many of you understand the blessed paradox! We have not lost our Lord’s spiritual Presence, but we are looking for His bodily Presence and, I think, He is already so near that if He were suddenly to appear in our midst, it would be no surprise to us and we would all clap our hands, and say, “Welcome, You long-expected One! We knew that You would come and we felt the influence of Your Presence—the coming event had cast its brightness upon us! We knew that You were on the way, for our hearts burned within us and we felt You coming nearer and the days of Your Glory dawning!”

Very well, then, bearing all this in mind, we have now to consider what the Apostle said about this Supper and, first, I shall ask you to think of *the backward look of this ordinance—*“You do show the Lord’s death.” Secondly, I shall ask you to listen to *the present voice of this ordinance,*to try to hear what it now whispers in our ears. And then, thirdly, I shall speak of *the prophetic glance of this ordinance,*since the text tells us that in it we “do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” So there is, in the ordinance, a glimpse at Christ’s coming Glory, a gleam of that long-expected light!

**I.**First, then, let us think of THE BACKWARD LOOK OF THIS ORDINANCE.  
It was intended to be the memorial of the great event of Christ’s life— and I think you will all agree with me that it is *a most effectual memorial.* It has been said, by men well competent to judge, that there is no better memorial of an event than the celebration of some such festival as this. If you write the record of it in a book, the book may be placed upon a shelf and, perhaps, remain unread. Or it may be completely destroyed so that not a copy of it remains. If you set up a stone or bronze pillar and engrave upon it some words by way of memorial, that pillar may be turned to some other use and the original intention of its erection may be wholly forgotten. I have seen marble columns, recording Roman triumphs, built into the houses of Italian peasants—and you may have seen the same. Painted windows are broken and even solid brass wears away. How can you keep a thing upon the tablets of man’s memory? Here is a nine days’ wonder—will it last for nine centuries even in old worm-eaten books, or engrossed on parchment? Will not the Record Office be invaded by rats? Has it not often happened so and the best preserved documents have perished? But institute a Supper like this, so that wherever the followers of Christ meet together, a piece of bread and a little wine may suffice them to show forth Christ’s death and you have instituted a memorial which will outlast your granite and laugh to scorn memorials of brass! Speak of imperishable marble? Here you have something far more enduring and now, for nearly 19 centuries has the Church of God kept alive the memory of Christ’s death by this sacred feast. In the wisdom of Christ it was given to us—let us not grow so wise , or rather so foolish — as to neglect it!  
In looking back from this ordinance, we see it to be not only a most effectual memorial, but also *a most instructive symbol.*Of what does this Supper consist? Simply of bread and wine. The bread must be broken and what better emblem of suffering can you have than that? The bread, itself, if rightly viewed, appears to be a mass of suffering. The seed is cast into the ground which has been cut up by the sharp plow. It lies buried for a while in the cold soil. When it rises, it has to endure, first, the frost and all the trials of the wintry weather, and then the heat of summer. And when it ripens, it is cut down with a sharp sickle. The sheaves press upon one another—they are thrown upon the barn floor and the precious grain is threshed out by severe beating. Next, it must be taken to the mill, to be crushed between great stones. And when it is utterly bruised into fine flour, it must be kneaded and made into dough. Then it must be baked in the oven and it has not finished its long process of suffering till, at last, it is laid upon the table and broken in pieces, and then further broken with the teeth in order to enter into men and become their nourishment. So you see that the broken bread is an admirable emblem of that precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ into which all sorts of griefs were condensed till the “Man of Sorrows” was utterly consumed by them.  
And look, too, at the wine in the cup. Does not that also indicate pain and suffering? Have you ever seen the vine—especially in the wineproducing countries—how it is cut down, till, in the winter, it seems to be nothing but an old dead stump? How sharply do they prune it and cut it back if it is a good vine! And when, at last, it bears its clusters, the grapes are gathered and thrown into the winepress and crushed beneath the trampling feet of the laborers. And the freely-flowing juice of the grape is the picture of Christ’s Sacrifice—the yielding up of His life—the pouring out of the precious blood of Jesus!  
Now take the two emblems separately. You cannot make the Lord’s Supper with the two joined together. You must have them both, but you must have them apart, for, when the blood is separated from the flesh, then death ensues. So, on the Table, you have not only two tokens of intense suffering, but you have in the two, separate from each other, a most marked and instructive symbol of death. This is just what the Lord intended that it should be. And when we come here, we can hardly keep from remembering His death, for it is so clearly set forth before us! I do not know what the Roman “mass” sets forth, with all its mummery and mockery—what that can have to do with Christ, I cannot tell! But here you have, as Christ instituted the ordinance, a fair token and symbol of His broken body and of His shed blood and, therefore, of His death.  
You also have, in this Supper, something more than this, and that is, *a most pleasing and happy exhibition of the result of that death.*Our Divine Master died. “Woe, woe,” we cry, “that Heaven’s Darling should lie dead in the tomb!” Yes, but look what comes out of His death! Men are now called to feast with God! Our Lord Jesus, by His death, has provided this sacred viand upon which hungry souls may feed to the fullest and they are invited to come and take of that which is provided—the good cheer of Heaven, the bread that strengthens man’s heart and that wine which safely makes glad his spirit. Yes, man is no longer an outcast. No longer does he wish for the swine’s husks to fill his belly, even if they cannot satisfy it, but he sits at the Table and a feast of fat things is prepared for him—necessities and dainties—bread and wine provided for him in Christ! And that is plainly set forth to all who care to see it in this Supper. Nor is this all.  
There is, in this supper, *a personal and yet united confession and testimony to Christ.* It might have seemed difficult to blend these two, for religion is a personal matter. If Christ is to save me, I must personally feed upon Him, and yet, religion is also a social matter. If Christ is to save me, it must be in connection with the whole of His Church which He has redeemed with His most precious blood. Now here, at the Table, eating is an individual act—no man can eat or drink for his fellow men and thus, each man sets forth that he does, from his own heart, of his own accord, by his own faith, receive Christ to be his Savior. Yet inasmuch as no one man, alone, can celebrate the Lord’s Supper, but there must be two or three at the least, so the great fact is set forth that we are not saved alone, but saved as members of one body—the Church of God which He has redeemed at so great a cost!  
See, then, how the unit is lost in the mass. No, not lost—it is still there and yet it is no longer separate—and this Supper sets forth all that. Come, therefore, Beloved, to this ordinance which has such richness of meaning in it that the few words I have spoken do but touch the surface of the subject! Come, I say, and think of your Beloved. He has died—He has died for you! That dear body of His, black and blue with the cruel stripes, and crimson with its own blood—that life poured forth, though it was for all His people, yet was especially for you, my Brother—for you, my Sister! You did not see Christ die, but if your faith is in a right condition, you may see Him die, as it were, emblematically. You may see His death vividly set forth, after a striking fashion, in those emblems on the Table. God give you Grace to see it and, in response, to love Him more who died on Calvary for you! Oh, if you had seen Him die, the horror of that scene would have overcome you and, instead of sweet thoughts of devotion, as you fancy might be the case, you would probably have been overwhelmed with terror!  
But now, as through a glass, in the emblems of the body and the blood of Christ, you may see Him under a softer light. The horror may not oppress you, but you may sit in that pew and see Him who died for you—see Him with a holy joy that He could have loved you and given Himself for you! It is you who are to think of Him. It is you who are to discern the Lord’s body. It is you who are to eat and drink worthily, with all your heart, setting forth Christ’s death. It is you who are to represent Him—you, with all your Brothers and Sisters, but you, none the less, as truly as if you were alone. “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death”  
That is the backward look of this ordinance—may God’s Spirit enable you to give that look at this moment!  
**II.**And now, dear Friends, secondly and briefly, bow your ear a little and listen to THE PRESENT VOICE OF THIS ORDINANCE TO YOU. What does it say at this hour?  
It says to me—and my heart shall hear it—that *Christ’s death must still be kept to the front.* I am to “show the Lord’s death till He comes.” Whatever I forget, I am to remember that. And this Supper is instituted on purpose that I may do so. O my Heart, you must keep a dying Christ always before you! Christ to the front for myself! Christ to the front in my teaching! Christ to the front in all my prayers! Christ to the front everywhere! O Memory, leave no other name but His recorded on my heart! Whatever else may come or may go, my Heart, you are told that you must still remember His death and keep it right in the forefront of everything!  
But over the table I hear a whisper come, *“You still need this memorial.”* We are not only to remember Christ, we are to, “do this,” in remembrance of Him. This ordinance is intended to help our memory. Is it possible that we can forget our Lord’s death? Ah, if it had not been possible and *probable*, that we should forget it, there would have been no need of this Supper! It is ordained because we are naturally forgetful, we are ungracious enough to let even the best things slip. We forget not our earthly beloved ones who have been taken from us—the dear infant child has its name inscribed on the tablets of its mother’s heart, the husband has not forgotten his wife—but yet we grow unmindful of our Lord, and hence He left us this sweet forget-me-not. He says to us, as it were, “No, My beloved, I will not let you forget Me. I will give you something that shall frequently remind you of Me. Come often to My Table and there constantly think of Me afresh and anew.”  
What else does this ordinance say? It says, *“In this Supper I have fellowship with the centuries that have gone before and with those which will follow.”*When our Lord said to His first disciples, “This do in remembrance of Me,” He really gave that command to each one of us who believe in Him. But He also gave it to all the saints who have gone before us and to all who will come after us. Does it not charm you to think that you are eating as Paul did, and as James and John did—that you are in the fellowship of the martyrs and confessors, the Fathers and the Reformers, and that we, in this ordinance, enter into the great cloud of *witnesses* and take our part with them? I look upon this Supper—which some seem to regard as an unimportant ceremony—as a thing most august and sacred, seeing how many hands have combined to break this bread and how many lips have partaken of this cup. So will it be in the future when you and I sleep with our fathers. If Christ shall not come for a long, long while, this ordinance will still be observed by the faithful. If His coming should be delayed for 10,000 years—which God forbid! —yet still this Supper table would be spread and loving hearts would gather around it to keep this memorial alive on the earth “till He comes.” Do you see what this communion really is? It is a bridge of diamonds! It springs from our Lord’s death with one grand arch and it spans the intervening space “till He

comes.” Blessed are they that are treading that glorious bridge and marching on, washed in the blood of His death, till they shall wear the white robes of His victory in the day of His appearing!  
I think I hear another voice coming out of the depth of the cup. It says, *“He will come. He will come.”*And, oh, blessed assurance, He must keep His promise! This Supper is His pledge and it would be a cruel mockery of us if He never came. He*must* come! My Brothers and Sisters, it is nearly 19 centuries since Jesus said to His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so*,*I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” And He will come! Do not grow weary or, if you do faint with the long watching and waiting, do not grow doubtful. He will come! Your fathers thought that He would come in their time. Some of them fancied themselves very wise and tried to interpret the prophecies which never will be explained until they are fulfilled—and they lost themselves in endless mazes of conjecture. Do not so, but, still, do not fling away your faith because you cast aside your speculation! Believe and hope, and patiently wait, and look, each day, for the returning Christ, for He may come before tomorrow’s clock strikes at noon! He may come before the midnight hour shall fall upon the hush of this great city. Before the word I am speaking shall leave these lips and reach your ears, He may appear, for, “of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven.” But it is ours to stand watching, waiting and hoping, for this Supper tells us that He will surely come again!  
One more message comes to me from this broken bread and that is, that *it is His first coming that makes us ready for the second.*Is it not so? “You do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” You keep before your mind’s eye the fact that He came once to die in order that you may feel joy in the fact that He is coming again, not to die, but to reign forever and ever! I think I hear the countless trumpets and see the dead rising, and behold the King attended by ten thousand times ten thousand kings! Kings, did I call them? They seem to me like stars! No, like suns, for “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” Their Lord has come and His saints are gathered around Him. Caught up into the clouds, the living ones are with Him and the dead have risen and joined them! Oh, the splendor of that tremendous day! Though we know not when that day shall be, we know that He will come—the angels gave the promise to the men of Galilee—and it shall be fulfilled. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” In the clouds of Heaven, with great pomp, will He appear and, as we come to this Communion Table, we must think of that glorious appearing of our Lord!  
**III.**Now, lastly, I have to speak about THE PROPHETIC GLANCE OF THIS ORDINANCE. I have partly referred to that, already, for one thought in our text blends with another.  
The prophetic glance reveals to us the fact that *Christ will come again.* We are to celebrate this Supper “till He comes.” Then, He *will* come! Fall not asleep, you virgins, for at midnight the cry shall be heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes.” O you who serve Him, begin not to mistreat your fellow servants and to be drunk, for He will come and He may soon be here! By this Supper are we assured that He will come. “But,” perhaps you say, “His saints have waited for Him nearly 2,000 years.” What is that? Two thousand years? Think of those who waited 4,000 years before Christ came here to die! Now, I reckon that to wait 2,000 years for our Lord’s Second Advent is a trifle compared with waiting 4,000 years for His First Advent, for, you see, on that first coming depended the salvation of all His people! The ancients might well ask, “Will He come to die?” O my Brothers and Sisters, if Abraham and the Patriarchs and the Prophets had been dubious about His coming to bleed and die, I should not so much have wondered! Four thousand years passed and yet He had not come—might not each man have put his hands upon his loins for fear that he would not come—that there would be no redemption—no pouring out of the great price by which men should be set free? Four thousand years to wait for that! Why, now, if we have to wait 40,000 years for His Second Advent, it need not be such an anxious time of waiting because we may expect Him to come in His Glory—we may expect Him to come to be admired in all them that believe! We may expect Him to come to reign forever and ever! We may be sure that He who slew the dragon will come to divide the spoil! He that routed Death and Hell will come to lead captivity captive and to reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords! You are not waiting in the night, for the Day-Star has risen. You are not waiting in the thick darkness—the Dawn has broken upon you. Christ has appeared once! You are redeemed by His blood, you are children of the living God! Patiently wait, then, for He will most surely come, and every hour brings Him nearer.  
What does this ordinance further say to me? Why, surely, that *Christ’s coming will be better than ordinances.*If, when He comes, there will be no more Lord’s Suppers as we observe them now, and if it is, as it certainly is, a rule of the Kingdom to always go from good to better—and from better to best, as God never brings forth the best wine, first, and afterwards that which is worse, but it is always something better, and better, and better—then what must Christ’s coming be? Brothers and Sisters, communion with Christ in the ordinances is very, very sweet! Oh, sometimes, we have had such pleasure, such delight, such rapture at the Table of our Lord, that we could hardly have endured any more!  
At such times I have sympathized, a little, with Peter when he wished to build three tabernacles and to remain on the Mount of Transfiguration! It is very easy to get up to a great height, but, alas, we soon get down again. I wish that we could always do, in spiritual things, what I have done, today, by God’s Grace, in temporal things. I am so lame and it was so great a pain for me to get up here, this morning, that I said, “God willing, if I once get up to my platform and preach, I will not go down, again, till I have preached the evening sermon.” So I have remained upstairs all day. When I was once up, I stayed up! Now mind you, do that in spiritual things! You know, if you go down, you lame folk, you may not be able to get up, again, so stay up when you are up, and try to continue enjoying the Presence of your Lord and Master.  
But, if Lord’s Suppers and communion with Christ in outward ordinances are so sweet and we are to go on to something even better when the Lord, Himself, comes, then what excessive delight it will be! Oh, to catch a glimpse of Him! If the feet of His servants upon the mountains are beautiful, what must His own dear face be when He shall be down in the valleys among us? Oh, if the sound of His Gospel is as silver bells, what shall be the utterances of His own dear lips when His words shall be as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh? Ah, me, there is something coming for you, Believer, of which you know but little as yet! Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into your heart to know them—yet God has revealed them to you by His Spirit. You know them, to some extent, but not wholly as yet, for here we see in part and understand only in part, but there we shall know even as we are known. Be of good comfort, Brothers and Sisters—get all the sweetness you can out of this Supper while it lasts, but do not forget that there is something better than this yet to be revealed. This ordinance is only like a candle, or a little star—when Christ comes, you will not need it, for He is the Sun!  
Further, does not this Supper, as it looks into the future, tell us that *the time is coming when we shall be rid of all infirmities?* What is the need of this Supper, but that we have such weak, frail memories? When it shall be taken away, it will be a token that we have good memories— memories that will miss nothing, but will hold by that which is good and blessed forever and forever! When this Communion is no longer to be observed, it will be a happy sign that we have come to our perfection!  
Here I will close, but I seem, in closing, as if I said to you, “This is a kind of preface.” In my old Puritan books, I often find a preface written by some other hand to introduce the author’s writing. Well, this is my preface to introduce you to this marvelous book—the Communion, the Feast of Love, the Lord’s Supper. There is no teaching anywhere like it! I have been in the habit of coming to the Lord’s Table every first day of the week now for many years—I have never omitted it except when I have been too ill to move. Has it lost its freshness? Oh, dear, no! It is always a standing sermon containing more teaching than volumes of men’s sermons. I do not know how they get on who have the communion only once a quarter or once a year. Paul said, “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup.” He should have said, “as *seldom* as you drink it,” according to the habit of some! There is no law about the frequency of its observance, except the sweet Law of Love which seems to say, “If this is a window where Christ looks out, then let me often approach it. If this is a door through which He comes to my heart, then let me stand often at this door.” “Often”—frequently—I think that at least once in the week it is well for us to come to the Table of our Lord.  
But there are some of you who have never come to this Table. If you are not God’s people, do not come—it would do you no good—it would rather do you harm to partake of these emblems. If you are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, do not come to His Table—you would be hypocrites or intruders. But if you are sincere believers in Christ, how can you stay away? “This do,” He says, “in remembrance of Me.” Suppose your Lord were to come and you had never done as He bade you? What would you say to Him? “It is such a simple matter,” you say. Yes, in some senses it is. Therefore, attend to it! If it were a matter in which your soul was concerned, so that you could not be saved without it, you say that you would attend to it. Would you? What wretched selfishness that would be! Is this all that you are to live for—that you may be saved? Are you really worth saving, such a miserable creature as you are? You seem to me to be too poor a thing to be worth redeeming. If you are what you should be, you are believing in Christ and you are saved—and now you say, “What can I do to show my gratitude to Him who has redeemed me?” Your heart expands, your spirit is enlarged and if there is anything, little or great, which Christ commands as a proof of love to Him, you are delighted to do it! Do you not sometimes wish that He would give you something very difficult to do—some difficult enterprise? Have you never envied the men that died, burning at the stake, for Him? Oh, it must have been grand to have thus proved one’s love to Him! But He says, “If you love Me, keep My Commandments”—and this is one of His Commandments, “This do in remembrance of Me.”  
Now come, dear Friends, to this Communion Table, seeking your Lord and Master, and may you find Him and your hearts be made glad! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*MATTHEW 26:17-30; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.***

**Matthew 26:17-19.***Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My discip1es. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.* Note their prompt obedience—“the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them.” In this respect, they set an example we shall do well to follow.

**20.***Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.*This was the memorable night when the Jewish Passover was to melt into the Lord’s Supper, just as the stars of the morning dissolve into the daylight.

**21.***And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.*This saying of our Lord must have startled His disciples! They had all made great professions of affection for Him and, for the most part, those professions were true. But this sentence must have fallen like a bombshell among them! “One of you shall betray Me.”

**22.***And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, every one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it?*They did not doubt their Lord’s declaration. They knew it must be true—and it produced in them deep emotion—“They were exceedingly sorrowful.” It also worked in them earnest self-examination. They did not, any one of them, say, “Lord, is it Judas?*”*Perhaps there was not one of them who could have thought so badly of Judas as to suppose that he would betray his Lord. They had such esteem for him that they had made him their treasurer. It is always wise for us to turn the glass of critical examination upon ourselves—we cannot do any good by suspecting our brethren. Suspicion stings like an adder, but we may do ourselves great service by suspecting and examining ourselves. Self-suspicion is near akin to humility and truthfulness—it was so with all but one of these disciples who began to say to Christ, “Lord, is it I?”

**23, 24.***And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* So, you see, dear Friends, that a man may get very near to Christ—yes, he may even dip his morsel in the same dish with his Lord, and yet he may betray Him, even as Judas did. We may be very high in office. We may apparently be very useful—I have no doubt that Judas was exceedingly useful to the 12 and to the Master—and yet, for all that, we may betray Him! God grant that we never may! Far better that we perished at our birth than that we should live to be traitors to our Lord!

**25.***Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said.* And if he had not been a hopeless reprobate, this unmasking of Judas ought to have driven him to repentance. A man may secretly indulge in his heart a wretched design and, when discovered, he may loathe it. But, alas, there was nothing in Judas which could respond to the Grace of God.

**26-28.***And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*Go into any Romish church and watch the priest’s performance at the altar, and see whether there is the least likeness between that mummery and this Divinely-appointed ordinance! I can hardly imagine two things which are so widely apart! How did the Lord’s Supper ever grow into the “mass”? It must have taken long years of moss and ivy and lichen and all kinds of clinging things to overgrow the original, natural column which the Savior set up and to turn it into that mingle-mangle of which the Romanists and Ritualists think so much! The only safe rule is to keep close to Scripture in everything, for, if you add a little, somebody will add more—and if you alter one thing, the next person will alter another and, by-and-by, you will not know what the original was! I have seen a peasant, in Italy, wearing a coat of which I believe neither man nor angel could tell which was the material of which it was originally made, for it had been patched so often. And, in like manner, if we did not know what was the original of the “mass,” it would be impossible for us, now, to tell, for it has been so patched and mended that it is not at all like the original! Let us, Beloved, keep strictly to the letter of God’s Word and also to the spirit of it, lest we err from the Truth of God as so many others have done.

**29, 30.***But I say unto you, 1 will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* Was it not brave of our dear Lord to join in singing a hymn at such a time as that and under such circumstances? He knew that He was very soon to die—He was going out to His last dread conflict—yet He went to it singing a Psalm! It was to His Passion that He was going—to Gethsemane’s agony and bloody sweat. Yet He led the way there with a sacred song upon His lips. “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.” Now let us turn to Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, at the 11th Chapter. We shall there see how this Supper of the Lord had been changed, even in the few years since the death of the Master.

**1 Corinthians 11:20, 21.***When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating, everyone takes before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk.*They seem to have brought their own provisions to the assembly and to have made a feast, thereof, and they even thought that was an observance of the Lord’s Supper! They differed in social position and, consequently, one had little and another much, and some even went to excess so that they were actually “drunk.” Paul might well rebuke such unseemly conduct!

**22.***What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in! Or despise you the Church of God?* “Do you think that, as a nominally Christian assembly, you are constituted merely that you may eat and drink? ‘What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God?’”

**22.***And shame them that have not?* “Making the poor who come to the gathering feel their poverty by observing the superiority of your provisions to their own.”

**22, 23.***What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.*“And therefore you ought not to have gone astray. I told you how to observe this ordinance, so you have willfully erred. This is what I delivered unto you.”

**23-27.***That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily.*That is, from wrong motives, without sincere faith and devotion to God.

**27-29.***Shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.* You notice that I introduced the word, “condemnation,” instead of, “damnation.” That word does not correctly give the meaning of the original—it is not damnation, but condemnation, or judgment, as is clear from that which follows.

**30.***For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*There is no doubt that God visited upon the Corinthians, in the way of chastisement, their lack of reverence at His Table. Many were weak and sickly among them, and many died. They were not lost if they were believers in Christ, but the Church at Corinth sustained a great loss through their departure, and I have no doubt that God still exercises a singular discipline over His own people. They that are outside are, to a large extent, left to sin as they please. Their punishment will fall upon them hereafter—but the child of God cannot be allowed to do so and he shall be chastened for his sin. The Lord still says to His spiritual Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” A father may let another man’s child alone, but his own boy shall not transgress without smarting for it! Such conduct as is here described does not bring damnation, for there is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—but it does bring the chastening with which God visits His children when they walk contrary to Him.

**31.***For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*But when a Church has lost its conscience and gets into such a state as this Corinthian Church fell into, then, as it does not judge itself, God judges it and chastens it severely.

**32.***But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*Perhaps somebody thought, just now, “I do not want to be in the Church of Christ if it gets special chastening.” That is one among many reasons why I *do* want to be in the Church of Christ, for, “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

**33, 34.***Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hungers, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 947, 356.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #2872 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LORD’S SUPPER  
NO. 2872

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25,1904.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1861.~~***

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

This solemn ordinance has been instituted and perpetuated to commemorate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is no ordinance to commemorate His life. One reason for this is because His death implies His life—when you commemorate His death, you testify that He lived. Another reason is that the Christian’s life, better than any ordinance, is the proof that Christ lived and the testimony to this world how He lived. A Christian should so act that worldlings would be compelled to ask, “By what power, by what energy, is he actuated to live in a style so superior to that of his fellows?” The answer he should always be prepared to give is something like this, “I live thus because Christ so lived and it is no more I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The love of Christ compels me, so that I am sweetly and blessedly compelled to live, not unto myself, but unto Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.” The proof that Christ came into the world should be that His followers are holy! Let their character be blameless and harmless, their conduct so devoted and so full of self-sacrifice that it shall be a constant memorial of that Redeemer whose name they profess. If the mind of Christ is in His people, it will make them so far superior to other men that it must be inferred that some superior energy is in them and that superior energy is none other than the love of Christ.

They should also so live that if any ask them how Christ lived, they may be able to say—not in words, for that might encourage pride, but in effect—“He lived as I live.” It has been well said that ungodly men do not read the Bible, but they read it as it is translated into the lives of Christians. The actions of Believers are, to the worldling, the means of judging what our religion really is. Men of the world do not sit down and study our creeds, but they trade with us in the common business of life—and if we trade dishonestly, they judge that our creed is wrong and that our religion is not true. They do not wade through our Bodies of Divinity to balance our arguments and test their value by the rules of logic—they have a shorter and more practical test than that. If our religion makes us upright in our conduct towards others and compels us to fear God in all that we do, then they pronounce our religion to be good. But if, on the contrary, we profess that we believe in Christ and yet can habituate ourselves to foul and degenerate behavior, they at once conclude that our religion is a thing of nothing. Brothers and Sisters, I repeat it, that Christ did not institute a memorial of His life because He would have *you* be the living memorials of Himself. He has not left us any ordinance in which His acts, His words, His thoughts can be set forth before the eyes of men in visible signs—He has done better than that for He has made you to be His signs and ordinances! “You are My witnesses,” says the Lord. If the Spirit of God is in you, you are the testifiers to the world of the holiness and the purity of the Character of your Lord!

Our text tells us that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial of His death. I am going to speak, first, *concerning that of which the ordinance is a memorial—Christ’s death.*Then*, to point out how the ordinance itself shows forth the Lord’s death till He comes*. And then, thirdly, to show how we, in this ordinance, rather than the ordinance itself—that *we, in the ordinance, do show the Lord’s death till He comes*.

Allow me to observe, however, that the retrospect gives us only one aspect of this ordinance, for it also distinctly holds out a very blessed prospect. We are taught, as often as we celebrate it, to look for our Lord’s Second Coming. Our text contains a very strong and a very lively anticipation of His Second Advent and of His *Personal* advent, too. Many persons say that Christ is certainly coming again, but that He is coming spiritually. This way of putting the matter seems to me to be a subterfuge. A man who is already here cannot be said to be expected to come. And it is certain that Christ is, at this moment, *spiritually* present with His people. His own declaration is, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” He is never absent, *spiritually*, from His Church. He still walks among the golden candlesticks. I cannot see, therefore, how it can be consistent with the ordinary meaning of language to say that He is to come spiritually.

My Brother, you believe that Christ is to come spiritually. Suppose that is true, what will be the result? Why, the Gospel will be better preached, more sinners will be converted and may I not also add that the ordinances will be better observed? Do you think that if Christ should come spiritually into this world, as you say He will, this ordinance would be taken away? “No,” I think I hear you say, “certainly not. If Christ shall come spiritually, Believers will be more attentive to His commands than they ever have been—they will be still more strictly obedient to His Word and will.” Just so, but my text says they are to show His death, “till He comes.” That seems to me to infer that, when He comes, the ordinance will be no longer observed. When He is here in Person, I can see adequate reasons why the memorial of His First Advent should be dispensed with. But if His Second Advent is not an absolute reality, I can see neither Scriptural nor logical reasons why this ordinance should cease to be observed at His *spiritual* coming, whatever that expression may mean!

It is well for us to always be “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” There are some who say that Dr. Watts did not believe this Doctrine, but he has expressed it most triumphantly in his paraphrase of Scripture where he writes—

***“Nor does it yet appear  
How great we must be made.  
But when we see our Savior here,  
We shall be like our Head.  
A hope so much Divine  
May trials well endure,  
May purge our souls from sense and sin  
As Christ the Lord is pure.”***

**I.**First, I have to try to show you WHAT THE LORD’S SUPPER SETS FORTH. It sets forth “the Lord’s death.”  
There is no ordinance to set forth His birth. The Roman Catholic Church invented a feast day and called it Christ-Mass and other churches have imitated the custom—but there is no ordinance, delivered unto us by the Lord Jesus, or His Apostles, to commemorate His Nativity! Nor do I find, in the Scriptures, any record of an ordinance to commemorate His circumcision, or His first preaching, or His riding in triumph into Jerusalem, or even any ordinance to commemorate His Ascension into Glory. We generally regard the keeping of the first day of the week as a commemoration of Christ’s Resurrection and of His appearance to His disciples when He showed them His pierced hands, feet and side. But even that can scarcely be called an ordinance. So, of all that Christ did or suffered, there is no ordinance enjoined upon us but that which relates to His death. Now, why is this?  
It is, *first, because it was for His death that Christ was most despised.*Therefore, for His death let Him be most honored! It was the Cross of Christ that was His shame—it was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. And it is here that the enemies of Christ always begin their attacks. They deny His Divinity because He died. They mistrust His power to save on the very ground for which we are able to trust to it—because He died. Usually, the battle against Christ and His Church rages most fiercely around His Cross. His adversaries, led by the great master-spirit of evil, all seem to say, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with that great Doctrine of the Atonement, for that is as a king in the hosts of Israel.” Those who preach the accursed crusade against Christ have, for their watchword and rallying cry, “Against His Cross! Against His Cross!” Therefore it is, most blessed Master, that You have provided this ordinance to be, as it were, a shield to Your own Cross, so that, if every minister should cease to preach Your atoning death, the silent bread and the voiceless wine should, louder than a thousand thunders, tell the world that Jesus died and that only through His broken body and His poured-out blood, sinners receive eternal life!  
Christ’s death, too, is chosen for special celebration *because it is the most important part of all that He did or suffered*. We would not depreciate His life, His Baptism, His work, or His Resurrection, but His death is the center of all. All the Doctrines of the Gospel revolve around Christ’s death as the planets revolve around the sun! Take away the sun from the solar system and you have dislocated everything. All the stupendous wheels would cease to move. Remove Your Cross, O Christ, and the keystone of the arch of the Truth of God is gone! Take away Your death, O Jesus, and it is death to all that You have taught, for all that You teach derives life from the fact that You have died! O my dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever errors may creep into the Church, they will be important only as they mar the luster of the Cross! I think it is the bounden duty of every Christian to be ready to die for the Truth of God. You know that our forefathers readily gave their lives for the defense of Believers’ Baptism. Still, not in the least depreciating Believers’ Baptism, I say that if it is worthwhile for one to die for that, it is worthwhile for tens of thousands to die, in one tremendous hecatomb, in defense of the fact that Jesus died! As this is the chief point of the adversaries’ attack, so must we always regard it as the most important bastion of defense! Here, Christian, turn your eyes the most frequently. Here let your thoughts dwell the most intensely. Here lies the source of all your hopes! Here you shall find the wellspring of all your joys! Think it not unimportant, then, that Christ has given to His death so solemn and yet so simple a memorial.  
I think the Master also appointed this ordinance *because His death is, after all, the most comforting thing in the whole Gospel system*. Where do you go, you of the weeping eyes, when your heart is breaking—where do you go for comfort but to the place where comfort was not—namely, to the Cross of the dying Savior? Where do you go, poor breaking Heart, when the woes of this life swell and gather till your soul is near to bursting—where do you go but to that spot where misery reached its climax? It is strange that the masterpiece of misery is also the masterpiece of comfort. The darkest spot in the whole world is yet the source of all our light! The dying of the Savior gives us life! His wounds heal us! His agonies bring us peace! His tortures yield us ease! The Good Shepherd knew that if His sheep desired to have green pastures, they would find them at the Cross, so He appointed this ordinance to bring them there. Well did He understand that if they would lie down beside the still waters, they must come to that place where the blood flowed from His blessed brow, and hands and feet, and side.  
You have said with the spouse, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth,” and He does it in this ordinance. You have sometimes asked Him to bring you into His banqueting house and that His banner over you might be love. But that banner has never floated from any mast but the Cross and, therefore, He has brought you there. You have asked that you may sit under His shadow with great delight and that His fruit may be sweet to your taste. This is His fruit—His broken body and His shed blood—so He brings you here. You have said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs there.” Your Lord knows that you cannot do this except you view His Cross as that palm tree, springing up in a desert land and bearing all manner of delightful fruits. You will need no further arguments, Brothers and Sisters, to convince you of the wisdom and tenderness of Christ in bequeathing to you this most comforting ordinance that so His death may be held in perpetual remembrance!  
**II.**Now I go on, in the second place, to show you HOW THE BREAD AND WINE IN THIS ORDINANCE SET FORTH THE DEATH OF CHRIST.  
You can hardly fail to notice how the ordinance is adapted *universally*to keep in memory the fact it commemorates. You recollect what happened to the woman who looked back after she came out of Sodom. The Lord would have us “Remember Lot’s wife,” so He turned her into a pillar of salt. But that memorial is only to be seen by those who pass that particular spot. Now, suppose that the Master had said to His disciples, “Erect for Me a bronze column. Let it be in the form of a cross and write upon it that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried”? It would not have appealed to our observation anything like so forcibly as this ordinance, which is not restricted to any time or place. This memorial has been seen in the darkness of the catacombs of Rome, where only a tiny taper afforded light to the worshipping assembly. This memorial has been seen among the heather on the Scottish hillside where the lightning flash lent its kindly beam to the minister as he read the Sacred Word. This memorial is seen, today, in the far-off isles of the sea. From North to South, from East to West, this is the standing memorial of Him who died! Better than storied urn, or animated bust, or rare marble, or precious metals, or jewels unrivalled for their worth is this blessed memorial because it can be seen everywhere, in every land!  
This is also an admirable memorial seeing that it is *perpetual*. Monuments of brass wear out. The teeth of Time devour the rugged granite, itself. Though you build, for a king, a monument like the pyramids of Egypt, yet shall his name be forgotten and even Pharaoh may lack a wise man to decipher the inscriptions on his tomb and recount the story of his mighty acts. Not so is it with this blessed ordinance—it can never wear away, it is always new. I may say to it, “O sacred Eucharist, you have the dew of your youth!” This memorial is as fresh, more than 1,800 years after its institution, as it was when, in the upper room, the disciples first celebrated it in anticipation of their Master’s approaching death! So, when centuries have followed centuries, and Time himself shall have become bald and his scythe shall have lost its edge—when yon sun shall have grown dim with age and the moon shall be pale with fading weakness—even then shall this ordinance be as fresh and as new as ever! It is perpetual because the command of our King cannot be repealed! It is never to be set aside till the need of testimony shall have passed away— till Christ Himself shall come to reign among men!  
And, oh, what a *simple*memorial this is! Priest of Rome, go to your sacristy and put on your millinery—your red, your blue, your silver, your scarlet and your fair white linen—play the harlot, for such you are before the eyes of men in all your wanton fineries! Prove yourself to be the true descendant of her of Babylon by the gaudiness of your apparel! But know, O priest, that we need none of your enchantments for the right observance of this ordinance! You sons of toil, you can come here with your garments still covered with the dust of your labor. What need we to fulfill to the letter our dear Master’s own injunctions? What but a piece of bread and a cup of wine? Oh, how shamefully have men mimicked this ordinance! How they have invented strange devices to make that appear wonderful which was wonderful enough in itself, because, like everything sublime, it was simple and majestic in its own simplicity!  
This simple ordinance has sometimes made me smile at the useless artifices of the foes of Christ. I have smiled at the thought that our Master has given us a memorial so simple that we can observe it even when our adversaries are most opposed to us. I have broken the memorial bread and sipped the wine in Venice, beneath the Austrian sway, where, to have held a public Protestant service would have involved imprisonment! But how could they have stopped us? There were four of us in our own inn—might we not do there as we pleased? No one knew why we needed a small piece of bread and a cup of wine—and we four sat around the table and I avow that it was as much the Lord’s Supper as it is when thousands of us assemble here to keep the sacred feast!  
If we were in Rome itself, in a room at the Vatican, though the Pope himself were in the next room, we might observe this blessed ordinance and he would never know that we had done so unless we chose to tell him! How could he deny us bread? That would be scant hospitality! And how could he deny us wine? And having bread and wine, we need no altar and we need no priest. Wherever two or three Christians are met together, there may they celebrate the Supper of their Lord! It is as valid without a minister as with one and just as really the Lord’s Supper though there are no ordained presbyters or learned Doctors of Divinity to preside at the table! Blessed memorial of the death of Jesus, they cannot put an end to you! We can laugh to scorn all the priests and the soldiers of Rome. If we had built a memorial pillar, they might have pulled it down. The sons of Moab might have stopped up our wells and cast down our towers, but who can destroy this simple ordinance? Persecution would no more avail to put an end to the Lord’s Supper than would the swords of Pharaoh’s soldiers

have availed to put an end to the plague of flies! The craft or skill of man can never put an end to the simple memorial of bread and wine—all that he can do is but to parody or pervert it.  
I think, too, that this is a very *blessed* memorial. The broken bread sets forth the broken body of our Lord and the wine, being separate from the bread, shows how His blood flowed from His body. The sign itself most touchingly sets forth the refreshing qualities of the blood which flowed from His head, hands, feet and side. The point I want to emphasize is that Christ has instituted a memorial of His death which requires, to carry it out, Christian hearts and, therefore, hearts full of love to Him and faith in Him. If you wish your name to be remembered, you may say, “It is my desire that men should keep my birthday.” So they may and, in a hundred years’ time, the recollection of the fact of your birth will have dwindled down into a mere fable! How many institutions we still have, the origin of which we do not know? But suppose you could have an institution kept up only by those who love you and suppose, in addition, that you had the power to always preserve in the world some hearts that would love you? What a blessed memorial that would be! In coming to the Table of our Lord, we meet not as a company of men who have no regard for Christ, no compelling love to kindle our passions to a flame! Why, His very name makes our hearts leap for joy!—  
***“Sweeter sounds than music knows  
Charm me in Immanuel’s name.”***  
His death is, to us, the most delightful topic of meditation. We come not to the Table of our Lord as the slaves of Pharaoh were flogged to build the pyramids, but we come cheerfully, joyfully, delighted to remember Him, feeling it to be less a duty than a privilege and far more a pleasure than merely a service. This Supper is, virtually, the outward and visible sign of ten thousand times ten thousand broken hearts that have been bound up, tearful eyes that have been made to flash with holy joy, aching consciences that have been eased and hearts that could sooner cease to beat than cease to love! So it is, indeed, a blessed and choice memorial of our Savior’s death which can never be forgotten by His loved ones.  
**III.**Now I come to my last point, and that is, perhaps, the most practical—HOW YOU AND I ARE TO SHOW OUR REDEEMER’S DEATH IN THIS SUPPER.  
Some people are very particular about the way in which the Lord’s Supper is administered, but, as long as everything is done decently and in order, I think that should be enough for us. I was staying, once, with a gentleman—a Dissenter—who had become more than a little formal. He was telling me that he had done a great deal of good in his parish and, among other excellent things, he recounted one with an air of enthusiasm which made me laugh. He said, “When I came here, these people used to bring the wine for the sacrament in a black bottle and, as I am sure that I could not celebrate the Lord’s Supper if the wine came from a black bottle, I have provided something better.” I thought it would have been a great deal better if he had asked the people whether they had brought black hearts, for a black bottle does not signify much—but a heart that is not right in the sight of God is the thing that needs to be taken away. If you and I have our hearts right, we need not mind how simple the mode in which the ordinance is administered!  
But now, what are you and I to do in observing this ordinance? We are to show the Lord’s death. Then, if we are to show it, we must show it to somebody. To whom? Why, first, *to ourselves*. My soul, be not content unless, in the bread, you discern the Lord’s body for yourself. Do not eat and drink, as the Apostle says, “unworthily, not discerning the Lord’s body.” Take heed, O my Soul, that you are not satisfied with eating the bread unless, by faith, you realize that the body of Christ was offered up for you—unless your faith can so participate in the merit of that Sacrifice that the eating of the bread becomes to you a lively picture of your participation in the results of Christ’s death! Mind, too, that the wine sets forth His blood to you. Brothers and Sisters, these symbols are but as the veil before the Holy of Holies—you must look beyond the symbols to that which is within the veil—or else, of what use are the signs to you? The bread is nothing, the wine is nothing—*that which the bread sets forth is everything!* Feed on that! That which the wine portrays is everything— see to it that you are a partaker of that!  
What multitudes of professors are quite content with the outward sign! I fear that the Lord’s Supper, through being so grossly misused, has deceived many. See how eagerly they send for a clergyman when they lie dying! Men who have scarcely ever entered a church or chapel in their lives—men who fear not God and have no saving interest in the death of Christ—desire to have this bread in their mouths at the last! Let that dying impenitent know this bread shall be a swift witness against him! Not being born of God and having no right whatever to this ordinance, he ate and drank unworthily and so ate and drank condemnation to himself! If any of you have imagined that this ordinance can save your souls, let me correct that error at once! It may *ruin them*, but it cannot save them! You must get right away to Christ, right away from this ordinance. It is not as unrenewed sinners, but as saints—as Christ’s disciples, as His saved ones—that you are to partake of this feast! You must come to Christ first, as a sinner, just as you are.  
I have read, or heard, sermons which proved that the minister was not at all clear which was Christ—the bread upon the Communion Table or the Savior upon the Cross. There is a sermon upon this text—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”—in which the preacher invites his hearers to come to the Lord’s Table. That is the very worst place to which they could come! They must first *come to Christ* and then, after they have found acceptance in Him, they may come to His Table. But they must not be invited to His Table until they have come to Him and trusted in His atoning Sacrifice! The Lord’s Supper is a curse, not a blessing, to unbelievers, so let none of us think of feeding upon Christ in the sign until we have Christ in reality in our hearts.  
Next, we are to show Christ’s death *to others*. Some of you will be spectators while the rest of us are observing this ordinance. As we shall, in one great host, break bread together, we shall say to you, “We do, each of us, believe that Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. We have put our confidence in His death as making reconciliation for us before God. We personally avow our own vital faith in Him and we declare to you, whatever may be your judgment concerning Him, that He is all our salvation and our desire.” The very poorest among the communicants will be a preacher. When you, dear Friend, take the bread and the wine, you will preach a sermon. I believe that the word used here has in it, in the Greek, the idea of preaching. You will say, by partaking of this ordinance, “I believe in Jesus Christ, in His broken body and His pouredout blood.” I hope that will be an appeal to the consciences of you who will be looking on at the ordinance, asking you whether you also believe in Christ—and though the appeal will be a silent one, I pray you to answer, “Yes,” or, “No,” to it. As you see us partake of the bread and the wine, imagine that you hear a voice coming up from the Communion Table and saying to each one of you, “Soul, Soul, when will you, too, believe in Jesus? When will you cast yourself on Him, that He may be your Allin-All?”  
Nor, by this ordinance, do we set forth Christ’s death only to ourselves and to others, but also*to God Himself*. We do, as it were, plead the merit of Christ’s broken body and shed blood every time we observe this ordinance. We bring before God, not a sacrifice, as though the one Offering needed to be repeated—but a memorial of the finished and perfect Sacrifice which was once and for all offered for the sins of men. Brothers and Sisters, it is a solemn thing to think that every time we come to the Communion Table, we bring before the Eternal Father the memorial of the death of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son!  
We bring that memorial, too, before the holy angels hovering, as they undoubtedly are, over every Christian assembly. We say to each of them, “He who was seen of angels” is our hope! Tell the glad tidings through all the golden streets that the death of Christ is still remembered in this lower world! Speed on your swift wings to Heaven and let it be known in your glorious dwelling place that there are men and women, saved by the precious blood of Jesus, meeting to commemorate His death.”  
And, Brothers and Sisters, in this ordinance we show Christ’s death *even to the devils in Hell*. There is nothing which they fear so much as the death of Christ. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine are like the flaunting of a victorious banner in the face of the beaten foe. It is the flashing before the eyes of Satan of the sword that smote him in the days of old and that will make him tremble again even now! Earth and Heaven and Hell are gathered around us as we meet at the Table of our Lord and we poor, puny men become a spectacle unto the three worlds. We are said to be men wondered at, but how much more wonderful is that which is visibly set forth in this ordinance—the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
O my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I pray you to see to it that you now show His death to your own conscience. Does it accuse you? Then, show it the wounds of Christ and it shall be well with you. Does the Law of God condemn you? Show it your bleeding Master and it will at once absolve you. Show Christ’s death to your unbelief and, surely, it will vanish away. Show Christ’s death to your heart and, surely, it must melt with love to Him. Show Christ’s death to the weeping eyes of your repentance and the tears shall be wiped away and you shall see your pardon bought with blood! Show Christ’s death to the weak, Leah-like eyes of your faith and it shall strengthen them till they shall see even the hidden mystery and discern the substance which, by mortal eyes, cannot be seen. Show Christ’s death to your wretched and miserable spirit that has been troubled and burdened with the cares of this world and it must leap for joy, and cast all its burdens away! Show the death of Christ to your old sins which have been coming back to you, today, and it will drive them all away. Show Christ’s death, in fact, to the eyes of your heart, the eyes of your emotions, the eyes of all your powers of body and soul—and thus you shall be like he who said, “I shall see Him,” though you shall not need to add, as he did, “but not now.” You may say, “I shall behold Him,” but you will not need to spoil it by adding, as Balaam did, “but not near,” for Christ shall bring you into His banqueting house and His banner over you shall be love!  
Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and remember that He said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Saint, come to the Table of your Lord and feast upon the emblems of His dying love, remembering that blessed are they who believe on Him, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told them by the Lord.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ROMANS 8:18-39.***

**Verse 18.***For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*Paul made “the sufferings of this present time” into a matter of simple arithmetic and careful reckoning. He added them all up and saw what the total was. He seemed to be about to state a proportion sum, but he gave it up and said that the sufferings were “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.” Did they stand as one to a thousand? No, otherwise they had been worthy to be compared! Did they stand as one to ten thousand—or one to a million—or one to a million of millions? If so, they would still have been worthy to be compared—but Paul saw that there was no proportion whatever between them. The sufferings seemed to be but as a single drop and the glory to be as a boundless ocean!

“Not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” That glory is not yet fully revealed. It is revealed *to* us, but not yet *in* us. What, then, shall we do in the meantime? Why, wait with patience and bear our appointed burden until the time comes for us to be relieved of it—wait, however, with hope—wait, too, as we must, quietly enduring the pains and pangs which precede so glorious a birth! In this respect, we are not alone, as the Apostle goes on to say—

**19-22.***For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now*. We live in a world that is under a curse—a world that was made subject to bondage through human sin. What does this cold mean? What do these fogs mean? What do the general mourning and sighing of the air all through the winter mean? What do the disturbances, convulsions and catastrophes that we hear about on all hands mean? It is the creation groaning, travailing, waiting—waiting till there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth, because the former things shall have passed away.

**23.***And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* Our soul has been delivered from the Curse. The redemption of the soul is complete, but not yet that of the body. That must suffer pain and weariness and even descend into the tomb, but its day of manifestation shall surely come! At the appearing of our Lord from Heaven, then shall the body itself be delivered and the whole creation shall also be delivered, so we wait in a travailing condition—and we may well be content to wait, for these pangs within us and around us all signify the glorious birth for which we may wait in hope.

**24, 25.***For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*. This is our attitude and our condition now—waiting for the glory which is to be revealed in us and accepting the sorrow which is appointed to us as an introduction to the joy which is to come to us, mysteriously, through it. But while we are waiting, we are not without present comfort.

**26.***Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered*. You must, I am sure, as children of God, often have felt that Spirit within you groaning in prayer what you could not express. How often have you risen from your knees feeling the utter inadequacy of words to express the desires of your heart! And you have felt that you had larger desires than you have been able to interpret. There have been mighty pangs within you telling of the Presence of this wrestling Spirit.

**27.***And He who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit.* When you do not know your own mind, God knows the mind of the Spirit and that is the very essence of prayer. He “knows what is the mind of the Spirit,”

**27.***Because He makes intercession for (or, in) the saints according to the will of God.*Whatever the Spirit of God prompts us to pray for, is according to the mind of God, for it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should ever be otherwise than in perfect accord with the Divine Father. The eternal degrees, if we could read them, would convey to us the same Truth as the impulses of the Spirit in our heart. And this is the true explanation of prayer—that what God intends to do, His Spirit leads His people to ask Him to do and thus there is no conflict between the eternal Predestination of God and the earnest entreaties of His people. They are, in fact, the outcome of that very Predestination.

**28-30.***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* These great Truths of God must never be separated. Any one of these things being true of us, it is most certain that the rest are also true. Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you cannot read God’s foreknowledge, neither can you enter into the secrets of Predestination, but you can tell whether you are called, or not. You can know whether you are justified by faith, or not. And if you get hold of those links, you have got a grip of that endless chain which is firmly fastened to the granite rock of eternity past and which is also fastened to the rock of the glorious eternity which is yet to be revealed!

**31-33.***What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God that justifies?* For so we think it ought to be read. That is another question. Can God lay anything to our charge after having justified us? Will He contradict Himself?

**34.***Who is he that condemns?*There is only One who can, for there is only one Judge, and that Judge is Jesus. So, the Apostle puts it again in the form of a question—shall He condemn us?

**34.***It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*Shall He condemn us? It is altogether impossible!

**35.***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword* ? What a long list of ills! They seem to make up a Jeremiah’s roll of sorrow. Can they separate us from the love of Christ? They have all been tried—have they ever succeeded?

**36.***As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*But did they succeed in separating saints from the love of Christ even in the days of martyrdom?

**37-39.***No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*“Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2942 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER  
NO. 2942

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1905.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1877.~~***

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

IT seems to me that the Lord’s Supper should be received by us often. When the Apostle says, in our text, “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup,” and our Lord said, in instituting the ordinance, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me,” I will not say that their words absolutely teach that we should frequently come to the Communion Table, but I do think they give us a hint that if we act rightly, we shall often observe this Supper of the Lord. Once or twice in the year can hardly be thought to be a sufficiently frequent memorial of one so dear. In the early Church, it is possible that they broke bread every day—the expression, “breaking bread from house to house,” may signify that. From the records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that when the saints came together on the first day of the week, they usually broke bread. If there is any rule as to the time for the observance of this ordinance, it surely is every Lord’s day. At any rate, let it be often. Do not, dear Friends absent yourselves long from the Table, but since your Lord has instituted this Supper as a necessary and admirable reminder of His death, take care that you celebrate it often.

This Supper is, according to the verse before our text, to be received by all Christians. “This do you, as often as you drink it.” It is not to the Apostles, nor to a few men who shall dare to call themselves priests, but to the members of the Church at Corinth and, by implication, to the members of all Christian Churches, that the Apostle wrote, “For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” Though it is but half a dozen of the very poorest and most illiterate Christians who meet together to break bread, they are helping to proclaim Christ’s death till He comes. It is the duty and the privilege of all the people of God—not merely of some of them—to observe this ordinance!

It is to be observed by eating and drinking, not by eating alone, as in the Roman Catholic church! “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.” It is most strange that the Papists should have taken away the cup from the “laity” socalled, since our Lord never said to His disciples concerning the bread, “Eat you all of it,” but, as if He foresaw that this error would arise, He did say concerning the cup, as He presented it to His Apostles, “Drink you all of it.” If you leave out the cup, you have marred the ordinance and, as I shall have to show you presently, you have robbed it of a great part of its meaning. In the Roman Catholic church—Roman Catholic, did I say? Why there is another church, nearer home, that is twin sister to it and is getting very much like it! And there, too, it is taught that looking at the cup does the spectators good. It is not necessary that your should “communicate,” but if they see the “priest” lift the cup, it will do them great good. This is a new way of blessing souls. Salvation used to be by the hearing of the Word, but now, forsooth, it is to be by seeing fine sights! But the Apostle says, “As often as you eat this bread, and *drink this cup*”—not as often as you look on as spectators, but as often as you actually become partakers in this symbolic feast, “you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

You notice that our translators have put this sentence in the indicative, but it is probable that the marginal reading is more correct and that it may be read thus, “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, show you the Lord’s death till He comes.” *Endeavor* to do it— *realize* that you are doing it—let your feelings be appropriate to the meaning of the ordinance—“show you the Lord’s death till He comes.” As often as true Believers meet together to eat this bread, and drink this cup, they do show, both to themselves and to all who look on, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just in passing, notice that it is bread that they eat and it is wine that they drink—nothing is said about transubstantiation here! But “as often as you eat this bread”—and it is *bread* and nothing but *bread*—“and drink this cup,” which still remains but a cup and its contents just what they were before—“you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

This will suffice upon the words of the text. And, now, the doctrine that I want to draw from it is that at all times when we come to the Communion Table, we show or proclaim the death of Christ. That is the great end and objective of the Lord’s Supper—to set forth—to yell out anew—to proclaim afresh the death of our Lord Jesus Christ!

**I.**First, let us consider HOW THIS ORDINANCE DOES PROCLAIM THE DEATH OF CHRIST.  
It is all very simple. There is nothing but bread broken and eaten, and wine poured out and afterwards drunk. How can this proclaim the death of Christ? Well, it does. It has done so ever since it was instituted and there are multitudes of Believers who delight to see that death set forth by it!  
First, *it sets forth the painfulness of Christ’s death*. It is death that is represented by these emblems, for there is the bread and there is the wine, both separate from one another. When the flesh and the blood of a person are together, they do not present to us the image of death. But the bread, which represents the flesh, altogether separate from the wine, which represents the blood, is the picture of death and death in a violent form—death by wounding, by bleeding. The separation of the life-blood from the body is the form of death which is manifestly set forth here to all onlookers. To my mind the very bread, as we break it, seems to say, “Thus Christ becomes our food.” Bread has to pass through many tortures before it becomes food to us. The wheat was sown in the ground. It was buried, it sprang up, it was exposed to cold winds and to hot sunshine before it ripened—and then it was cut down by a sharp sickle. After being cut down, it was threshed, then it was ground into flour, then the dough was kneaded into bread which was baked in an oven and cut with a knife—all of which processes may be used as *images of suffering*. So the broken bread which we eat at the Communion sets forth the suffering of Jesus. And the juice of the grape also sets forth suffering, for the clusters from the vine are flung together into the winepress and trod by the feet of men, or otherwise pressed until their life-blood spurts forth. Even so was the Savior pressed in the winepress of Jehovah’s wrath till His blood was poured forth on our behalf. This Supper sets forth to all who choose to see it, the painfulness of Christ’s death.  
It sets forth, next, that *it was a death of a peculiar kind, a death for others*, just as that bread is for us to eat and that cup is for us to partake of. So we say, by this ordinance, to all who look on and especially to ourselves, “When the Lord Jesus died, He died for all His people.” We here declare that we believe in Substitution—that Christ died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” And that He, “His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” That is the teaching of this Supper, that Christ’s death was a painful death and a death on behalf of others.  
This Supper also shows that *we believe the death of Christ to be acceptable to God*. Why do we spread this Table here in the place where we customarily meet for worship? Is this also an act of worship? Assuredly it is and one of the highest kind! But we should not dare to put these memorials of the death of Christ before the Father if we did not know that the Father had accepted Him. But “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him” and He was pleased with the Sacrifice which His Son offered. He smelled a sweet savor of rest in the death of His dear Son. Therefore, when we worship Him in the most humble manner and after the most solemn fashion, we say to the Lord, “We know that You have accepted the Atonement offered by Your dear Son and we set Him forth before all mankind as the accepted Sacrifice before His Father’s face.” And I think that we also mean to say by this ordinance, that *Christ’s Sacrifice is complete and perfect*. We would not wish to show it to others if it were not worthy of being looked at! If it were incomplete, we might well keep it in the background until Christ had finished it. But because the cry, “It is finished,” rang out from the lips of the dying Sufferer of Calvary, we rejoice to set forth His death to all who come this way! Behold and see that He has not partly paid the price, but He has paid it all! Look here— He has so finished His atoning work that He has spread a feast to which His servants may come and rejoice with exceeding joy! If the Sacrifice were not finished, it would not yet be feasting time. But it is complete and, therefore, do we proclaim it forth after this fashion.  
Another great Truth of God that we teach to everybody who sees us at the Communion Table is this—*Jesus Christ has died and we live upon His death*. This bread and this wine are the emblems of His broken body and His shed blood and, therefore, we eat them and drink them, and so say to you that Christ’s dying is our life. Whenever we want to get spiritually stronger, we always feed upon the Truth that Christ died for us. Do any of you deny the Doctrine of Substitution? We tell you that it is the very essence of our being—that, henceforth, it has become the wellspring of life to us! We could not be happy—we could not have any peace—if that were taken away from us! My heart speaks now in words of truth and soberness and says to you, “There is no Truth which I dare to deny, but, concerning this Truth of God of the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it would be absolutely impossible for me to doubt it.” Tortures and racks may tear away the strings that are bound about my heart, but they can never make me relax the hold that I have of Jesus Christ my Lord! No, the Lamb of Calvary, bleeding in our place, has become essential to our very being and we cannot, we must not, we will not becloud that blessed Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice! Is it not all-in-all to us?  
We also say to dear friends who may look on at this feast that *the death of Jesus Christ has now become to us the source of our highest joy*. We are not about to celebrate a funeral. When we come to this Table, we do not come in mournful guise. I know that it has pleased the authorities of certain churches to make men kneel before what they call the altar, but why have they to kneel? Is there any passage of Scripture in which there is even the shadow of any teaching which looks that way? At the Passover, the Israelites stood with their loins girt and their staves in their hand. Why was that? Because they were expecting to go out of Egypt and were not, then, out of the land of bondage. He who is under the Law, when he eats his Passover, must eat it with his loins girt and with his staff in his hand. But how did the disciples eat the Lord’s Supper? Why, reclining in the easiest posture possible! It was a most solemn supper, but it was a supper. It was the ordinary meal consecrated by the Lord to the great purpose of setting forth His death! And to make us kneel to receive it is, to my mind, to take away a great part of the teaching of it! We should sit at the Communion as easily as we possibly can—as we would at our own table—because “we which have believed do enter into rest”—and part of the teaching of the Lord’s Supper is that now, in Christ, we have perfect peace and we rest in Him as we feed upon Him. This ordinance is a feast, not now a subject for sorrow, but a theme for delight!  
And once more, Beloved, when we come to the Lord’s Table to proclaim Christ’s death, *we show it as the bond of Christian union*. The point of union among Christians is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am afraid that it will be many long years before we shall get all Believers to agree concerning Baptism. I hope right views of that ordinance are spreading, but it does not seem to me to be a point where all Christians are likely yet to unite. But, concerning our Lord’s death, all who really are His people are agreed! If we are in Him, we rejoice in that grand foundational Truth, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” and we delight to think that by His death He has redeemed us from death. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you cannot meet your fellow Christians on certain doctrines because some of you are strong men in Christ and others are but babes—and the babes cannot crack the nuts or eat the strong meat upon which swine feed—you can all unite in Christ! He is like the manna which suited all the Israelites in the wilderness—young or old, they could all feed on the manna and so can all the saints feed on Christ! And when we sit at the Communion Table, we say to all the world, “We are all one in Christ Jesus. We do not come to this Table as Baptists, or Episcopalians, or Methodists, or Presbyterians—we come here simply as those who form one body in Christ—they who agree to show forth to all mankind the death of our adorable Lord.”  
**II.**Secondly, let us consider WHY THE LORD HAS TAKEN MEANS TO SHOW THIS TRUTH.  
There are a great many important Truths in the Bible and every Truth of God ought to be kept in remembrance, but it is not concerning every Truth that the Lord has appointed an ordinance to keep it in memory. The Doctrine of Election is one that we firmly believe, but we have no special token, type, or symbol to set it forth.  
It is the death of Christ which is set forth by this memorial Supper. Why was that chosen? I answer,*because it is the most vital of all Truths*. Concerning the sacrificial death of Christ there must not be tolerated any dispute in the Christian Church. That must forever stand as a settled Doctrine of the Gospel. The atoning death of Jesus Christ once put away, you have taken the sun out of the Church’s Heavens. Indeed, you have taken away all reason for the very existence of the Church of Christ! I think it was Dr. Priestley, a Unitarian, who had a brother who was a sound Calvinistic Divine and who came and visited him. And he agreed to let him preach for him one Sabbath morning, on condition that he promised not to preach on any controversial subject. The good man gave the promise, but rather regretted, afterwards, that he had done so, yet he managed to redeem his promise and also to clear his conscience, for he preached on the next Sabbath morning from this text—“Without, controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,” from which he proved that the Godhead of Christ is a Truth about which no controversy could be allowed. We put the Doctrine of His Substitutionary Sacrifice in the same category—these is no true Christianity without it! You have given us merely the shell and the husk if you take away this great central Truth of the Gospel—God’s Justice vindicated by the death of His dear Son and, on that ground, free pardon published by the Grace of God to the very chief of sinners who believe in Him! This Doctrine, which some despise and decry, is the very essence of the Gospel of Christ! We have no question with regard to the truth of it, neither do we speak with bated breath concerning it, for our Lord Jesus instituted this Supper in order to keep this Truth of God before men’s minds because it is the point above all others that is vital to the Gospel.  
Another reason is*because so many combat this Doctrine*. It has been the Hougomont of the great Waterloo which has been fought against Christ. All His adversaries rally against this Truth. When any man becomes unsound upon other points, if you probe deeply enough, you will find that he has become unsound upon the Doctrine of the Atonement. The Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ is the one thing which His enemies are aiming to overthrow. They cannot endure it! They profess to be greatly offended by our frequent use of the word, *blood*, yet that word is one of the most conspicuous words in both the Old and the New Testaments, so we will still say, “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” and, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” This Communion Table sets forth the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and so brings His atoning Sacrifice before men’s minds—and thus His Church, so often as she observes this ordinance, proclaims Christ’s death in the teeth of all opposers—and this she means still to do “till He comes”!  
No doubt the Lord also instituted a symbol for the maintenance and propagation of this Truth *because it is a most blessed one to sinners*. Poor souls, there is no comfort for you till you know that Christ died in your place. Your conscience, if it is really awakened, will never be pacified with ceremonies! Nor will it be contented with moral precepts which you cannot carry out. Nor will it be lulled to sleep with the idea of your own religiousness ever saving you. Your awakened conscience makes you ask, “How can God be just and yet pardon *me*?” And it is the martyred body of your Lord that answers that question—  
***“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.”***  
But when you come to see

Christ on the Cross dying instead of you, then will comfort come into your mind, O distracted seeker—but not till then! Therefore is it that God bids His ministers preach Jesus Christ and Him Crucified and, therefore is it that as often as we come to this Table, we proclaim His death because sinners need that beyond everything else.  
And, Beloved, there is another reason, I think, why this Truth of God was selected to be set forth in this memorial Supper, namely, *that it might certify the Truth to your own soul*. What arrow will ever pierce the heart of sin unless it is dipped in the blood of Jesus? When I see sin punished on Christ, I see the evil of it. When I see Christ dying for my sin, I see the great motive for my dying for my sin. When I behold His griefs and pangs on my behalf, I see a reason why I should make abundant sacrifices in order that I may glorify Him. Beloved, the death of Christ is the great sin-killer and he who truly knows it and understands it, will feel its sanctifying power!  
At the same time, *this Truth greatly glorifies God*. When do you ever praise God so well as when you, a poor guilty sinner, stand at the feet of the Cross and see that Christ died there for you? The sweetest songs in all the world are those that are sung around the Cross by sinners saved by Sovereign Grace. And each one sings unto the Lord, “Wash me in the fountain and make me whiter than snow. Then shall every part of my being praise You and my whole nature shall break forth in ecstatic joy magnifying and blessing the name of the Lord who is able to put away such offenses as mine through the precious blood of His dear Son.” You will thus be enabled to glorify God when you come to this Table and meditate on the great atoning Sacrifice by which your sin is forever put away.  
I feel that I can say, without boasting, that my ministry and this ordinance agree well together. I have long preached to you Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. I have fully preached to you His vicarious Sacrifice. And when you come to this Table, you can realize that the Truth which I have preached to you links on to this ordinance. But how anyone can piece together a dry philosophy and this service, I do not know. Having left out the grand fundamental Doctrine of Atonement, how they can make anything but a farce of the Communion, I cannot even guess! I should think they might as well abolish it from their services and let the symbol go when the substance has already gone! But it cannot be so with us, for we feel that God would have His people always think of Jesus! He would have them often speak of Jesus! He would have them continually bear witness to the death of Jesus and, therefore, He makes this Communion to be the sweetest of ordinances to point us, with unerring finger, to Christ on the Cross!  
**III.**Now, thirdly, will you please take notice of THE PERPETUITY OF THIS ORDINANCE AND THE REASON FOR THAT PERPETUITY? “You do proclaim the Lord’s death *till He comes*.” When He comes, we shall not need these symbols, for we shall have the Master, Himself, with us, but, “*till He comes*” we are to observe this ordinance.  
What do I learn from this? Why, dear Friends, that His death will be efficacious “*till He comes*.” You are not called to show to the world something that is worn out. You do not come to this Table to set forth to the people who will look on something whose force is spent. Oh, no! You can still sing—  
***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more!”***  
And every time any of you who are unconverted, but are seeking the Lord, see this Table spread, you should say to yourselves, “Those people believe that there is still efficacy in Christ’s blood, or else they would not keep up the observance of that Supper.” Yes, we do believe just that, and we believe that Jesus is able to save you now if you come to Him—able at once to speak peace and pardon to your heart if you do but trust Him!  
Another thing I learn from our text is that as this Supper is to be celebrated “till He comes,” *it shows that there will always be a Church of Christ to celebrate it*. There always has been a Church of Christ since He founded it. In the darkest Popish days, Christ always had His little Church to observe this ordinance. In the catacombs at Rome, in the mountains of Bohemia, in the Vaudois valleys, in the wild glens of Scotland and in almost every land, in the simple breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine Believers still remembered Christ’s death even though they met together at the peril of their lives! And right on down to these brighter days in which we can meet two or three at a time, or hundreds or thousands at once to break bread and to drink wine in remembrance of our dying Lord, there has always been a Church of Christ and there will always be a Church of Christ! So do not despair however dark the days may yet be. Neither Rome nor Hell, itself, can put out the candle which has been lit by the Lord! There will be a Church of Christ “till He comes.”  
It is true that there will always be people to oppose this Doctrine and one reason why you are to continue to observe this ordinance is because there will always be some people who will deny Christ’s substitutionary death. Dear Friends and fellow-helpers in the Lord, it seems such a sweet thing to me to think that all the communicants at this ordinance tonight will be helping to preach a sermon upon our text! I alone must do the talking, but you who will presently gather around the Communion Table will unite in this act, by which we shall all say, “Christ died on Calvary’s Cross. Christ died for us!” And all the other Truths that I have been mentioning to you—by the very eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, you will proclaim again that there are some who believe in the bleeding Savior—some who still believe in Him as dying in their place! Let others deny it if they will, you will maintain that testimony.  
Beloved, this ordinance is to be perpetual, *because Christian hearts will always need it*. There were some people, a little while ago, who were getting so wonderfully perfect (in their own estimation) that I thought, at the time, they would soon give up the observance of ordinances. I read of one of them who said that he did not pray any longer, for his mind was so perfectly sanctified and conformed to the will of God that he did not need to ask anything of God! Poor fool—that is all I can say of a person in such a state of heart as that! When any man gets beyond the need of prayer, he has urgent need to begin his Christian life over! And it is the same with those who have got beyond the need of ordinances. Christ knew that we should never, in this life, be able to do without outward ordinances. He knew that His people would be forgetful, even of Himself, so He gave us this double “forget-me-not”—this sweet memorial of His death, that as often as we observe it, we may observe it in remembrance of Him.  
Moreover, *the world, itself, will always need this ordinance*. There will never come a day when the world will not need to have the Crucified Christ set before it. There will never be an hour in which there will not be breaking hearts that need consolation, wandering souls that need reclaiming and others who are seeking self-salvation, who will need to be taught that salvation lies in Another—and is to be found only in the bleeding Lamb of Calvary. May God help us to maintain this testimony for the world’s sake, for the poor sinner’s sake, for our own sake and for Christ’s sake “till He comes.”  
**IV.**I have done when I have made one more remark, which is this. If what I have said about this ordinance is true, then, LET US ATTEND TO IT. If in this way we set forth Christ’s death—if our coming to the Communion Table calls attention to that great fact—if we unite in this act of fellowship in testimony to the death of Christ, let us attend to it.  
What shall I say to some of you who, I trust, have Christ as your Master, but who have never yet obeyed this command of His? Let me ask you whether He has ever given you exemption from the observance of this ordinance and let me also ask you whether, as He though it wise to ordain this ordinance, you ought not to think it wise to observe it? Did He institute it in order that you might neglect it? Has He instituted any ordinance which it is right for His people to neglect? Do you know how much you have already lost through your disobedience to your Lord’s command? You tell me that it will not save you. I know that. And you know as well as I do that you should not come to the Communion Table if you thought it would save you, for none are invited to come but those who are already saved! But I should like you to look at this matter in the way in which a poor young man spoke of the other ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ.  
He had not all his wits, but the Grace of God had been at work within him and, as he lay dying, his chief regret was that he had not been baptized. His sisters said to him, “Well, but you know, Isaac, that baptism will not save you.” He answered, “I know that very well, for I am already saved. But,” He added, “I expect to meet the Lord Jesus Christ very soon and I should not like Him to say to me, ‘Why did you not do that little thing to please Me?’” There is much force in that remark. The smaller the thing is, the greater reason is there why we should attend to it directly, lest we should be supposed to have said, “I would not do even that little thing to please Christ.” If coming to the Communion Table would save you, of course you would come out of sheer selfishness! But if your religion is nothing but selfishness, may the Lord have mercy upon you and give you a far better one! It is the privilege of those who are saved to show their obedience to Christ and their love to Him by coming to His Table. Do you think that you can look Him in the face and say, “My Lord, You have instituted this ordinance to be observed in remembrance of You, but I have never observed it”? May He not look upon you and say, “It is but a small thing and it is for your soul’s good— can you not do that for Me?” You ought to question whether you are in a right state of heart if you can be negligent of this command of your Lord.  
But I must also speak to those who do observe the ordinance in a fashion, but who do not enter into the true spirit of it. Those who come rightly to the Table proclaim Christ’s death “till He comes,” but I am afraid that there are, at all Communion Services, some who do not think aright concerning Christ’s death. I always feel very sad, when I am presiding at this ordinance, if I find my thoughts wandering away from the last dread scene upon the Cross. I would rather not be at the Table of my Lord than be here thinking of something else beside His sufferings and death. What can be the use of the outward ordinance if inward and spiritual Grace is lacking? Beg the Lord to restrict all your thoughts to the Cross. Make this your prayer, “Bind the Sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar,” and let that Altar be the broken body of your Lord upon the Cross. Of Him let me think, and in Him let me rest all through the Communion Service, and let me see to it that I do reverently, humbly, heartily proclaim His death “till He comes.”  
Come then, Beloved, unworthy as you are, come to His Table! Come trembling because of your sin, but rejoicing in His Sacrifice and grateful for His great love! Come and trust Him over again! Come and give yourselves up to Him once more. Come and renew your vows of affection and devotion. Come and put your finger into the print of the nails and thrust your hand into His pierced side. No, more than that, say what the spouse does as she begins the song of songs, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine.” Seek to get near to Him, to come into close contact with Him and when you do so, hold Him fast and do not let Him go, but call together your friends and Christian Brothers and Sisters and say to them, “Here is the Master! Come with me and let us together have sweet fellowship with Him.” If, tonight, at the Communion Table, I might thus lay hold of the great Angel of the Covenant, I think I should feel inclined to hold Him till the break of day, as Jacob did at Jabbok. And if He should make my sinews shrink, yet would I bless His name for condescending to tarry and wrestle with me! If you can get into contact with Him, make this your resolve, that you will hold fast and will say to Him, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.”

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 22:1-9; MATTHEW 27:33-44.***

**Psalm 22:1.***My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*What a dolorous cry! How terrible it must have been to have heard that cry! How much more terrible to have uttered it! For the dear Son of God, the WellBeloved, with whom the Father is always pleased, to be forsaken of His God was, indeed, unfathomable grief!

**1.***Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?*It seems as if the Savior’s voice and almost His mind had failed Him, for He calls His prayer, “roaring,” likening Himself to a wounded beast. When any of You cannot pray, or think You cannot, remember these words of your Lord! If He, the Ever-Blessed Son of God, speaks of His own prayer as a, “roaring,” what must ours be? You know that Isaiah spoke of his own prayer as being like the chattering of a crane or a swallow, or the mourning of a dove, as if there were no articulate utterance about it. But to the ears and eyes of God, there is music in a sigh and beauty in a tear. As our Lord had to pray like this, do not wonder if we, sometimes, should feel that God has forsaken us. If there were such dark clouds for Christ, there may well be some for us also.

**2.***O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* If we remember Gethsemane and think how Jesus prayed there, even to an agony and a bloody sweat, shall we wonder if, sometime, our prayers seem to be put on one side and we do not immediately receive answers of peace to them? Yet, You see, our Lord kept on crying to God both day and night.

**3.***But You are holy, O You that inhabits the praises of Israel.* Settle it in your hearts that whatever God does, He is holy. Never harbor a thought against Him, never imagine that He is hard, or unjust, or unfaithful. That cannot be, so if the worst comes to the worst, never let your faith have any question upon this point.

**4, 5.***Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You did deliver them. They cried unto You, and were delivered: they trusted in You, and were not confounded.*Look back and see how God helped our ancestors. Recall how, in the past ages, the Lord always was the Deliverer of all those that trusted in Him. Was a righteous man ever finally forsaken of God? Since the world began, has not the Lord, sooner or later, appeared to deliver His children? It is wonderful to hear our Divine Master pleading in this fashion! But most wonderful of all is that next verse—

**6.***But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*There is a little red worm which seems to be nothing else but blood when it is crushed. It seems all gone except a blood-stain and the Savior, in the deep humiliation of His spirit, compares Himself to that little red worm. How true it is that, “He made Himself of no reputation” for our sakes! He emptied Himself of all His Glory and if there is any glory natural to manhood, He emptied Himself even of that! Not only the glories of His Godhead, but the honors of His Manhood He laid aside that it might be seen that, “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.”

**7, 8.***All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.* Or, as the passage is quoted in Matthew, “Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him.”

**9.***But You are He that took Me out of the womb: You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother’s breasts.*This is a very amazing thing. I do not think we remember as we ought that for years after our birth, we could do nothing to help ourselves, yet we were taken care of even then. He who has passed safely through his infancy need not be afraid that God will not help him through the rest of his life. And if we should live so long that we come to a second infancy, the God who carried us through the first will carry us through the second! He has already done so much for us that we are bound to trust Him for all the future. Now let us see, as I reminded You just now, how this passage is referred to in the Gospel according to Matthew.

**Matthew 27:33, 34.***And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say a place of a skull, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.*This was a stupefying draught which was usually given to prisoners about to die in order to mitigate their pain and, therefore, Christ would not drink it, for He was determined to suffer even to the bitter end. He did not come to have any mitigation of His agony when He was offering His Atonement for us. And so, “when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.”

**35.***And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.*This is a point upon which we cannot say much, but, to the peculiarly sensitive soul of Jesus, it must have been a great part of His shame thus to be stripped of every garment and hung up before the sun.

**36, 37.***And sitting down they watched Him there; and set up over His head His accusation written: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*By their own confession, He died for being a King and He died for being too greatly good, too royal in His love. He, being King of kings, died that you and I might live forever and be kings and priests unto God.

**38, 39.***Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads.* Not only they that sat there, such as the scribes, and Pharisee, and soldiers, and they that hung there, the thieves that were crucified with Him, but the passers-by reviled Him, indulging in a sneer.

**40-43.***And saying, You, that destroy the Temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. Likewise also the chief priest mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others: Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him.*That is the cry of the mockers today. If we will but give up the Atonement, men say that they will believe in Christ. His Character is so excellent that they will accept Him as an example, (so they say), but they will not have His Godhead, nor His precious blood! This proves that they are enemies, for they use the same language as His bitterest foes did when He hung upon the Cross. As for the scribes, they were learned in the Psalms and, therefore, they quoted what we have already read.

**43, 44.***He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.* Thus the Master passed through bitter trial and ignominy for our sakes.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 284.**  
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THE WITNESS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER  
NO. 3338

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 23, 1913.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

THE center of our holy religion is the Cross. The central thought of the whole of Christianity is Christ and the great point in Christ’s history is His Crucifixion. We preach Christ—but more—we preach Him Crucified! Beloved, this, which is the keystone or the whole arch of our religion, should be more constantly in our minds than it is. It should more frequently occupy our meditations. It should engage more incessantly our tongues—we should sing of it more often, we should pray more in the shadow of it and we should live more under the control of the impulses its suggests. In the Cross of Christ let each one of us glory and, like the Apostle, say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

In order to keep in our mind’s eye what, alas, we so easily forget—the death of our blessed Lord—He has been pleased to institute the Supper which we are about to celebrate. Beneath yon fair white linen cloth we have memorials of His passion, full of instruction to those who rightly view them. If any in this place should ask, “What mean you by this service?” our ready answer shall be according as it is written—“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Cor 11:26). We eat bread and drink wine, not out of any foolish superstition that these can be transmuted into the very flesh and blood of Jesus Christ—a superstition which would be a disgrace to a Bushman—a superstition which *is*a disgrace to those who hold it in this enlightened land, and not a disgrace only, but a vast sin—a black delusion which is given to them that they may believe a lie—whereby they involve themselves in the doom of Hell! We hold no such folly. Because we are rational and because we are spiritual, both our reason and our spiritual nature revolt against anything so atrocious as to believe that the body of Christ—the absolute flesh and blood—can be eaten and drank, or that if it could be done, it ought to be done, or that it could confer any spiritual benefit upon those who could perform so cannibal and revolting an act! We believe in the real Presence, but not in the corporeal Presence. We believe that Jesus Christ comes to us *spiritually* and refreshes us, and in that sense we both eat His flesh and drink His blood. But as to any such literal feast as some believe in, we reject the thought with horror and with contempt!

The great meaning of “The Lord’s Supper,” as we call it, is that we show the Lord’s death till He comes. We *show it to ourselves* and we show it, or represent it, to others—to unbelievers who may *chance to look on.*The former of these is, perhaps, the more important. In coming to eat of the bread and drink of the wine at this Supper—

**I.**WE SHOW THE LORD’S DEATH TO OURSELVES.  
Not, indeed, that this is the exclusive manner of exhibiting the passion which our dear Savior endured, or the decease which He accomplished, for there are, it must be admitted, other methods of showing the Lord’s death. *One is by this Book,*this Inspired Volume which contains the record of His Crucifixion—which explains it—which enforces upon men the duty of putting their trust in the merit of Him who died. Wherever this Bible is opened there is a showing of Christ’s death! Why, the whole Book is full of it! There is a crimson line of atoning Sacrifice running from Genesis to Revelation—  
***“Here I behold my Savior’s face  
Almost in every page.”***  
Every distinct Book of Inspiration is like a mirror reflecting the image of Jesus—“as in a glass, darkly,” it is true, but still sufficiently clear even for these dim eyes of ours. All the Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the Child, Christ Jesus, as said Augustine of old—If you would see Jesus, you must search for Him in Holy Scripture and, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you will not go far until you find Him!  
The Lord Jesus Christ’s death is also shown forth *in public ministry.*There are some who are so fond of painted windows because, they say, they preach by painting. Brothers and Sisters, we paint by preaching! That is the only difference and to paint by *preaching* is an infinitely better thing than to preach by painting! All the methods that are adopted to show forth Christ’s death throughout all the world are utter vanity compared with the ministration of the Gospel. It is not possible for the preacher too much to magnify His office. It is God’s predestinated channel of Grace to the sons of men. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”—and as we speak, God helping us—Christ is set forth, manifestly Crucified among you! How many in this place have seen Jesus by what they have heard spoken of Him? The eye of the mind has seen Him. ‘Twere of little use for the eyes of sense to do so. Thousands saw Christ with their natural eyes and perished in their sins! But to see Him with the eyes of the spirit—this it is that saves. The preaching of the Gospel paints Christ to the mind’s eyes, not to the natural eyes, so it is the best way of depicting Him, for it exactly meets the vision that it is intended to impress!  
Still, over and above the showing of Christ’s death in the printed Word and the Word preached, there comes in this emblematical Supper in which we show Christ’s death after a manner I will try to explain. We show to ourselves as we come here *that Christ was* really Incarnate and so could die. My Soul, as you take that bread into your fingers, remember that it is a thing to be handled and to be touched—a material substance. And so, God, the Infinite, took into union with Himself actual flesh and blood, such as you have in your own body! A strange thing that a pure Spirit should condescend to tabernacle in flesh—and yet it is so written—“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” Oh, matchless mystery! He who fills all things became an Infant of a span long! He who is Eternal and Omnipotent became a humble working Man, putting on the garment without seam, suffering, toiling and at last yielding up His life! As each drop of wine shall pass your lips and you recognize it as a *material substance*, you show to yourself, O Believer, that Jesus Christ became Incarnate. Think of this! Take care that you do not make a God out of the manhood, nor a man out of the Godhead. Rest assured that as certainly as Christ was God, without diminution of His splendor, so certainly He was also Man, pure Man with a Manhood like your own, even as He, Himself, said—“Handle Me and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” See, then, Brothers and Sisters, your next of kin—a sufferer like yourselves—and let the bread and wine remind you of Him!  
Then next, the Supper *reminds you of your Lord’s sufferings.* There is the bread broken. The wine, the juice of the grape, crushed out with pain and labor—poured out. Now remember that Jesus Christ, though not a bone of Him could be broken, was broken in spirit—“Reproach has broken My heart; I am full of heaviness”—He poured out His soul unto death. Let the bread and the wine remind you of the bloody sweat in the Garden—of the anguish unto death which He endured in dark Gethsemane among the olive trees. Let them bring to your recollection, Beloved in the Lord, the scourging at the hands of Pilate and of Herod. Imagine you see Him standing patiently there, giving up His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair—hiding not His face from shame and spitting. That bread broken and that wine poured out should remind you of the journey along the *Via Dolorosa,*as He went fainting beneath the burden of His Cross. They must remind you of the Cross and the nails, the grief of being forsaken, the anguish of thirst, the bitterness of scorn, the torment of fever and, at last, death itself. I do not say that, perhaps you will be able to make the whole scene pass before your minds, but I bid you try to do so. Drive away every other thought as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. Charge your soul to stand with His Virgin Mother at the foot of the Cross and pray that His blood may fall upon you, drop by drop, that you may be so enchanted by what you see, withal so dreadful, but yet so full of bliss, that you may not dare for a moment to let a stray thought come in! This and this only, think of! Think of Jesus Incarnate and of Jesus suffering!  
But the bread and the wine show more than this. What do I see? Bread, the flesh. Wine, the life, the blood. Flesh and blood, then, when separated, are both dead so that the cup and the bread together distinctly signify the actual death of our Lord. There is no such thing as a Lord’s Supper with the bread, alone, nor with the cup, alone, nor with the bread and wine mingled! They must both be distinct. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. And until the blood has been poured forth, the flesh still remains and retains its life. But put the two, distinctly, and you get the idea of death as clearly as you can have it. Now, Beloved, I want you to come close up to this Truth of God, that the Lord of Glory actually died. For our Savior there was no passing into Heaven by a chariot of fire. It is not said of Him, as of Enoch, that “He was not, for God took Him.” He must die! You dread death. You look forward to it frequently with trepidation. But Christ passed absolutely through it and the Human Soul and the Human Body of our Savior were torn from each other. He actually descended into the abodes of the dead! He bowed His head to the great enemy and yielded up the ghost. Had He not so died, there had been no ransom paid for you, for God’s Law demanded a life. The sentence was, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” Christ has actually died—and let this Supper bring home the thought most sweetly to yourselves that Jesus died!  
We have not yet shown Christ’s death wholly to ourselves.*The spreading of that bread* and wine on yonder table is a showing to ourselves*that God has made a provision for human needs.* A hungry man coming to that Table thinks at once of eating and drinking. He perceives that if it is placed there, it is placed there for use. Bread and wine in the cupboard may be stored, but bread and wine on the table are evidently for use. Now, child of God, catch that thought and hold it. Jesus Christ has come into the world, not to withhold, but to give! Not to reserve, but to distribute! Not to keep to Himself any good thing, but to bestow all that He has upon His people! Come, then, with all your great necessities—come to the Savior, for He freely presents Himself to all Believers! Great Sinner, do you need great pardon? Jesus will give it to you! He puts on the Table the cup. Do you need, Christian, great comfort? Come and take it—it is put on the Table! Jesus keeps open house for all comers who come by faith to Him. Have you the faith to come and trust Him? Then all that Jesus is and has you may be and have! Especially you that are His friends, you that have leaned upon His bosom—do not stint yourselves, for He does not stint you. You are not straitened in Him—if straitened at all, it is in yourselves. Jesus puts upon the Table for us, Himself, and, being put there, it is as good as an open invitation by a loud voice, saying, “O, you hungry, come and feed! O, you thirsty, come and drink!” There is nothing in Christ which He will deny to His people! Christ has nothing in Heaven or on earth which He will keep back from the Believer that dares to come and ask for it! Come, then! Come boldly! The Lord give you access unto this Grace!  
And do we not show the Lord’s death a little further when, *after having spread the Supper, we come to eat it?* Then we say to ourselves, “Just as I must eat this bread, or it will not nourish me, so must I take Jesus Christ, personally, by a distinct act of faith and take Him to be mine. And as this bread, after I have taken it, incorporates itself with me so that there is no distinction between this bread and my body, but it helps to build up the structure of my body, so when I take Christ and trust Him, He becomes one with me and I become one with Him and my life is hid with Him. And He says that because He lives I shall live also.” Now, is not that a wonderful lesson to teach by so simple an action? You eat, you drink, the food becomes assimilated into yourselves. You come to Jesus, you trust Him and Christ becomes one with you and you become one with Him, so that henceforth you can say, “It is no more I that lives, but Christ that lives in me” and, as for Jesus, He calls you a member of His body! He calls you a branch from His stem! He calls you the spouse and He, Himself, your Bridegroom! Oh, sacred union effected by the act of reception which is the act of faith!  
And now, beloved Believer, as you first lived by receiving Grace, you can only grow in that life by still receiving it! Do not come to this Table and say, “What can I bring?” No, but come and say, “What can I take away?” Do not say, “Am I worthy?” That question never ought to be asked. You are not worthy! But come, unworthy as you are, and take what Jesus has provided for unworthy sinners! “Well,” says someone, “but we are to take heed lest we eat and drink being unworthy.” No, you are not! There is no such text in all the Bible! You see, you have left out a syllable. What it does say is about eating and drinking *unworthily*—and that is with respect to the way of eating it. If you come to this table lightly—if you come to it irreligiously, profanely—if you come as they did at Corinth, to merely drink. If you come to get money by it, as some did in years gone by, to qualify themselves for office or to obtain charity— *that* would be to eat and drink unworthily! But, unworthy as you are, if your—  
***“Hope is fixed on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness,”***  
then come, for such as you the Table is spread!  
And when you do come, I do pray you yet once more, *do not let unbelief keep you back from enjoying all that is to be enjoyed.* You know a very hungry man does not stand on many manners. If he is told to eat everything that is set before him, then his hunger does not permit him to stand on niceties, but he eats all he can get. And so may you. Yes, and you may carry away what you will, too, with you. You may come and get a feast tonight and the sweet remembrance of it in days to come will be permitted to you. Believe that Christ does not refuse you anything. When you pray, do not ask as if you were getting something out of a hardhearted Being, but come to One whose delight it is to give—whose very Glory it is to scatter His mercies among His beloved ones—  
***“Come, make your needs, your burdens known! He will present them at the Throne  
And angel bands are waiting there,  
His messages of love to bear.”***

Thus, you see, in the bread and the wine, in the bread and wine separated, in the bread broken and the wine poured out, in the two emblems put on a table— and in these two being so partaken of that they become united with the fabric of our body—we set forth the whole mystery of the death of Jesus Christ to ourselves. May the Spirit of God help us to truly do this!

Observe now that—  
**II.**WE ARE TO SHOW CHRIST’S DEATH TO OTHERS.  
As often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we do this. We

*show to others the fact that Jesus died.* I think historians have taken it as one of the best proofs of a fact when some rite has been instituted to commemorate it. A pillar with an inscription is not always a certain index to truth. Our own Monument, for instance, had a record on it that London was burned down by the Catholics—who had no more to do with it, certainly, than the Muslims did! The inscription in that case was not a record of fact! Yes, and a pillar might be erected to record an event which never occurred at all. But, as a general rule, large bodies of men will not agree together to continually celebrate events which never occurred. Nobody doubts, I suppose, the siege of Londonderry, when the prentice boys meet every year to make a noise and disturbance. They at least bring before the historian’s mind the certainty that such an event did occur, for it is still thus recorded. Now, our Lord gave us this simple method of breaking bread and drinking wine to be our way of setting up our pillar—our mode of keeping up a great historical fact—that there was a Man who lived in Judea, who professed to be the Son of God, who was the King of the Jews, who lived a humble life and died a marvelous death! There is no fact in history so well attested as this! So that those who have given up the Inspiration of Scripture have seldom touched either the life or the death of Jesus, but have conceded both to be facts. And now this very night, perhaps, in fifty thousand places, at this moment, this commemorative act of eating bread and drinking wine is about to be performed in this one country of England. Now that is something by way of record, and by this act we help to perpetuate to all generations the fact that Jesus died!

But we do a great deal more than this to others. We assert by coming here, tonight, and eating this bread and drinking of this cup, *that we believe that this Man*, *Jesus of Nazareth, was the Son of God and the Savior of men, and that we go in with Him for everything that is involved in the story of His life and death.* That is to say, if it is a shame for Christ to die upon the Cross, we are willing to bear part of the shame. If it is thought to be foolishness to believe in a Crucified Man—we are fools and come here to avow it. If it is said to be a stumbling block to many that Jesus of Nazareth should be the Son of God—we come to declare that it is no stumbling block to us! We accept Him as Divine! We trust in Him as the Propitiation for our sins! Beloved, when you shall take that bread, you take part with Christ. You take lot with Him and, mark you, He often goes up the bleak side of the hill—and you will have to do the same with the snow between your teeth! And He often lodges in huts and hovels— yes, He has not where to lay His head! He has handfuls of the world’s filth thrown at Him and but little of its gold laid at His feet. He is despised and rejected of men—and if you will keep Him company, you must expect to be despised, too, and to be as ill-treated as He was—for the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord! Whoever follows David must go to him in the wild goat tracks of Engedi, or dwell with him in the Cave of Adullam. He that would be David’s man must share David’s needs and David’s disgraces or else he cannot share his crown. Believers, have you counted this cost? You professors who come to this Table and who say to the onlookers, “We go with Christ! We are enlisted under His banner! We have given ourselves to Him”—have we counted the cost?—

***“Have you counted the cost? Have you counted the cost? You followers of the Cross?  
And are you prepared for your Master’s sake To suffer all worldly loss?  
And can you endure with the virgin band, The lowly and pure in heart,  
Who wherever the Lamb does lead,  
From His footsteps never depart?”***

Oh, that so counting the cost, you may continue with Him till life’s journey is over! Thus, you see, you not only assert that Christ died, but you communicants assert that He died for *you* and that you are one with Him and will take shares with Him when He comes into His Kingdom!

You do even more than that. *You explain the meaning of Christ’s death by the mere fact of coming to this Table.* “How,” you ask, “is that?” In eating the bread and drinking the wine, you set forth a sacrifice—a libation of blood and a slaughter of flesh—and you say to all the world, “Our trust for salvation rests in a Sacrifice! We have no hope of being saved by anything that springs of ourselves—we look wholly out of self and entirely to the Sacrifice which was offered up on the Cross.” While some of you sit down to the Table, others of you will be onlookers. I do pray, as you look on, if you have never known this Truth of God before, learn it now. All your hope of ever entering Heaven must lie quite out of yourselves and be concentrated in Another—in God’s only and own dear Son! While I am stating this fact, which is so well known to you that it sounds commonplace, I feel as if I could burst into a flood of tears to think that it should grow so commonplace and yet be not believed! Does God become Man and die, and will you not trust Him? Does my God, that made the heavens and the earth, of whom I read that without Him was not anything made that was made—does He become a Man and suffer that sinners might live? And is it nothing to you, is it nothing to you and will you prefer the tawdry pleasures of this world to the solid bliss which He can give you? And will you dash yourselves upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler and run upon His glittering spear and ruin yourselves forever rather than close in with Christ and kiss the Son lest He be angry? I can understand why it is that you do not love my Lord, for once I was so foolish, myself, but oh, it is brutish—it is worse than that, it is devilish to despise a dying Christ! I know not whether I have not maligned the devil in using his name in such a matter as that, for surely, had Jesus died for devils, they would not have been such devils as men are who, hearing of a Savior and believing the story of His passion, yet turn a deaf ear to it and give their souls up to Madame Wanton, or to base-born Mammon, or to some other carnal thing which will but delude and destroy them!

There are some of you I shall never see again. I charge you before the Eternal God, as we shall meet at His Last Judgment Seat, think of this— that if it is worth God’s while to come here and be Incarnate, and so to suffer to make Atonement, it is not a thing for you to trifle with! But if you do, you will find that the stone which you refused will grind you to powder in that day when, like some cliff that is loosened from its socket, long quivering there, it shall come rolling down upon the heedless traveler to crush him and utterly destroy him! God save you, my dear Hearer, stranger to me, and stranger to yourself, and stranger to my God! And though you may remain a stranger to me, yet may you begin to know something of yourself, tonight, and something of my Master, of whom I will say this one thing—If you did but know Him you would love Him—

***“His worth if all the nations knew,***

***Sure the whole world would love Him too.”***Thus, then, do we show the fact of our participation in Christ’s death and the meaning of it.

Does not the voice of ages and of generations after generations speak to you now in the constancy and frequency of this celebration? And do you not perceive that we move forward to the boundary which shall realize the Church’s hope? “We do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” Then He is coming! He is coming! I know not when, no, nor know the angel of God that is nearest to the Eternal Book when God unfolds the leaves. But He is coming! As when the earthquake comes, with divers signs and prodigies that make men start, and yet they know not what it is, He comes! As the lightning flash that is seen from east to west, He comes! As the thief that steals silently through the shadows of the night and robs the sleeper, so He comes! The Man that wore the crown of thorns is coming with a crown about His brow more glorious than all the coronets of earth. He is coming! The Son of Mary is coming to wear no more the garment without seam, but wrapped—

***“With rainbow wreath and robes of storm.”***He is coming! The Man that did hang upon the Cross will sit upon the Great White Throne—

***“On cherub wings and wings of wind,  
Appointed Judge of all mankind.”***  
And you said tonight—you said it and I heard you—that you crucified Him and you said that yours were the hands that drove the nails and

made the hammer fall. You sang just now—  
***“‘Tis I have thus ungrateful been.”***

Now you have confessed it! You who have trusted in Him will confess it and yet, thank God that out of a fault springs your salvation! But you who have not trusted Him, what will you say to Him in that day when He shall come to judge the world? You shall look on Him whom you have pierced and you shall weep and wail because of Him! Oh, that you would look at His wounds now and trust Him, for if you do not, you shall look on them, then, and you shall say, “I made those wounds.” And that thought will shake you as when a lion shakes its prey. That thought will melt your bones as though they were but ice in the heat of the sun! And your loins shall be loosed and your soul shall sink in dismay. I pray you—I beseech you by the love you bear to yourself, and to your soul that can never die—look unto Jesus and be saved! Look unto Him now! You must look one day—look tonight! You must look, either with repentance and faith, or else with terror and despair! Choose which it shall be. Choose now! Young men and women who have stepped in here tonight, I pray God that you may have Grace to decide for Jesus now. Old men and fathers, maidens and matrons, may you also have Grace to say, “I will take Him as my Savior, not as my Judge”—

***~~“But if your ears refuse  
The language of His Grace,  
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews, That unbelieving race.  
The Lord in anger dressed,  
Shall lift His hand and swear,  
‘You that despise My promised rest  
Shall have no portion there.’”~~***

***~~EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EZEKIEL 36:16-38.~~***

**Verses 16-20.***Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before Me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Therefore I poured My fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, where they went, they profaned My holy name, when they said to them, these are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of His land.* All through Scripture we are told that God has great regard to the honor of His holy name. “The Lord your God is a jealous God.” And this is no small blessing to us, for it has so happened that when there has been no other reason for mercy, God’s regard to His own name has found Him a reason for dealing mercifully with His unbelieving, undeserving people! See how He had scattered His chosen people. He had sent them away into captivity, justly, on account of their sins. But it came to pass that wherever they went, whether it was into Persia or Babylonia, the people said, “These are Jehovah’s people! These are Jehovah’s people and they are gone forth out of His land.” What was the consequence of this?

**21.***But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went.* He had pity for His own name! He had a reverence and esteem for His own renown and standing, even among these heathen nations!

**22, 23.***Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus says the LORD GOD; do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen which you have profaned in the midst of them: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD says the LORD GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.* Brothers and Sisters, what must God think of a nation like ours which has come to be called by His name, albeit it so little deserves that great honor? What, I say, must He think of the fact that if there are any vices yet unknown, white men will teach them to the heathen? And when the heathen have heard the Gospel, the great sources of doubt are the white men—Englishmen! Full often the greatest oppressors will spring out of our own nation! Certainly we hold the belt for drunkenness and where our fellow countrymen go, the name of Christianity is rendered base among the heathen! The Muslims say of such a man, “He has been drunk and turned a Christian.” I will grant that much that is said is said unwisely, untruthfully and slanderously in exaggeration, for these men are no Christians! They know not the Lord. It is not a Christian country—it is a heathen country, as some of us know, not only by what we read, but by what we see and hear! Can you walk the streets without hearing blasphemies more black than might be heard in any streets under Heaven? This is a heathen country, but yet it has somehow come to be thought to be a Christian country and, therefore, its conduct is bringing dishonor upon the name of the Most High! Oh, that He would have pity upon that name and interpose, and once more establish the Truth of God and set up a throne of righteousness and turn the hearts of the people to Himself in this country! Oh, that it were so, for His great name’s sake! He cannot bless us for our own sakes, for we deserve nothing but His wrath—but, oh, that He would once again have pity upon His holy name that is profaned—and bless this, our land! The Lord goes on to say concerning His people—

**24.***For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* Now, this stands true of Israel after the flesh. It will assuredly be fulfilled in the latter days. But it stands even more certain concerning Israel, the true Israel, of whom the natural Israel is but the type. Now, we read one form of that New Covenant made with God concerning His elect, comprehending all that have believed in Christ, or ever shall believe in Him. This is the Covenant that He makes with us in these days—

**25, 26.***Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh.*Here is, first of all, full *justification*. “From all your filthiness will I cleanse you.” And here is, next, *regeneration—*“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” These are unconditional promises of that Covenant which He has made with His redeemed in the Person of Christ Jesus, their Covenant Head! See how majestically it is worded—“I will” and, “You shall.” There is not an “if” or a “but” all through it!

**27.***And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.*Here is *sanctification*! Here is *final perseverance*! Blessed promises of the Covenant of Grace!

**28.***And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God.*That is the greatest promise of all! If a man were to preach a series of sermons upon this text during every day in the year, he could never exhaust the fullness of its meaning. “You shall be My people, and I will be your God.”

**29.***I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.*And, spiritually, how true this is—that whenever God saves us from sin, He also saves us from every form of famine. No heart was ever left to hunger and thirst in vain when it was cleansed from its sin! Our needs come out of our sins, but when we walk with God, He lays no famine upon us in spiritual things.

**30.***And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.*“Then,” when I have blessed you thus—when I have fully saved you, when I have brought you up from all the places where I have scattered you, when I have enriched you and indulged you with *my* love—

**31.***Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.* Repentance is not the root of Grace, but the lily-like flower of it. It is not a thing for the early morning of Christian life, alone. Repentance will go side by side with faith all through the ways of righteousness till we get to Heaven Gate! It is when we have most of mercy that we have most loathing for sin—

***“Law and terrors do but harden  
All the while they work alone.  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon  
Soon dissolves a heart of stone!”***

**32.***Not for your sakes do I do this, says the LORD GOD. Be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* There is no man saved for his own sake. There is no man redeemed for his own sake. It is for God’s own Glory’s sake. There is no motive so high—there is none so worthy of God, as the making known to all generations and all realms the majesty of His love and the faithfulness of His Covenant.

**33-36.***Thus says the LORD GOD: In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I, the LORD, build the ruined places, and plant that, that was desolate; I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.*Now, as He will do this, I doubt not, in Palestine, in due season, so does He always make the most desolate places to be built when His people live near to Him. Let us have courage, Brothers and Sisters, about London, about England, about the world! It is very wicked, but if we will keep close to God, we are able to overcome this wickedness in Christ’s name. Let us have comfort about these evil days in which the most of men seem to be departing from the Gospel. We can “hold the fort” till Christ comes—let us but have courage! God will give us yet to see better and brighter days. He was thought to be a good citizen who never despaired of his country and he is a good Christian who never indulges a dreary thought about the ultimate triumph of Christ and the coming of His Kingdom—“for Yours is the Kingdom,” even now, “and the power and the glory,” and so shall it be, forever and ever!

**37.***Thus says the LORD GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*There must be the spirit of prayer and supplication poured out first. We shall see Israel restored to her land when Israel is restored to the Mercy Seat—and we shall see great prosperity as a Church and the blessing of God will rest upon our nation when once God’s people go up to the top of Carmel with their faces between their knees and cry, and cry, and cry again, expecting that yet the heavenly shower shall end this long drought of the curse—and the blessing shall come. “I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.”

**38.***As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the LORD.* And that is the great end of it all—to make men know that the I AM is—that the true and real God is still potent among the sons of men and does His will both here and among the armies of Heaven. Unto His name be glory forever and ever!

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THE FEAST OF THE LORD  
NO. 3501

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 1916.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1871.~~***

***~~“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”  
1 Corinthians 11:26.~~***

I THINK we cannot too often explain the meaning of the two great Christian ordinances—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—for it is essential to our profiting by them that we understand them. If we do not know what they mean, they certainly cannot convey to us any blessing whatever. They are not mere channels of Grace in themselves, apart from our understanding being exercised and our hearts being moved by them. Very soon the best ordinance in the world will become a mere form and will even degenerate into superstitious practice unless it is understood— and we must not always take it for granted that the meaning of the simplest emblem is understood. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, must still be the motto of the Christian minister! We must explain, explain and explain again, or else men will satisfy themselves with the outward form and not reach to the teaching which the forms were intended to convey. Our text deals with the Supper of our Lord, and we will read it again. “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.”

The first point of the text is *what we do*—we “show.” Then, *what do we show, and how*? And then, *who shows it*—“you do show the Lord’s death.” And then, *when*?—“as often”—“till He comes.” First, then, when we come to the Lord’s Table—

**I.**WHAT WE DO.  
We “show.” That word has two or three meanings. They all melt into one, but we shall get at it better by dividing it. It is meant here, by showing Christ’s death, that *we declare it*. When the emblems are placed upon the table—bread and wine and we gather around it, we declare our firm belief that Jesus, the Son of God, descended into this world and died as a Sacrifice for sin upon the Cross. It has been found that if a great event is to be kept in mind in succeeding ages, there must be some memorial of it. Men by degrees forget it and even come to be dubious as to whether such an event did occur. Sometimes a stone has been set up—a monument—but this has not always been most effective. God, when He would have the children of Israel remember that He brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, did not bid them set up a monument, but He ordained a ceremony which was to be practiced on a certain day. It was called “The Passover,” and the slaughter of the lamb and the eating of it became a yearly declaration by the people of Israel that they believed that God brought their fathers up out of the house of bondage. So effective has this been that men have often used the same device. When the Jewish people escaped from the plot which was laid by Haman, through the wisdom of Mordecai and Esther, they ordained the keeping of the feast of Purim, that they might have in perpetual memory the goodness of God towards His people.  
And you know how, in our own English history and in the history of other countries, certain rites and ceremonies have been ordained in order that there might be a perpetual memorial, a declaration made that such-and-such a thing did occur. Now that more than 1800 years ago Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, died upon Calvary by Crucifixion, we do here proclaim and declare! We set forth again to a world that is skeptical and denies the fact which is its brightest hope—we set forth our confident belief that so it was—and as long as this ordinance shall be celebrated, there shall be a standing proof in the world that that was the case!  
But to set forth means more than to declare, it signifies, in the next place *to represent*. There is in the Lord’s Supper a representation of the death of Christ. Men, when they have found an event to be interesting and remarkable, have often devised ways of representing it to the people that they might understand it.  
With regard to our Lord’s death, there are some who hang up pictures on the wall—they think the use of the crucifix and so on to be proper. I find no teaching of that kind in the Word of God! I do find that too often such things lead to idolatry. And what shall we say of these miracle plays which, even in these modern times, have been carried out in which the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is travestied? They seem to be shocking to the Christian mind! But here, in a very simple manner, you have God’s own appointed way of representing to ourselves and to onlookers the death of our Lord. This is the Christian’s “show”—we *show* the death of Christ here by a Divine Appointment. I shall, farther on, show how it is so, and that the breaking of bread and the pouring forth of wine—the use of those two emblems—is a most telling, most suggestive, most instructive method of representing the death of Christ. There are two other ways of representing it—the one, the pencil of the Evangelist which has drawn the death of Christ in the Word of God. The other is the preaching of the Gospel. It is the preacher’s business to set forth Christ Crucified— evidently crucified among you. The three ways that God has ordained of representing the death of Christ are the Word read, the Word preached, and this blessed ordinance of the Supper of the Lord.  
To “show.” This means to declare, to testify—and it also means to represent. But it has another meaning—it means also *to hold forth*, to make manifest, to publish, to call attention to. Now it has been a matter of fact that when the Jesuit missionaries went to China and converted a great many to what they called “the Christian faith,” they never mentioned the fact that Christ died. For years they concealed it, lest the people should be shocked! Now we, on the other hand, put that first and foremost! We have no other Christianity than this—that Christ died and rose again—and we cannot come to the Lord’s Table without showing it. The Jesuit could, because it would puzzle the wisest man to see the death of Christ in the “Mass.” He might sit and look at a hundred “Masses” before he knew what it meant. But the moment we gather around this Table and break bread, and pour out wine, whoever asks us, “What do you mean by this ordinance?” the answer is prompt—the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err in this—“We set forth to you that Jesus died.” “God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are not ashamed of a crucified Savior! We have heard of some in these days who are always preaching a *Glorified* Christ. We wish them such success as their ministry is likely to bring, but for us, we preach a Crucified Christ—“Christ and Him Crucified,” for it is here, after all, that the salvation of the sinner lies! Christ Glorified is precious enough—oh, how unspeakably precious to a soul that is saved!— but first and foremost to a dying world it is Christ upon the Cross that we have to declare! And, therefore, when we come to the Communion Table we do three things. We assert the fact that Jesus died—we represent that fact in emblem, and then we thus press it upon the attention of men. We desire them to observe it. We ask them to mark it. We tell them that this is the sum and substance of all the Gospel that we were sent to preach—“God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation for our sins.”  
Thus I have opened up the meaning of the word to, “show.” This is what we do. Now the second point is, my Brothers and Sisters—  
**II.**WHAT WE SHOW, AND HOW.  
It is said in the text, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.” How do we show it? What do we show? Well, first of all, we show that *God has set forth Christ for men*. The Table is spread—there is bread on it—there is the cup upon it. What for? Not for beasts. Here is the food of men! It is set there for men. It is intended that the bread should be eaten, that the wine should be drunk. Everybody who sees a table spread knows at once that there are preparations for a meal or a festival. Now God has set forth Christ for men. There is in Christ what man needs. As bread meets his hunger, as the cup meets his thirst, so Christ meets all the spiritual needs of mankind. And the soul that would live, and the soul that would rejoice, must come to God’s provision for his living and his rejoicing—and that provision is to be found in Jesus Christ Crucified! God set forth Christ of old. Even in the Garden, He set Him forth in the first promise. He continued to set Him forth by all the Prophets, and in this last day every veil has been taken away by an open Bible inviting all comers! God has set forth the Bread of Life to the sons of men! And you tonight will show that fact. When you see that Table uncovered, you have a representation. God has made a feast of fat things for the sons of men in the Person of Jesus Christ. The feast consists of bread and wine. Now in this we represent Christ’s human Person, Christ’s Humanity. That He is no myth, but real flesh, is taught by the bread being on the Table—that He was no phantom, but that real blood coursed through His veins as through ours— that the Lord of Life and Glory was, like ourselves, a real Man, in humanity in all respects like ourselves, sin alone excepted! There shall be no phantom feast upon the Table, and the materialism that is there is meant to show that he was a Man,*a real Man*—  
***“Who once on Calvary died,  
When streams of blood and water ran  
Down from His wounded side.”***  
But the next thing we show forth is *His death*. We have His Person— then we have His death—observe how. According to the Romish Church, the most of the people are only to participate in the bread—the wafer. Now such persons never show Christ’s death at all, for the text says, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show Christ’s death.” It is only by the *two that you show His death at all*. The bread represents the body, but the cup must represent the blood, or else you have no token of His suffering—no emblem of His death. Cannot the two be mixed together? No, for if the blood and flesh are together, you have the living man! It is when the blood flows—when the lifeblood ebbs from the body, and the body is bloodless, that then you have the wine as a token of death! And the separation of the two—the use of the two emblems—is absolutely necessary to set forth death. The more you think about this, the more you see in it. The emblem is the simplest in the world, but yet the most instructive. Take either one of the elements—the bread, how it typifies Christ’s suffering! Here was the wheat bruised beneath the thresher’s flail. Then it was cast into the ground. It sprung up and ripened and had to be cut down with the sickle. Then it had to be threshed. Then ground in the mill. Then was it baked in the oven. A whole series of sufferings, if I may use the term, it had to pass through before it became proper food for us! And so must our Savior pass through innumerable sufferings before He could become food for our souls, and Redeemer of our spirits. As for that which is in the cup, it was trodden beneath the foot in the winepress—its juice was pressed forth. So in the winepress of Jehovah’s Wrath was Christ pressed before He could become the wine that makes glad both God and man! Both emblems represent suffering, each one separately, but put together they bring forth the idea of death, “and as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.”  
But more than this! We show that God set forth Christ—we show His Person as a real Man, we show His sufferings and His death—but next we show *our participation in the same*, for it is not, “as often as you *look* at this bread,” or, “as you *gaze* upon this cup,” but, “as often as you*eat* this bread and *drink* this cup.” Christ saves us not until we receive Him by an act of faith. The bread satisfies no hunger while it rests upon the table, and a drink from the cup quenches no thirst until it is really drunk! So the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Savior must be received by our faith. We must believe in Him to the saving of our souls. Now how simple a matter is eating! It matters not, unless a man is dead—he needs little teaching to know how to eat. It is as simple as a natural act—he puts food into his mouth. It is just so here. There is the Savior and I take Him—that is all. It seems to me to be even a more complex act to eat than simply to trust in Jesus, yet is it a very simple thing. The idiot can eat. No matter how guilty a man, he can eat. No matter how dark and despairing his fears, he can eat. And O, poor Soul, whoever you may be, there shall be no lack of wit or merit that shall keep you back from Christ! If you are willing to have Him, you may have Him! The act of trusting Christ makes Christ as much your own as the eating of the bread! Suppose some difficulty were raised about whether a piece of bread was mine. Well, the legal question would take a long time to decide. I cannot produce the document, nor find the witnesses to prove it is mine. But there is one little fact, I think, which will settle it—I have eaten it! So if the devil, himself, were to say that Christ is not mine, I have believed on Him and if I have believed on Him, He *is* mine just as surely as when I have eaten a piece of bread there can be no question about its being mine! Now we set forth, tonight, by eating bread and drinking of the cup, the fact that Jesus Christ is our Savior—and we take Him by simple faith to be our All-in-All.  
But there is still more teaching. The bread and wine are being eaten and drunk, are assimilated into the system—they minister strength to bone, sinew, muscle—they build up the man. And herein is teaching. *Christ believed in is One with us*—“Christ in us the hope of glory.” We have heard persons talk of Believers falling from Grace and losing Christ. No, Sir, a man has eaten bread—he ate it yesterday. Will you separate that bread from the man? Will you trace the drops that came from the cup, and fetch them out of the man’s system? You shall more easily do that than you shall take Christ away from the soul that has once fed upon Him! “Who

shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” He is in us a well of water springing up into Everlasting Life! See then how large a letter Christ has written to us with these pens—how in this bread and this wine, eaten and drunk, He has taught us wondrous mysteries—in fact, the whole Christian faith is, in brief, summed up here upon this Table!  
And now we must remark upon what it is we show forth, and how we do it. *We do this very simply*. Certain churches must go about this business in a very mysterious manner—a great deal of machinery is needed— a plate becomes a *paten*, and a cup becomes a *chalice*, and a table, ah, that has vanished and turned into an altar! The whole thing is turned topsy-turvy until it is very questionable in the Church of Rome whether there is any supper at all—for if you introduce the altar, you have put away the table and done away with the whole thing! It is another ordinance, and not the ordinance which Christ established! One would suppose that when the Apostles first went out to preach, if the religion of the Romish Church is that of the Scripture, they would have needed, each of them, a wagon to carry with them the various paraphernalia necessary for the celebration of their services! But here, wherever there is a piece of bread, and wherever there is a cup, we have the plain, but instructive emblems which our Savior bade us use. “He took bread and broke it. “He did drink of the cup, and passed it to His disciples, and said, ‘Drink you all of it.’”  
Let us keep this ordinance in its pure simplicity. Let us never add anything to it by our own devising by way of fancying that we are honoring God by garnishing His Table. Let us plainly show Christ’s death, and as we do it plainly *we should also do it festively*. Is it not delightful to reflect that our Lord has not ordained a mournful ceremony in which to celebrate His death—it is a feast! You would suppose by the way that some come that it is a funeral—but it is a feast, and joy becomes a feast! And when, according to the example of Christ, we recline at our ease in the nearest approach to the posture in which the Oriental lay along at the table, and when we come with joyful heart, blessing the Lord Jesus that though our sins put Him to death, yet His death has put to death our sins, then it is that we celebrate His death as He would have us celebrate it—not as an awful tragedy, in which we try to provoke our indignation against the Romans or the Jews—but as a hallowed festival in which the King, Himself, comes to the Table, and His spikenard gives forth a sweet smell and our spirit is refreshed!  
And once more, this way of showing Christ’s death is one of *communion*. Now one person cannot do it—many must come together. You must eat and drink together to celebrate this, your Lord’s death. And is not this delightful, for in this cup we have fellowship with Him and with one another? We, being many, have one bread! We, being many, have one cup—one family at one table with one common Head—the Lord Jesus, who is All-in-All to us. Oh, I bless His name that whereas He might have ordained a way of our showing His death which would have been mournful, or a way which would have been solitary, He has selected that which is joyful and that which is full of good fellowship, so that saints below and Himself can meet together in the festival of love and show His death until He comes in the breaking of bread and the pouring forth of wine! Thus I have tried to show what it is we show, and how we show it. Now thirdly—  
**III.**WHO ARE TO SHOW IT? Who shows it? “As often as*you* eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death.” The, “you,” then, includes all the saints of God—all who come to the Table, who eat this bread and drink this cup—and truly a very pleasing thought arises from this. Here is a way of showing Christ’s death in which all who love Christ have a share! You cannot all show it from the pulpit—gifts are not equally distributed—but you all alike share in this showing of His death! In this special way, which He, Himself, celebrated for our example, and which He expressly delivered to His servant, Paul, that it might stand on record! Now if Paul himself were here, he could not show Christ’s death alone at the Lord’s Supper. He must ask some of his poorer Brothers and Sisters to come with him. If the minister of a Church should be full of the Holy Spirit, yet could he not show forth Christ’s death here in this peculiar way. He must say to his brethren, “Come, Brothers and Sisters—it says, ‘you’—“as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup.” Here we are tonight, as we sit here, all brought into a blessed equality in the act of using the same outward sign and of performing the Master’s will in the same way!  
“But,” says ones “does every man who comes to the Table, and eats and drinks, show Christ’s death?” Notice how the verse which follows my text puts a bar to that. “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.” It must be taken for granted that the man has *examined himself*—that he comes there as a true Believer in Jesus—that he comes with the full intent to show Christ’s death! And if he does that, such a man is showing Christ’s death. I am very earnest, dear Brothers and Sisters, as it has been a long time since I have met with you—having been kept away so long by sickness, though I have been with my Brothers below stairs—I am anxious that we should, indeed, show Christ’s death tonight. Let us do it ourselves. I find that the text may either be read in the indicative or in the imperative mood. It is either, “*you show* Christ’s death,” as our version has it, or it may be, “*show you* Christ’s death”—it is an exhortation. Oh, let us take care that we show it to ourselves. “Show it to ourselves?” asks one. Yes, it is meant for you. This is a primary meaning of the text. When you take that bread, don’t think of the bread, and stay there, but say to your own soul, “My Soul, think you of Jesus. My Heart, go away, now, to Gethsemane. Come, you stray thoughts! Come, you passing vanities, be gone! I must go away to where my Savior bled and died—  
***“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing  
Which, before His Cross, I spend.”***  
I have come here to show His death. Let me see Him. I will ask Him to permit me in spirit to put my finger into the print of the nails, and to put my hand into His side. Oh, go not from this Table satisfied with the outward emblem—press into the inner court—pray the Master to manifest Himself to you as He does not unto the world! For here is the main business—show His death to your own heart till your heart bleeds for sin! Show it to your own faith till your faith feels it is all-sufficient! Show it to others! You will be sure to show it to others if you show it to yourself, for as others look on and mark your reverent behavior, if they cannot enter into your joy, they will be reminded of what they have so long forgotten! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let me urge each one of you that no one should be content without sharing this honor. I feel we all have an honor to participate in showing forth the death of Christ. Let us not, in sharing the honor, bring condemnation on ourselves. But I must hasten on. The fourth point is—  
**IV.**WHEN ARE WE TO DO IT?  
The text says “often”—“as often as you eat this bread.” The Holy Spirit might have used the words “when you eat,” but He did not. He teaches us by implication that we ought to do it often. I do not think there is any positive law about it, but it looks to me as if the first Christians broke bread almost every day—“breaking bread from house to house.” I am not sure that that refers to Communion, but in all probability it does. This much is certain, that in the early Church the custom was to break bread in memory of Christ’s Passion on the *first day of every week*, and it was always a part of the Sabbath’s service when they came together to remember their Lord in this way. How it can be thought right to leave the celebrating of this ordinance to once a year or once a quarter, I cannot understand! And it seems to me that if Brothers and Sisters knew the great joy there is in often setting forth Christ’s death, they would not be content with even once a month! But I leave that.  
The other mark of time in the text is “till He comes.” Then this service is to end. There will be no more Lord’s Suppers when Christ appears, because they will be needless. Put out the candle—the sun has risen! Put away the emblem—here comes Christ, Himself! But until He does come, this will always be a most fitting ordinance. I pleased myself with a thought I met with the other day. Our Lord Jesus Christ sat at the table and ate with His disciples, and He took the cup and He sipped it, and he passed it around. It is being passed round still. It has not got round the table yet, it is being passed on! For 1,800 years it has been passed from hand to hand! They have not all drunk yet and you remember He said, “Drink you all of it”—all of you! Did He speak to all His elect that were to be born—to all the countless companies yet to come? I think He did, and it is going around and, by-and-by, when all the people of God have participated in Christ, it will cease. The cup will never be emptied till then— ***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more.”***  
When the last has drunk of it, what then? It will come back into the Master’s hands and then will be fulfilled that word of His, “I say unto you I will not henceforth drink of the juice of the vine till I drink it new in My heavenly Father’s Kingdom.” And it is going around, Brothers and Sisters—that cup of glorious Christian fellowship of love to Christ, the cup that is filled with Jesus’ blood—it is passing around, and when it has reached His hands, then we shall need no more the outward ordinance!  
But until then it is clear from the text that it is to be kept up. And I have a little dispute with some of you here present. You love the Lord, but you have never been baptized. You love Jesus, but you have never come to His Table. Now let me say you are in opposition to Christ! He says, “Do this till I come.” You don’t do it. “Oh, but I am only one,” you say. To your measure of ability you have helped to make the Lord’s Supper obsolete. Can you see that? If you have a right to neglect it, so have I—if I, so have all my brethren. Then there is an end to it. My dear Brother, Sister, you are doing the best you can to make Christ forgotten in the world! I pray you by His own dying example and His express command, “This do you in remembrance of Me”—if you have believed Him, keep this, His commandment. If you have not believed in Him, then keep away! You have no right to take it! But if you have believed, I beseech you stand not back for shame or fear, but eat and drink at His Table till He comes!  
Time has gone too fast for me, and I must close. There is one lesson, however, that I cannot leave out. Until Christ comes. We are taught our interim employment—what is to occupy us until Jesus comes! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, until Jesus comes we have nothing left but to think of Him. Till Jesus comes, the main thing we have to do is to think of and set Him forth a Crucified Savior. There is no food for the Church but Jesus! There is no testimony to the world but Jesus Crucified! They have sometimes told us that in this growing age we may expect to have developed a higher form of Christianity. Well, they shall have it that like it, but Christ, Himself, has left us nothing but just this, “Show My death till I come.” The preacher is to go on preaching a dying Savior. The saint is to go on trusting that dying Savior, feeding on Him and letting his soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. There is nothing left us to occupy our thoughts, or to be the subject of our joy, as our dear dying Lord! Oh, let us feed on Him! Each one, personally, as a Believer—let us feed on our Savior! If you have come once, come again. Keep on coming till Christ, Himself, shall appear. As long as the invitation stands, let us not slight it, but constantly come to Christ Himself and feed on Him.  
In conclusion, let every ungodly person here know that he has no part nor lot in this matter. Your first business, Sinner, is with Christ Himself. Go and put your trust in Him! Oh, go this night! You may never have another night to go in. And then when you have believed, then obey His command in Baptism, and *then* also come to His Table and show His death until He comes. The Lord bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *REVELATION 1.***

**Verses 1, 2.***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: Who bore record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.* John was one who was of the same spirit as his Master. He lived in very intimate communion with his Lord and, therefore, to him the choicest Revelations were made. The Lord does not reveal His secrets to uncongenial minds. He that will do His will shall know of the Doctrine, and He shall know all secret things. Oh, if we lived nearer to God, if we walked more in the love of Christ, how much more we might know and see! Or, if we saw not visions, yet there are inward perceptions to the heart which God would grant us if we lived more in the light of His Countenance.

**3.***Blessed is he who reads, and they who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein for the time is at hand.* It is not a book to be put on the shelf. There is practical teaching in it. It is not intended to lead us into vagaries of speculation, but it is meant for practical purposes. We are to keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.

**4, 5.***John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before His throne. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.*Think, dear Friends, how this benediction may be fulfilled. “Grace be to you,” he says, “and peace.” And what are to be the fountains and springs of this peace? It is to come from God, first, from Him who is. All that God is, is a fountain of peace and Grace to us. And from Him who was—all that He has ever been, the eternal past, the changeless purposes, the Divine predestination of the Infinite. There are springs of peace and Grace here. And from Him who is to come. All that God will ever be, all the manifestations of His power, His justice, His love, which the ages are yet to see—all these are wells of Grace and peace to God’s own people. I want you to think of this. And when your minds are disturbed and you have need of peace, and when your heart is sinking and you have need of Grace, come to God for both of these things, regarding Him as He who is, who was, and who is to come! And there are seven spirits which are before His Throne. The Holy Spirit, in whatever way He operates in any of His Divine works—in all these He is the Comforter, the source of Grace and peace to us. You need not be afraid of the Holy Spirit, even though He is the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning, for He will burn up nothing in us but what ought to be consumed, and will judge nothing but what ought to be judged and to be condemned—so that peace may come to us from the seven spirits which are before the Throne of God—but especially Grace and peace from Jesus Christ as the Faithful Witness. Whatever He bears witness to, it is full of Grace and peace to Believers, and He, Himself, is the first begotten from the dead. Oh, His Resurrection! What a wondrous fountain of Grace and peace that is to us! And then His Divine Sovereignty—His rule over all Providence and Nature, the Prince of the kings of the earth—what Grace and peace may every one of you who love Him find there! At the thought of this, the Divine writer turns from His benediction to a doxology.

**5, 6.***Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*Brothers and Sisters, the very best work which we ever do on earth is to adore. You are blessed in prayer, but you are seven times blessed in praise! When you get to the doxology, it is the benediction made more sublime. The benediction takes wings and mounts into a celestial atmosphere when you begin to adore and magnify Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins! There is one thing that adoration does—it helps us to see—and when you close your eyes in adoration, you see more than when you have them open in any other way! I am sure of this, for the next line is—

**7.***Behold He comes with clouds.*John sees Him. He adored Him— ***Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,  
Whom though we have not seen Your face, Unceasing we adore.***

In that adoration we behold You. “Behold He comes with clouds.” **7.***And every eye shall see Him, and they, also, who pierced Him: and  
all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.*What  
is more, adoration helps us to hear as well as to see! It supplies us with  
new senses. John hears this voice.  
**8.***I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord,  
who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.* Happy man who  
thus, in reverent worship, hears God speaking to Him in answer to his  
voice to God.  
**9.***I John, who also am your brother.*How sweet this sounds. This is a  
man that has seen and heard God! This is a man who is full of visions,  
who has beheld the broken seals and the poured out vials—the man that  
is familiar with the Infinite! “I, John, who also am your brother.” **9.***And companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of  
Jesus Christ, was on the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God,  
and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*That is a wondrous linking, is it  
not, in this verse?—“the kingdom and patience.” You must have the  
Cross and the crown together. We get the Kingdom of Christ, but not  
without the Passion of Christ! There is the Cross marked on all the treasure trove that we find in Christ. It is not genuine if it is not marked with  
the Cross. “The kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.’’  
**10, 11.***I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s-Day, and heard behind me a  
great voice, as of a trumpet. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and  
the Last.* What evidence we have here of the Divinity of Christ, for we  
shall see, as we read on, that it is Christ who is speaking here. And just  
now it was the Father, who in much the same words said, “I am Alpha  
and Omega.” We cannot always draw the line between the voice of God  
and the voice of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, and we need not wish to do  
so, for Holy Scripture does not draw us up rigid, but it would have us believe it, all the same. Yet it is always accurate, always true, where it has  
shades of definition, for, after all, Christ is so truly God that whether it speaks of Him absolutely as God, or of Him as God and Man, Mediator, it  
matters little to us.  
**11-12.***And, What you see, write in a book, and send it unto the seven  
churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto  
Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and  
unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.*It is so  
natural in us to want to see the place from which the voice proceeds. **12-16.***And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the  
midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with  
a garment down to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden  
band. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and  
His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His feet like unto fine brass, as if  
they burned in a furnace: and His voice as the sound of many waters. And  
He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp  
two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in its  
strength.*I will not stop to explain those details. The picture is too sacred.  
Let it stand before you in its Glory, and listen to these words. **17.***And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.* Oh, how the, “I,”  
dies when Christ is manifested! How we sink! And yet our joys shall rise  
unutterably, immeasurably high! “I fell at His feet as dead.” **17.***And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am  
the First and the Last.* There is where your comfort comes from—not from  
what *you* are, but from what *He is*! You are the last, but He—here is the  
point—He is the first and the last!  
**18, 19.***I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of death. Write the things  
which you have seen.* Come, lay aside your fears. Your fears disqualify  
you from holding the pen. You have scarcely dared to look. I am sure you  
will not dare to write until I strengthen you.  
**19, 20.***And the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and  
the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven  
churches—*the messengers, the ministers of the seven churches. **20.***And the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.*  
God bless our reading to our rich instruction.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2647 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR THE COMMUNION  
NO. 2647

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1899.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1857.~~***

***~~“Let a man examine himself, and so let him  
eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”  
1 Corinthians 11:28.~~***

WE do not hold it right to admit all persons indiscriminately to the Lord’s Supper—we believe the Lord’s Table is the place of communion— and we would have none there with whom we cannot have true Christian fellowship. We can commune with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, however different may be their views upon some points of doctrine. So long as we find it possible to have fellowship with them, we believe it to be our duty to welcome them to the Supper of our Lord. When, through unholiness of life, lack of piety, or unsoundness in the fundamental Truths of the Gospel on the part of those who apply to us to be received as communicants, we feel that we cannot commune with them, we hold it to be our bounden duty, as God has given us authority in His Church, to prevent those from drawing near unto the Table who would but commune unworthily and so eat and drink unto themselves judgment—as the Word in the 29th verse should be translated. Among our Baptist Churches, fashioned, we trust, somewhat nearer to the Scriptural order than certain others we know of, we do exercise at least some measure of discipline. We require from those who are members of the Church and who are, by reason of that membership, entitled to commune, that they should, at their reception, give us what we consider satisfactory proofs of their conversion. And we require of them, afterwards, that their conduct should be consistent with the Law of Christ. Otherwise, we would not, in the first place, receive them, or, having received them, we would not be long before, by the Scriptural process of excommunication, we would remove from our midst those members whose lives and conversation were not in accordance with the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, do what we may—though we fence the table with the utmost diligence—and though we continually warn you not to deceive us. And not to deceive yourselves, seeing that you cannot deceive God—yet are we perfectly aware that the greater part of the guarding of the Table must rest with yourselves. We believe it to be our bounden duty, as God shall give us Grace, to take care, so far as we can, that unworthy persons are not received at the Lord’s Table. Yet man being mortal, is fallible and erring, so we cannot judge you and we must leave the greater part of your examination, before you come to the sacred Table of the Master, with yourselves. Remember, dear Friends, that no recognition by the minister, no reception by the deacons or elders of a Church will excuse you for coming to the Lord’s Table if, when you come, you are not a really converted person. It is true that you cannot come there unless the Church, itself, consents to your coming—but the Church takes upon itself none of the responsibility of your fitness. It says to you, “You may come to the Communion Table, but if you have deceived us, on your own head is the sin! And if you are not what you profess to be—true believers in Christ—your unlawful observance of the ordinance must be accounted for, at the Last Great Day, among the rest of your transgressions.”

And I do now, most solemnly and earnestly, as the Pastor of this Church, in the name and on behalf of this Church, warn all men and women now about to draw near unto this Table that if they are not God’s children and have no faith in Christ, they stop before they, with sacrilegious hands, touch the elements of this sacred Supper! We would have them know that it can be of no service to them, but will increase their sin and add to their guilt if they, after such a warning as this, come to the Master’s Table without having examined themselves and without being thoroughly persuaded in their hearts that they have been born of God— let that thought have due weight with all intending communicants—and if some of them even withdraw from the Table as the result of this fencing of it, I shall rejoice that they have had the honesty to do what is right.

**I.**Now, Beloved, turning from that point for a little while, I would remind you that THERE IS A PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR RECEIVING THE LORD’S SUPPER ARIGHT.

In certain churches, among persons who are only nominally religious—mere formalists and ceremonialists—it has been customary to set apart a whole week for preparation. And you may remember how Mr. Rowland Hill, in his *Village Dialogues*, tells of Mistress Too-Good, who, after spending a whole week in preparation for the Lord’s Supper, found that it was not to be administered till the next Sabbath—whereupon she fell into a great passion and cursed and swore because she said that she had wasted a week! I doubt not that there have been some who have made a kind of hypocritical preparation which would have been better omitted. I do not exhort you to do any such thing! But if a right thing is abused, that is no reason why we should not use it properly. Everyone of us, before we come to the Supper of the Lord, ought to have prepared our hearts, under the help of the Holy Spirit, for a right participation. We are not to rush to our Master’s Table as a horse runs into the battle, not knowing where it is going! We are not to come to this sacred Feast as we go to a meal in our own houses. We are not to partake of the emblems of the body and blood of Christ as we would sit down at our common tables to eat and drink.

We are to come here with devout solemnity and due preparation. Nor may we expect to receive a blessing, in the reception of the Supper, unless we have properly prepared ourselves for it before we come here. Alas, this is too much forgotten—and men think they may draw near to God without making any preparation whatever! Not so was it with the ancient saints. When Jacob was going to build an altar and to sacrifice to the Lord at Bethel, he felt it necessary to bid his family to put away all their strange gods from among them. When God was about to appear on Sinai, He commanded the people to purify themselves because He was coming near to them. And not only was it so in olden times, but it should be so now. We should not draw near unto God with hasty and careless steps, but we must remember and obey Solomon’s injunction—“Keep your foot when you go to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil.” As Moses took his shoes off because the place whereon he stood was holy ground, so ought we, my Brothers and Sisters, to put away all carnal thoughts and all worldly things when we approach this most sacred circle—a circle even more hallowed than that which surrounded the burning bush, for this surrounds the cross of Calvary, the death place of our Lord and Master—

***“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the Cross I spend,  
Life, and health, and peace possessing,  
From the Sinner’s dying Friend!  
Here I’ll sit forever viewing  
Mercy’s streams in streams of blood!  
Precious drops my soul bedewing,  
Plead and claim my peace with God!  
Truly blessed is this station,  
Low before His Cross to lie  
While I see Divine compassion  
Floating in His languid eyes!  
Here it is I find my Heaven,  
While upon the Cross I gaze.  
Love I much? I’ve more forgiven—  
I’m a miracle of Grace!  
May I still enjoy this feeling,  
In all need to Jesus go  
Prove His wounds each day more healing, And Himself more fully know.”***

Let me press upon your consideration two or three thoughts with regard to what is necessary in a proper preparation for the Lord’s Supper. First, I think, *before coming to the Lord’s Table, every professing Christian should occupy himself, in some measure, in contemplation and meditation*. We ought not to come here without due consideration of what we are about to do. We ought to consider, in the first place, that we are coming into the more immediate Presence of God. It is true that during Divine service in the House of God we are especially in the Presence of the Most High, but when, at eventide, we eat and drink the Supper of the Master, we get nearer to Him than we do in any of our other religious exercises, with the solitary exception of the ordinance of Believers’ Baptism. This Communion service has about it something so humbling, so tender, so full of fellowship—bringing us so near to Christ—while Christ is so near to us, that we ought not to come to it without feeling that we are entering into the immediate courts of the Most High! And, surely, if the contemplation of God makes the angels veil their faces with their wings, it should make us come to this Table with great reverence and solemnity of spirit.

We ought, in the next place, before we come here, *contemplate the authority upon which we celebrate this ordinance*. If any of you come to this Table because I administer the ordinance, or because your parents partake of it, or because, according to the old orthodox doctrine of the Baptist Churches, this is regarded as being a Divine ordinance, you have made a mistake! It is your duty, in the reception of the Lord’s Supper, or the observance of the ordinance of Baptism, to consider the authority by which you do it and to be certain that, in coming here, you are doing God’s will and that you are performing that which God has commanded you. If you come not to the Communion as to a Divine ordinance, you come not to it aright. If you merely partake of it as a matter of form, instead of knowing that God has commanded the form and that His Son, Jesus Christ, is embodied in it, you have not the preparation which you ought to have in coming here.

Again, before coming to the Communion, *it behooves you to consider the great distance there is between you and God*. Even though you now have very blessed and hallowed fellowship with the Lord Jesus, remember that in this Supper, there is a memorial of *your guilt*. It is true that you see here how your sins were taken away by the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, but let the very bath in which you were cleansed remind you of your sinfulness! And, oh, my Brothers and Sisters, when we sit here, let us not eat and drink in a showy manner, as if we were doing some praiseworthy act, but let us do it as if we felt that we were not fit to sit on the lowest seat of the Church of Christ. God grant that this may be a time when we shall humble ourselves and cast ourselves in the very dust before Him! We might, instead of being at the Table of the Lord, have been sitting on the ale-bench. We might have been drinking the cup of devils and holding communion with Belial—but Grace, Free Grace, has brought us here! Let us abase ourselves in the Presence of God. Let us humble ourselves before Him and, while we feed, by faith, on our Master’s body, let us feel as if our own proud flesh were cut away and humbled by the very communion we hold with Christ, our Redeemer.

Then, Christian, this should be a further subject of contemplation before you come here—*you should have a right idea of the Savior, whose body and blood are here typified to you*. I think we should not come to this ordinance unless we have, for some time at least, devoutly considered the broken body, the shed blood, the sufferings, the agonies, the death and the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us all, before we sit at this Table, remember whose death it is we commemorate here. We should view the Savior as the Son of God and then as the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary. We should view Him as He walks along His way of sorrow. We should seek, by earnest contemplation, to view Him prostrate in the Garden, to see Him plowed with bloody furrows at Gabbatha and to behold Him dying amid terrible tortures upon the hill of Calvary. Unless, my Brothers and Sisters, we have done this, or are enabled by God’s Spirit in a special manner to do this, now, we must not expect to derive any benefit from the mere eating of the bread and drinking of the wine. You might eat your bread and drink your wine at home. You might be taking your ordinary suppers. You might break your crusts and drink from your cups in your own houses. But of what use would all of this be? They would not be the Lord’s Supper and neither shall *this* be the Lord’s Supper to you unless your hearts are occupied with a devout contemplation of the Presence of God, of your own nothingness before Him and of the glorious Sacrifice and Atonement of Jesus Christ evidently set forth before you.

In the next place, *not only contemplation, but supplication should form a part of our preparation for this Supper*. If we acted aright, we would never come, even to the *hearing* of a sermon, without prayer! Were our hearts in a proper spiritual condition, we would never leave our houses to go to the House of Prayer without first supplicating God to help the minister and to help us! We would never leave the tents of Jacob without asking that the pillar of cloud might be manifestly seen resting upon the tabernacle of Israel. We would, when we come up to God’s sanctuary, breathe a prayer the moment we enter it, crying out for the Holy Spirit to rest upon us during this day. And certainly, if we ever neglect prayer before holy duties, it should never be omitted before this sacred Supper! O my Brothers and Sisters, I fear that many of us have lost the sweetness of this ordinance because we have forgotten to pray for a blessing upon it! It was but this very day that I found myself preparing to come to this place without having, first of all, sought fellowship with Jesus—and I felt grieved and vexed within my spirit that I should have been so guilty as to have forgotten the solemnities to which I was about to attend! And, by His Grace, I sought at once to spend some time in silent meditation and prayer to God. So should every Church member do likewise.

Oh, what blessed communion services would we have then! We would not go away from the Table of the Lord barren and cold, as we often have done, blaming the minister because we think he has not spoken with sufficiently affecting words and has not distributed the sacred elements in a profitable manner. Whereas the fault has been in ourselves and not in the minister—and we have been eating and drinking unworthily. And, as the judgment upon that wrong state of heart, we have found the Lord’s Table, itself, to be barren instead of proving it to be the King’s banqueting house and a feast of fat things to our souls!

**II.**Now, Beloved, I ask you to notice that MY TEXT GIVES US THE BEST PART OF PREPARATION, WHICH IS SELF-EXAMINATION. “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”

How many of us have thus examined ourselves? I fear many of us have come here without any self-examination whatever. Well, then, let us begin at once to examine ourselves and, during the little interval between this service and the time of the administration of the Supper, perhaps it might not be amiss if you were to read over the hymn which we sometimes sing, from which you can see what are the questions incumbent upon you to ask yourselves in self-examination and what are the marks of those who have the right to sit down at the Table of the Lord—

***“The sacred Word declares them such,  
Whose hearts are changed by Sovereign Grace, Who place their confidence and hope  
In Jesus’ blood and righteousness.  
Who know the Truth and in the ways  
Of holiness direct their feet.  
Who love communion with the saints  
And shun the place where scorners meet. With past attainments not content,  
Increasing purity they seek.  
By whom uprightness is maintained  
In all they do, and all they speak.  
These are the men whom God invites,  
For them the Church sets wide her door,  
Whatever their birth or rank may be,  
The bond, the free, the rich, the poor!”***

This hymn suggests some solemn questions which none of us ought to have ventured here without having answered. And I think many of us can easily answer them. My Brothers and Sisters, *have we not been changed by Sovereign Grace?*Can we not, each one, say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am and I am not, now, what I was once”? Can we not, unless we are awfully deceived, say, with unfaltering lips, “We know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that we have been born again”? If we *cannot* say so—O my Friends, if any one of you cannot say so, I charge you, before God, before Jesus Christ and the elect angels—if you cannot say that you believe and know that you have been born again, do not come and profane this Table of the Master by *daring* to sit with the saints while you are unrenewed and not begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!

How many of you are among those whom the hymn next describes?— ***“Who place their confidence and hope  
In Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”***

I know that, by God’s Grace, it is so with many of us. I have no other hope! No rock, no refuge for my weary spirit is there beside the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I trust you can say so, too, my dear Friends. But if you cannot. If you are resting anywhere else but in Jesus. If you have any dependence upon rites or ceremonies or good works, I again solemnly command you by the Judge of the quick and the dead—venture not to this Table to receive the Lord’s Supper—for, in so doing, you would but eat and drink unworthily, not having faith in Jesus and confidence in His precious blood.

Can you say, also, as the hymn does, that *you know the Truth and that in the ways of holiness you direct your feet?* I fear we must all confess that we cannot say this as much as we would desire. Let us, however, still make it a point of self-examination. Come, Friend, it is now a month since the last time you sat down at this Table—what have you done during this time? How have your steps been directed? How has your speech been ordered? What about your acts towards God? Towards man? Make this a time of turning over the pages of your diary for the last month. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us examine ourselves and so let us eat of this bread, and drink of this cup. It cannot be an unprofitable exercise which is commanded in our text, so let us obey it! Let us now question ourselves. Are we truly the Lord’s? If He should say to us, as He said to His disciples, “One of you shall betray Me,” what would we say? Let us, each one, ask the question now, “Lord, is it I?” Have we, like Judas, been plotting against the Master? Have we been robbing the Lord’s treasury, depriving Him of what we promised in our vows? Not giving Him the time and service which we solemnly pledged to give Him?

Let us look again at our hymn. *Have we broken the communion of saints during the last months?*Have we not, by anger and wrath and bitterness, injured our own spirituality when we have been talking against the children of God? Have we not felt that we have broken the sacred link which united us with them? Have we washed the saints’ feet this month? Have we not rather bemired and befouled them by going astray, ourselves, and leading them astray, too? Have we humbled ourselves during the last month? Have we taken the towel and girded ourselves, as Jesus did, to do menial work for the Church? Has there not been too much pride creeping into all our services? Has it not marred all our deeds and spoiled our best endeavor? And how about prayer? Have we not been sadly negligent in that holy exercise? And with regard to love to our Master, have not our hearts been too often cold towards Him, who had His heart set open for us, that all the blood therein might be spilt in one great torrent for our sakes?

O Friends, I cannot suggest all the questions that you have need to ask yourselves in such an examination as our text enjoins! Begin from the last Communion evening and go through the Sundays, through the Mondays, and Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and all through the weeks— and then surely both you and I will have work enough to do, during the next hour, to examine ourselves! Ah, we ought to have done it *before*, that we might be able, now, to apply ourselves more solemnly to Communion rather than to self-examination. But now I entreat you once again, as I am bound to do, to be faithful to my God—if you are lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are faithful to the Truth of God. If you have been really converted—if you have partaken of the Holy Spirit—I invite you to the Master’s Table and may the Spirit of God rest on you! But, as an honest minister, I warn you who are not what you should be from coming to this Table. Oh, if any of you have been mere professors and hypocrites, I charge you not to come here! As in your dying day you shall remember your deeds of formality and hypocrisy, I beseech you, do not dare to touch that bread with unhallowed lips, nor sip that wine! Do not take them unless you feel that you have God’s Spirit within you and are really united to the Lamb!

I fear there are some of you who have, for many months received these emblems, who would this night, for the first time, leave them untasted if you really knew yourselves! There are some in this Church, I grieve to say, with whom I can hold but very little fellowship by reason of the hard words they sometimes utter against certain of us because of some little difference of opinion. And there are many others with whom we can have no communion at all because their lives are so unholy and their conduct is so un-Christian that, though they are sound enough in the faith, we can but wonder that they know so much of the Truth and yet have so little of the spirit of Christ in them. Ah, dear Friends, it is not all gold that glitters, and all *professors* are not *possessors*! There are some in Christ’s Church everywhere and God forbid that I should flatter this Church— there are some even here—who are enough to tear the church in two by their bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking! There are others who are enough to bring down God’s rod upon us for their unholy living—yes, and the very best of us, the Johns and the Enochs—have they not cause to humble themselves on account of their manifold shortcomings and misdoings? Let all professors of religion examine themselves lest it should be found that they have been deceiving themselves and others— have trusted in themselves that they were righteous when they had not passed from death unto life!

Ah, Friends! I cannot speak with the solemnity I would desire to command on such an occasion as this. I cannot bar this table, God forbid that I should do so!—from any one of you—come and welcome all you who love the Lord Jesus! But although I cannot force back any of you who are not converted. Though I cannot thrust you away if you have the right to come, because you are members of this Church or of some other, I do, as far as human power can have any influence with you, solemnly warn you not to come to the Communion unless you are really regenerated by the Holy Spirit! I would rather have six members in my Church, who are living souls in Zion, than 600 mere professors. O Lord God, sift and fan this Church yet again! If any are only chaff, drive them out of it, or make them Your wheat, that they may be housed in Your barn and not be burned up with unquenchable fire! O Lord, make each of us sincere! Impress upon our minds the solemnity of this act and when we draw near unto this Table, may it be especially under Your smile and with Your benediction, through Jesus Christ our Lord! To God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 116.***

I knew a godly woman who, when she was very sick, would always say, “Read me the 116th Psalm.” It is deservedly a great favorite with many experienced Christians. May the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it!

**Verse 1.***I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications.*It is a great condescension on God’s part to listen to us. You know what a comfort it is to find a sympathetic listener who will let you tell out your griefs. It is not wise to tell them to everybody, but there are some who have an ear into which it is both pleasant and profitable to pour the story of our woes. Because God had listened to the voice of His servant’s supplications, David therefore said, “I love the Lord.” Nothing will make us love God better than the assurance that He hears our prayers. We could not love a deaf God, so, when Jehovah does attend to our voice and our supplications, we feel drawn more closely than ever to Him.

**2.***Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.* That same blessed experience which is a reason for love is also an argument for continued prayer. “As He has heard me, He shall still hear me. As He has listened to me, He shall listen to me again—at least, it shall not be for lack of my cries that He does not listen.” That expression, “He has inclined His ear unto me,” seems to me to mean, “He has stooped down to me to catch my faintest words. He has been favorable to me. He has smiled as He has heard my broken prayers and cries. He has inclined His ear unto me. It was not a mere hearing such as His Omniscience might warrant me to expect—it was such a favorable hearing as only Infinite Love would have given to me and, oh, if He is so favorable as to hear, can I be so ungrateful as not to pray?” Here was the case that David had laid before the Lord.

**3.***The sorrows of death compassed me.*Just as the dogs surround the poor stag and shut him in the fatal circle.  
**3.***And the pains of Hell got hold upon me.*They set their teeth into him as the dogs do into the stag.  
**3.***I found trouble and sorrow.*He was in a double grief—he had trouble outside and sorrow within—it was troubled sorrow and sorrowful trouble, wormwood mingled with gall.  
**4.***Then called I upon the name of the LORD.*That was the very best time to pray. Satan does his utmost to prevent our praying when we are in extremities, but, oh, dear Friends, if Jonah prayed in the whale’s belly, where can you and I be where we may not and cannot pray? If we sat down upon the very doorstep of Hell—yes, if the Pit opened her mouth to swallow us up, we might still pray! And the mercy is, that while we are on praying ground we are also on the ground of Grace where God can meet with us! “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.”  
**4.***O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul.*It was a short prayer—an eager, earnest petition—full of passionate importunity. There was no dictating to God how the deliverance should be worked. “I beseech You, deliver my soul. Do it in Your own way. Do it in the way that will bring most glory to You. If You do not deliver my body, yet deliver my soul. If my goods must go. If all I have must melt away, yet, O Jehovah, I beseech You, deliver my soul!” This is one of the best prayers in the whole Bible. It is very much like the publican’s prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”  
**5.***Gracious is the LORD, and righteous.* That is a strange combination which the ungodly cannot understand. It is a riddle never to be read except at the Cross! “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.” That is what every troubled conscience wants to know—how God can be just and yet can pardon sin—but we who have believed in Jesus do know! It is our joy to say, “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.”  
**5.***Yes, our God is merciful.*I always feel inclined to mispronounce that word, or to divide it into two, and read it, “Our God is mercy full,” for so He is—He is brimming over with mercy!  
**6.***The LORD preserves the simple.*The sincere—sometimes the ignorant—those who do not pretend to know. Or, the simple, those from whose heart the Lord has driven out all guile, making them to be simpleminded. They are such fools (as the world calls them) as to be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that is to perform the highest act of wisdom on the part of man! They are such simpletons as to believe the old, old Bible, and to cling to the great atoning Sacrifice, and to let the novelties of modern thought blow away like the down of the thistle in the summer breeze! “The Lord preserves the simple.” How did David know that? Listen.  
**6.***I was brought low and He helped me.*There is no way of knowing a general doctrine so good as that of having a particular experience of it! “I was brought low, brought to be a simpleton, brought so very low that I was obliged to pray a simple prayer—brought so very, very low that I was obliged to have a simple faith in God—for I had nobody else to believe in and nobody else to trust. ‘I was brought low, and He helped me.’” What a help that is—a help in which God virtually does it all—for our poor weakness, with its best attempts, would rather hinder than help.  
**7.***Return unto your rest, O my soul; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.* Poor dove, you are dropping into the water. Your wings can scarcely sustain you—come back to Noah—“Return unto your Noah, O my soul!” That is the Old Testament reading of it and the New Testament rendering is, “Return unto your Jesus, O my soul, for He is your true rest! Get back to Him, ‘for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.’ In past times, when you were dwelling with Him in close communion, it was better with you than it is now, that you have wandered from Him. Return, return, poor prodigal, for there is every inducement to bring you back! In your Father’s house there is bread enough and to spare. He never stinted you. ‘The Lord has dealt bountifully with you’ and He is dealing bountifully with you even now in giving you the opportunity to come back, in giving you the power to pray and in permitting you to go to the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat.”  
**8.***For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.* Just now he prayed, “Deliver my soul.” He has received the answer to his petition, for he says, “You have delivered my soul from death.” He said nothing, then, about his eyes, but God gives exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He did not say anything about his feet, but the Lord gave him a blessing for them, also— “You have delivered my feet from falling.” Oh, for an all-over blessing, a blessing from head to foot—from the eyes that stream with tears to the feet that are slipping away from under us! A blessing that begins within by delivering the soul and then works its way into the very countenance and makes it resplendent with joy and thankfulness and gets into the daily life, helping us to march boldly along the slippery way! Glory be to God! He has given this deliverance to many of us!  
**9.***I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.* “I will not care who sees me so long as He sees me. I will court no presence but His Presence, ‘I will walk before Jehovah.’” It is grand walking under a constant sense of the Lord’s inspection and a delightful consciousness of His smile! This is like Enoch’s walk and you know how it ends, for Enoch could not die for the life of him—he walked so near to God that he did not pass into Heaven by the ordinary road—he “was not, for God took him.” And we, too, though we may die as to these bodies, know that we shall never die as to our souls, for He has given to us who have believed in Jesus, eternal life! And we can never die or be separated from Him.  
**10.***I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.* “I believed.” Come, Friends, can you all say that? It is a blessed thing for you if you can say that when the sorrows of death compass you and the pains of the grave lay hold upon you. That is glorious faith which says, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” Faith is not a dumb Grace of God—it will make its voice heard.  
**11.***I said in my haste, All men are liars.* You see, he had once spoken in the power of the flesh. It was well, therefore, that he should now speak in the power of faith. “I said in my haste, All men are liars.” But it was true for all that, for they will fail us if we trust them instead of the Lord. Yet, in another sense, they are not all liars, so David retracts the hasty words which might have a double meaning and might imply what he did not intend, or what he should not mean. See how quickly he turns away from this unpleasant subject! Note what comes next.  
**12.***What shall I render unto the LORD for all His benefits toward me?*“There,” he seems to say, “put all men away, I have done with them. If they are all liars, let us say no more about them, but let us turn to God.” When you, dear Friends, are disappointed with men, do not sit down and worry—you should have known what to expect before you began with them—and now you have found it to be so, turn it to good account. David feels that he has received everything from God, so he says, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Well, what can he do? His own poverty comes rushing over his sight, again, and the answer to his question is—  
**13.***I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.*“I ask, ‘What shall I render?’ and I reply, ‘I will take.’” That is what you and I also must say—  
***“The best return for one like me,  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from His gifts to draw a plea,  
And ask Him still for more.”***  
You have given God all you have when you have given Him your weakness, your sin, your emptiness—that is all that is truly yours—and then it is that you render to Him that which He asks for, that He may put away your sin, that He may fill your emptiness and glorify Himself in your weakness.  
**14.***I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people.*If you have made any vows, mind that you keep them. It is often better not to vow, but when the vow is made, let it be diligently paid.  
**15.***Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.* It is very painful for us to witness, but it is precious to God. We think that they have ended their usefulness when they reach that point, but God estimates their very death to be precious! Tread very softly when you go to the bedside of a departing saint—you may brush against an angel’s wing, for the room is full of them—the place whereon you stand is holy ground! Troops of angelic messengers are there to do their Master’s bidding in the last hours of His child—which are about to become his first hours in Glory! Besides, the Master, Himself, is there—He is never absent when His children are dying. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”  
**16.***O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid.*“Born in Your own house, of one who belonged to You—a home-born slave—and glad to glory in that fact! Born in Your house, bought with Your money and yielding up myself joyfully to You—‘I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid.’”  
**16.***You have loosed my bonds.* Why, we thought he was going to say, “Your Grace has, like a fetter, bound my wandering heart to You.” Just so—that is the liberty which he enjoys—“You have loosed my bonds.” We are never so free as when free-will has had its deathblow and we have come under the power of Sovereign Grace. And now there is another freewill, born of Grace, and with its full consent we give ourselves up to God, saying, with David, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant; You have loosed my bonds.”  
**17.***I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.* Now David has grown into a priest, offering sacrifices. He has also grown into a singer, praising the Lord with thanksgiving, and he has grown into a preacher—“And will call upon the name of the Lord.” The very man who found the pains of Hell laying hold upon him is now engaged in the holiest exercises!  
**18, 19.***I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the LORD’S house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise you the LORD.* Or, “Hallelujah!” I cannot close this reading without remarking how often my ears are shocked with the blasphemous way in which this thrice-holy word is dragged into the mire—”Hallelujah fiddles!” “Hallelujah lasses!” and I know not what. “Hallelujah”—praise unto Jehovah—is one of those words which never ought to be pronounced except with the utmost solemnity! Although there should be mixed with it the most rapturous joy. Let us take heed lest we be found guilty of taking the name of the Lord, Jehovah, our God, in vain, by using that word flippantly. But let us solemnly feel in our hearts and say with our lips, “Hallelujah—Praise the Lord!”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #2699 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EXAMINATION BEFORE COMMUNION  
NO. 2699

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2, 1881.~~***

***~~“But let a man examine himself, and so let him  
eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”  
1 Corinthians 11:28.~~***

IT can never be too clearly understood that spiritual ordinances are only for spiritual persons. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper belong to Believers and to none but Believers. It is an evil thing for any church to give either the one or the other of those two ordinances to those who are destitute of “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” There would have been no necessity for Paul to say, “Let a man examine himself,” if the Lord’s Table were free to all. If every man might come to it, then every man might come simply because he was a man, and he would have no occasion to examine himself at all. The very fact that there is an examination, presupposes that there are some persons who have no right to “eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” And our own personal examination is in order that we may discover whether we have a right to participate in this ordinance or not. Therefore, let every man clearly understand that the Lord’s Table is for the Lord’s people. As in a man’s house, his table is for his family, so, in God’s House, His Table is for His family, and if we do not belong to the family of God, we have no right to draw near to His Table at all!

I fear that there are some unconverted people who imagine that they have performed a meritorious action when, on certain days in the year, they have, as they say, “taken the sacrament.” But, my Friend, if your heart is not right with God, you were a thief and a robber when you came to His Table and took what He provided for His children alone! You did not come in by the Door, that is, Christ, but you climbed up some other way, and you were really sinning against God in that very act which you supposed to have some merit in it! Unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless you have been born again by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit. Unless you truly belong to the household of faith, as you have no part in the spiritual mystery, so you have no right to the outward and visible sign by which that mystery is set forth. All this is implied in our text, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is not meant for the conversion of sinners. It is not intended to lead men to salvation, but it is intended for those who are already saved, those who are converted. I *have* heard of unconverted persons coming to the Lord’s Table and the solemn impressions experienced there have led them to repentance and faith in Christ. We must always remember that God works how He pleases and, in such cases as those, He overlooked the communicants’ great mistake and even in the midst of their error He worked according to the Sovereignty of His Divine Grace. Yet this is no excuse for ungodly persons venturing to come to the Communion Table, for they will be eating and drinking condemnation to themselves! And if it should please God to forgive the transgression and to save their souls, this will be an exception, and a surprising work of Grace, for it is not according to the Law of the Master’s House. If any of you think that by being baptized and coming to the Lord’s Table, you will thereby be saved, you “err, not knowing the Scriptures.” You have no right to either ordinance till you have first come to Christ and are saved. But when you have passed from death unto life, when you have been washed in the Savior’s precious blood, then is your time to come forward and, by being buried with Christ in Baptism, acknowledge your conversion and, by sitting with your fellow Believers at His Table and meditating upon His wondrous Sacrifice, of which the bread and the wine are the significant symbols, feed the spiritual life that God has imparted to you.

Having given you this plain warning, I now come to my text, which teaches us, first, *the objective of the examination commanded in it—*“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” Secondly, it points out to us *the matter of that examination.* And, thirdly, *the duty that follows after the examination—*“Let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

**I.**First, our text teaches us THE OBJECTIVE OF THE EXAMINATION COMMANDED IN IT—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

The distinct objective of the examination is*that the communicant may eat and drink at the Lord’s Table.*In some churches, there is a practice which is called, “fencing the tables,” defending the Table of the Lord against the approach of improper characters. This is a very right and necessary thing to do, but some ministers have so guarded the table that very few have dared to come to it—and those who have come have often been persons who had more conceit than Grace, while the better part— the truly humble and broken-hearted ones—have been frightened away! It would appear, from the exhortations of these ministers, as if Paul must have said, “Let a man examine himself, but never let him eat of this bread, nor drink of this cup. Let him so examine himself that he shall come to the conclusion that he has no right to sit at the Table of the Lord and, therefore, shall go his way feeling that he is utterly unworthy of that high privilege.” Beloved Friends, this is not my objective in preaching from this text, nor should it be yours in obeying it. Examine yourselves with the hope and the strong desire that you may be permitted to come to the Lord’s Table. Do not let the examination take so morbid and melancholy a form that you almost look out for causes of self-suspicion, but the rather, especially as many of you have known the Lord for years, let your examination be made in order that you may come aright to the table, that you may come there in a right spirit, and not that you may be compelled to stay away. “Let a man examine himself,” and then, in the spirit of self-examination, let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.

Distinctly remember that the qualification for a place at the Lord’s Table is *not* perfect sanctification. If it were, I am afraid that there would not be a soul here so qualified. And if there should be one who declared that he had attained to such a state, I should expect that he would prove to be the biggest hypocrite in the place! Recollect, also, that the qualification for coming to the Lord’s Table is not the full assurance of faith. There might be some genuine believers in Christ who would not be able to commune if that were the qualification, but, happily, it is not. The least grain of true faith in Christ qualifies you! You are not to examine to see whether it is full noontide with your soul—have you even a little twilight? Have you been quickened into new life so much as to have a holy hunger and thirst for more of the Christ who is already yours? If so, you may come to His Table. Do not arrange the examination in such a way as to exclude yourselves unnecessarily. I will not, if I can help it, put it in such a style as to exclude one of you who ought to be admitted. On the contrary, my soul longs that the whole of you might truly feel and say, “Yes, we do love the Lord, and we are anxious to come and obey His command, and thus show His death in remembrance of Him.”

Well, that is the first great objective of this examination—not that you may be made to stay away, but that you may come, if you are really entitled to sit at the Table of your Lord!

Note, next, that another objective of this examination is *that every man may know that the responsibility of his coming to the Lord’s Table rests wholly with himself.* “Let a man examine himself, and so let him come.” Not, “Let a man go to his minister and be examined.” Or, “Let him go to his priest and make confession.” No, no! “Let a man examine *himself,*and so let him eat.” I can give no man a certificate which really entitles him to come to the Communion Table. In my office as pastor, it is my privilege to receive members into this Church. But, by so doing, we never mean to imply that we thereby certify that they are really converted. That is a matter which must rest with each man and his judgment of himself, if he is a wise man, will not be the opinion of his minister, but the verdict of his own conscience in the sight of God. Come to this Communion Table, Brothers and Sisters, as individuals! Come, each one, feeling, “I alone am responsible to God for what I am about to do. Taking the Word of God as my guide, I judge myself to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, I am about to sit at this table.”

I think that of all abominations, the idea of sponsors, either in Baptism or the Lord’s Supper, is the most detestable. No man can be a sponsor for another! Everyone of you must individually stand before God and no godfathers or godmothers can, without telling a lie, promise for you that you shall keep God’s holy Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life. It is not in their power, neither is it in the power of any minister to give you the right to come to the Lord’s Table or to the other Christian ordinance—“Let a man examine himself.” Take the responsibility upon yourself, each one of you, for so the Apostle puts it, and this will help you to come aright to the Table of the Lord. You are bidden to examine yourself, in order that you may come under an overwhelming sense that it is your own act and deed—that you are not here because your mother came or your father came—that you are *not* here because you are entitled to come by virtue of your church membership, but you are here, each woman, each man, each one of you, for himself or herself, having searched your own heart and asked God to search it, to see whether you ought to come, or not!

In the next place, the objective of this examination is *that everyone may come to the Lord’s Table most solemnly—*not flippantly, thoughtlessly, heedlessly—but that each communicant may say, “I am going to eat of that bread and drink of that cup in resemblance of my dear Lord whom I really know and trust. There is no mockery or mere formality in this act. I come in downright earnest, bringing my heart with me, for I have looked into my heart, I have examined myself, and I take upon myself the responsibility of saying, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’” So this examination means that you are to come to the Lord’s Table with deep solemnity.

And, surely, it also means *that every communicant must come most humbly,*for the result of any true examination of ourselves mush be deep humiliation of spirit. As for myself, I must confess that I am not what I want to be, and I am not what I ought to be. I can only come to the table declaring myself to be an unworthy one in whom the Grace of God is indeed magnified. That He should ever have put me among His children and permitted me to call Him, my Father, will be a wonder to me throughout eternity! See, then, the blessed result of this self-examination when it lays you low at the foot of the Cross, and makes you come to the Lord’s Table, not boasting, “I have a right to be here,” but humbly and gratefully saying, “I do indeed adore the Grace of God which has made it possible that such an one as I am should be allowed to sit down with the family of God at His banqueting table of love.”

Another result of the examination which is aimed at is *that we may come to the Lord’s Supper intelligently,*knowing why we come and what reason we have to come, and on what footing we come. Examining yourself you will discover your soul-hunger and learn that you come to be fed. Examining yourself, you will discover spiritual life and understand that you come that it may be nourished by your meditation upon the Person of your Lord. You know, in holy ordinances, almost everything depends upon the right understanding of them. There is no efficacy in water, whether it is applied by immersion or by aspersion—the value of the ordinance depends upon the conviction which the man has when he is baptized—that it is the will of his Lord that he should thus confess his faith. There is nothing efficacious in that bread or that wine. The bread has no more virtue in it than there is in any other bread which the baker ever made. The wine is, in itself, no more a means of Grace than any other wine that ever was pressed out from the vintage. It is the thought that shall be excited by that bread and that wine that will be the benefit—it is the mind seeing through the visible sign that which is inwardly signified. Hence it is that our Lord calls us to this self-examination, that our intellect may be stirred and our mind may be prepared, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to understand the meaning of that which He puts upon the table for us to feed upon.

And, just once more, this examination is intended *that we may come to the table with an appreciative joy.*Let me explain that rather long word. You know if you come to the Communion Table saying, “I do not know whether I have a right to be here,” you cannot enjoy yourself. If I were sitting at a man’s table, and I said to myself, “I am afraid I have made a mistake. I do not believe he ever invited me,” I should feel very uncomfortable while I was there, and I should be wonderfully glad when the dinner was over. But if, as I sat at the table, I said, “I know the gentleman invited me. I have his invitation with me and he is smiling upon me, for he is glad that I am here.” That is how I like to feel at the Lord’s Table—to know, after examination, that I am in my right place. Then I soon forget all about my right to be there and all I think of is that which is on the Table, and about my Lord who has invited me, and how I can enjoy the sweetest communion with Him, and partake of the dainties which He has put before me.

I want you, Brothers and Sisters, to examine yourselves till you come to this conclusion, “We are not perfect, but we believe in Jesus. We are not yet fully assured, but we have a humble hope in Him. We are not the strongest of His warriors, but we have His life in us—we do know Him, and trust Him.” Then you will feel, “The Good Shepherd feeds the lambs as well as the full-grown sheep of His flock, so we may come to Him for all we need.” Then you will have nothing to think about as to yourself, but all you will have to do will be to say, “My Lord here gives me His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink, after a spiritual fashion. In these outward types, I will now feed upon Him. The fact that God took our nature upon Himself shall be as food to my soul. The equally blessed fact that being found in fashion as a Man, He took my sins upon Himself and suffered in my place shall be like generous wine to me. I will drink it down! I will feed upon it! I will live by it!” Then you will have joy and gladness in your soul and this supper will be what it really is—no funeral feast, but a banquet of delight for all the friends of Christ! “Let a man examine himself” with the view that he may so eat and so drink when he comes to the Table of the Lord.

**II.**Now, very briefly, I must dwell upon the second point which is this—THE MATTER OF THE EXAMINATION. “Let a man examine himself.” Listen, Brothers and Sisters, while I ask you a few questions which will help you to examine yourselves.

First, then, *here is a spiritual feast.* Am I spiritually alive to partake of it? Dead men have no right to come to a banquet. Am I, then, spiritually alive? Have I ever been quickened and renewed in heart and life? Has the Holy Spirit brought me into the spiritual world? If so, have I an appetite for this sacred feast? Do I hunger after Christ? Do I long for the Water of Life? Then I may come to this table, for here my Lord supplies the needs of those who are the living in Zion. The dead cannot feed on the richest dainties—corpses can neither eat nor drink. And dead sinners may not come to this festival for the living. But, if there is even a spark of spiritual life in you, though you are faint and sick, come along, for you have a right to come!

The next question is—Here is a feast, but am I a friend of the Lord who is the Host at this table? The Lord Jesus invites all His friends to come to His banquets. Am I, then, His friend? And is He mine? Have I ever taken Him to be my Savior and am I trusting in His precious blood for my salvation? And then, in return, do I love Him and love His cause, and love His people? Do I commune with Him as friend communes with friend? Do I talk familiarly with Him? Am I on intimate terms with Him? Does He know me, and do I truly know Him? If so, I need not be afraid to come to His Table, for every friend of His is welcome there. Ask yourself these three questions. Am I alive? Have I a spiritual appetite? Is Christ my friend?

*Next, this feast is meant to set forth the death of Christ.* That fact suggests another question. Do I really believe in His death? Of course, I believe that He died, but do I really, *myself*, trust Christ’s death to save me? Do I believe that by His dying, He offered to God such an Atonement for the sins of men that whoever believes in Him is justified from all things? And have I, by faith, appropriated to myself His Atonement so that I am thereby justified in the sight of God? If so, I may come to His Table, for I am only doing, then, in outward sign, what I am really also doing in my inward spirit.

Further, *our Lord Jesus bids us “do this*”*in union with all His people.* That suggests the question—Am I one of His people, and one with them? Do I really love them? The Apostle Paul says, “We being many are one bread”—“one loaf”—and “one body.” Is our union as close as this? I think, Brothers and Sisters, that if you have any malice or ill-will towards any of your fellow Christians, or towards anyone else, you ought not to come to the Lord’s Table while you are in that condition of heart. You remember that Christ said, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you; leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

The same rule applies to those who would be guests at this sacred feast. It is a hard thing for men to sit at the same table and all the while to be, as it were, eating one another’s hearts out. No, no—there must be true love among the brotherhood—and if I have not love to all the people of God, I have no right to come to the Table of the Lord. Once more,*this cup is the New Covenant in Christ’s blood.*That Truth of God leads me to ask another question—Am I in covenant with God in Christ Jesus? Have I accepted the Covenant of Grace? Have I yielded myself up to God by bringing to the great Father the Sacrifice of Christ which is the seal and ratification of the Covenant? Do I regard myself, at this moment, as one of the covenanted ones to whom the promises of God belongs? If so, I may certainly drink of the cup of the Covenant!

Moreover, *Jesus bids us observe this ordinance in remembrance of Him.* Now, a man cannot remember what he never knew. Here, then, is another question—Do I know Christ? Have I ever seen Him with the eye of faith? Did I ever behold Him hanging on the tree and feel the burden of sin roll off my shoulders as I witnessed His amazing sufferings? In a word, do I really know Christ? Do I speak with Him in prayer? Do I commune with Him and tell Him my griefs and sorrows? Or, am I a stranger to Him? A stranger to Christ may not eat of this feast, but he who is acquainted with the great Lord who sits at the head of the Table may freely come and eat and drink that which is set before him.

These are some very plain and simple questions which I beg you to put to yourselves. And if you do not know Christ, if you do not love Him, if you do not love His people, if you are not trusting in His blood, if you have never been born again, if you have nothing of the Grace of God in you, get far away from His Table, I pray you, for you would only be eating and drinking condemnation to yourselves if you partook of the emblems of Christ’s broken body and shed blood! But if you have the least evidence of a work of Grace within your soul. If you have the feeblest faith— as long as it is true faith—if you are really resting in Jesus for salvation, come and welcome to His Table—

***“How happy are Your servants, Lord,  
Who thus remember You!”***

**III.**This brings me to the third head, which is THE DUTY AFTER THE EXAMINATION—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

If you can satisfactorily answer all the questions I have given you, it is your *duty* to come to the Table of your Lord and to eat of the bread and drink of the cup! I know some professing Christians—I hope they are really Christians, it is not my place to judge them—but the commands of Christ seem to be very trifling and inconsiderable things with them. What would you think of anyone who said that he was a disciple of a certain teacher, but he did not care to observe his teacher’s commands? Why, you would say that he was trifling with his master! Now, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke thus plainly concerning one of the two ordinances which He instituted—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Yet we have met with a number of His professed followers who say, “Well, that Baptism is not a saving ordinance.” Who said that it was? Would you attend to it if it were? Then, if you only mean to do what will pay you, your obedience will be selfish and of small value! Are you really a disciple of Christ? It should be the delight of a disciple to do what his Master bids him, whether there is any visible benefit to him in it, or not. It is not for you or me, Beloved, to question or quibble at anything which our Lord has commanded, but promptly to obey it.

Another person says, “Well, I never come to the Communion Table, but I am just as good as those people who do.” My dear Friend, I will not quarrel with you about your own goodness, but I generally find that those who think that they are good are not as good as they think they are. However, if the Lord Jesus Christ has given you this plain command, “This do in remembrance of Me,” I ask you, believing it to be commanded by Christ, how can you call yourself His servant when you refuse to do what He bids you? I am not putting the question too strongly. You know that I have no faith in the saving power of ordinances. Do I not, as clearly as I can speak, constantly warn you against that error? Still, if it were only the picking up of a straw, and if Christ had commanded it, I do not see how a man could be sure that he was the servant of Christ if he did not pick up that straw when his Master told him to do it! The less the thing is in itself, the more does it become the test of our obedience. If these ordinances were essential to salvation, then everybody would observe them with the view of being saved by them, but, inasmuch as they do not save, and were never meant to save, but are, in fact, only the *privileges of those who are saved*, the observance of them becomes a test of a man’s true discipleship, for it makes it clear whether he will obey Christ or not.

“Well,” says one, “I have examined myself and I do not feel that I have a right to come to the Lord’s Table.” Then, do not come, my Friend, as you are. Still, it is your duty to get into such a state that when you again examine yourself, you shall be able to say, “Now I have a right to come,” for, if you have not a right to come to the Lord’s Table, then you have no right to enter Heaven! If you are not fit to commune with the saints on earth, you certainly are not fit to commune with the saints above! So look to that matter at once, I pray you. And look to it very carefully.

After examination, it appears from the text that it *is the duty of every man who has examined himself to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*It is very noteworthy that the Holy Spirit should have moved the mind of Paul to put it in this shape—“let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” Especially observe that he mentions the cup. “No,” says the Roman Catholic priest, “it is not for you. When I go up to the altar, as a priest, I drink the wine in that cup. It is not for you, you must not meddle with it. The cup does not belong to the laity.”

What shall I say to such a man? With what burning words shall I express the indignation that I feel against the apostate church that dares to withhold what Christ has so freely given? “There,” says He to His disciples, “all of you drink of that cup”—but in comes a man who pretends to be a priest, and he says, “You shall not touch it.” By that mark, as by many more, can the beast and the antichrist still be discovered this day, even as of old! Still does the cry ring out from Heaven, “Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues,” for plagues must come upon the arrogant priesthood that dares to take away from God’s people that which Christ puts on His Table, and of which He says, “Drink you all of it.”

It is your duty, as Christians, to see to it that you eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, after you have examined yourselves and proved that you are really on the Lord’s side!

I will not prolong this exhortation further than to remind you that it is not only our duty to eat and drink, but “so*to eat and drink as to discern the Lord’s body.*“Let a man examine himself, and *so* let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” “So.” That is one of the biggest little words in the English language! You remember one text where it is very big— “God *so* loved the world”—measure that word if you can—“God *so*loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here, in our text, is another instance in which the word, “so,” is very big, indeed. After examination of himself, a man is “so” to eat—in the spirit which that examination produces, which I have shown you is one of solemnity, humiliation and earnest delight in Christ—“so let him eat,” so as to discern the Lord’s body, which means just this. I take that bread, and I say, “This represents to me the great Truth of God that God was made flesh, and dwelt among us and that, today, He is one with men as well as one with God. I eat that bread and I feed spiritually on that Truth.”

Then I take the cup and I say, “This cup represents to me the blood of Christ, and I see in this cup the symbol that He died, ‘the Just for the unjust,’ to bring me to God. I take this wine to represent the blood of His Atonement, the great fact that He died as my Substitute. And as I drink the wine and it goes into my inward parts, I take the precious Truth of Substitution—Christ dying instead of me—and I put it into my very soul to nourish, to cherish and to delight me.”

Now that is the way to discern the Lord’s body and that is the way, “so,” to eat of that bread, and to drink of that cup, as to be spiritually profited! May God, the Holy Spirit, help you to enter into the spirit of the ordinance, and to observe it as Christ ordained it, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MATTHEW 26:17-39; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.***

**Matthew 26:17, 18.***Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My discip1es.* See here the blending of Christ’s humiliation and His Godhead. The Master had no room of His own in which He could keep the Passover. He had not even where to lay His head, yet such was His power that He had only to send messengers to one whom He knew, though perhaps the man did not know Him—and as soon as ever the message was delivered, the large upper room, furnished and prepared, was at once freely tendered for the celebration of the supper! Jesus Christ, even in His lowest estate, had the hearts of all men beneath His control.

**19-21.***And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.*This was a very unpleasant thought to bring into the midst of those who were gathered there for the memorial feast, yet it was most suitable for such a message to be spoken at the Passover, for at its institution, the Lord said to Moses, “With bitter herbs they shall eat it.” And here was something bitter enough. I hope we shall have our Master’s Presence at the Communion Table, yet it will be well for our joy to be sobered with such a painful thought as this—there may be a traitor with us even here.

**22.***And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, each one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?* The habit of self-suspicion, rather than suspecting somebody else, is a good one. If there is anyone in this place who is going to commit a gross sin, why may it not be myself? The natural tendency of each one of us is to say, “I shall never do such a thing as that, I am sure.” Ah, me, if Grace were truly reigning in our heart, we would, each one, be suspicious of himself and not of others, and the question of each one would be, “Lord, is it I?” Not one of the Apostles asked, “Lord, is it Judas?” or, “Is it So-and-So?” But everyone of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?”

**23, 24.***And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.* Remember, this “woe” applies not only to Judas Iscariot, but to anyone else who betrays Christ. Oh, if, under the pressure of persecution, or if being bribed by some present pleasure, or if through our own natural fickleness we should betray our Master, woe unto us! May the Lord, by His almighty Grace, keep us from committing such a sin as that! If we do betray our Lord, it would have been better for us that we had not been born.

**25, 26.***Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, You have said it. And as they were eating.*While yet the paschal supper was proceeding. “As they were eating”—

**26.***Jesus took bread, and blessed it.*Or, as the marginal reading says, “gave thanks for it”—  
**26.***And broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body.*That is to say, “This represents My body.” Our Lord could not possibly have meant that the bread was His body, for there was His body sitting whole and entire at the table—and they would have been astonished beyond measure if they had understood Him literally! But they did not do so, for they were well used too the Oriental custom of leaving out the word for, “like,” and just saying, “It is so-and-so.” Besides, Christ had also said, “I am the Door,” “I am the Way,” “I am the Good Shepherd.” And there is also that striking sentence, “I am the Rose of Sharon.” No idiot ever understood these passages literally! And those are more foolish than idiots who render literally these words—“This is My body.” They are wickedly, wantonly and willfully foolish in thus misrepresenting our Savior’s meaning!  
**27.***And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.*That is, “Drink from it, everyone of you.” Was this the institution of the Lord’s Supper? Yes, but what do the Romanists say? Why, that the people may not drink of the cup and so they keep it away from them! But our Savior says to this representative company of all His disciples, “Drink you all of it.”  
**28, 29.***For this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you. I will not drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom.*“In that joyous day, that day of days when the battle will have been fought, and the victory won forever—then will I pledge you in My Father’s Kingdom, and keep the feast with you forever!  
**30*.****And when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*Oh, how brave it was on the Master’s part to sing a Psalm just before He went out to be betrayed and to be crucified! Our second reading is also concerning the Lord’s Supper. Turn to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 11, verse 20. The Corinthian church, as I have often explained to you, was one that had no pastor. They had what is called “open” worship—everybody speaking who pleased, and there being no kind of government or discipline. They fell into every sort of conceivable disorder, and even the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was utterly degraded among them. Here is what Paul wrote to them.  
**1 Corinthians 11:20, 21.***When you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating, everyone takes his own supper before others, and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*They had such low notions of the communion that they seemed to think that if they ate together, each one bringing his own provision, they would be celebrating the Lord’s Supper! But Paul would not agree to that. What did he say?  
**22.***What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* They may not have meant to do so ill, but they had fallen into all sorts of disorder and Paul, therefore, first rebuked them, and then explained to them the right observance of the ordinance.  
**23-27.***For I have received from the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood; this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*Note carefully the wording of this verse; it is not, “Whoever, being unworthy, shall eat and drink.” It is not an adjective, it is an adverb and relates, not so much to the person, as to the *way in which he came to the communion*. Those who came to the Lord’s Table in a half-drunken fashion. Those who regarded it merely as a common meal. Those who came there under false pretences. Those who came there not thinking of Christ’s body at all—they would all be guilty of not discerning the Lord’s body, and so of prostituting His ordinance, robbing it of its dignity and solemnity by coming there in such a condition.

**28, 29.***But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily.* We are all unworthy to come to the Table of our Lord. Who among us can possibly be thought to be worthy to come to such a feast as this? But the Apostle is writing concerning those who came there carelessly, or without thought, or with a wrong motive. Years ago, you know, nobody could hold certain government or municipal offices without taking what was called “the sacrament.” That was making the Lord’s Supper a picklock to office! That was, indeed, to eat and drink it unworthily! Such, also, as come merely for the sake of getting alms, or out of custom or formality, but leave their hearts behind them, eat and drink unworthily and shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord”—as guilty as they were who actually crucified the Savior. “For he that eats and drinks unworthily.”

**29.***Eats and drinks “condemnation” to himself.*For that is how the Word of God should be rendered.  
**29, 30.***Not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*God is always carrying out a system of discipline in His Church. To a large extent, He lets the world, for the present, sin as it pleases, but in His own family He uses the rod. And when the Lord’s Supper is dishonored, there is no doubt that the sickness and sleep here mentioned will follow. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Many even die—not that they are lost—not that this sickness is sent as a curse, but as fatherly chastisement. And the death of many of its members is often a chastisement to the church which is thus weakened by losing its best helpers.  
**31-34.***For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat: tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 581, 683.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2865 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FENCING THE TABLE  
NO. 2865

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY JANUARY 7, 1904.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“But let a man examine himself, and so let him  
eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”  
1 Corinthians 11:28.~~***

THERE are two symbolical ordinances in the Christian Church—and only two—Believers’ Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These have been so misinterpreted, perverted and abused that the wish has sometimes crossed the minds of spiritual persons that they had never been instituted. We do not wonder that there should be a denomination of Christians who have given them up, though we think that in this matter they have not acted according to the Word of God. We ourselves retain them for this reason only, because we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ ordained them—and we desire to observe them exactly as Christ ordained them. And only thus shall we find them instructive and helpful to our souls.

Baptism, the immersion of the Believer in water, is the token of his death, burial and resurrection with Christ. It sets forth the fellowship which he has with his Lord as the Apostle tells us—“Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him”—not that the plunge into the water confers any Grace upon the person who is baptized, but it is the *type*, the*emblem*, the instructive *symbol* of the new birth—which new birth consists in passing, by death and resurrection, into newness of life. You all know that we are only born once. A thing can only have one true beginning. Hence, Baptism is never to be repeated. Once done, it is done forever.

The other ordinance is the Lord’s Supper and, as Baptism, sets forth, typifies, (mark you, *nothing more* than typifies), and is the emblem of the new birth, so the Lord’s Supper is the emblem of the spiritual feeding of that new life. Now, though a man is born only once, he eats a great many more times than once and drinks a great many more times than once. Indeed, to eat and to drink often are necessary to the maintenance of our life. If we neglected to do so, we would soon find ourselves in an ill case. Hence, the Supper of the Lord, representing, as it does, the spiritual feeding of the new-born life upon the body and blood of Christ, (and only representing it, mark you—not really doing it in any carnal sense), is oftentimes to be repeated. We find that the early Christians very frequently broke bread together. I think they did so almost every day. It is recorded, by some of the early fathers, that the first Christians seldom met together, on any day of the week, without commemorating the death of Christ. Augustine mentions this and he seems to have taught that at least once in the week—on that blessed day which celebrates the Resurrection of our Lord, Christians should meet for the breaking of bread. I think that the oftener we meet for this purpose, the better it is for us. The Holy Spirit specifies no particular time—we are not under a law which binds us to this period or to that. Our Lord leaves it very much to our own loving hearts, but the words that Paul quotes, “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me,” certainly imply that we should often “do this” in remembrance of our dear Lord and Savior.

A simple feast, even of bread and wine, a feast often celebrated, would be liable to be trifled with and misapplied. Hence, as Paradise of old was guarded by cherubim, with a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life, so stands this simple Supper of the Lord guarded with a flaming sword, of which my text is a portion—“Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.”

Now, with this thought upon our minds, let us go to the text, itself, and observe how we are bidden to examine ourselves before we come to the Table of the Lord. We will speak, first, concerning *the necessity for this examination.* Next, *the person who is to perform it.* Then, *the vital points of the examination.* And, lastly, *the spirit in which we should come to the table after we have examined ourselves*.

**I.**First, then, THE NECESSITY FOR THIS EXAMINATION. The sense of that necessity will be very strongly impressed upon us if we remember that many *have profaned the Table of the Lord*. Hence it is incumbent upon us to examine ourselves lest we should do the same. Years ago—our grandfathers remember it well—men had to “take the sacrament,” as it was called, before they could be made mayors of towns, or hold certain offices in the municipalities and, in that way, the Communion Table became a passport to secular office. I tremble as I think how the laws of this land compelled men—though they ought never to have yielded obedience to such laws—to eat and drink judgment or condemnation to themselves as they profaned this holy ordinance! Others have made it, as I fear that some still make it, a means of obtaining alms— coming to the Communion Table because those who are members of the church are helped in the time of their poverty, or there is a distribution of alms money among the needy communicants. Ah, dear Friends, however poor you may be, it would be better for you to starve than to get help in this way if you are not really the Lord’s people! If any of you have acted thus, I charge you, before Almighty God, to do so no more! If we have any suspicions that we have ever done such a thing, we may well examine ourselves concerning that matter and sincerely repent if we have so sinned against the Lord.  
Others come to the Communion as a piece of sheer superstition, really believing, poor deluded souls, that when they take the wafer into their mouths, they actually eat the flesh of Christ. Such a monstrous doctrine as that is only fit for cannibals—it is not a Doctrine of Christianity! What a profanation of the ordinance it is to come to it with such a notion as that! If any of us have the slightest idea that to partake of what is called “the sacrament”—though there is no such name as that for it anywhere in Scripture—confers Divine Grace, let all such thoughts be banished from our minds at once!  
It is not a converting ordinance, nor a saving ordinance—it is an establishing ordinance and a comforting ordinance for those *who are saved*. But it never was intended to save souls, neither is it adapted to that end and if it is so misrepresented, it is apt rather to be the means of damning than of saving the soul, for he that so eats and drinks may, in very deed, be eating and drinking damnation to himself!  
I fear that there are others who come to the Communion Table out of mere form. I find that it is the custom of certain persons to do this always on Christmas day and on Good Friday, though what particular sanctity there can be about those two days, I am sure I cannot tell. I see little enough of holiness about them and a great deal of sheer superstition. But let all of us be careful that we never come to the Communion simply because it is the first Sabbath in the month, or even because it is the day of our Lord’s Resurrection and because, as church members, we feel that we ought to come there. I mention these things—although I hope, to the most of you, they are unnecessary—because they are necessary to a certain class of persons who, in one or other of these ways, thoughtlessly profane the Table of the Lord.  
But, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we need to examine ourselves because it may be that though free from these evils which I have mentioned, we have come to this solemn feast without due solemnity, without serious thought, without the proper preparation of heart or the right observance of the ordinance. We have come very often to the Communion Table, yet there has been but little real heart-fellowship with Jesus. There has been bread upon the table and in our mouths, but we have not discerned the Lord’s body. There has been wine there, but we have not looked through the sign to the blood of which it is only the symbol. If it has been so with any of us, we have, to that extent, eaten and drunk unworthily—and I know not how much of deserved chastisement God may have laid upon us on that account—but the Apostle’s words have often been fulfilled since his day, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”  
This examination is necessary, next, *because the purpose of this ordinance requires that we should be in a fit condition for its observance*. What is the objective of this ordinance? “This do in remembrance of Me,” says the Lord Jesus. But you cannot remember what you do not know! how can you remember an unknown Christ? By coming to the Communion Table, you are supposed to let men see, as they look on at this ordinance, that you believe that Christ lived and died to save sinners. But suppose that you do not believe it—that you do not, at any rate, in your heart savingly believe it? Then you are not a fit person to proclaim that Truth of God to others by means of this ordinance. The Lord Jesus Christ does not want His enemies to remember Him—He wants His friends to cherish His memory and to keep the fact of His death prominently and permanently before the eyes of the world.  
It must be His friends who must do this! Besides, this ordinance is one special means of communion between Christ and His people, but what communion can there be between you and Christ if you are a son of Belial? If you love sin and continue to live in sin, what possible fellowship can you have with the holy Christ? Will He have communion with a man who comes to His Table drunk? Or who comes from dishonest actions all week? Or who has been singing a lascivious song, but now turns to join with those who laud and magnify the name of the thrice holy God? Imagine not that Jesus Christ will welcome such as you are to His Table! If you do come, it will be at your most imminent peril! It can do you no good—it will be a curse rather than a blessing to you! So, let us examine ourselves because those who come to the Table of the Lord ought to be of such a sort that the purposes and objectives for which the ordinance was instituted may be realized in them.  
But let us especially examine ourselves *because, if we come not aright, we shall incur very severe penalties—*the penalties which I have already mentioned to you. Let me again read to you these solemn word, “Therefore, whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” And then follows the sure penalty upon true Believers who, nevertheless, come in an unfit state to the Table. I have read it to you before, but I will read it again— “He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground! Rush not into the sacred place, but come with that gracious timorousness—no, rather with that holy boldness which becomes a sinner who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and is robed in His spotless righteousness!  
And, dear Friends, once more, there is a necessity for us to examine ourselves *because we must know that there are, among us, some who are doubtless partaking of the Lord’s Supper unworthily*. We have known, to our great sorrow, of some who have been harboring an unforgiving spirit, yet who have dared to come to the Communion Table. When I have really known that this has been the case, I have prevented the wrongdoer from sitting down with us, but, unknown to me, and to other ministers, it HAS often have happened that persons have come professing to be Christians, yet all the while not manifesting the true spirit of Christianity toward some offending Brother or Sister. You remember how even the loving Apostle John writes, “If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”  
Then, alas, there are some, who, by coming to the Communion, profess to be Christians, yet who, nevertheless, are all the while living in shameful sin which they dare not have discovered. This is one of the greatest sources of sorrow to true ministers of Christ and it has made us often wring our hands with agony and weep bitter tears before the Lord, when we have seen trees looking fair and green, but which, inwardly, as Bunyan said, were “so rotten that they were only fit to be tinder for the devil’s tinderbox.” Their profession was a false one, for, all the while their moral character was unsound. There was a rottenness about them which no one discovered till, upon some fatal day—fatal to their own reputation, but good for the Church’s purification—they were exposed and driven out with shame. Judas was found out at last. Ananias and Sapphira were at last found out and cut off from among the people of God—and the unclean and unholy among the early Christians were excommunicated from the assembly of the saints.  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, if, to your own personal knowledge, this has been the case with others, forgive me when I ask—Is there not at least the possibility that it may also be the case with you? At any rate, you will do well to examine yourselves and if, after having honestly examined, you can say, “No, that is not the case with me,” then bless God that you can truthfully say so. Take no credit to yourselves, but give to God’s Grace the whole of the praise. Still, do look thoroughly to this matter. “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” I, as a minister, am bound to examine myself because there have been eminent preachers of the Gospel who, nevertheless, have lived unhallowed lives. No preacher may dare to say, “My office screens me from this test.” Deacons and elders of the church, you must examine yourselves because you have known church officers who have brought disgrace upon the offices that they have filled. And you Sunday school teachers, open-air preachers, tract distributors and the like—and you members of the Church— however useful you may be and however highly you may be respected by your fellow members, I beseech you, nevertheless, shirk not this duty, but let each one examine himself before he comes to sit down at the Table of the Lord.  
**II.**Now, secondly, I am to speak about THE PERSON WHO IS TO PERFORM THIS EXAMINATION—“Let a man examine *himself*.”  
Let not anyone say, “I was examined by the proper officers of the church before I was admitted into church membership, so I do not need any further examination.” Now, mark, it is the duty of every church, in receiving members, to judge all applicants by their fruits. “By their fruits shall you know them,” is our Lord’s own test. We must have a credible profession of faith, supported by a life that is consistent therewith, but that is all upon which we can form a judgment. We cannot examine the heart and we cannot infallibly judge the life. How very often have we been deceived in these matters! If anyone were to suppose that a certificate of church membership is to excuse him from the duty of personal selfexamination, he is grievously mistaken. No, dear Friend, *you* know what your secret thoughts are and what your private actions are and, therefore, it is to *yourself* that this duty is committed—“Let a man examine *himself*.”  
“Well, but,” someone may say, “my friends—my private friends—are quite satisfied concerning my spiritual condition. I have been talking to my godly mother. I have been conversing with my praying father. I have had sweet fellowship, just lately, with a good old Christian friend—and they all seem perfectly satisfied with me.” I am glad they are but Paul says, under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “Let a man examine *himself*.” There is no greater error under Heaven than to try to shift the responsibility of our own personal religion on to friends or to so-called “priests.” There can be no more gigantic imposture than the supposed sponsorship of infants! It amazes me that anybody can dare to say, on any child’s behalf, that it shall renounce the pomp and vanities of this world, and all else that is mentioned in the Church Catechism. But it would be an equally gigantic imposture if we were to establish a sponsorship for grown-up people! Both of them are wicked and neither of them can be carried out—we cannot guarantee the Christian character of other people—the Apostolic rule must remain, “Let a man examine *himself*.” Look you well to the state of your own souls and, to this end, go to God in prayer and

say, as David did, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”  
**III.**Now, thirdly, WHAT ARE THE VITAL POINTS IN THIS EXAMINATION? There are a good many, but I have arranged them under five heads for the sake of brevity and to help your memories.  
First, my dear Friends,*examine yourselves concerning your knowledge*. There are some who are too ignorant to come to the Table of the Lord. They may have taken their M.A. degree at Oxford or Cambridge, they may even be Doctors of Divinity and yet be too ignorant to come to the Lord’s Table. What knowledge is necessary for coming aright to the Table? I answer—*Saving* knowledge—a *living* knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ who said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” You cannot remember a person you never knew, so you must be acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ if you would observe this ordinance as He instituted it. There is the bread upon the table. Have you ever known what it was to be *spiritually* hungry? Do you know that Jesus Christ is the only Food that can relieve the hunger of your spirit? Have you learned to know Him through feeding upon Him by faith? Then you are a fit person to partake of the bread on the Communion Table because you are a person who understands what it signifies—you who have been satisfied by feeding upon Christ.  
There is also the wine cup upon the Table. Were you ever *spiritually* thirsty? Did you then see how the Lord Jesus Christ, by His atoning Sacrifice, has fully met all the needs of your soul? Have you really partaken of Jesus Christ and has your heart been refreshed, revived and cheered by the application to it of the precious blood of Jesus? If so, you understand the meaning of that Communion Cup and you are a fit and proper person to partake of it. But if you have never known this spiritual hunger and thirst—if you have never realized your own spiritual needs—and if you have not known what it is for Christ to supply those needs—I charge you to stay away from this Table until you do know these things! Otherwise you will be eating and drinking in utter ignorance and the mere physical acts will be of no service whatever to you. May the Lord give you to know Him whom to know is eternal life! And when you do know Him, then come to His Table, for you will not then eat and drink unworthily.  
Then, next, *examine yourselves concerning your faith*. Knowledge is all in vain without faith. And the knowledge of which I have been speaking is a knowledge that is closely allied with faith. Are you trusting alone in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ? I have asked myself that question many scores of times and I do not recollect that I ever had any hesitancy about how to answer it. I know that I am trusting in Jesus! If I am really living—if there is any truth in my own consciousness—I am sure that I have trusted my soul for time and for eternity wholly to the keeping of that Savior who lived, died and rose again for sinners! Well, that being so, I have a right to come to the Communion. Christ wants Believers at His Table—they are His own children. If you are believing in Him, He invites you to come and you will be welcome if you come! You will not eat and drink unworthily, dear Friend, if you apprehend, by faith, that Christ’s flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed. You will come to the Table in the right manner.  
In the third place, I want you to *examine yourselves concerning your repentance*. In the emblems upon the Communion Table, you can see something of what it cost your Lord to redeem you from sin, death and Hell. The bread, representing the flesh of Jesus, is separate from the wine, which represents His blood. And the separation of the blood from the flesh indicates death—a bleeding away of life in the most acute anguish. It cost your Lord untold agony to redeem you from going down into Hell, so can you ever imagine that any man is a fit person to participate in the emblems which set forth that agony if he has never felt, in his own soul, any agony on account of sin? What right has an impenitent person to come where the death of Christ, on account of sin, is especially set forth? A heart that has never been broken because of sin—shall it come and remember the broken body and broken heart of Jesus? A heart of stone that has never been melted—shall it come and remember His precious flesh that was melted in the agonies of Calvary? If your eyes have wept no tears of repentance, how can you properly remember Him whose veins wept blood to redeem His people from their sins? It is a contrite heart and a broken spirit that Christ wants here! Only with such persons will God deign to dwell and only with such will Christ commune, either at His Table or anywhere else. See to it, then, that you have genuine repentance.  
The next vital point for self-examination is love. *Examine yourselves concerning your love*. I think, Brothers and Sisters, that none of us can worthily eat of this bread and drink of this cup unless we truly love our Lord. So I venture to put the question to each one of you here. I know not your names, but the name that is used by our Lord Jesus will do for you. He says, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” You answer, “Yes.” Do you? Then I will put the question again. “Simon, son of Jonas, Jesus says to you, ‘Do you love Me?’And yet a third time I may put it, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” ‘Tis Jesus with the pierced hands and with the pierced feet who speaks, and He says, “Do you love Me?” This is the test of whether you may come to His Table, or not. Can you answer, “‘Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You.’ Sometimes my friends hardly know it, for I am not always as consistent as I should be. Sometimes, Lord, I have even to question it myself, but You know that, deep down in my heart, notwithstanding all my coldness and forgetfulness, all my wanderings and all my faults—You know that I do love You.” Come along, Brother! Come along, Sister! You will not eat and drink unworthily if this is true concerning your love to your Lord!  
There is one other matter which is vital, and that concerns obedience. *Examine yourselves concerning your obedience,* for, unless a man obeys the commands of Christ, he does not prove that he really loves Christ. If we truly love Him, we shall keep His commandments. If Paul had said that no one had a right to come to the Communion unless he was perfect, I certainly could not come and I feel sure that there is no one in the whole world who would have the right to come. Perfect? Ah, perfect weakness! And if anybody says he is perfect in any other sense than that, he must be possessed of perfect folly! But the obedience that we must have is of this sort. Do you desire to be perfectly obedient to your Lord? Do you, in your heart, desire to be rid of every sin and to forsake every false way? Is there any sin that you would harbor and indulge? Then you are not truly obedient! But can you, on the other hand, say, “Lord, I would be purged from every evil of every kind and I desire to obey You in all things. No matter how it may grate upon my feelings, or how contrary it may be to my wishes, where You bid me, I will go, and what You command me, I will do—your Grace helping me”? Is that what you say? Then you may come to the Communion, for Jesus Himself welcomes you! But if you will not give up sin—if you have even one pet sin that you are still determined to keep, you are a traitor to Christ and you have no more right to come to His Table than Judas Iscariot had!  
**IV.**Now, in closing, I want to speak a few words concerning THE SPIRIT IN WHICH, AFTER THIS SELF-EXAMINATION, WE OUGHT TO COME TO THE COMMUNION TABLE.  
Ought we not to come, dear Friends, each one of us, *in the spirit of holy wonder*? This is the Lord’s Table and I am coming, with the Lord’s redeemed people, to eat and drink at it—what a wonder that I am here! I never come to the Communion without being astonished at the amazing Grace of God to me and especially as I think of this great church which God has been graciously pleased to gather in this place. How much I owe to Him! How constantly am I struck with the marvels of His mercy to me! And each one of you, my fellow Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, has some peculiar reason for feeling the same kind of wonder in your own case.  
Next, we ought to come to the Communion *with a sense of selfabasement*. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to think little of ourselves everywhere, but when we come to the Table of our Lord, we ought to shrink to nothing—yes, to less than nothing! In the wilderness, man did eat angels’ food, but angels never ate such food as this! Yet we are permitted to come and partake of it. So, let us sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink, and sink till we are lost in wonder, love and praise that we should ever be permitted to come to this sacred feast!  
Let us come, at the same time, *in a spirit of strong desire*. I believe that in a sermon people always get something good when they come desiring to get something good. A hungry congregation will be sure to be fed! And if we come to the Communion Table feeling, “My Lord and Master, I desire to meet with You. The bread alone will not satisfy me—I need to feed spiritually upon Your flesh. The wine will not quench my soul’s thirst—I need spiritually to receive Your blood into my inmost soul. I desire, with all fervor of holy ardor, to put my finger into the print of the nails and to thrust my hand into Your side!” If you come to the Communion in this spirit—longing for Christ—you shall have Him! Open your mouths and pant for Him, and the living waters shall quench your soul’s thirst.  
Then come to the table *with a believing hope*. Perhaps you have not seen your Master’s face lately—you have been sorrowfully walking in darkness. Come to the Communion hoping that He will look through the lattice and reveal Himself to you. Do you not know that the two ordinances are windows of agate and of diamonds to the opened eyes of His people? Perhaps your loving Lord will look again through one of those windows while you are sitting at His Table. So, come expecting Him! Come with your heart wide open to receive its rightful Lord and Master and, with your eyes of love looking up to Him, surely, if the eyes of your love look up to Him, the eyes of His love will look down upon you! If you come to His Table, singing, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feeds among the lilies”—if you come passionately desiring to enjoy His company—then you may also come with the full confidence that His company will be given to you!  
I have only one thing more to say. Come to the Communion Table resolved that if in the ordinance you do not find your Lord—if in the breaking of bread, He is not manifested to you and if, in the pouring forth of the wine, you get no taste of His love—*you will still trust in Him*. Do not depend on outward signs and visible evidences, but say, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’ And if His Table should yield me no spiritual meat, I will still cleave to my Master. And if He will only let me be as a dog beneath His Table, I will eat the crumbs that fall there and so shall I live, for in every crumb of His mercy there is life everlasting!”  
As for you who, perhaps, have never thought upon this subject, I have to say just this to you, and then I have done. Remember that religion does not begin with ordinances. While I have been speaking to professing Christians concerning the Communion, I hope that none of you have been thinking of it as a saving ordinance. You, as sinners, have to exercise faith in Christ before you have anything to do with Believers’ Baptism—you have to come to Christ, Himself, before you are qualified to come to the Lords Table. As soon as you have, by faith, received Jesus Christ, Himself, as your Lord and Savior, the tokens and emblems of His death will become instructive to you. But until Jesus Christ is wholly yours, hands off all these holy things! For, as uncircumcised Philistines would have had no right to be at the Paschal Supper, so have those who are not renewed in heart with that circumcision that is made without hands, no right to come to the feast of Christian love which is reserved for the followers of the Crucified! Come to Jesus, to Jesus only, and put your trust in Him! God grant that you may do so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MATTHEW 26:17-30; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18-34.***

**Matthew 26:17-26.***Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where will You that we prepare for You to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the evening was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began, every one of them, to say unto Him, Lord, is it I? And He answered and said, he that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, you have said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it.*So the Jewish Passover melted away into the Lord’s Supper. Indeed, so gently did the one dissolve into the other that we scarcely know whether this incident, relating to Judas Iscariot, occurred during the Passover or the Supper. According to one account, it would seem to be one and, according to another account, the other, but, indeed, the one ordinance was almost imperceptibly merged into the other. I want you carefully to notice, as we read this narrative through, whether you can see, here, any trace of an altar. Look with both your eyes and see whether you can find any trace of a priest offering a sacrifice. Watch diligently to see whether you can perceive anything about kneeling down, or about the elevation or the adoration of “the host.” Why, even the Roman Catholic church knows better than to believe in what it practices! Most of you have seen copies of the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci, himself a Catholic of the old school. How does he picture those who were at the institution of the Lord’s Supper? Why, they are all sitting around a table, with the Lord Jesus in their midst! I wonder that they exhibit and still allow to be in their churches, a picture like that, which, painted by one of their own artists—most effectually condemns their base idolatry in which a wafer-god is lifted up, to be adored by men, who must be besotted, indeed, before they can prostitute their intellects so grossly as to commit such an act of sin! What a rebuke to that idolatry is conveyed by this simple statement—“As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it.”

**26.***And broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said. Take, eat, this is My body*. The Romanists do not even break the bread. They have a wafer so as to avoid anything like an imitation of the example set by our blessed Lord and Master. He took a piece of the bread which was provided for the paschal feast—the ordinary unleavened bread—and He broke it and gave it to His disciples, and said to them, “Take, eat, this is My body.” Not, of course, the literal body, which was there at the table— this was the emblem of His body about to be broken on the Cross on the behalf of all His people!

**27.***And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.* “Every one of you, take your own personal share.” This, also, the Papists have perverted by denying the cup to the laity.

**28-30.***For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives*. It was a social feast, somewhat funereal and tinctured with sadness, for Jesus was about to go from them to die. Still, it was a joyous celebration, closing with a hymn. At the paschal feast, the Jews always sang Psalms 113 to 118. Probably our Lord sang all these through. At any rate, Christ and His Apostles sang a hymn and I always like to think of Him as leading the little company—going to His death with a song upon His lips, His voice full of melody and made more sweet than ever by the near approach of Gethsemane and Calvary. I would like always to sing, whenever we come to the Communion Table, after the fashion in which they sang that night—“When they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.” Now let us read what the Apostle Paul writes concerning the Lord’s Supper.

**1 Corinthians 11:18-22.***For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper. For in eating everyone takes before the other his own supper and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.* These Corinthians fell into a great many errors. Everybody was a speaker and said whatever he pleased. And they had no proper order or rule. Among other evils—when they met together to observe the Lord’s Supper, they brought their own food with them, thinking that eating thus together was keeping the sacred feast. So the richer ones feasted to the full and the poor went almost without anything. “One is hungry, and another is drunk,” says the Apostle, and he tells them that this was not the right way of observing the Lord’s Supper. Yet it is evident that the idea which was in their mind was that of feasting together. They had exaggerated it and carried it to a grievous excess, but that was the idea they had concerning it. Certainly, there was no altar, or priest, or anything of the sort. Now the Apostle tells them how the ordinance should be observed.

**23-25.***For I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me*. How wonderfully simple it all is! There is nothing here of the paraphernalia of a “sacrament.” It is a simple memorial festival, that is all.

**26, 27.***For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. Therefore whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*He shall be guilty with respect to that body—not with respect to the *bread* against which he cannot sin—but with respect to that *body which is represented by the bread*, and with respect to that *blood which is represented by the cup*. See with what holy solemnity this humble feast is fenced and invested? There is a Divinity which hedges the simple ordinance of Christ lest men should trifle with it to their eternal ruin!

**28, 29.***But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*“Judgment” or “condemnation” is the word in the original, not, “damnation.” That is *not* a fair translation, neither does it express the Truth of God. He that eats and drinks unworthily condemns himself in so doing—he comes under judgment for that act. This is the kind of judgment that falls upon Christians if they come unworthily to the Lord’s Table—

**30-32.***For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Believers who are rendered sick, or who even die because of their offense against the Lord’s ordinance, are not therefore condemned to Hell! Far from it—it is that they may not be so condemned that God visits them. “When we,” the people of God—“are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned *with the world*.”

**33, 34.***Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.* By due attention to the Apostle’s injunctions, they would be able to rightly observe the ordinance. And we, also, may learn, from what Paul wrote, how we may worthily come to the Table of our Lord.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3391 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD’S SUPPER  
NO. 3391

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 1914. *DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“Let a man examine himself, and so let him  
eat of that bread and drink of that cup.”  
1 Corinthians 11:28.~~***

“Let *a man* examine himself.” That is, any man—every man who intends to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. The word is indefinite that it may be understood to be universal. No man is to come to that Table, no woman is to draw near without the previous self-examination. No age will excuse us, for there have been aged hypocrites, as well as young deceivers. No office will exonerate us from this examination, for there was a Judas even among the Apostles. The highest degree in the Church of God may consist with the most rotten formality. We are to examine ourselves each time we come. Each man is to do so. No one is to shirk the personal duty. Everyone is to undertake it as in the sight of God. Brothers and Sisters, you members of the Church about to come around this Table, give heed to the mandate of the Holy Spirit, by the inspired Apostle! “Let each one here examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.”

“Let a man *examine*himself.” The word is forcible. Let him make inquisition into his own soul as to whether all is right or not. Let him search diligently, tracing out every symptom that looks unfavorable, if, perhaps, that symptom may reveal the truth. Let him dwell upon every dark side or ill-looking spot, if, perhaps, those dark signs should mean more than is apparent on the surface. We are not to trifle with ourselves by making a superficial survey. Let a man examine himself as does the dealer in precious metals when he thrusts the ore into the fire, knowing that only the gold will come out, while the dross will be consumed. Put yourself into a crucible! Heat the furnace of examination seven times hotter than before, for since your heart will, if possible, escape from knowing the truth, be resolved that it shall know it, and the worst of it, too! Let a man review, test, prove, search, try! In all the strongest words that I could find that mean the fullest scrutiny, would I put the language of the Apostle, “Let a man examine himself.”

“Let a man examine *himself*.” He need not be so particular to examine those that surround him. If there should be unworthy communicants at the Table, his communing will not thereby be damaged. Though some may have intruded where they ought not to be, yet if your heart and mind shall come near to Christ in actual fellowship, we shall not have the less indulgence from our Lord because a Judas happened to be there. “Let a man examine himself.” Let it be personal work. I know there is an examination through which the Church member among us passes, when such as are experienced in the faith ask, “What do you know of these things? What is your faith touching this and that? Have you believed? Have you repented?” Such an examination, however, must never content you. I pray you never feel that it is any certificate of genuine discipleship to have been seen by the Elders, or to have had the pastor satisfied of your conversion. We are poor, fallible creatures—we cannot profess to search the heart—no, we never did profess it! It is but your outward life and your profession that we are called upon to judge at all. You must not go by our examination, but, “Let a man examine himself.” You are to look into your own heart, with your own eyes and ask to have them enlightened by the Holy Spirit! You are to hold the balance, yourselves, and weigh your soul therein. You are not to be satisfied with a second-hand judgment, or with another man’s search! Take the candle yourself, Man! Go through every corner and every crevice. Sweep out the old leaven and so keep the feast in simplicity of heart. “Let a man examine himself.”

“ *And so*,” says the Apostle, *“let him eat of that bread.”*That is to say, *the examination is to be seasonable*. It is to come always at the time of the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine. It should always be the prelude to communion. Examination should preface enjoyment. You should see whether you ought to be there and have a right to be there and, that ascertained, then you should come—but not till then! Is it not a very significant circumstance that the very first time our Lord took the bread and broke it, and instituted this Supper, there was at that very time a self-examination going on—and they then made an appeal to the Lord, Himself, at the conclusion, for each one said, when the question was asked as to who it was that would betray Him, “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?”—not at all an unsuitable question to be passed round tonight, when we shall break bread, and hear it said, “One of you will betray Me.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, I fear there are many more than one here among professors who will betray Him! Perhaps there are scores, if not hundreds, among so large a mass of professing Christians who will not prove, after all, to be genuine! Then let the question, though it stirs the anguish of your souls, pass round among you, “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?” Nor let any man eat of this bread, or drink of this cup till he has humbly in his soul sought to put it to his conscience, that he may investigate this matter whether he is Christ’s or not!

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, for a few minutes we shall *look at the matter about which we are to examine ourselves.*And then *we shall press upon you this examination, by giving you a few reasons for it*. May God grant us a blessing in this searching business!

**I.**CONCERNING WHAT WE ARE TO EXAMINE.  
You will observe that the text does not tell us, “Let a man examine himself as to this or that particular, and so let him eat.” He is to examine himself, but the Apostle does not say about what. The inference is that he is to examine himself about this Supper. He is to examine himself as to whether he has a right to eat of this bread and to drink of this wine. The Supper gives us the clue, then, as to what we are to examine ourselves upon. I shall see before me, presently, broken bread and the wine cup filled with the red wine. These two things are the emblems—the bread of the body of Christ, which was bruised and made to suffer for our sake—the wine of that precious blood of Christ by which sin is pardoned and souls are redeemed.  
I have no right to touch these emblems *unless in my soul I believe the facts that they represent*. Shall I not begin to question myself, then? *Do I accept, as a certain fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*? Do I believe that God descended from the highest Throne of Glory and became a Man born of woman? Do I believe that He suffered in human flesh, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God? Do I believe that in His blood, which was “shed for many,” there is a virtue for the putting away of sin and making Atonement to Almighty God, and that so sinners may be accepted in the Beloved? Unless I believe these things, I am clearly a hypocrite, a terrible hypocrite, if I dare to come to this Table at all! I am perverse among the perverse to thrust myself in to touch the emblems when I do not accept the facts which those emblems set forth! Now, every man here can easily examine himself by that test, but I hope the most of us here would say, “We do believe those facts.” Yes, but do you believe them as facts that are forcible in themselves and fraught with consequences? Do you apprehend them in their amazing weight and their stupendous bearing upon the judgment of God and the destiny of men? God made flesh—God Incarnate—Jesus, Immanuel, suffering to put away the sins of His people—The Christ of God presenting salvation to every soul that trusts in Him! Why, this is news such as never stirred even Paradise, itself, before! It is the best, highest and most wondrous news that angels ever heard! We ought to so hear and accept these facts in that same spirit that characterized them when they transpired, in order to duly discern their importance, or we have no right to come here!  
Furthermore, Brothers and Sisters. Every man who eats of the bread and drinks of the wine sets forth in emblem by the eating of the bread *that the flesh of Christ is his, and by the drinking of the wine that the blood of Christ is his*. Because he has possession of these things, he, therefore, comes to eat as men eat their own bread, or to drink as men drink their own wine. Now, dear Hearer, the question asked of you is this—Have you an interest in the body and the blood of Christ? “How can I know my interest therein?” asks one. You may know it thus—Do you fully and alone rely upon Jesus Christ for your salvation? Do you implicitly trust the merits of His agonies? Do you, without any other confidence, cast yourself fully upon the great atoning Sacrifice and transactions of Calvary? If so, that faith gives you Christ! It is the evidence that Christ is yours—you need not be afraid to come and take the wine when you so manifestly have the thing that is signified thereby. You may come—you are invited to come—you cannot stay away without sin if Christ, indeed, is yours!  
The question may assume another form. This Supper was instituted *that we might remember Christ in it*. A question, then, for each one—Can you remember Christ? Will coming here help you to remember Jesus Christ? If not, you must not come. How can you remember what you do not know? And how shall you remember at all aright, One in whom you have no part nor lot? To remember Christ as a mere person in history is of no more use than to remember Julius Cesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte! To remember Christ, who loved you and gave Himself for you—this is the choice remembrance that will be beneficial to your spirits. Beloved, I am quite certain that sometimes in what is called, “the Sacrament,” there is little or no recollection of Christ. Men and women come to it with no idea of remembering Him. They think that there is something in the thing, itself—some holiness in eating the bread and drinking the wine—some Grace bestowed by the priestly hands that administer the emblems of the Passion. But oh, it is not so! This is not to receive the Lord’s Supper— this is but Popish idolatry! This is not the true worship of the child of God! You come to the Table to remember Him! And only as far as those signs help you to remember Him—to trust Him, to love Him—only so far do they become a means of Grace to you! There is no latent moral virtue in material substances! No regeneration lurks in water! No confirmation in Grace streams from prelatic hands! There is no sanctity in lawn sleeves! There is no holiness in bread and nothing devout in wine! These are just outward and visible signs. The holiness, the sanctity, the Grace must lie in your own hearts as you lovingly receive these symbols and draw near with true spirits to the Lord who bought you with His blood! Ask yourselves, then—do you remember Him? Would these things help you to remember Him? If not, you have no business here.  
*It may be that some child of God here tonight is not fit to come to the Table*. You may be startled, perhaps, at that remark, but I venture to suppose such a thing possible! And if it should happen to turn out to be the case, I pray that Brother or Sister to take the admonition home! Is there any Brother whom you have offended, whose forgiveness you have not sought, or is there anyone who has offended you, to whom you have not rendered forgiveness? I think that what our Lord said about coming to the altar and leaving the gift before the altar until first we have been reconciled to our brother—though this is no altar at all—may be with all righteousness supposed concerning this Table! How can you expect fellowship with Christ with an unforgiving heart? How can you love God, whom you have not seen, if you do not love your brother, whom you have seen? If it is so hard for you to forgive, how hard will it be for you to *be forgiven*? An unforgiving spirit shuts you out of Heaven. Why, Man, you cannot even perform the lowliest act—you cannot pray! You, cannot say, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And if you cannot pray, much less can you commune! Oh, see to that, and let each man and woman examine themselves upon that!  
In pressing this subject upon you, may I be permitted to say, very earnestly, that the right way to examine ourselves before coming to this Table is*by the rule which is laid down in Scripture*. Examine yourselves by the tests and proofs of the Spirit which are spoken of in God’s Word. Just as you would examine another, impartially—  
***“Nothing extenuate,  
Nor anything set down in malice”—***  
so must you examine yourselves. Alas, we have one rule for others and another rule for ourselves! How mistakenly quick-sighted are we to discover the imperfections and infirmities of others of God’s people, while our own glaring sins scarcely give our conscience a twinge! We go about with great beams in our eyes, all the while wondering why our Brothers and Sisters cannot see the mote that is in theirs! Judge yourselves! Judge yourselves and let the severity of your judgment upon your fellow Christians be now turned upon yourselves! It will be much more to your profit and much more according to the rules of Christian charity. God grant we may, none of us, be afraid of the strictest rules of Scripture in their sternest form. Alas, Brothers and Sisters, we often stop short in our self-examinations just when they might be of use to us, like the patient who tears off the plaster just when it begins to work, or ceases to receive the medicine precisely when it has reached a point in which it would be useful! Press home, press home, the grave questions and anxieties that lurk within you! Never be afraid to be probed to the quick and to be cut to the core. Make no provision for self-deception! Ask the Lord to lay bare your hearts, right bare, before His Omniscient eyes. And as you are thus examining, do not flinch, do not mince matters, do not trifle, do not be partial, but judge yourselves truly and thoroughly, lest, after all, you should be mistaken! And lest, after coming to this Table, you should be banished from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!  
Thus much upon the points which are in debate—about which we are to examine our fitness to come to this Table. Allow me now, as best I can—  
**II.**TO PRESS THIS VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT UPON YOU, WITH SOME REASONS WHY THERE SHOULD BE SUCH A SELFEXAMINATION.  
I might say, Brothers and Sisters, that such an examination should be used*because self-knowledge is always valuable*. The old Greeks, whose wonderful sayings often verged upon Inspiration, used to say, “Man, know yourself!” It is ill for a man to be acquainted with foreign countries and to know nothing of his own—to understand other men’s farms and to let his own run to waste—to be conversant with other men’s health and to be dying of a secret disease! To study other men’s characters, but to allow his own character to be obnoxious in the sight of God. Know yourselves! Nothing will pay you better than to search your own hearts and to know yourselves. Of all stock-taking, this is one of the most beneficial. It will often be the death of pride when a man finds out what he really is. Self-righteousness will fly before such a searching, as owls fly before the rising sun! Know yourself and you are on the road to knowing Christ, for the knowledge of self will humble you, will make you feel your need of Jesus and may, in the hands of God the Holy Spirit, lead you to the finding of the Savior! Oh, Men and Women, how is it that you have so many acquaintances, such a large circle of friends and yet do not make acquaintance with yourselves? While you will read much of literature, you read not your own hearts! You commune with others, yet you commune not with yourselves and do not know yourselves. I pray you examine yourselves, if for no other reason than because such lore is among the most precious that a man can gain!  
Examine yourselves, again, you professed Christians, *because it is a marvelously easy thing for us to be deceived and to continue to be deceived*. Of course, every man likes to be flattered. Whether he believes it is so or not, this is a universal truth, and any man—I care not who he may be—is very easily to be persuaded that all is right with him. Satan, too, will help your natural tendencies, your partiality to yourselves. He only wishes to lull you to sleep and to rock you in the cradle of delusion. All things around a man conspire to help him to delude himself. The notion of Grace which is commonly entertained, the popularity of religion, the ease with which a man can join a church, the littleness of persecution in these days—all these things help to make it a very easy passage by which a man may glide along, until even when he dies he may still believe that he is on the road to Heaven, while all the while he has been going post-haste to Hell! Oh, since it is so easy to be deceived, and it is your soul that is in jeopardy, I beseech you examine yourselves!  
Besides, my dear Friends, *you know how some are deceived*. Charge your memories a minute. Do you not know some among your own acquaintance that are deceived? Ah, you readily remember them! But do you know that there were persons sitting in other parts of the Tabernacle who were thinking of *you* while you were thinking of them! You said of such a one, “Ah, I have watched her at home. I know that noisy tongue of hers, she is no Christian.” And that very woman was just whispering to herself, “Ah, I know him. I have traded at his shop. I know those short weights of his—he is no Christian.” Ah, you do not want God to condemn you—if you were only allowed to speak, you would condemn yourselves! But if such is the case, that we so readily can find out that others are deceived, is not the question one that is worth the asking, “May we not be deceived, ourselves?” Oh, let it come home. May not the preacher be deceived? May not Elders and deacons, who have been in honor these many years, be, nevertheless, rotten at heart? May not members of this Church who have been at this Table from the very beginning, almost from their childhood have, after all, had but a superficial godliness that will not stand the fire, that shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is? Therefore, I beseech you, since many are deceived, examine yourselves and so come to this Table.  
Further, remember that it is important for professing Christians to do this, beyond all others, because, perhaps, there is no greater bar to the reception of Grace in all this world *than the belief that you have Grace already*. It were a mercy if some here present had never joined the Church. Sad that I should say it, but it is so. It were a mercy to themselves that they had never professed to be Christians, because now, if we preach repentance, they say, “I repented years ago.” If we talk of faith in the Savior, they say, “I have faith—I joined the Church and avowed my faith.” If we speak of Christian knowledge—they have Christian knowledge— though it is the knowledge that puffs up. They have the imitation of all the Graces and, as it is sometimes very difficult to know which is the real gem and which is the paste gem that imitates it, so these people live so much like Christians, in many respects, that it is hard even for themselves to discover that they are not rich and increased in goods, but are naked, and poor, and miserable! If I were out of Christ, I would wish to be out of the Church. If I had no faith in Him, would that I had no profession of Him! If there is any soul in any place that is least likely to be saved, it is an unregenerate soul inside the Church, participating in Christian ordinances and dead while it lives! Search yourselves, then on this account.  
And let me add another solemn word. Search yourselves *because within a short time, at the very longest, you will be upon the bed of death and there, if not before, there will be deep searching of heart*. When the outward man decays and the flesh is melting away, you will need something more than profession to lean on. Sacraments, and going to places of worship will prove but poor things to bear you up in the midst of the billows of death! How must a man feel when he puts out on that dread sea with his lifebelt and finds it will not bear his weight! When he leaps into his lifeboat that he had hoped would bear him safely to the haven, and finds that every timber is strained and that it leaks—and he sinks into the flood. Oh, find out your mistakes while yet there is time to rectify them! I beseech you by the living God, whose face of fire you shall soon see, prepare yourselves for His judgment as well as for the judgment of your own conscience in the hour of death, for every man must be weighed in the balance! No mere pretender shall pass the gates of bliss. Destitute of faith, it matters not how bright your profession—you shall be banished from His Presence! If it is not Grace-work and heart-work, you may have eaten or drunk in His Presence and He may have taught in your streets, but He will never know you! If you have never confessed your sins in secret to the great High Priest. If you have never laid your hand upon that precious head that bore the sin of His elect. If you have never seen in solemn transfer your iniquities passed over to Him—and if your faith has never recognized that transaction and rejoiced in it—oh, beware, beware, beware, for in the last tremendous day your professions shall be but a painted pageantry for you to go to Hell in! Yes, worse than that, among the firewood of your burning that shall flash most furiously with devouring fire, will be the hollow sticks of your base profession, your bastard godliness, your counterfeit graces, your glitter that was not golden, your profession that was not based upon possession!  
Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, for these reasons let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread.  
But now, supposing this to be all done and we have come to this answer, “I am not in Christ. I am not a Christian. I have not believed”? Then, away, away, away from this Table! But where shall I send you? I will send you to the Cross. Though you may not come to the Table, you may come to Jesus!  
But suppose your answer should be, “I am very unworthy and sinful, but still, I have believed in Jesus, though I yet see much in myself that is evil.” Dear Brothers and Sisters, that is not the question! Preparation for the Lord’s Supper does not lie in perfect sanctification, but in true faith in Jesus! If, then, you have made sure of this, have done with the examination—I mean for tonight—because after you have examined yourself, it does not then say, “Keep on,” but, “So let him eat,” and I do not like that examination to stick in the throat so that you cannot digest the dainty morsels of the Savior’s precious body. It is done! You have examined and you know Him! You have believed in Him and trusted that He is able to keep you. Now, then, take care that you eat! I mean not merely eat with the mouth and drink with the throat, but now take care to pray that you may have real fellowship with the Incarnate God, gratefully magnifying the Grace that has made you to differ and cheerfully accepting the precious Person who is the ground of your reliance, of the life of your soul!  
God grant you now, having passed the door and shown your entrance ticket as true Christians, to sit and eat bread in the Kingdom of God!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *MATTHEW 6:1-24; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16.***

**Verse 1.***Take heed that you do not do your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven*. The motive which leads a man to give will form the true estimate of what he does. If he gives to be seen of men, then when he is seen of men he has the reward he sought for—and he will never have any other. Let us never do our alms or good works before men, to be seen of them.

**2-5.***Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does, that your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret, shall Himself reward you openly. And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* I have heard very great commendation given to certain Easterns, because at the hour of the rising of the sun, or the hour when the sound is heard from the summit of the mosque, wherever they may be, they put themselves in the posture of prayer. God forbid I should rob them of any credit they deserve, but far be it from us ever to imitate them! We are not to be ashamed of our prayers, but they are not things for the public street! They are intended for God’s eyes and God’s ears, only.

**6, 7.***But you, when you pray, enter into your closet and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.*It is not very easy to repeat the same words often without it becoming a vain repetition. A repetition, however, is not forbidden, but a “vain” repetition. And how greatly do they err who measure prayers by the yard! They think they have prayed so much because they have prayed so long, whereas it is the work of the heart—the true pouring out of the desire before God—that is the thing to be looked at. Quality not quantity! Truth, not length. Oftentimes the shortest prayers have the most prayer in them.

**8, 9.***Be not you, therefore, like they: for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him. After this manner therefore pray you.*And then He gives us a model of prayer which never can be excelled—containing all the parts of devotion. They do well who model their prayers upon this.

**9-13***Our Father which are in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* Our Savior now makes a remark upon this prayer and on one particular part of it which has stumbled a great many.

**14, 15.***For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* There are some who have altered this and pray in this fashion, “Forgive us our debts as we desire to forgive our debtors.” It will not do! You will have to desire God to forgive you, and desire in vain if you pray in that fashion! It must come to this point of literal, immediate, completed forgiveness of every offense committed against you if you expect God to forgive you. There is no wriggling out of it. The man who refuses to forgive, refuses to be forgiven! God grant that we may, none of us, tolerate malice in our hearts. Anger glances in the bosom of wise men—it only burns in the heart of the foolish. May we quench it and feel that we do freely, fully and heartily forgive, knowing that we are forgiven!

**16.***Moreover when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*Simpletons praise them—think much of them—and they plume themselves thereon and think themselves the very best of men. They have their reward.

**17, 18.***But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret, and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly*. Yet have I heard persons speak of certain emaciated ecclesiastics as being such wonderfully holy men. “How they must have fasted! They look like it. You can see it in their faces.” Probably much more likely produced by a fault in their digestion, than by anything else! And if not—if we are to suppose that the skinniness of a man, his person, is to be the token of his holiness—then the living skeleton was a saint to perfection! But we are not beguiled by such follies as these. The Christian fasts but he takes care that no one shall know it. He wears no ring or token even when his heart is heavy. Full often he puts on a cheerful air, lest by any means he should communicate unnecessary sorrow to others! And he will be cheerful and happy in the midst of company, to prevent their being sad, for it is enough for him to be sad, himself, and sad before his Father’s face.

**19-21.***Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* There is many a way of sending your treasure before you to Heaven. God’s poor are His money-boxes—His bankers. You can pass your treasure over to Heaven by their means. And the work of evangelizing the world by the labors of God’s servants in the ministry of the Gospel—you can help this, also. There is much need for your plenty. Thus also you can pass your treasure over into the King’s bank and your heart will follow it! I have heard of one who said his religion did not cost him a shilling a year—and it was remarked that very probably it would have been expensive at the price. You will find people form a pretty accurate estimate of the value of their own religion by the proportion which they are prepared to sacrifice for it.

**22.***The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, your eye is single.*If your motive is single—if you have only one motive—and that a right one—the master one of glorifying God—if your eye is single.

**22, 23.***Your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*When a man’s highest motive is himself, what a dark and selfish nature he has! But when his highest motive is his God, what brightness of light will shine upon all.

**24.***No man can serve two masters.* He can serve two persons very readily. For that matter, he can serve twenty, but not two *masters*. There cannot be two master principles in a man’s heart, or master passions in a man’s soul. “No man can serve two masters.”

**24.***For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon*. Though some men’s lives are a long experiment of how far they can serve the two.

***1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-16.***

**Verse 1.***And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.* The Church at Corinth consisted of persons of large education and great abilities. It was one of those churches that had given up the one-man system, where everybody talked as he liked—a very knowing Church, and a Church of Christians, too. But for all that, Christian babies! And though they thought themselves to be so great, yet the Apostle says that he never spoke to them as to spiritual men—he kept to the simple elements—regarding the carnal part as being too much in them as yet to be able to drink down spiritual things.

**2.***I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for up to now you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able*. How grateful we ought to be that there is milk and that this milk does feed the soul—that the simplest Truths of Christianity contain in them all that the soul needs—just as milk is a diet upon which the body could be sustained without anything else. Yet how we ought to desire to grow that we may not always be upon a milk diet but that we may be able to digest the strong meat—the high Doctrine of the deep things of God. These are for men, not for babes. Let the babes be thankful for the milk, but let us aspire to be strong men that we may feed on meat.

**3.***For you are yet carnal: for where as there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men?*A united Church, you may conclude, is a growing Church—perhaps a grown Church! But a disunited Church, split up into factions where every man is seeking position and trying to be noted—such a Church is a Church of babes. They are carnal and walk as men.

**4.***For while one says, I am of Paul: and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal?*Instead of that, they should all have striven together for the defense of the common faith of Jesus Christ. No greater symptom of mere infancy in true religion than the setting up of the names of leaders or the preference for this or that peculiar form of Doctrine, instead of endeavoring to grasp the whole of the Truth of God wherever one can find it.

**5, 6.***Who, then, is Paul? And who is Apollos but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.* Let God, then, have all the glory! Be grateful for the planter and grateful for the waterer, yes, and grateful to them as well. But still, let the stress of your gratitude be given to Him without whom watering and planting would be in vain!

**7, 8.***So then neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but God that gives the increase. Now he that plants and he that waters are one.*They are pursuing the same design! And Apollos and Paul were one in heart. They were true servants of one Master.

**8, 9.***And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: you are God’s husbandry, you are God’s building*. The Church is built up. God is He who builds it up—the Master of the work, but He employs His ministers under Him to be builders.

**10-13.***According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.* It is very easy to build up a Church quickly. It is very easy to make a great excitement in religion and become very famous as a soul-winner. Very easy. But time tries everything! If there were no other fire than the mere fire of *time*, it would suffice to test a man’s work. And when a church crumbles away almost as soon as it is got together— when a church declines from the Doctrines which it professed to hold, when the teaching of the eminent teacher is proved, after all, to have been fallacious and to have been erroneous in practical results, then what he has built comes to nothing! Oh, dear Friends, what little we do, we ought to aspire to do for eternity. If you shall never lay the brush to the canvas but once, make an indelible stroke with it! If only one work of sort shall come from the statuary’s workshop, let it be something that will live all down the ages! But we are in such a mighty hurry—we make a lot of things that die with us—transient results. We are not careful enough as to what we build with. May God grant that this truth may sink into our minds! Let us remember that if it is hard building with gold and silver, and harder still building with precious stones, yet what is built will stand the fire! It is easy building with wood—and still easier with hay and stubble—but then there will be only a handful of ashes left of a whole lifework if we build with these.

**14-15.***If any man’s work abides which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*. If he meant right—if he endeavored to serve God as a worker, though he may have uttered many errors and have been mistaken—(and which of us has not been?)—he shall be saved, though his work must be burnt.

**16.***Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*Do you know it? He says, “Know you not?” but I might leave out the, “not,” and say, “Know you that you are the Temple of God?” What a wonderful fact it is! Within the body of the saint, God dwells, as in a Temple. How some men injure their bodies or utterly despise them, though they would not so do if they understood that they are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in them.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2746 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF DIVINE CHASTENING  
NO. 2746

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1901.

***~~DELIVERED BY C H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1859.~~***

***~~“When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” 1 Corinthians 11:32.~~***

THERE had been great irregularities in the Corinthian Church with regard to the Lord’s Supper. They had made that solemn festival a scene of gluttony. Each person had brought his own provisions with him and while the rich were feasting on dainties, the poor often had scarcely anything to eat. The Apostle Paul tells them that on that occasion they did not come together for a feast of carnal things. He says, “In eating everyone takes before others his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunk. What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.”

Now, on account of these irregularities, God was pleased to visit the Church at Corinth with many sore afflictions. A great many of the members were smitten with sickness and some were even taken away by death. Little did the Church at Corinth understand the reason for this plague, this visitation of God upon their members, but the Apostle explains it to them. He says, “For this cause”—note the 30th verse—“many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.” There is a constant judgment going on in the Church of God. If we would judge ourselves and walk orderly and worthily in God’s sight, then we shall not be judged—the plagues will not come upon us. But when we are judged, what are we to say with regard to that? Is that a proof that God hates His Church and that He has cast His people away? And especially, too, if any die as the result of their iniquities, is that a proof that they perish eternally? “Oh no” says Paul, “they are judged now, in this world—they are chastened now of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world.”

What a great mystery is Providence, even to us who believe in a future state! We throw down the gauntlet of defiance to the infidel. We declare and with the best reason on our side, that it is utterly impossible for men to understand how there can be any justice in the dispensations of God in this world, or how there can be any justice in God at all, if there is not a time to come in which the great mysteries of this life shall all be set right. We defy any man who disbelieves in the immortality of the soul, to account for the fact that the most godly are those who suffer the most, and that, often, those who have the greatest happiness in this world are the men who least deserve it and are the most wicked! If there is not a future state of rewards and punishments. If the just man shall not reap the full reward of all his sufferings and griefs, and if the wicked shall not receive punishment for all his sins, how can God be just—and how can the Judge of all the earth do right?

There is also another mistake into which we may very readily fall. It is very easy for us to judge of the characters of men by their position in this world—and so to judge in a manner entirely apart from the facts. Some will have it that if a man is exceedingly prosperous, it stands to reason that he must have been good. “Surely God would not have rewarded him,” they say, “unless there had been something worthy about him.” This is what is inculcated upon our children. How often does the father pat his child upon the head and, pointing to an alderman who is growing exceedingly fat with riches, tell his son that he must be a good boy and then he, too, will become as great? Or, taking him by the house of some exceedingly rich man, how often does the father tell his child that if he shall be good—which is, I suppose, but a brief, pithy expression, to signify if he shall be obedient and keep the Laws of God—then he shall be rich? And so, in fact, it is thought impossible to make a child understand that a man may be rich and yet wicked—that he may be happy in this world and have much of visible blessedness and yet, after all, be a stranger to God and be the very reverse of good! We, I trust, in our riper years, are free enough from such a mistake as that.

Yes, Friends, we must never judge of men’s inward condition by their outward position. A rich man may be gracious and a poor man may be wicked—and we may turn the truth in the other direction and declare that many are the poor who have Divine Grace within, and many are the rich who are but fattening for God’s slaughtering-day at the last! It is a well-known fact, which has, doubtless, led to both the errors which I have mentioned—the error of thinking that God is unrighteous and also the error of judging men by their outward state. I say it is doubtless a fact that many of the true children of God are exceedingly troubled in this world, while, full often, the wicked escape. Why is this? Our text explains it. It declares that “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

**I.**THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE CHASTENED OF THE LORD—THEY ARE MORE CHASTENED THAN ANY OTHER MEN. They are chastened every morning and they are plagued all the day long. Why is this? God must be right in acting thus—what is His reason? I will give you a few reasons. First, the righteous are more chastened than other men because their sins are worse than those of others. Secondly, they are more chastened than other men, that God may make them an example of His hatred against sin. And then, they also receive extraordinary chastening because of God’s extraordinary value of them and His determination to wean them from their sins and cure them of their iniquities.

I say, in the first place, that God chastens His people more than others, and we may find a reason for this in the fact that *their sins are worse than those of other men.* I do not mean that they are outwardly worse—I will defend the character of the people of God from any such aspersion as that! I do not mean that the people of God are worse sinners than others, judged by the Law, weighed in the scales of the Justice which will try all men. It is in another respect that they are worse—not in the light of the Law of God, but in the light of the Gospel.

They are worse, partly because the righteous have more of the Light of God than other men. In proportion to the Light of God against which we sin, is the greatness of our iniquity. A sin which a Hottentot might commit and which God would wink at because of his ignorance, He would never pass by in His own children, because His children know better. They have spiritual discernment. They are not so foolish as to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Their conscience has been enlightened and besides, they have the Word of God and the indwelling of the Spirit— and when they sin, they sin against greater light and knowledge than other men have. Hence it is that their sins stand in the very first position with regard to guilt. And what wonder, therefore, that God should sorely chasten them?

On this thought I will not lay greater stress, but pass on to observe that the sins of the righteous are worse than those of other men from the fact of the greater mercy which they have received. It is impossible for any man to sin so grievously against God as the man who is God’s favorite. He who lies nearest to our bosom is capable of grieving us the most. Why is it that the sin of Judas was so great? It was because Judas was an Apostle and he had been a friend of Christ. Jesus might have said to him, “It was not an enemy that reproached Me; then I could have borne it. Neither was it he that hated Me that did magnify himself against Me; then I would have hid Myself from him. But it was you, a man My equal, My guide and My acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the House of God in company.” Christ feels a blow from an enemy, but a stab from His friend is “the unkindest cut of all.”

What? When Christ has chosen us out of the world and has redeemed us with His precious blood. When God has taken us into His family, when He has wrapped the righteousness of Christ about us, like a robe, and has promised us an eternal dwelling place at His right hand—shall we sin, do you think, and shall not our sin be counted to be a heinous offense, indeed, because of the love at which we kicked and the great mercy over which we stumbled? A husband feels an unkind word from his wife far more than from anyone else because he loves her better than he loves others and, therefore, she has the greater power to grieve him. And Christ cares little for all the railing of a wicked world, but if His Church speaks slightingly of Him—if she offends Him—then is He cut even to the heart! If we take anyone into our friendship, we entertain at once a jealousy of him. If he speaks evil behind our back, we say, “If you had been an enemy, I would never have noticed it. You might have said just what you chose, and I would never have rebuked you. But you professed to be my friend and if you say anything against me, I cannot bear it. This wounds me sorely and, therefore, I must rebuke you for it.”

One good old writer says, “When the Lord takes a man to His private chamber and admits him into His secrets, He at once becomes jealous of him—He will not permit him to sin so deeply as others. ‘Oh,’ He says, ‘have I made you My friend? Have I walked with you? Have I permitted you to lean your head upon My bosom and will you go away and break My Laws, and rebel against One who has been so loving to you as to admit you into the secret place of His Tabernacle? Then, surely, your sin is great, indeed, and I ‘will chasten you for it.’” Beloved, if you will set your sins in this light, you will at once perceive that it is no wonder that God chastens you! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, when we think of the great mercy of God to us—of His overflowing kindness, both in Providence and Grace—when we meditate upon the fond affection which has cradled us from our youth up, and the strong protection that has guarded us from all harm, surely we must think that offenses against God, committed by us, are worse than the sins of other men who have never tasted of such mercies as those which we receive daily! This, also, is another proof of the greatness of the sin of God’s people as compared with the sin of others—and is a reason for His chastising them.

Besides, my Friends, the sins of God’s people are worse than those of other men from the ruinous effect of their example. When a worldling is seen drunk, there is sin, of course—but when a Church member is seen reeling in the streets, how much worse it is! The world makes this a grand excuse for itself. It is under the shadow of the imperfections of the Church that wicked men find shelter from the scorching heat of their conscience. If they can detect a minister in sin. If they can discover a deacon or an elder indulging in iniquity. If they can quote a justification for sin from the lips of a Church member, how content and pleased the wicked are! They did, as it were, but walk in their transgressions before— but when they find a Church member in the same path, then they run greedily in the way of iniquity! I say, Brothers and Sisters, our sins deserve twice the afflictions of other men if we rebel because they do more mischief. And often, you know, judges have to estimate transgressions not merely by their guilt, but by the influence of the example of the criminal—and so, God will the more heavily chasten His people because if they sin, they do so much damage to the morals of mankind and bring so much dishonor upon the name of the Lord their God! For all these reasons I am sure I am right in saying that the sins of God’s people are, in God’s esteem, worse than the sins of other men and, perhaps, this is one reason why He always chastens them, even when He lets the wicked go unpunished for a while. This is not, however, the grand reason. I come to another.

Why does God chasten His people while He permits so many others to go unpunished? I take it that another reason is that He *may give a manifest and striking example of His hatred of sin.*When God chastens all ordinary man for iniquity, His justice is seen. But when He lays His rod upon His own child, then at once you discover how much He hates iniquity. When Brutus condemned traitors, Rome could see his justice, but when his two sons are brought up and accused of the crime, and he says—“Lictors*,*do your duty. Strip and beat them.” And after they have been scourged, when he bids them take them away and treat them as common malefactors, then all Rome is startled with the inflexibility of the justice of Brutus! So, when God smites His own children—when He lays the rod on those who are very dear to Him, when He makes them public examples—then even the world itself cannot withhold its admiration of the justice of God.

When David—the man after God’s own heart—was smitten so sorely for one sin, God’s justice was more fully manifested than in the punishment of a hundred ordinary men. There were many men, throughout Jerusalem, ten times worse than David, but they escaped Scot free. Not so David, because David was much loved of God and, therefore, he must be chastened that the whole world might see that God hates sin, even when it nestles in the breasts of His own beloved children. Never was there such a proof of God’s hatred of iniquity as when He put His own Son to death! And next to that, the chastisement of His own well-beloved children is the most forcible proof of His hatred of iniquity. I take it that this is a second reason why the righteous are so much chastened.

But then the best reason is *because of the high value which God sets upon His people.*Our text says, “We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” God has a great esteem for His people and He will not let them perish. But He knows right well that if He allowed them to go unchastened, they would soon destroy themselves and lose their interest in His love. This He never can permit, for that were contrary to His oath and contrary to His Covenant. Therefore does He chasten them. So, whenever you are a chastened child of God, you may draw comfort from it. Samuel Rutherford, in writing to Lady Kenmure, who was in deep affliction, having first lost her two children and then her husband and mother, said, “Your Ladyship must certainly be a special favorite of Heaven, for if you were not, surely the Lord would not take all this pain to make you fit for Heaven. If He did not love you very much, He would not be so jealous of your love. For I take it,” he said, “this is the reason why He took away those who were dear to you— because He would have every atom of your love and, therefore, would not permit anything to be spared to you upon which your heart was set.”

As for the wicked, let them have what they please—let them set their hearts upon their riches, it is their only treasure—let them give their love to their lusts and to their carnal pleasures. God wants not their love—the love of the wicked is not pleasant to Him—He wants not their praises. What have they to do with loving and praising Him while they are reveling in their iniquities? But with regard to the righteous, God loves them—He wants their love and He will have it—and He will chasten them until He gets it. He will make them even as a weaned child, taking away the breasts of this world from their lips, and putting bitterness into their mouths till they begin to loathe this world and long for a better—long to leave their present state and to be with Him who is their All-in-All!

Besides, with regard to the wicked, God says of them, “Let them go on sinning, let them fill up the measure of their iniquities.” A reprobate may be many years in sin before he is discovered or punished. You have known and seen, of late, in the commercial embezzlements of our time, how long a wicked and ungodly man may go on in sin. Year after year he is embezzling money, yet he is not found out. There are a thousand opportunities for discovery, but, somehow or other, his wickedness is masked and it seems as though Providence itself helped him to conceal his iniquity. But if you are a child of God, don’t you try it, for you will be found out the first time! Mark that—an heir of Heaven can never go on long in villainy. God will straightway set him up as an object of scorn before men—and why? Because the Lord loves us and He does not want us to fill up the measure of our iniquity. He desires to stop us at once in our sin and, therefore, you will find this is a fact verified in your observation—if a child of God commits but a small act of dishonesty, it is certain to be found out—but an ungodly man may heap up his iniquities and yet go unpunished for many and many a day!

No, I will go further than that! Many a man has pursued a life of fornication and uncleanness and has *never*, at least as far as we can see, been punished or chastened. His life seems to have been a continued round of gaiety. He has gone from mirth to mirth, and from merriment to debauchery. He has been the envy of his fellow men, for the strength of his body and for the vigor of his health. He has even come to die and has gone to his grave softly, without a band in his death, or a pang in his last hour—and why is this? Simply because the Lord said, “Let him alone; he is joined to idols; let him go.” God did not care to cast stumbling-blocks in his path. He was running his downward way and God left him alone. “There,” He said, “let him work his own damnation. Let him run the downward road. I will not stop him.” And, like the swine possessed with devils, that man has run violently down a steep place into the sea of damnation and has never discovered his lost state till he has perished in the fiery waters of Hell!

But you will not find the child of God go on like that. David grossly sinned once, but it was not long before he was chastened for it. Another man might have lived for years in adultery and yet not been punished. Not so with the Believer—he must be chastened at once. God will keep His people free from the growth of iniquity. As soon as the first weed springs up, He lays the hoe to its roots. But as for the wicked, their sins may grow till they are great. “Let them alone,” says God. “In the day of harvest, I will say to the reapers, ‘Gather them into bundles, and burn them.’” So, you see, it is God’s love to His children, His anxious desire that they may not perish, which often brings them into chastisement on account of sin which, otherwise, they might have escaped. If, then, we are often chastened and sorely vexed. If we are God’s children, let us see the loving reason for it and conclude that “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

**II.**And now, having explained the Lord’s chastisement of His people, I shall occupy but a very few minutes in showing that GOD, BY THUS CHASTENING US, SPARES US FROM BEING CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD, dwelling simply upon the fact that though the righteous are chastened here, they can never be condemned in the next world.

We are often charged with preaching immoral Doctrine when we say that the righteous man can never be condemned—that he that believes in Christ can never be punished on account of his sins. Whatever charge may be brought against us, we are not ashamed to repeat our statement, for thus it is written, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” The sufferings which God’s people feel here are not punishments, but chastisements. If I have ever used the word “punishment” in relation to Believers, it must be understood in its restrictive sense.

God has punished Christ, once and for all, for all the sins which the elect have committed, or ever can commit. And *it is not consistent with the justice of God to punish the same offense twice in two different persons.* The sufferings of the righteous here are not punitive, they are corrective—they are intended to be chastening. It is not the sword of the judge, it is the rod of the father, which falls upon the Believer. The father may sometimes give his child a sterner and more severe punishment for an offense than even a judge might award. A judge might dismiss a child with a censure for some fault, but the father, when he gets him home, will see him well whipped for it and so, full often, the chastisement of God, in this world, may even seem to be heavier than if it were punitive! Yet we may always remember this for our comfort—that God is not condemning us with the world. When He is smiting us, He is not using the rod with which He will break in pieces the wicked! He is not terrifying us with the awful thunders which shall one day make all Hell quake with fright! He is but putting on an expression of anger that He may cleanse our hearts—and is but using the rod with the hand of love, that He may purge us of that folly which is bound up in the heart of His people.

I have said that a Christian shall never, in the world to come, be condemned for his sin, and it is assuredly true, for the first reason, that God cannot punish twice for one offense. It is also true for the second reason, that *God cannot condemn those whom He has justified.*That were to reverse what He has once done and so to prove Himself a mutable being! He cannot first give us the witness of forgiveness and afterwards the witness of damnation for guilt. It is not possible for Him to first kiss us with the kiss of His love and then, afterwards, to cast us into Hell. God will not play fast and loose with His children, first justifying them through His Grace and then, afterwards, condemning them through their sin. I say that were to contradict Himself.

God cannot, in the third place, condemn His children *because they are His children, and He is their Father.*Having taken men into such a relation to Himself as to make Himself their Father, God has in that very act put it beyond His own power to utterly condemn and cast them out. He is Omnipotent—He can do anything as far as His power is concerned—but He cannot belie the instincts of His heart. Now, no father can forget his child—it is not possible—and it is not possible for God, after He has once forgiven and has sealed that forgiveness in the glorious privilege of adoption—it is not possible for Him to answer the cry of, “Abba, Father,” with the sentence, “Depart, you cursed!”

And, again, it is impossible for God to condemn those whom He has justified for the reason that if He did so, *all His promises and the whole tenor of the Covenant would be violated.*It was to save from their sins all those who believe in Him that Jesus died. If, then, these are not saved, everyone of them, His death must be in vain. If those whose sins He carried shall be, at last, cast into Hell, then Christ’s project of Redemption has never been fully carried out. To suppose a universal Atonement is to suppose that the design of God has been partly frustrated—that Christ has attempted to do something greater than He will really effect. But here is our solid resting place—that the Covenant stands secure and that, in Christ, every stipulation of it is firm—and through Him every single article of it shall be carried out. Now, the complete salvation of all the elect is one part of it and, therefore, chastened though they may be in this world, that is no contradiction to the fact that they shall “not be condemned with the world” hereafter.

I am going to close my discourse with a picture. The Last Great Day is coming. Do you see, yonder, the gathering storm? Do you mark the black clouds as, one after another, they accumulate? For whom is that tempest coming? Can you take a glimpse into the treasure house of God and see His hailstones and coals of fire? Can you discover His lightning, as they are stored up against the Day of Wrath? For whom are these reserved? You shall hear, by-and-by.

Look yonder in another direction, the very opposite. What does that deluge of descending rain mean? What does the rolling of that awful thunder mean? I see, in the center of that storm, a Cross. What do all that terrible display of tempest and of hurricane mean? Why, yonder, there is no sound as yet of storm! It is gathering, but it has not burst. It still gathers but, as yet, not a drop of rain descends. The lightning is bound up in bundles which are not yet loosed. Why is it that, yonder, all is the stillness of a storehouse and a mighty preparation for war, while, over there, that war is going on and all the bolts of God are launched? It means this. God has separated His people from the world. Over yonder His wrath is spending itself, the black clouds are letting out their floods, thunder is poured forth and lightning is flashing—where? Upon the head of the mighty Savior, the dying Jesus!

The wrath must be spent somewhere and so, in all its fury, it is manifesting itself around Christ! And yonder pilgrims who are just caught by a few drops that skirt the terrible tempest, are those for whom that tempest is being endured by their glorious Substitute. Yonder tried and afflicted ones, scared by the lightning and alarmed by the troubling of the tempest—these are the men who have a share in the Substitution of Christ. I say the afflictions of God’s people are like the trickling on the skirts of that great tempest—they are the few drops on the margin of the storm which spent itself on Christ. These men, who in this world suffer afflictions—righteously endure them and patiently suffer them for Christ’s sake—are those who shall have no storm hereafter—for look, the storm is now gone. All is cleared away and, instead, the sun shines out in its glory above their heads! Angels are descending and on angelic wings they are borne upward to a Temple and to mansions prepared for them in the Presence of their Father.

But look at yonder men and women—they are dancing merrily! Though all overhead is black, not a drop of rain has yet fallen. Mark how they are marrying and giving in marriage, for not a bolt has yet been launched. Who are these? Alas, poor wretches, these are the men for whom the Judge is treasuring up wrath against the Day of Wrath. For them He is reserving fire and brimstone, hot coals of juniper and terrible destruction. They look askance on yonder pilgrims slightly wetted with the storm. They make a mock of yonder poor converted ones, trembling as they hear the rolling thunder. They say, “We hear no tempest! It is all a delusion, there is no storm!” Yes, Sinners, but the day is coming when you shall discover your mistake! You have your portion here, but Believers are happier, as they are all saved for the great hereafter. You have no bands in your death—it is that you may have the tighter bands in Hell! You have few afflictions here—it is that they may be doubled to you hereafter! You go merrily through this world, you carry the lamp of joy with you—it is that your blackness may be the more terrible and your darkness the more awful when you are excluded from earthly joys—and shut up forever in the outer darkness, where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!

It is pleasant to pass through a country after a storm has spent itself—to smell the freshness of the herbs after the rain has passed away and to note the drops after they have been turned to diamonds in the sunlight. That is the position of a Christian. He is going through a land where the storm has spent itself, or if there are a few drops, the written page of the Covenant cheers him on and tells him this is not for his destruction. But how terrible is it to witness the approach of a tempest—to see the preparation for the storm, to mark the birds of Heaven as they flutter their wings, to see the cattle as they lay their heads low in terror, to discern the face of the black sky, the sun which shines not and the heavens which give no light! How terrible to stand on the verge of a horrible hurricane—such as occurs, sometimes, in the tropics—to know that we cannot tell how soon the wind may come in fury, tearing up trees from their roots, forcing rocks from their pedestals and hurling down all the dwelling places of man!

And yet, Sinner, this is just your position! There are no hot drops as yet fallen, but a shower of fire is coming. There are no terrible winds blowing on you, but God’s tempest shall surely come. As yet, the floods are dammed up by Mercy, but the floodgates shall soon be opened. The bolts of God are yet in His storehouse, but, lo, judgment comes, and how awful shall be that moment when God, robed in vengeance, shall come forth in fury! Where, where, where, O Sinner, will you hide your head, or where will you flee? Oh, that the hand of Mercy may now lead you to Christ! He is freely preached to you, and you know your need of Him! Believe in Him! Cast yourself upon Him and then the fury shall be over and you need not dread to go into eternity, for no storm awaits you there, but quiet, and calm, and rest, and peace forever!

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON: *RUTH 1.***

**Verse 1.***Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.*That was a bad move on their part—better poverty with the people of God, than plenty outside of the covenanted land.

**2.***And the name of the man was Elimelech.* Elimelech? It means, “my God is King.” A man with such a name as that ought not to have left the kingdom where His God was King! But some people are not worthy of the names they bear.

**2.***And the name of His wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.*That is generally what happens. Those who go into the country of Moab continue there. If Christians go away from their separated life, they are very apt to continue in that condition. It may be easy to say, “I will step aside from the Christian path for just a little while,” but it is not so easy to return to it. Usually something or other hampers—the birdlime catches the birds of Paradise and holds them fast.

**3, 4.***And Elimelech, Naomi’s husband died, and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.* Which was about ten years too long! Probably they did not intend to remain so long when they went there. They only meant to be in Moab for a little while, just as Christian people, when they fall into worldly conformity, only purpose to do it once, “for the sake of the girls, to bring them out a little.” But it happens to them as it is written here—“and they dwelled there about ten years.”

**5.***And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.*That seemed to be her great grief— that she was left. She would have been content to go with them, but she was left to mourn their loss.

**6.***Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.* It is often the case that when our idols are broken, we turn back to our God. It is frequently the case that the loss of earthly good leads us to return to our first Husband, for we feel that then it was better with us than it is now. Naomi had also another inducement to return.

**6.***For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited His people in giving them bread.* Have any of you professors gone a long way off from God? I wish you knew what plenty there is in the Great Father’s house and what a blessed feast there is for these who live with Him! There is no famine in that land! There is plenty of gladness, plenty of comfort, plenty of everything that is joyful to be found there. You need not go to Moab and to her false gods to find pleasure and satisfaction.

**7-9.***Therefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother’s house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept.*Separation was painful to them, for they loved their mother-in-law, a most unselfish person who, even though it was a comfort to her to enjoy their company, thought it would be for their good, in a temporal sense, that they should abide in their own country.

**10-14.***And they said unto her, Surely we will return with you unto your people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will you go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth cleaved unto her.* What a difference there often is between two persons who are under religious impressions at the same time! The one would like to follow Jesus, but the price is too much to pay, so there is a kiss somewhat like that of Judas, and Orpah goes back to her people, and to her idols. But how different was the other case! Ruth was, as it were, glued to Naomi! She “cleaved unto her.” Stuck to her and could not be made to go back with her sister.

**15-17.***And she said, Behold, your sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return you after your sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you: for where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge: your people shall be my people, and your God my God: where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more, also, if anything but death parts you and me.*That was bravely spoken and she meant it, too.

**8.***When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left off speaking unto her.*That is a striking expression, “When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her.” O you dear young friends who want to be Christians, how glad we are when we see that you are steadfastly minded to go with the people of God! There are so many who are quickly hot and quickly cold—soon excited towards good things and almost as speedily their ardor cools and they go back into the world. Do ask the Lord to make you steadfastly minded! This is one of the best frames of mind for any of us to be in.

**19.***So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, When they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?* They seemed all to turn out of doors to have a look at these two strangers and especially at Naomi, for she was so different from what she had been when she went away. “And they said, Is this Naomi? Some said, “Is this Naomi?” questioning. Others said it with surprise as a thing incredible, “This Naomi! How can she be the same woman?” It was very rude of them to turn out, just like people without sympathy do on Ramsgate Pier, to see the sick passengers land. Nobody seems to have said, “Come into our house to lodge,” but all questioned, “Is this Naomi?”

**20.***And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi.* “Call me not ‘pleasant.’”  
**20.***Call me Mara.*That is, “bitter.”  
**20.***For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.*It was a pity for Naomi to say that, yet I fear that many of us have done the same. We have not borne such sweet testimony to the Lord as we might have done, but have sorrowfully moaned, as this poor woman did.  
**21.***I went out full.*Why, then, did you go out?  
**21.***And the LORD has brought me home again empty.*Ah, but He *has* brought you home again! Oh, if she would but have noticed the mercy there was in it all, she might still have spoken like Naomi! But now she speaks like Mara—bitterness. Her husband and her two boys—all her heart’s delight—were with her when she went out. And now that they are gone, she says—  
**21.***Why then call you me Naomi, seeing the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?*Yet it is a sweet thing to be able to trace the hand of God in our affliction, for nothing can come from that hand towards one of His children but that which is good and right! If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, “I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands,” you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what Infinite Wisdom directs and Infinite Love has ordained!  
**22.***So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.*That is, at the time of the Passover. Let us hope that they received a blessing in observing the ordinances of that time and that they were thus helped to get back to the only right and happy state of heart.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #777 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HELPS

NO. 777

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

***~~“And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” 1 Corinthians 12:28.~~***

IT appears, according to the Apostle Paul, in regard to the diversity of gifts which proceeded from the selfsame Spirit of God, those who gave assistance to the early Church did so in different ways. He tells us, “God has set some in the church, first apostles.” These were to go from place to place founding churches and ordaining ministers. There were next, “secondarily, prophets,” some of whom uttered prophecies and others were gifted in their explanation. Then came, “thirdly, teachers,” who were probably either pastors settled in many churches teaching the Word, or else evangelists journeying about and proclaiming the Truths of God.

Then came, “after that, miracles, then gifts of healing.” And the Apostle does not forget to mention another class of persons, called “helps.” Now, who these people precisely were I suppose it would be very difficult, at this period of time, if not quite impossible, to tell. Some have thought that they were assistant ministers who occasionally aided settled pastors both in the pastoral work of visiting and in occasionally preaching the Word. Others have thought that they were assistant deacons, and perhaps even deaconesses, an office that most certainly was recognized in the Apostolic Churches.

Others, again, have supposed these “helps” to have been attendants in the sanctuary who took care that strangers were properly accommodated, and managed those details which always must be superintended by somebody in connection with any gathering of persons for any public object whatever. But whoever they were, or whatever may have been the particular functions they discharged, they appear to have been a useful body of people and worthy to be mentioned in the same verse as Apostles and teachers, and even to be named with miracle-workers and those who had the gifts of healing!

It strikes me that they were not persons who had any *official* standing but that they were only moved by the natural impulse and the Divine life within them to do anything and everything which would assist either teacher, pastor, or deacon in the work of the Lord. They were the sort of Brethren who are useful anywhere—who can always stop a gap and who are only too glad, when they find that they can make themselves serviceable to the Church of God in any capacity whatever. We have a goodly brigade of “HELPS” in this Church, and I want now to stir them up! And while I am speaking to them, perhaps a word or two of comfort may come, as it were, from round the corner to some who need the assistance which

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these Brethren give, and for whose help, indeed, those of whom we speak lay out their lives.

John Bunyan, that master of Christian experience, as well as of Christian allegory, has, it seems to me, described that part of the work of these “helps” which is most valuable and which is most required. He describes Help as coming to Christian when he was floundering about in the Slough of Despond. Just when the poor man was likely to have been choked, having missed his footing in the slough, and when he found that with all his struggling, he was only sinking deeper and deeper into the mire, there suddenly came to him a person of whom Bunyan says nothing more throughout his whole allegory, whose name was Help. Help put out his hand and, saying some words of encouragement to Christian, pulled him out of the mire, set him on the King’s Highway and established his goings.

There is a period in the Divine life when the help of judicious Christian Brethren is invaluable. Most of us who know the Lord at all know quite as much as we wish to know about that awful Slough of Despond. I myself did lay in it for five years, or thereabouts, and I think I know pretty well every part of it. In some places it is deeper than in others, and more nauseous. But, believe me, a man may reckon himself thrice happy when he gets out of it, for when one is in it, it seems as though it would swallow him up alive! Dear, very dear to us, must ever be the hand that helped us out of the depth of the mire where there was no standing! And while we ascribe all the glory to the God of Grace, we cannot but love most affectionately the instrument He sent to be the means of our deliverance.

On the summit of some of the Swiss passes, the Canton, for the preservation and accommodation of travelers, maintains a small body of men, sometimes only two or three, who live in a little house at the top and whose business it is to help travelers on their way. It was very pleasant when we were going through a pass in the mountains of Northern Italy to see, some three or four miles from the top, a man coming down who saluted us as though he had known us for years. He carried a spade in his hand, and though *we* did not know what was coming, he evidently understood better than we did what was going to occur.

By-and-by we came to deep snow and the man went to work with his spade to clear a footway, and when he came to a very ugly piece of road some of the party were carried along on the man’s back. It was the man’s business to care for the travelers and before long there came one of his companions with wine and refreshments which were generously offered to the weary ones. These men were “helps” who spent their lives on that part of the road where it was known their services would be required. And when travelers reach the spot, these men are ready to give their assistance in the nick of time. They would have been worth nothing at all down in the plains. They would have been only an encumbrance if they had met us in any other place—but they were exceedingly valuable because they were just where they were required—and came exactly at the moment when they were wanted.

Now, my Friends, “helps” are of no use to a man when he can help himself. When he has no difficulties, an offer of assistance is an intrusion. There is just one point, such a juncture as the passing of the summit of the mountain, where help will be exceedingly precious to him. And it seems to me that the period of a man’s experience which Bunyan describes by the Slough of Despond is just that season when you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, may render invaluable aid to the Christian minister by coming to the rescue of those who seem as though they would be swallowed up.

This brigade of “helps,” if I understand Bunyan right, are stationed all round the borders of the Slough of Despond and it is their business to keep watch all round and listen for the cries of any poor unenlightened travelers who may be staggering in the mire. Just as the Royal Humane Society keep their men along the borders of the lakes in the parks in winter time—and when the ice is forming bid them be on the watch and take care of any who may venture upon it—so a little knot of Christian people, both men and women, should always be ready in every Church to listen for cries of distress, and to give assistance wherever it may be required.

Such seem to me to be the sort of “helps” we want. Such, perhaps, these ancient “helps” may have been.  
**I.**I want, first of all, to GIVE A FEW DIRECTIONS TO THESE “HELPS” AS TO HOW THEY MAY HELP POOR SINNERS OUT OF THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND. After some little experience I have had in helping others, I would recommend one particular course at the outset. When you meet with someone who is despairing and thinks he cannot be saved, get him to state his case. This should always be the *first* thing.  
When Help went to Christian he did not at once put out his hand to him, but he said, “What are you doing there? How did you get there?” It does men good to state their spiritual case to others. Confession to a priest is a piece of abomination, but sometimes the communication of our spiritual difficulties to another will be, in itself, a most helpful exercise to ourselves. You will know how to deal with them and they will know the better what you want when they put their necessities into words. I have occasionally found that the mere act of stating a difficulty has been the very means of at once removing it.  
Some of our doubts will not bear the light of day. Many spiritual difficulties are there which, if a man did but look them fully and squarely in the face long enough to be able to describe them, would vanish even during the investigation! Let the youngster state his case. Get that young man alone, dear Brother—get him to sit down quietly with you, and say to him—“Now, what is it you are distressed about? What is the point that puzzles you? What cannot you understand? What is it that dejects and dispirits you?” Let them state their own case.  
Next to this, enter, as much as lies in you, *into* their case. This may seem to you, perhaps, an unimportant direction, but, depend upon it, you will be able to give very little help, if any, if you do not follow it. Sympathy has very much to do with our ability to comfort others. If you cannot enter into their distress, you will scarcely be able to lift them out of it. Try to bring yourselves down to “weep with them that weep,” as well as to “rejoice with those that rejoice.” Do not sneer at a difficulty because it seems small to you. Remember that it may be very great to the person who is troubled by it.  
Do not begin to scold and tell the young man that he ought not to feel as he does feel, or to be as distressed as he is. As God puts His everlasting arms underneath*you*, so you must put the outstretched arms of your sympathy underneath your younger and weaker Brethren that you may lift them up. If you see a Brother in the mire, put your arms right down into the mud, that, by the Grace of God, you may lift him bodily out of it! Remember that you were once just where that young Sister of yours is now. Try, if you can, to bring back your own feelings when you were in her condition.  
It may be, you say, that the stripling or the damsel is very foolish. Yes, but you were fools yourselves once, and then you abhorred all manner of meat and your soul seemed to be drawing near to the gates of death. Now you must use Paul’s language—you must “become a fool for their sakes.” You must put yourselves into the condition of these simple-minded ones. If you cannot do this, you need training to teach you how to be a help—as yet you do not know the way. Let them state their case and then endeavor to feel their difficulties as your own.  
Perhaps your next work ought to be to comfort these poor Brethren with the promise. Help, in “Pilgrim’s Progress,” asked Christian why he did not look for the steps and told him that there were good steps all the way through the mire. But Christian said he had missed them. Now, you can point these poor sinking ones to the steps, Brethren, if you are well acquainted with the*promises of God.* Have them on the tip of your tongue, ready at any time. We have heard of a certain scholar who used to carry miniature copies of all the classic authors about with him so that he seemed to have almost a Bodleian in his pocket.  
O that you would carry miniature Bibles about with you! Or, better still, that you had all the Word of God constantly with you in your *heart* so that you might be able to speak a word in season to them that are weary! Whenever you come across a poor distressed soul, what a blessed thing for you to be able to say to him, “Yes, you are a sinner, it is true. But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Perhaps he will tell you that he cannot do anything—and you may answer that he is not told to do anything but to *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ and he shall be saved. He will say, perhaps, that he cannot believe—but you can remind him of the promise, “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”—that is, those who seek Him earnestly by prayer.  
Some texts in the Bible are like sundry stars in the sky—those constellations in the heavens which are so conspicuous that when the mariner once sees them he can very soon tell where he is! He determines the latitude and longitude of his own position by gazing intently on one of these celestial bodies. Some brilliant passages of Scripture appear to be set in the firmament of Revelation as guiding stars to poor bewildered souls. Point to these! Quote them often! Rivet the poor sinner’s eyes upon them—this will be one of the best ways of helping him. Oh, if there is a poor despairing one here to-night, let me quote to him three great and mighty promises of our God—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” “He retains not His anger forever because He delights in mercy.” “Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” These three texts are specimens of promises by which you “helps” can assist sinking sinners.  
After this, dear Friends, try to instruct those who may want your help more fully in the plan of salvation. The Gospel is preached every Sunday in hundreds of pulpits in England, and yet there is nothing so little known or understood in this country as “the truth as it is in Jesus.” Sometimes the preacher cannot, even with all his attempts, make plain the simple Gospel. You, perhaps, may be able to do it because you just happen to suit the comprehension of the person in hand. God is my witness how earnestly I always endeavor to make clear and plain whatever I say, but yet my peculiar modes of thought and expression may not be suitable to the cases of some in such an audience as this.  
Some one person may be able to meet cases which I cannot. If my Brothers and Sisters, the “helps,” will be constantly active, they may often *explain* where *I* only confuse. That which may not have been understood as the preacher put it may be comprehended when it is stated afresh by them. If you will only put the same thing in another shape, the sinner will say, “Ah, I see it now. I could not understand it from him, but I can understand it from you!” Do, if you would help souls, point them to the Savior! Do not bother them about any irrelevant matters, but just talk to them at once about the precious blood—that is the main thing. Tell the sinner that whoever trusts in Christ shall be saved. Do not point to the wicket gate as Evangelist did—that is not the way! Point the sinner to the Cross!  
Poor Christian would never have been in the Slough of Despond if he had had a proper person to direct him. Do not scold Evangelist, but just undo the mischief he did by always pointing the sinner to Calvary. Would you supplement this? I recommend you to tell the troubled conscience your own experience. Many have been able to get out of the Slough of Despond in this way. “What,” says the young man, “did you ever feel as I do?” I must say I have often been really amused when I have been talking with young enquirers to see them open their eyes with astonishment to think that I had ever felt as they did, whereas I should have opened mine with far greater astonishment if I had not! We sit down, sometimes, and tell our patients all their symptoms. And then they think we must have read their hearts, while the fact is that our hearts are just like theirs, and in reading ourselves, we read them.  
We have gone along the same road as they have, and it would be a very hard thing if we could not describe what we have ourselves experienced. Even advanced Christians find great comfort in reading and hearing of the experience of others if it is anything like their own. And to young people it really is a most blessed means of Divine Grace to hear others tell what they have gone through before them. I wish our elder Brethren were more frequently “helps” in this matter, and that when they see others in trouble they would tell them that they have passed through the very same difficulties, instead, as some do, of blaming the young people for not knowing what they cannot know, and upbraiding them because they have not “old heads on young shoulders,” where, I am sure, they would be singularly out of place.  
Once more, I think you will very much help the young enquirer by *praying* with him. Oh, the power of prayer! When you cannot tell the sinner what you want to say you can sometimes tell it to God in the sinner’s hearing. There is a way of saying in prayer, with a person, what you cannot say directly to his face and it is well, sometimes, when praying with another, to put the case very plainly and earnestly—something in this way: “Lord, You know that this poor young woman now present is very much troubled, but it is her own fault. She will not believe in Your love because she says there is no evidence of it. You have shown it in the gift of Your dear Son but she still persists in wanting to see something of her own upon which she may rest—some good frames or feelings. She has been told many times that all her help lies in Christ and not at all in herself, and yet she still keeps on seeking fire in the midst of water and life in the graves of death. Open her eyes, Lord! Turn her face in the right direction and lead her to look to Christ, and not to self.”  
Praying in this way, you see, often puts the case very plainly. There is a real power in prayer—the Lord still hears the cry of His people. As certainly, Beloved, as ever the electric fluid bears the message from one place to another—as certainly as the laws of gravitation move the spheres—so certainly is prayer a mysterious, but a real power! God *does* hear prayer! Some of us are quite as certain of this as we are that we breathe—we have tried it and proved it. It is not *occasionally* that God has heard it, but it has become as regular a thing with us to ask and have as it is for our children to ask for meat at the table and receive it at our hands.  
I should hardly think of attempting to *prove* that God hears my prayer, either to myself or anybody else. It has become so much the habit of my life to know that God hears prayer that I have no more doubt of it than I have of the fact that if I lose my balance I shall fall, and that the power of gravitation affects me in walking, in sitting still, in rising up, and in lying down. Exercise, then, I beseech you, this power of prayer and you shall often find that when nothing else will help a soul out of its difficulty, prayer will do it. There are no limits, dear Friends, if God is with you, in your helping others through the power of prayer.  
These directions—and they are not very many—I want you to keep in your memories as you would the directions of the Royal Humane Society with reference to people who have been in danger of drowning. I dare say some of you have already practiced them so long that you know them well enough.  
**II.**Having spoken thus on how to help, I shall now describe THOSE WHO CAN HELP. It is not everybody who can help in the way I have been describing. I want to enlist a little brigade of spiritual firemen—that is, I want to gather a company of “helps” to assist persons who may be slipping and floundering about in the Slough of Despond.  
The first essential for a true “help” is that he should have a *tender heart*. There are some people who seem to be prepared by Divine Grace on purpose to be soul-winners. I know a Brother whom I did once venture to compare to a hunting dog in this matter, for no sooner did he suspect that there were anxious souls than he was on the alert! And did he but*hear* of a number of converts, away he went! He seems dull and heavy at other times, but then his eyes flash, his heart, his whole soul is stirred up to action and he becomes like a new man! Among converts and enquirers he is all alive—his soul takes fire directly—and amidst the diversities of gifts that proceed from the same Spirit, his gift evidently is to help souls.  
Such a man was Timothy, of whom Paul says, “I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state.” You know in common life there are some people who seem to be born nurses. Others there are, to be sure, who cannot nurse at all! If you were ill you would never have them about you even if they would come for nothing and pay *you* for having them! They mean well, but somehow or other they would stomp across the room every time they moved and would be sure to wake you up! And if there were any medicine to be taken at night it would taste all the worse if they gave it to you. But you have known a real nurse—perhaps your own wife—you never did hear *her* walk across the room when you were ill and you never would, even if you had an instrument to your ear like a microscope to the eye magnifying the minutest thing! She steps so softly that you might almost sooner hear her heartbeat than her footstep.  
Then, too, she understands your tastes exactly and always knows what to bring you. Whoever heard of a nurse more fit for her work than Miss Nightingale? She seems as if she could do nothing else, and as if God had sent her into the world on purpose—not only that she might be a nurse, herself—but that she might also teach others to nurse. Well, it is just the same in*spiritual* things. I have used a homely illustration to show you what I mean.  
There are some people who, if they try to comfort you when you are distressed, go so awkwardly to work about it that they are sure to give you a great deal more trouble than you had before. They really *mean* well, and try to do their best, but they cannot do what you want done. It is not their skill—they are not “helps”—they would take a great crowbar to do the thing which a little picklock would easily effect. And they go about everything in such a strange, clumsy style that you can see they were not made for the work. The true “help” to a distressed soul is a person, who, though his head may not be very big, has a large and warm heart. He is a man, in fact, all heart.  
It was said of John that he was a pillar of fire from head to foot. This is the kind of man the soul wants when it is shivering in the cold winter of despondency. Such men I know—may God train many more and give us all more of the gentleness that was in Christ—for unless in this

way we are naturally fit for the work, we shall never be able to do it. The “help,” moreover, needs not only a large heart, but a very *quick eye*. There is a way of getting the eye sensitively acute with regard to sinners. I know some Brothers and Sisters who, when they are sitting in their pews, can almost tell how the Word is operating upon those who sit near them.  
Some people cannot do this, others can. And besides this they know just what they ought to say to their neighbors in the seat when the sermon is over. They understand *how* to say it and whether they ought to say it in the pew or going down stairs, or outside—or whether they ought to wait till some time in the week. They appear to have an instinct which tells them just *what* to do, *how* to do it, and *when* to do it. Oh, it is a blessed thing when God thus sets watchmen along the borders of the Slough of Despond! Then, if they have quick ears, they listen, and by-andby they hear a splash over yonder in the Slough, and though it may be very dark and misty, they go to the rescue! Nobody else hears the cry but those who lay themselves out to listen for it.  
We also need for this work men who are quick of foot, to run. Why, there are some of you who never speak to your neighbors about their souls! You have a sitting here and you never think of speaking a word to those who sit next to you. I thank God there are some of you who will not let a stranger go out without a good word concerning Christ. I pray you persevere in the good habit and the Lord will bless you, for while there is much to be done in such a congregation as this by the preacher, there is yet *more* to be done by these “helps” in getting to the conscience and doing good to the soul.  
For a thoroughly efficient “help,” give me a man with a loving face. We do not make our own faces, but I do not think a Brother who is habitually grim will do much with anxious enquirers. Cheerfulness commends itself, especially to a troubled heart. We do not want levity—there is a great difference between cheerfulness and levity. I can always tell a man who looks sweetly at me what I feel, far better than I can tell it to one who in a sort of official way talks to me as though it were his only business to enquire into my private concerns and to find out all about what I am and where I have been.  
Go about your work softly, gently, affectionately. Let your cheerful countenance tell that the religion you have is worth having—that it cheers and comforts you—and then the poor soul in the Slough of Despond will hope that it may cheer and comfort him. Earnestly, too, let me recommend you to have a firm foot. If I have to go and pull a Brother out of the Slough, I must know how to stand fast, myself, or otherwise, while I am seeking to pull him out, I may fall in! I must remember that hearing the doubts of others may give rise to the same doubts in my own mind unless I am firmly established as to my own personal interest in Christ Jesus.  
If you would be useful, you must not be always doubting and fearing. Full assurance is not necessary to salvation, but it is very necessary to your success as a helper of others. I remember when I taught in the Sunday school, I was trying to point one of the boys in the class to the Savior. He seemed troubled, and he said to me, “Teacher, are you saved?” I said “Yes.” “But are you sure you are?” said he, and though I did not answer him just then, I felt that I could not very well tell him that there certainly was salvation in Jesus Christ unless I had tried Him for myself and been assured of it. Do try to get a firm foot, dear Brethren, and you will be more useful round the edge of the Slough than as though you were constantly slipping down.  
Then, as you have to do business round this Slough, try to know it well. Try to find out its worst parts and where it is deepest. You will not have to go far to do this—you have probably been in it yourself and therefore know something about it—but you can easily gather from one and another where it is worst. Seek, if you can, to understand the mental philosophy of despondency. I do not mean by studying Dugald Stewart and other writers on mental philosophy, but by real heart-felt experience seek to become practically acquainted with the doubts and fears which agitate coming souls. When you have done this I hope the Lord will give you—for you will need it if you are to become very useful—a good strong hand in order to grip the sinner.  
Jesus Christ did not heal the lepers without touching them and we cannot do good to other men by standing at a distance from them. The preacher sometimes gets hold of his hearers—he can feel he has them and can do almost anything with them—and if you are to be a “help,” you will have to learn the art of getting hold of the *conscience*, the *heart*, the*judgment*, the*whole man*. When you once get hold of a troubled heart, never let it go. Oh, I pray that you may have a hand like a vice that will never let go of the sinner when once you have hold of him! What? Shall the child of God let the sinner fall back into the Slough? No! Not while the rock on which he stands holds fast, and while he can hold the sinner by the hands of prayer and faith. May God teach you to grip men by love, by spiritual sympathy, by passion for souls so that you cannot let them go.  
Once more, if you would help others out of the Slough of Despond, you must have a bending back. You cannot pull them out if you stand bolt upright—you must go right down to the man. There he is! He is almost gone! The mire is well near over his head—now you must turn up your sleeves and go to work. “But the man cannot speak correct English!” Never mind! Do not speak correct English to him for he would not understand it! Speak bad English, which he can understand. It is said that many of the sermons of Augustine are full of shockingly bad Latin, not because Augustine was not a good Latin scholar, but because the dog-Latin of the day suited his turn best to get hold of men.  
There is a certain prudery about ministers which disqualifies them for some work—they cannot bring their mouth to utter a Truth of God in such language as fishermen would understand! Happy is that man whose mouth will say the Truth in such a way that the persons he is speaking to will receive it. “But the dignity of the pulpit!” says one. Well, and what is that? The “dignity” of a war chariot lies in the captives dragged at its wheels, and the “dignity of the pulpit” lies in the number of souls converted to God! Do not tell me of your fine jargon, your Johnsonian sentences, your rolling periods—there is no “dignity” in any of these if they go over the heads of your hearers! You must condescend to men of low estate.  
You will, sometimes, meet with men and women to whom you really must talk to in a style which does not commend itself to your taste, but which your judgment and your heart will command and compel you to use. Learn to bend your back. Do not, for instance, go into a cottage like a fine lady coming to visit poor people. Go and sit down on a chair and sit on the edge if the rushes are gone. Sit close to the good woman, even if she is ever so dirty, and talk to her, not as her superior, but as her equal. If there is a boy playing marbles and you want to talk to him, you must not call him away from his play nor look down upon him from an awful elevation as a schoolmaster would. But begin with a few playful expressions and then drop a more serious sentence into his ear.  
If you would do people good you must go down to them where they are! It is no use preaching fine sermons to drowning men! But go to the edge of the pool, put out your arms and try to pull them out. These, I verily think, are some of the qualifications of a true “help.”  
**III.**Let me now close by ENDEAVORING TO INCITE THOSE OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO HAVE BEEN “HELPS” TO GO ON YET MORE EARNESTLY IN THE WORK, AND TO STIR UP THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TRIED IT, TO BEGIN.  
Perhaps somebody may ask, “Why should I help others?” and my answer shall be, “because souls want help.” Is not that enough? The cry of misery is a sufficient argument for mercy. Souls want it. They die. They perish. They are ready to despair. Help them. There was a story in the papers last week of a man being found dead in a ditch who had been lying there, dead, for six weeks. It was said that somebody had heard a cry of, “Lost, lost,” but it was dark and he did not go out to see who it was! “Shocking! Shocking!” you say, and yet just the very same thing may have been done by you! There are some persons here tonight who may not cry, “Lost,” because they do not feel they are lost, but they are so. And will you let them die in the ditch of their ignorance?  
There are others who *are* crying, “Lost!” and who want a word of comfort. And will you let them perish in despair for the lack of it? My Brothers and Sisters, let the needs of humanity provoke you to activity! Remember, again, how you were helped, yourselves, when you were in a like condition. Some of us will never forget that dear Sunday school teacher, that tender mother, that Christian woman, that kind young man, that excellent elder of the Church who once did so much for us. We shall never forget their tender attention. They seemed to us as visions of bright angels when we were in the thick fog and darkness. Return the debt! Repay the obligation! Discharge what you owe and you cannot do this except by helping others as you were helped yourselves.  
Moreover, Christ deserves it. There is a lamb out there that is lost. It is *His* lamb! Will you not care for it? If there were a strange child at my door asking for a night’s shelter, humanity might prompt me to take in the poor little creature out of the snow and wind. But if it were the child of my brother or of some dear friend, kindred sympathy would constrain me to protect it. That sinner is your Savior’s blood-bought one and is very dear to Him. He is a prodigal, but he is your Father’s son, and consequently your own brother! By the relationship there is, though he discerns it not at present, you are bound! A moral obligation rests upon you to give him your help.  
O Beloved, you would not need any other argument if you knew how blessed the work is in itself! Would you acquire knowledge? Help others! Would you grow in Divine Grace? Help others! Would you shake off your own despondency? Help others! It quickens the pulse. It clears the vision. It steels the soul to courage. It confers a thousand blessings on your own souls to help others on the road to Heaven! Shut up your heart’s floods and they will become noisome, stagnant, putrid, foul. Let them flow and they shall be fresh and sweet, and shall well up continually! Live for *others*, and you will live a hundred lives in one. For blessedness, commend me to industry and divorce me from idleness!  
But, if that is not enough, I think I may say that you are *called* to this work. Your Master has hired you! It is not for you to pick and choose what you will do—He has given you your talents and you *must* do what He bids you. Tonight, then, before you leave this house, try to do some practical service for your Master, for He has called you to it. If you do not, you will probably get the rod of correction. If you do not help others, God will treat you as men do their stewards who make no righteous use of the goods entrusted to them—your talent may be taken from you. Sickness may be waiting for you because you are not active while you are in health. You may be brought to poverty because you do not make a right use of riches. You may be brought into deep despair, yourselves, because you have not helped despairing souls.  
Pharaoh’s dream has often been fulfilled. He dreamed that that there were seven fat bulls who fed in the meadow, and, by-and-by, there came seven lean bulls who ate up the fat ones. Sometimes, when you are full of joy and peace, you are lazy and idle and do not do any good to others. And whenever this is the case, you may depend upon it that very soon the seven lean bulls will come and eat up the seven fat bulls. You may rest quite assured that those lean days in which you do nothing for your Master—those lean prayers, those lean Sundays will eat up your fat Sundays, your fat graces, your fat joys—and then where will you be?  
Besides all this, we are getting nearer Heaven and sinners are getting nearer Hell. The time in which we can win souls by serving Christ is getting very short. The days of some here must be very few and with none of us can they be very long. O let us think of the reward! Happy spirit who shall hear others say, as he enters the celestial regions, “My father, I welcome you!” Childless souls in Glory who were never made a blessing to others on earth must surely miss the very Heaven of Heaven. But they who have brought others to Christ shall have, in addition to their own Heaven, the joy of sympathy with other spirits whom they were the means of blessing.  
I wish I could put my meaning into words that would burn their way into your hearts! I want every member of this Church to be a worker! We do not want any drones. If there are any of you who want to eat and drink and do nothing there are plenty of places elsewhere where you can do it! There are empty pews about in abundance—go and fill them, for we do not want you! Every Christian who is not a bee is a wasp. The most quarrelsome persons are the most useless, and they who are the most happy and peaceable are generally those who are doing most for Christ. We are not saved by working, but by Grace, but *because* we are saved we desire to be the instruments of bringing others to Jesus. I would stir you all up to help in this work—old men, young men, and you, my Sisters, and all of you—according to your gifts and experience.  
I want to make you feel, “I cannot do much, but I can help. I cannot preach, but I can help. I cannot pray in public, but I can help. I cannot give much money away, but I can help. I cannot officiate as an elder or a deacon, but I can help. I cannot shine as a bright particular star, but I can help. I cannot stand alone to serve my Master, but I can help.” There is a text from which an old Puritan once preached a very singular sermon. There were only two words in the text, and they were, “And Bartholomew.” The reason he took the text was that Bartholomew’s name is never mentioned alone, but he is always spoken of as doing some good thing with somebody else. He is never the principal actor, but always second.  
Well, let this be *your* feeling—that if you cannot do all yourself, you will help to do what you can.  
Gather we not, this night, as a meeting of Council to present degrees to such disciples as through many sessions of labor have merited them? I confer upon you who have used your opportunities well the sacred title of “Helps.” Others of you shall have it when you deserve it. Go and win it! God grant that it may be your joy to wear the holy vestment of charity, fringed with humility, and to enter into Heaven praising God that He helped you to be a helper to others.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2694 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GRACE PREFERRED TO GIFTS  
NO. 2694

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 3O, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1881.~~***

***~~“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I show you a more excellent way.” 1 Corinthians 12:31.~~***

THERE are among us many who have recently joined the visible Church of Christ. We have heartily welcomed them and we desire to always entertain, concerning them, a joyous feeling of thankfulness that they have united with us. May they never have to regret it and may the Church of God never have to regret it, either! Dear Friend, now that you have become a member of a Christian Church, you should say to yourself, “What can I do for it? I have not come here merely to confess that I am saved and there to let the matter stop, but I have enlisted in an army that I may be a comrade with other soldiers, and be drilled, and trained, and equipped so that I may know how to march and to go forth to the battle. I have come into the church to be a member of a body. What is my office? Every member has its own special office in the body—it is not there merely for its own comfort, but to be a help to the whole system of which it forms a part. What, then, can I do?” The question which we should each one ask of the Lord is that which Saul asked on the way to Damascus, “Lord*,*what will You have me to do?”

When that question is once answered and you, dear Friend, know your proper place in the body of Christ, and have taken that place, whatever it may be, I think that your next desire will be that you may be in the best *spiritual* health—that you may be as vigorous as you can be—that, little though you ever may have to place at your Lord’s disposal, yet that the best use may be made of that little! Even when we have done all those things that are commanded us, we shall still have to confess that we are unprofitable servants to our great Lord and Master. Yet everyone of us should pray that he may have as much to use for Christ as he can use, and that he may be as well fitted by the Holy Spirit for the Master’s service as it is possible that he can be. I would like to give to God the best that I have and, as that must be my whole spirit, soul and body, ought I not to wish that my spirit, soul and body should be at their very best? I believe that many of you, dear Friends, feel just as I do about this matter. And, therefore, I shall not do wrong if I stir up the pure minds of those who have, through Infinite Mercy, given themselves to Christ, and say to them, “Make the most of yourselves. Make the best of yourselves. ‘Covet earnestly the best gifts.’” But when I have said that, I shall have to add a caveat and, possibly, that caveat will rise into a word of encouragement and exhortation—“Yet I show you a more excellent way.”

There are two things in the text. There is, first, *an excellent way.* And, secondly, there is *“a more excellent way.”*  
**I.**First, there is AN EXCELLENT WAY. That is, for each individual Christian to “covet earnestly the best gifts.”

Paul is not speaking here concerning ordinary gifts as we see them in men of the world who are gifted in various ways. He is referring to *spiritual* gifts—gifts which we dare to ask of God, gifts which we may expect the Spirit of God to bestow upon us, gifts which can be used in the Church of Christ and which we desire to possess in order that we may use them to the Glory of God. We have not all the spiritual gifts which were entrusted to the first Christian Church. I do not suppose it would have been wise that we should have had them!

The gift of miracles, for instance, if it had continued in the Church, would have attracted the notice of men rather to the supernatural power of God than to the moral and spiritual power of Christ Jesus our Savior as manifested through the Divine Spirit. This great spiritual battle between right and wrong, which is being fought out in the arena of the world, God never intended to be fought out by mere might and power through the dazzling display of signs and wonders. He resolved to win the victory by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, according to that word unto Zerubbabel, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.” He intended to work in a spiritual manner upon the hearts of men and, therefore, He dispensed with the aid of miracles which had been necessary in the first stage of the Church’s growth. You have, no doubt, often seen, in the case of a young tree when it is newly planted, that a stout stake is driven in by the side of it and the sapling is tied to that stake. But when the tree grows bigger and stronger, it needs no such support. So has it been with the Church of Christ on earth. At first it was feeble and needed to be upheld and sustained by the aid of miracles, wonders and signs—but it no longer needs that aid. Or, as you have seen a ship in the Thames being towed out to sea and then, when it is fairly out upon the ocean, it is trusted to its own steam, or to the winds of Heaven, so has it been with the Christian Church. She was towed out of the narrow river of Judaism onto the broad sea of later times and now the Blessed Spirit speeds her on her way without the tug of miracles!

How far the gifts of healing may still remain in the Church, I should not like to be forced to say—either to say that they remain, lest any should be led into fanaticism—or to say that they are utterly gone, lest I should be denying some things which, at any rate, look like facts. God does, I doubt not, still hear the believing prayers of His servants concerning the sick. At least, in certain cases, and still should it be, as I judge, an ordinance to be observed, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.” Be that matter how it may, that is not the subject of this evening’s discourse. The spiritual gifts, of which I am to speak, are those about which there can be no question that they *do* remain and are to be had by those who earnestly covet them and diligently seek them.

One of the first of these gifts is *knowledge.*Dear Friends, you who are beginners in the School of Christ, seek after more knowledge of the Word of God, and seek it very earnestly. You were brought to Christ knowing very little except yourself a sinner and Christ a Savior. But now that you are saved, you should try to “comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” “Search the Scriptures.” Be familiar with the Doctrines of Grace. Seek to be established in the faith and, as the Apostle Peter says, “Be always ready to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

I wish that all religious professors sought to be more deeply instructed by the Word read and by the Word heard, and by experience and meditation in the things of God. Covet earnestly this spiritual gift of knowledge and give yourselves diligently to the search after it, that you may become fully established in the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What a blessing you will be to others if you have much knowledge of the things of God! How often you will be able to help those who are in spiritual difficulties! How frequently you will be enabled to flash light upon the darkness of the ignorant and to bring comfort to those who are in distress of soul! Solomon said, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all your getting get understanding,” which I would interpret here as an understanding of the Word of the Lord.

Next to that, dear Friend, covet earnestly *the power to impart knowledge.*It is not everybody who possesses knowledge who can convey it to others. There is a habit, there is a fitness, there is a spirit, there is a mode which men must obtain if they are to be “apt to teach.” I have known some who have attempted to pour the Truth of God into very narrow-necked vessels such as children are, but they have spilled far more than they have poured in! Some are so confused in their proclamation of the Truth that they are misunderstood. Some put the wrong Truth foremost and seem as if they would explain the mysteries of the Revelation before they have taught the simplicities of Matthew and the other Evangelists! They are perpetually putting the cart before the horse. Do not so, Beloved, but ask the Holy Spirit to bestow upon you the gifts of teaching, that you may become to those whom God puts in your way, ready to communicate the Truth of God, breaking the Bread of Life upon which you have yourself first fed.

With that gift of teaching, get, if you can, that other *blessed gift of personal address,* so as to be able to*“button-hole”*people and to speak to them individually about their danger, and the way of escape from it. If you possibly can, do acquire the holy art of soul-winning! It is the finest piece of Christian education that I know of—the power to hunt for men as hunters seek their game—to track them to their hiding places—to stop up the holes in which they seek to get shelter, and to take them in Gospel nets and bring them as willing captives to your Lord and Master! This spiritual hunting is grand work—may you be well skilled in it! It is a very special gift. Covet it earnestly. I am sure that I greatly covet it. There are some here who have it in a very marked degree. I would that all God’s people had this precious spiritual gift!

Then there is what we call “gift in prayer”—the *gift of public prayer—* covet that also, dear Brothers and Sisters. Some excellent members of the church never pray in public and I do not blame them. God forbid that we should do so! Still, I am inclined to think that a very large number of our dumb people would have been able to speak and pray in public if they had only begun earlier in their Christian life. And I also believe that they would be able to do so now if they were not quite so proud. “Oh,” you say, “that is rather a hard word.” Well, Brother, you are afraid that you would break down, are you not? Now, if you would not mind doing so, and would break down two or three times, you would do well enough afterwards. Some of you, possibly, are afraid to pray even in your own family circle because you think that you would not find suitable words. Now, suppose that you were to tell the Lord that you are afraid you cannot use appropriate language, and ask Him to help you? And then suppose you can only utter half a dozen sentences? If your children come and complain that the family prayer was too short, it will be a novel sort of complaint! I have sometimes heard about its being too long—and if ever you hear me complain of anybody breaking down in the Prayer Meeting, I beg you to mark that word, for it will be a remarkable thing for me to say!

On the contrary, I am glad to hear a Brother break down. I wish some of you would do so. Some of our young friends, when they break down, give new life to the meeting. They put real feeling into it, for we are all alive with sympathy towards them. Their breaking down does us far more good than the long, prosy prayers that rather weary us than help us. When some trembling Brother stands up in the meeting—when he pours out the requests of his heart with simplicity and earnestness, and in a way that suits us all—we thank God for him and we feel that we have been as much refreshed by the few minutes of his prayer as we should have been by the best possible discourse. So, dear Friend, covet earnestly the gift of public prayer, for it tends greatly to the edification of your fellow Believers. If you have the gift in any measure, cultivate it and seek to possess more and more of it.

And what a precious gift is that of *preaching the Word!*Thank God that this gift is still preserved in the midst of the Church, for the pulpit, rightly filled, is the tower of the flock. It is the very bastion of the walls of Zion. As long as her watchmen shall stand there and cry aloud in God’s name, the foe shall not be able to enter, or to break her peace. There are many men who have this gift who *do not* cultivate it, and do not use it as much as they ought. I say not that all preachers should become regular pastors of the flocks, but we have among us many men of business who could speak for Christ here and there, in the streets, or in a cottage, or in large assemblies, when they might be called upon, and who ought to endeavor, as much as in them lies, to get the power of speech that they may speak well for Jesus Christ. In this sense, dear Brothers, “covet earnestly the best gifts.”

Another very desirable spiritual gift is that of *wisdom to direct tried souls.* I have known and you have known, some who have been wise in this sense quite early in life. And others we have known—the gift usually comes in this way—who have become wise through experience. They are not easily deceived. They are men of steadfastness. They know what they believe and they know why they believe it. And when a difficult case, which has puzzled many, is brought before them, you are astonished to see what a discerning spirit God has given them, so that they at once indicate the right course to be taken. They can discover the clue of the maze, and those who follow it come to the desired point very speedily. Now, these persons are invaluable in the Church—matronly women, and venerable men—who can speak a word in season to him that is weary, or a word of warning to him that is ready to slip. And who can do it so kindly that no offense is taken at what they say—and who can do it at the right time, and in the right tone and spirit—so that the message is regarded and is not forgotten. I pray God to raise up many in our midst who shall have this very precious gift.

I have sometimes heard people say, in disparagement of certain churches, that “they take in a lot of young people—mere boys and girls!” Yes, and we would like to take in a lot more of that sort. We are always open to receive any quantity of Christ’s lambs, for, in due season they will grow into sheep and so the flock will be perpetuated. I came to London just about the time when good Mr. Joseph Irons, of Camberwell, had finished his ministry. I had read how some people complained that in his early days, he had received a great many young people into his church. And when I came to New Park Street, I had the high privilege of finding these young people turned into old, experienced Believers! And among the first who came to join with us, when the standard was lifted up, was a goodly number of these gracious men and women—nearly all of whom are now with God—they became pillars in the midst of our church and they contributed greatly to its stability and its usefulness. They were some of the boys and girls whom young Joseph irons received into the Church, only, having been boys and girls perhaps 40 or 50 years previously, they were not very boyish and girlish when I knew them!

What a comfort those who have been long in Christ are to the minister! What a help those who have much of the spirit of their Master are to their fellow members! What a terror they are to the ungodly! The devil himself cannot move these people from their steadfastness, for God is with them and, therefore, they are so strong that they overcome even the Evil One. Alas, it is always true that we have not many fathers! But when we do get some fathers and mothers in Israel, they are a great strength and a great treasure to us, and God is to be thanked for them. I want you young people to mind that, as you grow older, you grew wiser, and to see to it that you endeavor to live near to God, and to walk before Him, as to get deeper and deeper into the very heart of the Truth of God, so that, in later years, you may have the blessed spiritual gift of wisdom which will enable you to guide others.

Meanwhile, there is a gift which comes to us without our using any direct means to obtain it—a sort of outgrowth from a godly character, namely, *influence.* I will not attempt to define what it is, but you know well enough when you feel it. A man stands up to pray in the Prayer Meeting and a stranger who may be present thinks, “What a delightful prayer that is, yet nobody seems to be affected by it!” Then another person stands up to pray. He is not very fluent and the stranger does not think that his prayer is at all remarkable, but he notices that the people appear to feel the force of it. Why is that? The difference is in the man who presents the prayer—there is an influence exerted by him which the other man does not possess. I believe that there are some men who, if they were very ill and could only be borne from their beds to say half a dozen sentences, would work more good in the hearts of those who heard them than some others would do by half a score of *sermons!*

To quote a living instance—I may venture to do so, for I do not suppose that the Brother whose name I am about to mention will ever know that I did it. When I listened to dear Mr. George Mueller, I thought, “Well now, that is very simple talk. A child from the Sunday school might almost say all that he has said.” Yet I was edified to the highest degree because there was George Mueller’s influence at the back of all that he said. That was the secret of its power. I knew something of his holy life, his power with God in prayer, his faith and the great work which it had enabled him to accomplish. So the simplest sentence seemed to drop into my soul with weight, power and unction, for there was the influence of the good man behind it all! And glad enough was I to sit at his feet and listen to his gracious talk. I do not remember anything he said that was at all striking, or fresh, or new, or original—it was because the man had been with God and had his Lord’s Presence continually with him, that his words came with unction and power!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this is a spiritual gift which we ought earnestly to covet. Oh, that we might be spiritually like Asher! You know that part of Asher’s blessing was, “Let him dip his foot in oil!” What was the consequence of the fulfillment of that blessing? Why, that, wherever he went, he left an oily mark behind him. “What sort of a minister have you now?” I once asked a person who came from a place where the new minister had been for, perhaps, a year or two, and I had known the previous one—“What sort of a minister have you now?” The answer I received was, “Well, Sir, we have a man of this kind. If he comes into your house for only ten minutes, you know that he has been there.” That is the sort of man I should like to be, and the sort of woman I wish you to be, dear Sister—so that when you go even for a little time into the company of others, they may know that you have been there! Yes, and when you do not go anywhere, when you are lying upstairs sick in bed, may you have such an influence about you that your power shall be felt far away! And those who have been serving God shall serve Him better and more earnestly, and more joyfully because they remember you—and your influence—by God’s blessing upon it, shall be quickening and strengthening to them. This was the kind of influence which Paul wielded even from his prison at Rome, for many of the Brothers and Sisters, waxing confident by his bonds, were moved to serve God all the better because their fellow soldier was compelled to be absent from the fight.

All these that I have mentioned are *spiritual* gifts, therefore, seek them. Covet them earnestly for they will be a blessing to you, they will be a blessing to others and they will bring glory to God! That is an excellent way for you to walk in.

**II.**But, in the second place, I have to speak to you, as the Apostle writes to these Corinthians, concerning “A MORE EXCELLENT WAY.” Silver is good, but gold is better. A certain way may be excellent, but another way may be still more excellent. Gifts are good, but Grace is better. Get gifts, spiritual gifts, but also get Grace and, above all, get the best Grace, the noblest Grace, the greatest Grace—that is, LOVE, for love to God and love to your fellow men, and love to the Church of God—this is “a more excellent way.”

Get much Grace, then, first, *because you need it.*I do not know that you need gifts. Perhaps, dear Friends, you are not lacking in gifts. You require some for the service of your Lord, but perhaps you have enough, and it may be that if you had more, they would be an encumbrance to you. But I am sure that you need Grace. A man may be really better off with one talent than with five, but he cannot be better off with one measure of Grace than with five. The more Grace we have, the better, for thus we shall be “rich toward God,” and this kind of riches brings no sorrow with it. You need a great deal more Grace than you think you do. Something is going to happen in which you will need great Grace. Perhaps there is to be more trial for you. Possibly there is to be more *prosperity—*and then you will certainly need more Grace! But, whatever is to come, get more Grace because you will need it.

I must warn you young converts and also all other Believers, that one reason why you will need Grace is because the devil will be certain, sooner or later, to assail you with fierce temptations. If ever there is a railway made to a place where there are no temptations, I suspect that they will have to run a great many trains there—but will there ever be discovered such a country? Never, beneath the cope of Heaven! As long as we are here, we will be tried, and I am always slow to advise people to try to change their trials for any others. I remember the world’s poet speaks of a something that—

***“Makes us rather bear these ills we have,***

***Than fly to others that we know not of.”***  
The burden which I have to carry, I have carried so long that it begins to fit my shoulders—and I would not like to change it for yours, even though yours may be lighter than mine, for there is an awkward corner about yours that perhaps fits the shape of your back, but it would not so well fit mine! It would be more burdensome to me than it is to you, and my lead would be more weighty to you than it is to me. We had better let the temptations that we now have be bravely conquered than suppose that by changing our adversaries, we could secure a victory. If you were to get quite alone, as our Savior was in the wilderness, with nothing but the wild beasts round about you, you could not shut out the devil even then! Forty days He had for meditation, prayer and fasting, yet there was the devil waiting to assail Him again and again! So I repeat that not even solitude, if the lonely hours were spent in prayer, fasting and watching, could secure us immunity from temptation—it must and will attack us.

We ought to be very grateful when, for a time, we are free from it, but we still ought to be on our watchtower, for, at any moment, that adversary, whose noiseless flight no ear has ever heard, that relentless foe— who is not to be perceived by the eye, for he is an invisible spirit who may descend from the air of which he is the prince, and alight at our side—may begin to tempt us though we are fresh from our knees, and covered with the dew of communion with God! The mercy is that active and vigilant as Satan is, the Grace of God is more than a match for him! So again I urge you to get more Grace because you need it in resisting temptation.

Next, get more Grace, *because*you*can have it.*There is no limit! Perhaps, even though you covet earnestly the best gifts, there may be some gifts which you will never receive. A Brother may wish to preach and yet he may never be able to do so. Another may desire to pray in public and yet, perhaps, he may never be bold enough to open his mouth in the assembly. One may long for wisdom that he may guide others, yet it may never be granted to him. But all can have Grace! That is a fountain which is always flowing, a river from which all who will, may drink. There are, in certain places, little ponds by the roadside, and as you pass by you may see notices giving warning that no dogs may be washed there. Go down to the River Thames and see whether you can find any notice of that kind there! There stands a bullock, knee-deep in the stream, and drinks all he wants—and all kinds of creatures come and wash or swim in the water. There is such a plenty of it that nobody is refused. So is it with the Grace of God—it is a vast river which cannot be exhausted and, therefore, the Divine invitation is, “Let him who thirsts come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” So get more Grace, dear Friend, because you can have it!

Get more Grace, *also, because you will then be sure to be useful.*I am not sure that you would be more useful if you had more talent. There are some men who have too many talents to ever be of much use to the church or the world. You may think that this is a strange thing for me to say, but I really mean it. They seem to have such big sails that their boat cannot sail—it capsizes. They need to have bigger boats and more of the ballast or burden of trouble to carry, and then, perhaps, they might bear their huge sails in safety. It is not every gift that makes a man useful, but I am sure that all Grace makes us useful. Gift is often barren, but Grace is always fruitful. You can bury a gift in a napkin, but who can put Grace in a cloth and hide it? Grace is one of the things that cannot be buried—it is a living thing, a burning thing, and it will make you useful if you have it—therefore, seek to have more and more of it.

Get more Grace, dear Brother, *because so you will assuredly glorify God.*I am not sure that you would always glorify God if you had more gifts. How little glory God gets often out of great gifts! I remember how, when I began to preach the Gospel, I used to wish that Milton had been a preacher. I often thought what a grand thing it would have been if Shakespeare had been a minister. With his wonderful versatility of talent and poetry of expression, I thought he would have been a very powerful preacher. But, afterwards, I almost thanked God that we had not any Miltons or Shakespeares preaching. It is far better to have men of quite another stamp, so that the hearers may not be carried away either with poetical expressions or with an excess of worldly knowledge and ability. Those fishermen, over by the Sea of Galilee, who did not know much except about fish, were more fit to preach the Gospel than were those fine gentlemen at Athens who thought they knew everything that was to be known in all the world! They were too full of worldly wisdom to learn the wisdom that comes down from above. But those fishermen were just simple souls who could believe what they were told, and who could repeat to others what Christ had said to them—and that is the kind of instrument that Christ generally uses in the effecting of His gracious purposes of mercy.

So, Beloved, covet earnestly much Grace, for Grace always glorifies God. There is not a grain of Grace in the world which does not reflect the light of His face from whom it came. Gifts may be prostituted to the vilest purposes, but Grace—the Grace of God—always brings glory to His holy name. Therefore, while you “covet earnestly the best gifts,” “yet I show you a more excellent way.” That is, seek to obtain continually more Grace.

Now, in closing my discourse, let me tell you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, why this is “a more excellent way.” First, you may have gifts and yet you may still be only natural men and women. The highest gifts of preaching that men have ever had, or of poetry by which they could write choice hymns, did not prove that they had passed from death unto life. They might still be in the gall of bitterness and be enemies to God as Judas was. Though they had very remarkable and special gifts as Judas had, for, no doubt, he worked miracles and, in the name of Christ, did many wonderful works. Gifts are but natural things and they are given to the children of the flesh. But Grace is supernatural and whenever it is bestowed upon us, it proves that we are the children of God after the Spirit.

Remember, also, that you may have gifts and yet you may still be under the power of sin. Alas, how many who have the brightest natural gifts are still using them in the cause of Satan! And even some who have spiritual gifts of the kind I have described, yet since they are not gracious as well as gifted, are doing mischief rather than good to the cause of Christ. To my great grief I have known some who had a considerable gift in prayer, and who seemed to have a good knowledge of the Word, yet who, all the while, were living in some secret sin and, by-and-by, it was found out and they went out from us because they were never really of us. You may have the most brilliant gifts and appear to be notable Christian workers, yet, for all that, you may still be under the dominion of sin. And so it comes to pass that a man may have all gifts, all knowledge and all faith so that he could remove mountains, and he may even give his body to be burned, yet, if he has not love—if he has not *Grace*, he is still under the wrath of God! It must be an awful thing to preach like an Apostle and yet to be cast into Hell like a devil—to be able to instruct others and yet never to enter into the Kingdom of God—to be able to pray in public and yet never have any part or lot in the things of Christ—no union to Him, no salvation by Him.

O Brothers and Sisters, do you understand and realize this? You may have great gifts and yet go to Hell! Therefore, while they are worth the having under proper conditions, they are not one tenth so much worth the having as Grace is, for he who has Grace is not under the curse or condemnation of the Law, or under the power of sin! Grace saves men, but all the gifts in the world, heaped together, cannot do that!

Note, next, that gifts bring corresponding responsibility with them, so they may even make it harder for a man to be saved—but Grace saves the man. If I have 10 talents, then I have a tenfold necessity upon me to be diligent in putting them out to interest. When men boast of their talents, what fools they are! It is as though the packhorse should glory in the load he has to carry! Do you think a cab-horse is proud because he has to drag along a four-wheeler and, perhaps, five people? Does he think himself more greatly privileged than an animal that only has to carry his rider? No, yet that is the case of the gifted person, for, the more gifts, the more load, the more weight, the more burden! So a gift is not a thing to be eager after—it is Grace that we need, for, the more Grace, the more strength of wing to mount with, the more fleetness of foot to run in the ways of God. A gift is but an addition to our load, but Grace is strength with which to carry it. Covet the load if you may honor your Master by carrying it for Him, but, far more, covet the Grace which shall enable you to bear it to His Glory.

Further, gifts bring many men into danger, but Grace never does. Gifted men are often in peril of being proud, but who, who is what he should be, is ever proud of his Grace? If it is true Grace, it will humble him. Gifted men, especially those who have great intellectual gifts, are very apt to be sophisticated and unwilling to receive the simple Gospel. Some people who have very big heads, and whose hearts are not as large as they might be, are bothered half their lives with doubts that never perplex those who, having more Grace, accept whatever they find in the Word of God. It is a great gift, no doubt, to have a clear brain, to have an insight into deep mysteries, and to be able to solve difficult problems. Yet I do not know that I am particularly covetous of it. I would prefer to cry, with Thomas, “My Lord and my God,” though I would rather come to Christ in a different spirit from that of Thomas, for “blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Childlike faith is a diamond, but the faith that comes by reason is often, if it is a diamond at all, a very small one with a great flaw in it and, therefore, not so good for reflecting the brightness of the pure light of the Truth of God!

But Grace does not bring us into any dangers. It neither puffs up nor yet unsettles. Therefore, while you covet the best gifts, covet Grace yet more. Alas, alas, how many have had gifts and have been made topheavy by them! Their heads have been swimming through the height to which they have attained, while Grace has kept the humble Believer pursuing the even tenor of his way, doing good all his days, enjoying peace with God and receiving an abundant entrance into the joy of his Master whom he faithfully served according to his ability. Remember, also, dear Friends, that some may receive gifts, yet those gifts will not be tokens of God’s love to them at all, for He may only have given them with a view to other people. Possibly you hand a porter at your door a, parcel of valuables to carry, but that is no proof of your love to him—it is a very handsome present that you are sending to a friend upon his birthday. The love token is to the person who gets it, not to the porter who carries it! I may come here tonight and be nothing but God’s porter to bring precious treasures to your souls—and in the case of many a minister, or many a Sunday school teacher—it may be no token of love that God gives them His messages to carry. They are only the go-betweens—the porters—the love token is to those who receive it.

How I dread the thought that I should ever be among you simply like a butcher, as I have seen him stand at his great block of wood, chopping up meat for all who come! Yet, all the while, he does not eat any of it himself. Perhaps he is a serving man, whose wages are scanty, so that he gets but little meat for himself. It is a poor portion if one has to be a butcher and yet is not, himself, able to feed. He is like a cook who scarcely tastes the dainties that she makes and, perhaps, has no care to do so, but only makes them and serves them up for other people. It is a dreadful thing, in spiritual matters, to be nothing but God’s gobetween—a ship that carries a rich cargo, but the captain of the vessel does not own a sliver of all that is on board. It all belongs to somebody else—he is but the carrier. Oh, remember, you who have great gifts, but no Grace, are only like big ships with high sails, you are only God’s carriers and have no part nor lot in the matter! But he who gets Grace is an heir of God. He has the power, the privilege, the right to become a son of God!

Remember, also, dear Friends, that though you covet gifts, and receive them, you will lose them one day. All the wisdom that a man has acquired he may lose in an instant by a crack from a stone on his skull. It is a great thing to have a good education, clear thought and abilities for usefulness. Yet a slight accident in a railway carriage may make a man as helpless as an imbecile, but, blessed be God, all the railway accidents in the world cannot take Grace from us! No, neither on earth, nor in Heaven, nor in Hell is there anyone who can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! If you have Grace, you will keep it, and it will keep you. But neither can you keep your gifts, nor can your gifts keep you—therefore Grace is infinitely to be preferred to the most excellent of gifts!

Remember, yet again, that gifts cannot comfort a man when he is in deep depression of spirit, when he is sick and especially when he is near to death. Many a man, lying on a sickbed, has found comfort in the Grace which God has given him, but there never was one who found comfort in his gifts. What a mighty preacher Paul was! Yet he wrote thus concerning one thought that crossed his mind—“Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Ah, we may live for 50 years or more and gather a great church, and do much good, but there is not a speck of the small dust of comfort in it all—for we remember that God may have simply used us as builders use their scaffolds as long as they need them. And when the house is built, they take the scaffold down and put the material away. God may use us in the same way if we have gifts without Grace! But if we have Grace, it will not be so with us. Grace unites us to Christ. It makes us living stones in the building of which He is the Foundation. When we come to be sick, Grace brings us the promises. Grace looks to Christ, Grace gives us hope, Grace gives us the foretaste and pledge of Glory, and especially is it so with that sweet and blessed Grace of love. The man who is full of Grace, though he has not a solitary talent, and is all unknown, yet is a happy and blessed man! In poverty and in obscurity, in sickness and in death, he is blessed because his soul is full of the majestic Grace of Divine Love.

Thus have I set before you, dear Friends, the “more excellent way.” God help you to run in it and may you have much Grace, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1617 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LOVE’S LABORS  
NO. 1617

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Charity bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.”  
1 Corinthians 13:7.~~***

THE grace of charity, or love, of which so much is most admirably spoken in this chapter, is absolutely essential to true godliness. So essential is it that if we have everything beside, but have not charity, it profits us nothing. The absence of charity is absolutely fatal to vital godliness—so says the Holy Spirit in this chapter. When, then, you read the Apostle’s high praises of charity, do not say, “This is a fancy virtue to which certain special saints have attained and we are bound to admire them for it, but we need not imitate them.” Far from it! This charity is the *common*, everyday livery of the people of God! It is not the prerogative of a few, but it must be the possession of all. Do not, therefore, however lofty the model may be, look up to it as though you could not reach it—you *must* reach it!

It is put before you not only as a thing greatly desirable, but as absolutely necessary, for if you excelled in every spiritual gift, yet if you had not this, all the rest would profit you nothing whatever. One would think that such excellent gifts might benefit us a little, but no, the Apostle sums them all up and says of the whole, “it profits me nothing.” I pray that this may be understood by us at the very beginning, lest we should manage to slip away from the Truth of God taught us by the Holy Spirit in this place and should excuse ourselves from being loving by the notion that we are so inconsiderable that such high virtue cannot be required of us, or so feeble that we cannot be expected to attain it. You must attain it or you cannot enter into eternal life, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of His, and the Spirit of Christ is sure to beget the charity of our text which, “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

What does this teach us at the outset, but that a salvation which leads to this must be of God—and must be worked in us by His power? Such a comely Grace of God can never grow out of our fallen nature! Shall such a clean thing as this be brought out of an unclean thing? This glorious salvation unto pure love must be grasped by faith and worked in us by the operation of the Spirit of God. If we consider salvation to be a little thing, we bring it, as it were, within the sphere of human possibility. But if we set it forth in its true proportions as involving the possession of a pure, loving, elevated state of heart, then we perceive that it is a Divine wonder! When we estimate the renewed nature aright we cry, “This is the finger of God,” and right gladly do we then subscribe to Jonah’s creed, “Salvation is of the Lord.” If charity is in any man and abounds, God must have the glory, for assuredly it was never attained by mere natural effort, but must have been bestowed by that same hand which made the heavens.

So then, Brothers and Sisters, I shall hope, when I conclude, to leave upon your minds the impression of your need of the Grace of God for the attainment of love. I would not discourage you, but I would have you feel how great a labor lies before you and how impossible it will be unless you are girt with a strength beyond your own. This shall be your solace—that if it cannot be the outcome of your own effort, yet, “the fruit of the Spirit is love,” and the Spirit is ready and willing to bear fruit in us! Notice then, first, the multitude of love’s difficulties—it has to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things.

Secondly, observe the triumph of love’s labor—it does all these four things—it “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” And then, thirdly, this will bring us back to the point we have started from—the sources of Love’s energy and how it is she is able, thus, to win her four-fold victory over countless difficulties.

**I.**Consider well THE MULTITUDE OF LOVE’S DIFFICULTIES. When the Grace of God comes into a man, he is born at once to love. He that loves is born of God and he that is born of God loves. He loves Him that begat, even God, and he loves him that is begotten of Him, even all the saved ones. He commences to obey the great command to love his neighbor as himself. His motto is no longer that of an earthly kingdom, Dieu et Mon droit—God and my right. He bears another word on his banner, Dieu et mon frere—God and my brother. No sooner is Love born than she finds herself at war. Everything is against her, for the world is full of envy, hate, and ill-will. I would warn the most loving-hearted that they have entered upon a war for peace, a strife for love—they are born to hate hatred and to contend against contention.

As the lily among thorns, so is love among the sons of men. As the hind among the dogs, so is charity among the selfish multitude. Evidently the difficulties of love are many, for the Apostle speaks of them as, “all things,” and as if this were not enough, he repeats the words and sets forth the opposing armies as four times, “all things.” I do not know whether you can calculate this mighty host. “All things” would seem to comprehend as much as can be, but here in the text you have this amount multiplied by four! For, my Brothers and Sisters, you will have to contend with all that is within yourself. Nothing in your original nature will help you. God has put within you a new life, but the old life seeks to smother it. You will find it a severe struggle to master yourself and, if you succeed, you will be a conqueror, indeed!

Besides that you will have to contend with “all things” in the persons whom you are called upon to love. You must have fervent charity towards the saints, but you will find very much about the best of them which will try your patience. Like yourself, they are imperfect and they will not always turn their best side towards you, but sometimes sadly exhibit their infirmities. Be prepared, therefore, to contend with “all things” in them. As for the *ungodly* whom you are to love to Christ, you will find everything in them that will oppose the drawings of your love, for they, like yourself, by nature are born in sin and they are rooted in their iniquities.

When you have mastered that kind of “all things” you will have to contend with “all things” in the world, for the world lies in the Wicked One, and all its forces run towards self, contention and hate. Every man’s hand is against his fellow and few there are who honor the gentle laws of love. They know not that Divine charity which “seeks not her own.” The seed of the serpent is at enmity with all that is kind, tender and self-sacrificing, for these are the marks of the woman’s seed. Marvel not, my Brothers and Sisters, if the world hates you! And then remember that “all things” in Hell are against you. What a seething mass of rebellions life—all venomous with hate—is seen in the regions of darkness!

The Prince of the power of the air leads the van and the host of fallen spirits eagerly follow him, like bloodhounds behind their leader. All these evil spirits will endeavor to create dissension, enmity, malice and oppression among men—and the soldier of love must wrestle against all these. See, O my Brothers and Sisters, what a battle is yours! Speak of crusades against the Paynim—what a crusade is this against hate and evil! Yet we shrink not from the fray. Happily, though love has many difficulties, it overcomes them all and overcomes them four times!

There is such vitality in evil that it leaps up from the field whereon it seemed to be slain and rages with all its former fury. First, we overcome evil by patience, which “bears all things.” Let the injury be inflicted—we will forgive it and not be provoked—even 70 times seven will we bear in silence. If this suffice not, by God’s Grace we will overcome by faith—we trust in Jesus Christ, we rely upon our principles, we look for Divine succor—and so we “believe all things.” We overcome a third time by hope—we rest in expectation that gentleness will win and that long-suffering will wear out malice—for we look for the ultimate victory of everything that is true and gracious and so we “hope all things.”

We finish the battle by perseverance—we abide faithful to our resolve to love. We will not be irritated into unkindness. We will not be perverted from generous, all-forgiving affection and so we win the battle by steadfast non-resistance. We have set our helm towards the port of love and towards it we will steer, come what may. Baffled often, love “endures all things.” Yes, Brethren, and love conquers on all four sides. Love does, as it were, make a hollow square and she sets the face of her warriors towards all quarters of the compass. Does God seem, Himself, to smite Love with afflictions? She “bears all things!” Do her fellow Christians misrepresent her and treat her ill? She believes everything that is good about them and nothing that is injurious!

Do the wicked rise against her? When she tries to convert them, do they return evil for good? She turns her hopefulness to the front in that direction and hopes that yet the Spirit of God will bring them to a better mind! And does it happen that all her spiritual foes attack her with temptations and desperate insinuations? She lifts up the banner of patience against them and, by the power of God’s Grace, she puts the infernal enemy to the rout, for she “endures all things!” What a brave mode of battle is this! Is not Love a man-of-war? Is she not invincible? Hear love’s heroic cry as she shouts her defiance—

***“Come one, come all, this rock shall fly,***

***From its firm base as soon as I.”***  
If once taught in the school of Christ to turn love to every point of the compass and so to meet every assault against our heart, we have learned the secret of victory!

It seems to me that I might read my text as if it said that Love conquers in all stages of her life. She begins in conversion and, straightway those that mark her birth are angry and the powers of evil are at once awakened to seek her destruction. Then she “bears all things.” Let them mock, Love never renders railing for railing—Isaac is not to be provoked by Ishmael’s jeers. She gathers strength and begins to tell others what she knows of her Lord and His salvation. She “believes all things” and so she confesses her faith—and her fellow Christians are confirmed by her witness. It is her time of energy and so she tries to woo and win others by teaching them the things which she believes.

She advances a little farther and, though often disappointed by the unbelief of men and the coldness of her fellow Christians, she nevertheless “hopes all things” and pushes on in the expectation of winning more of them. Her dove’s eyes see in the dark and she advances to victory through ever-growing conflict. Yes, and when infirmities thicken upon her and old age comes—and when she can do little else but sit still and bear and believe and hope—she still perseveres and accepts even the stroke of death, itself, without complaining, for love “endures all things.” I do not think I need say more upon the difficulties of love. I am sure that every experienced person knows that these difficulties are supreme and that we require superlative Grace if we are to master them.

Love does not ask to have an easy life of it—self-love makes that her aim. Love denies herself, sacrifices herself that she may win victories for God and bring blessings on her fellow men. Hers is no easy pathway, but hers shall be no tinsel crown!

**II.**Secondly, let us survey THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE’S LABOR. Her labors are four-fold. First, in bearing all things. The word here rendered, “bear,” might as correctly have been translated, “cover.” You that have the Revised Version will find in the margin, “Love *covers* all things.” “Covers” is the meaning of the word in ordinary Greek, but Paul generally uses the word in the sense of, “bear.” Our translators, therefore, had to choose between the usual meaning and the Pauline usage, and they selected Paul’s meaning and put it down in the first place as, “bears,” giving us in the margin the other sense of “covers.” The two ideas may be blended if we understand it to mean that Love bears all things in silence, concealing injuries as much as possible even from herself.

Let us just think of this word, “covers,” in reference to the Brethren. True love refuses to see faults unless it is that she may kindly help in their removal. Love has no wish to see faults. Noah’s younger son discovered and declared the shame of his father, but his other sons took a garment and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. After this fashion does Love deal with the sins of her brethren. She painfully fears that there may be something wrong but she is loath to be convinced of it. She ignores it as long as she can and wishes that she could deny it altogether. Love covers, that is, it never proclaims the errors of good men.

There are busybodies abroad who never spy out a fault in a brother but they must necessarily hurry off to their next neighbor with the savory news—and then they run up and down the street as though they had been elected common criers. It is by no means honorable to men or women to set up to be common informers. Yet I know some who are not half so eager to publish the Gospel as to publish slander. Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lips. If anyone is to smite a child of God, let it not be a Brother. Even if a professor is a hypocrite, Love prefers that he should fall by any hand rather than her own.

Love covers all injuries by being silent about them and acting as if they had never been. She sits alone and keeps silence. To speak and publish her wrong is too painful for her, for she fears to offend against the Lord’s people. She would rather suffer than murmur and so, like a sheep before her shearers, she is dumb under injury. I would, Brothers and Sisters, that we could all imitate the oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil and what does it do, but cover it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl! Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which otherwise had harmed us! I would desire to keep a bath of silver ready for my fellow Christians in which I could electroplate all their mistakes into occasions for love! As the dripping well covers, with its own deposit, all that is placed within its drip, so would love cover all within its range with love, thus turning even curses into blessings! Oh that we had such love that it would cover and conceal all so far as it is right and just that it should be covered and concealed!

As to *bearing* all, taking the words as they stand in our version, I wish to apply the text mainly to our trials in seeking the conversion of the unconverted. Those who love the souls of men must be prepared to cover much when they deal with them—and to bear much from them in silence. When I begin to seek the conversion of anyone, I must try, as much as I can, to ignore any repulsiveness that there may be in his character. I know that he is a sinner, otherwise I would not seek his salvation. But if he happens to be one who has fallen very low in the esteem of others, I must not treat him as such, but cover his worst points. You cannot possibly bring the Samaritan woman who has had five husbands into a right state of mind by “wondering that He spoke with the woman.” Thus the *disciples* acted, but not their Master, for He sat on the well and talked with her—and made Himself her willing companion that He might be her gracious Savior!

He ignored her sin so far as to talk with her for her good. You will not long have begun this holy work before you will discover in the heart you seek to win much ignorance of the Gospel. Bear with it and bring forward the text which sheds light on that darkness and teach the Truth of God which will remove that error. Before long you will have to contend with hardness of heart, for when a man knows the Truth of God, he is not always willing to receive it. Bear it and be not vexed. Did you not expect the heart to be hard? Don’t you know what business you are upon? You are sent to turn men from darkness to the Light of God and from the power of Satan unto God! Be not astonished if these things should not prove to be child’s play!

In addition to this, perhaps you will have ridicule poured upon you. Your attempts to convert will be converted into jests. Bear it! Bear all things! Remember how the multitude thrust out their tongues at your Lord and Master when He was dying—be not so proud as to think yourself too good to be laughed at! Still speak concerning Christ and whatever happens, bear all things. I will not attempt to make a catalog of your provocations—you shall make one, yourself, after you have tried to convert men to Christ—but all that you can possibly meet with is included in my text, for it says, “bears *all*things.”

If you should meet with some extraordinary sinner who opens his mouth with cruel speeches such as you have never heard before and if, by attempting to do him good you only excite him to vulgarity and blasphemy, do not be astonished! Have at him again, for charity “bears all things,” whatever they may be. Push on and say, “Yes, all this proves to me how much you need saving. You are my man! If I get you to Christ there will be all the greater glory to God.” O blessed charity, which can thus cover all things and bear all things for Christ’s sake! Do you need an example of it? Would you see the very mirror and perfection of the charity that bears all things? Behold your Divine Lord! Oh, what He has covered!

It is a tempting topic, but I will not dwell on it. How His glorious righteousness, His wondrous splendor of love has covered all our faults and all their consequences, treating us as if He saw no sin in Jacob, neither perversity in Israel. Think what He bore when He came unto His own and His own received Him not! What a covering was that when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”! What a pitying sight of the fearful misery of man our Lord Jesus had when holy tears bedewed those sacred eyes! What a generous blindness to their infamous cruelty He manifested when He prayed for His bloodthirsty enemies! O Beloved, you will never be tempted, taunted and tried as He was! Yet, in your own shorter measure may you possess that love which can silently bear all things for the elect’s sake and for Christ’s sake—that the multitude of the redeemed may be accomplished—and that Christ, through you, may see of the travail of His soul.

Now let us look at the second of Love’s great labors. You have heard of the labors of Hercules, but the fabulous hero is far outdone by the veritable achievements of Love! Love works miracles which only Grace can enable her to perform. Here is the second of them—Love “believes all things.” In reference, first, to our fellow Christians, Love always believes the best of them. I wish we had more of this faith abroad in all the Churches, for a horrid blight falls upon some communities through suspicion and mistrust. Though everything may be pure and right, yet certain weak minds are suddenly fevered with anxiety through the notion that all is wrong and rotten! This unholy mistrust is in the air, a blight upon all peace—it is a sort of smelly mildew of the soul by which all sweet perfume of confidence is killed. The best man is suspected of being a designing knave, though he is honest as the day. And the smallest fault or error is frightfully exaggerated till we seem to dwell among criminals and to be all villains!

If I did not believe in my Brothers and Sisters, I would not profess to be one of them. I believe that with all their faults they are the best people in the world and that, though the Church of God is not perfect, yet she is the bride of One who is! I have the utmost respect for her, for her Lord’s sake. The Roman matron said, “Where my husband is Caias, I am Caia.” Where Christ is King, she who stands at His right hand is “the queen in gold of Ophir.” God forbid that I should rail at her of whom her Lord says, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you.” True love believes good of others as long as it can and when it is forced to fear that wrong *has* been done, Love will not readily yield to evidence, but, she gives the accused brother the benefit of many a doubt!

When the thing is too clear, Love says, “Yes, but the friend must have been under very strong temptation. And if I had been there, I dare say I would have done worse.” Or else Love hopes that the erring one may have offended from a good, though mistaken, motive—she believes that the good man must have been mistaken, or he would not have acted so. Love, as far as she can, believes in her fellows. I know some persons who habitually believe everything that is bad, but they are not the children of love. Only tell them that their minister or their brother has killed his wife and they would believe it immediately and send out for a policeman! But if you tell them anything *good* of their neighbor, they are in no such hurry to believe you.

Did you ever hear of gossips tattling *approval* of their neighbors? I wish the chatterers would take a turn at exaggerating other people’s *virtues* and go from house to house trumping up pretty stories of their acquaintances! I do not recommend lying, even in kindness, but that side of it would be such a novelty that I could almost bear with its evils for a change. Love, though it will not speak an untruth in praise of another, yet has a quick eye to see the best qualities of others and it is habitually a little blind to their failings. Her blind eye is to the fault and her bright is for the excellence. I once read of an old legend—I do not suppose it to be literally true—but its spirit is correct. It is said that once upon a time, in the streets of Jerusalem, there lay a dead dog and everyone kicked at it and reviled it. One spoke of its currish breed, another of its lean and ugly form, and so forth. But One passed by who paused a moment over the dead dog and said, “What white teeth it has.” Men said, as He went on His way, “That is Jesus of Nazareth.”

Surely it is always our Lord’s way to see good points wherever He can. Brethren, think as well as you can even of a dead dog! If you should ever be led into disappointments and sorrows by thinking too well of your fellow men, you need not greatly blame yourself. I met, in Anthony Farrindon’s Sermons, a line which struck me. He says the old proverb has it, “Humanum est errare,” *to err is human*, but, says he, when we err by thinking too kindly of others we may say, “Christanum est errare,” *it is Christian to err* in such a fashion! I would not have you credulous, but I would have you trustful—for suspicion is a cruel evil. Few fall into the blessed error of valuing their fellow Christians at too high a rate.

In reference to the unconverted, this is a very important matter. Love “believes all things” in their case. She does not believe that the unconverted are converted, for, if so, she would not seek their conversion. She believes that they are lost and ruined by the Fall, but she believes that God can save them! Love believes that the precious blood of Christ can redeem the bond slaves of sin and Satan, and break their iron chains. She believes that the power of the Holy Spirit can change a heart of granite into a heart of flesh! Love, therefore, believing this, believes that God can save this sinner by her and she, therefore, begins to speak to him, expecting that the word she speaks will be God’s instrument of salvation! When she finds herself sitting next to a sinner, she believes that there was a necessity for her to be there, even as Christ must go through Samaria. She says to herself, “Now will I tell this poor soul what Christ has done, for I believe He may save him.”

She does not refrain from preaching Christ through fear of failure, but she believes in the great possibilities which lie in the Gospel and in the Spirit of God—and so she deals earnestly with the man next to her. She believes in her own principles. She believes in the Grace of God. She believes in the power of the Spirit of God. She believes in the force of the Truth of God. She believes in the existence of conscience and so she is moved to set about her saving work. She believes all things! Brethren, do you need a model of this? Then I beseech you look to your Divine Master once again!

See Him in the morning when the sheep are counted, missing one of them. So full of faith is He that He can find the lost one, that He leaves the 99 and cheerfully enters the pathless wilderness! See how He bounds over the mountains! How He descends the ravines! He is seeking His sheep until He finds it, for He is fully assured that He *shall* find it! He shall not fail nor be discouraged, for His faith is great in the salvation of men and He goes forth to it believing that sinners shall be saved. I delight in the deep, calm faith of our Lord Jesus Christ! He had no faith in man’s goodness, for “He knew what was in man,” but He had great faith in what could be done *in* men and what could be worked *for* them, and for the joy that was set before Him, in this He endured the Cross, despising the shame. He had faith that grand things would come of His salvation—men would be purified, error would be driven out, falsehood would be slain— and love would reign supreme. Here is the second grand victory of Love— she “believes all things.” Herein let us exercise ourselves till we are skilled in it.

Love’s third great labor is in “hoping all things.” Love never despairs. She believes in good things yet to come in her fellow men, even if she cannot believe in any present good in them. Hope all things about your Brothers and Sisters! Suppose a friend is a member of the Church and you cannot see any clear signs of Grace in him? Hope all things about him! Many true Believers are weak in faith and the operations of Grace are dim in them. And some are placed in positions where the Grace they have is much hindered and hampered—let us take these things into consideration. It is hard to tell how little Grace may yet suffice for salvation— it is not ours to judge. Hope all things and if you should be forced to see sad signs in them which make you fear that they have no Grace— remember that some of the brightest Believers have had their faults and grave ones, too.

Remember *yourself*, lest you also are tempted. If you cannot hope that these persons are saved at all, hope that they *will* be, and do all that you can to promote so blessed an end! Hope all things! If your brother has been very angry with you without a cause, hope that you will win him and set about the task. If you have tried and failed, hope to succeed next time and try again. Hope that though you have failed seven times and he still speaks bitterly, yet in his heart he is really ashamed, or at least that he will be so very soon. Never despair of your fellow Christians! As to the unconverted, you will never do anything with them unless you hope great things about them. When the good Samaritan found the poor man half dead, if he had not hoped about him, he would never have poured in the oil and the wine, but would have left him there to die.

Cultivate great hopefulness about sinners. Always hope of them that they will be saved though no good signs are apparent in them! If you have done your best for them and have been disappointed and defeated, still hope for them. Sometimes you will find cause for hope in the fact that they begin to attend a place of worship. Grasp at that and say, “Who can tell? God may bless them.” Or if they have long been hearers and no good has come of it, still hope that the minister will, one day, have a shot at them and the arrow shall pierce through the joints of the harness. When you last spoke to them, there seemed a little tenderness—be thankful for it and have hope! If there has been a little amendment in their life, be hopeful about them. Even if you can see nothing at all hopeful in them, yet hope that there may be something which you cannot see and, perhaps, an effect has been produced which they are endeavoring to conceal.

Hope because you are moved to pray for them. Get other people to pray for them, for as long as they have someone to pray for them, their case is not over and your prayers honor our Master. If you get others to pray, there will be another string to your bow. If they are very ill and you cannot get at them, or they are on their dying beds, *still* have hope about them and try to send them a message in some form or other! Pray the *Lord* to visit and save them! Always keep up your hope about them—till they are dead let not your hope be dead! Would you see a model of this? Ah, look at our blessed Lord and all His hopefulness for us! Look how, despairing of none, He went after those whom others would have given up! If you need a proof, remember how He went after you! Will you despair of anybody since Christ did not despair of you?  
Wonders of Grace belong to God and all those wonders have been displayed in many among us. If you and I had been there when they brought the adulterous woman taken in the very act, I am afraid that we would have said, “This is too bad; put her away, she cannot be borne with!” But oh, the hopefulness of the blessed Master, when even to her, He said, “Woman, where are your accusers? Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.” What wonderful patience and gentleness, and hopefulness our Lord displayed in all His conversations with the twelve! It was a noble hopefulness in Christ which led Him to trust Peter as He did! After he had denied his Master with oaths, our Lord trusted him to feed His sheep and lambs and set him in the forefront of Apostolic service! He has also had compassion on some of us, putting us into the ministry and trusting us with the Gospel, for He knew what love would do for us and He was certain He could yet make something of us to His own Glory.

The last victory of love is in enduring all things, by which I understand a patient perseverance in loving. This is, perhaps, the hardest work of all, for many people can be affectionate and patient for a time, but the task is to hold on year after year. I have known some men earnestly check their temper under provocation and bear a great many slights, but at last they have said, “There is an end to everything! I am not going to put up with it any longer. I cannot stand it.” Blessed be God, the love that Christ gives us endures all things! As His love endured to the end, so does the love which the Spirit works in us endure to the end. In reference, first, to our fellow Christians, love holds out under all rebuffs. You expect that I shall not love you, my good man, but I shall love you! You give me the rough side of your tongue and make me see that you are not a very lovable person, but I can love you notwithstanding all that!

What? Will you do me a further unkindness? I will oppose you by doing you a greater kindness than before! You said a vile thing about me—I will not hear it, and, if it is possible, I will say a kind thing of you! I will cover you up with hot coals till I melt you! I will war against you with flames of love till your anger is consumed! I will master you by being kinder to you than you have been unkind to me! What hosts of misrepresentations and unkindnesses there are—but if you go on to be a true Christian you must endure all these! If you have to deal with people who will put up with nothing from you, take care to be doubly patient with them. What credit is there in bearing with those who bear with you?

If your Brothers and Sisters are angry without a cause, be sorry for them, but do not let them conquer you by driving you into a bad temper. Stand fast in love—endure not *some* things, but *all* things for Christ’s sake—so shall you prove yourself to be a Christian, indeed. As to your dealing with the unconverted, if ever you go into the field after souls, be sure to carry your gun with you and that gun is LOVE. You gentlemen who go out shooting partridges and other birds at this time of the year, no doubt find it a pleasant pastime. But for real excitement, joy and pleasure, commend me to soul-winning! What did our Lord say, “I will make you fishers of men.” If you go out fishing for souls you will have to endure all things, for it will come to pass that some whom you have been seeking for a long time will grow worse instead of better.

Endure this among the all things. Those whom you seek to bless may seem to be altogether unteachable. They may shut their ears and refuse to hear you—never mind, endure all things! They may grow sour and sullen and revile you in their anger, but be not put about by them—let them struggle till they are wearied—and meanwhile quietly wait, saying to yourself, “I must save them.” A warden who has to take care of insane persons will frequently be attacked by them and have to suffer hard blows—but what does he do? Strike the patient and make a fight of it? No, he holds him down and pins him fast—but not in anger, for he pities him too much to be angry with him. Does a nurse with a delirious patient take any notice of his cross words, grumbling and outcries? Not she! She says, “I must try to save this man’s life” and so, with great kindness, she “endures all things.”

If you were a fireman and found a person in an upper room, and the house was on fire, would you not struggle with him rather than let him remain in the room and burn? You would say, “I will save you in spite of yourself.” Perhaps the foolish person would call you names and say, “Let me alone, why should you intrude into my chamber?” But you would say, “Never mind my intrusion. I will apologize, afterwards, for my rudeness, but you must first be out of the fire.” I pray God gives you this blessed lack of manners, this sweet casting of all things to the wind, if by any means you may save some! If you desire to see the mirror and the paragon of persevering endurance, look there! I wish you could see it. I wish these eyes could see the sight as I have sometimes seen it. Behold the Cross! See the patient Sufferer and that ribald multitude—they thrust out their tongues! They sneer! They jest! They blaspheme and there He hangs, triumphant in His patience, conquering the world and death and Hell by enduring “all things!”

O Love, You did never sit on a throne so imperial as the Cross, when there, in the Person of the Son of God, You did endure all things! Oh that we might copy in some humble measure that perfect pattern which is here set before us! If you would be saviors; if you would bless your generation, let no unkindness daunt you! Let no considerations of your own character, or honor, or peace of mind keep you back! But of you may it be said, even as of your Lord—

***“He saved others, himself***

***He could not save.”***  
Have I not shown you four grand battles far excelling all the Waterloos, Trafalgars, Almas and Inkermans on record? Heroes are they that fight and win them—and the Lord God of Love shall crown them!

**III.**I close by noting THE SOURCES OF LOVE’S ENERGY. The time is gone, as I thought it would be, but it has brought us round in a circle to where we started. Only the Holy Spirit can teach men how to love and give them power to do so. Love’s art is learned at no other school but at the feet of Jesus where the Spirit of Love does rest on those who learn of Him. Beloved, the Spirit of God puts love into us and helps us to maintain it! Thus—first, Love wins these victories, for it is her nature. The nature of Love is self-sacrifice. Love is the reverse of seeking her own. Love is intense. Love is burning. Therefore she burns her way to victory.

Love! Look at it in the mother. Is it any hardship for her to lose rest and peace and comfort for her child? If it costs her pain, she makes it pleasure by the ardor of her affection. It is the nature of love to court difficulties and to rejoice in suffering for the beloved object. If you have fervent love to the souls of men, you will know how true this is. Next to this, love has four sweet companions. There are with her, *tenderness*, that “bears all things,” *faith* that “believes all things,” *hope* that “hopes all things” and *patience* which endures all things.” He that has tenderness, faith, hope and patience has a brave quaternion of Divine Graces to guard him and he need not be afraid!

Best of all, Love sucks her life from the wounds of Christ. Love can bear, believe, hope and endure because Christ has borne, believed, hoped and endured for her! I have heard of one that had a twist—they say that he saw something that others never saw and heard a voice that others never heard—and he became such a strange man that others wondered at him. Oh, that I had more and more of that most solemn twist which comes through feeling a pierced hand laid on my shoulder and hearing in my ears a sorrowful voice—that same voice which cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” I would see that vision and hear that voice—and then—what then? Why, I must love! I must love! I must love!

That would be the soul’s strange bias and sweet twist! Love makes us love! Love bought us, sought us and brought us to the Savior’s feet—and it shall, from now on, lead us to deeds which otherwise would be impossible! You have heard of men, sometimes, in a mad fit doing things that ordinary flesh and blood could never have performed. Oh to be distracted from selfishness by the love of Christ and maddened into self-oblivion by a supreme passion for the Crucified! I know not how otherwise to put my thoughts into words so that they may hint at my burning nail marks upon your feet—and then may He pierce your heart till it pours forth a life for love and flows out in streams of kind desires, generous deeds and holy sacrifices for God and for His people. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1002 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NOW, AND THEN  
NO. 1002

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

***~~“For now we see through a glass, darkly. But then face to face.” 1 Corinthians 13:12.~~***

IN this chapter the Apostle Paul has spoken in the highest terms of charity or love. He accounts it to be a Grace far more excellent than any of the spiritual gifts of which he had just before been speaking. It is easy to see that there were good reasons for the preference he gave to it. Those gifts, you will observe, were distributed among godly men, to every man his several portion, so that what one had another might have lacked. But this Grace belongs to all who have passed from death unto life. The proof that they are disciples of Christ is found in their love to Him and to the Brethren. Those gifts, again, were meant to fit them for service—that each member of the body should be profitable to the other members of the body.

But this Divine Grace is of personal account—it is a light in the heart and a star on the breast of everyone who possesses it. Those gifts, moreover, were of temporary use—their value was limited to the sphere in which they were exercised. But this Grace thrives at all times and in all places, and it is no less essential to our eternal future state than it is to our present welfare. By all means covet the best gifts, my dear Brother, as an artist would wish to be deft with all his limbs and quick with all his senses. But above all, cherish love, as that same artist would cultivate the pure taste which lives and breathes within him—the secret spring of all his motions, the faculty that prompts his skill.

Learn to esteem this sacred instinct of love beyond all the choicest endowments. However poor you may be in talents, let the love of Christ dwell in you richly. Such an exhortation as this is the more necessary because love has a powerful rival. Paul may have noticed that in the academies of Greece—as indeed in all our modern schools—*knowledge* was likely to take all the prizes. Who can tell how much of Dr. Arnold’s success as a schoolmaster was due to the honor in which he held a good boy in preference to a clever boy?

Most certainly Paul could discern in the Church many jealousies to which the superior abilities of those who could speak foreign tongues, and those who could prophesy or preach well, gave rise. So, then, while he extols the Grace of love, he seems rather to disparage knowledge. At least

he uses an illustration which tends to show that the kind of knowledge we pride ourselves in is not the most reliable thing in the world. Paul remembered that he was once a child. A very good thing for any of us to bear in mind. If we forget it, our sympathies are soon dried up, our temper is apt to get churlish, our opinions may be rather overbearing and our selfishness very repulsive.

The foremost man of his day in the Christian Church, and exerting the widest influence among the converts to Christ, Paul thought of the little while ago when he was a young child, and he thought of it very often, too. Though he might have hinted at the attainments he had made, or the high office he held, and laid claim to some degree of respect, he rather looks back at his humble beginnings. If there is wisdom in his reflection, there is, to my mind, a vein of pleasantry in his manner of expressing it.

“When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Thus he compares two stages of his natural life, and it serves him for a parable. In spiritual knowledge he felt himself to be then in his infancy. His maturity, his thorough manhood, lay before him in prospect. He could easily imagine a future in which he should look back on his present self as a mere tyro, groping his way amidst the shadows of his own fancy. “For now,” he says, “we see through a glass, darkly. But then face to face: now I know in part. But then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Here he employs one or two fresh figures. “ *Through a glass*”! What kind of a glass he alluded to we may not be able, exactly, to determine. We will leave that question for the critics to disagree about. It is enough for us that the meaning is obvious. There is all the difference between viewing an object through an obscure medium, and closely inspecting it with the naked eye. We must have the power of vision in either case, but in the latter case we can use it to more advantage. “Now we see through a glass, *darkly*.” Darkly—in a riddle!

So weak are our perceptions of mind that plain truths often puzzle us. The words that teach us are pictures which need explanation. The thoughts that stir us are visions which coat in our brains and want rectifying. Oh, for clearer vision! Oh, for more perfect knowledge! Mark you, Brethren, it is a matter of congratulation that *we do see*, though we have much cause for diffidence, because we do but “see through a glass, darkly.” Thank God *we do know* but let it check our conceit, We only know in part.

Beloved, the objects we look at are distant, and we are near-sighted. The Revelation of God is ample and profound, but our understanding is weak and shallow. There are some things which we count very precious now, which will soon be of no value to us whatever. There are some things that we know or think we know, and we pride ourselves a good deal upon our knowledge. But when we shall become men we shall set no more value upon that knowledge than a child does upon his toys when he grows up to be a man. Our spiritual manhood in Heaven will discard many things which we now count precious—as a full grown man discards the treasures of his childhood.

And there are many things that we have been accustomed to see that, after this transient life has passed, we shall see no more. Though we delighted in them, and they pleased our eyes while sojourning on earth, they will pass away as a dream when one awakes. We shall never see them again, and never*want* to see them. For our eyes, in clearer light, anointed with eye-salve, shall see brighter visions and we shall never regret what we have lost in the presence of fairer scenes we shall have found.

Other things there are that we know now and shall never forget. We shall know them forever, only in a higher degree, because no longer with a partial knowledge! And there are some things that we see now that we shall see in eternity—only we shall see them there in a clearer light. So we shall speak upon *some things that we do see* now, which *we are to see*more fully and more distinctly hereafter. Then we shall enquire how it is *we shall see them more clearly*. And we shall finish up by considering *what this fact teaches us*.

**I.**Among the things that we see now, as many of us as have had our eyes enlightened by the Holy Spirit, is OURSELVES. To see ourselves is one of the first steps in true religion. The mass of men have never seen themselves. They have seen the flattering image of themselves and they fancy that to be their own facsimile, but it is not. You and I have been taught of God’s Holy Spirit to see our ruin in the Fall. We have bemoaned ourselves on account of that fall. We have been made conscious of our own natural depravity. We have been ground to the very dust by the discovery. We have been shown our actual sinfulness and how we have transgressed against the Most High.

We have repented for this, and have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel. Day by day we see a little more of ourselves— nothing very pleasing, I grant you—but something very profitable, for it is a great thing for us to know our emptiness. It is a step towards receiving His fullness. It is something to discover our weakness. It is an essential step towards our participation of Divine strength. I suppose the longer we live, the more we shall see ourselves. And we shall probably come to this conclusion—“Vanity of vanities. All is vanity”—and cry out with Job, “I am vile.”

The more we shall discover of ourselves, the more we shall be sick of ourselves. But in Heaven, I doubt not, we shall find out that we never saw even ourselves in the clearest light, but only as “through a glass, darkly,” only as an unriddled thing, as a deep enigma. For we shall understand

more about ourselves in Heaven than we do now. There we shall see, as we have not yet seen, how desperate a mischief was the Fall, into what a horrible pit we fell, and how fast we were stuck in the miry clay. There shall we see the blackness of sin as we have never seen it here, and understand its Hell desert as we could not till we shall look down from yonder starry height where infinite Mercy shall bring us.

When we shall be singing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” we shall look at the robes that we have washed in His blood, and see how white they are. We shall better understand, then, than now, how much we needed washing—how crimson were the stains and how precious was that blood that washed those scarlet spots. There, too, shall we know ourselves on the bright side better than we do now. We know today that we are saved, and there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

But that robe of righteousness which covers us now, as it shall cover us then, will be better seen by us. And we shall discern how lustrous it is, with its needlework and worked gold—how much better than the pearls and gems that have decked the robes of monarchs are the blood and righteousness of Jehovah Jesus, who has given Himself for us! Here we know that we are adopted. We feel the spirit of sonship. “We cry, Abba, Father.” But there we shall know better what it is to be the sons of God— for here it does not yet appear what we shall be. But when we shall be there, and when Christ shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. And then we shall understand to the full what sonship means.

So, too, I know today that I am a joint-heir with Christ, but I have a very poor idea of what it is I am heir to. But there shall I see the estates that belong to me. Not only see them, but actually enjoy them. A part shall every Christian have in the inheritance undefiled and that fades not away, that is reserved in Heaven for him, because he is in Christ Jesus— one with Christ—by eternal union, one. But I am afraid that is very much more a riddle to us than a matter of understanding. We see it as an enigma now, but there our oneness with Christ will be as conspicuous to us and as plain as the letters of the alphabet. There shall we know what it is to be a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

There shall I understand the mystical marriage bond that knits the Believer’s soul to Christ. There shall I see how, as the branch springs from the stem, my soul stands in union, vital union, with her blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, one thing that we see now which we shall see in a much clearer light hereafter, is “ourselves.”

Here, too, we see the CHURCH, but WE SHALL SEE THE CHURCH MUCH MORE CLEARLY BY-AND-BY. We know there is a Church of God. We know that the Lord has a people whom He has chosen from before the foundation of the world—we believe that these are scattered up and down throughout our land—and many other lands. There are many of them we do not know. Many that we should not particularly like, I daresay, if we did know them, on account of their outward characteristics. There are persons of very strange views, and very odd habits, perhaps. And yet, for all that, the people of the living God!

Now, we know this Church. We know its Glory—moved with one life, quickened with one Spirit—redeemed with one blood. We believe in this Church, and we feel attachment to it for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has married the Church as the Bride. But, oh, when we shall get to Heaven, how much more we shall know of the Church, and how we shall see her face to face, and not “through a glass, darkly”! There we shall know something more of the numbers of the chosen than we do now and it may be to our intense surprise. There we shall find some among the company of God’s elect whom we, in our bitterness of spirit had condemned. And there we shall miss some who, in our charity, we have conceived to be perfectly secure.

We shall know better, then, who are the Lord’s and who are not than we can ever know here. Here all our processes of discernment fail us. Judas comes in with the Apostles, and Demas takes his part among the saints, but there we shall know the righteous, for we shall see them. There will be one flock and one Shepherd, and He that on the Throne does reign forevermore shall be glorified. We shall understand, then, what the history of the Church has been in all the past, and why it has become so strange a history of conflict and conquest. Probably we shall know more of the history of the Church in the future.

From that higher elevation and brighter atmosphere we shall understand better what are the Lord’s designs concerning His people in the latter day. And what Glory shall redound to His own name from His redeemed ones, when He shall have gathered together all that are called and chosen and faithful from among the sons of men. This is one of the joys we are looking for—that we shall come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in Heaven. And have fellowship with those who have fellowship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thirdly. Is it not possible, no, is it not *certain*, that in the next state WE SHALL KNOW MORE OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD THAN WE DO NOW? Here we see the Providence of God, but it is in a glass, darkly. The Apostle says “through” a glass. There was glass in the Apostles’ days—not a substance such as our windows are now made of—but thick, dull colored glass. It was not much more transparent than that which is used in the manufacture of common bottles, so that looking through a piece of that glass you could not see much. That is like what we now see of Divine

Providence. We believe all things work together for good to them that love God. We have seen how they work together for good, in some cases, and experimentally proved it to be so.

But still it is rather a matter of faith than a matter of sight with us. We cannot tell how “every dark and bending line meets in the center of His love.” We do not yet perceive how He will make those dark dispensations of trials and afflictions that come upon His people really to subserve His Glory and their lasting happiness. But up there we shall see Providence, as it were, face to face. And I suppose it will be among our greatest surprises—the discovery of how the Lord dealt with us.

“Why,” we shall, some of us say, “we prayed against those very circumstances which were the best that could have been appointed for us.” “Ah,” another will say, “I have fretted and troubled myself over what was, after all, the richest mercy the Lord ever sent.” Sometimes I have known persons refuse a letter at the door, and it has happened, in some cases, that there has been something very valuable in it, and the postman has said, afterwards, “You did not know the contents, or else you would not have refused it.”

And often God has sent us, in the black envelope of trial, such a precious mass of mercy that if we had known what was in it, we should have taken it in, and been glad to *pay* for it—glad to give it house room, to entertain it. But because it looked black we were prone to shut our door against it. Now, up there we shall know not only more of ourselves, but perceive the reasons of many of God’s dealings with us on a larger scale. And we shall there, perhaps, discover that wars that devastated nations, and pestilences that filled graves, and earthquakes that make cities tremble, were, after all, necessary cogs in the great wheel of the Divine machinery.

And He who sits upon the Throne at this moment, and rules supremely every creature that is either in Heaven, or earth, or Hell, will there make it manifest to us that His government was right. It is good to think in these times whenever thing seems loosening, that “the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” It must come out right in the long run. It must be well—every part and portion must work together with a unity of design to promote God’s Glory and the saint’s good. We shall see it there! And we shall lift up our song with new zest and joy as fresh displays of the wisdom and goodness of God, whose ways are past finding out, are unfolded to our admiring view.

Fourthly. It is surely no straining of the text to say that though here we know something of THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL, AND THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH, by-and-by, in a few months or years at the longest, *we shall know a great deal more than we do now*. There are some grand doctrines, Brothers and Sisters, we dearly love, but though we love them, our understanding is too feeble to grasp them fully. We account them to be mysteries. We reverently acknowledge them, yet we dare not attempt to explain them. They are matters of faith to us.

It may be that in Heaven there shall be counsels of eternal wisdom into which no saints or angels can peer. It is the Glory of God to conceal a matter. Surely, no creature will ever be able, even when exalted to Heaven, to comprehend all the thoughts of the Creator. We shall never be Omniscient—we cannot be. God alone knows everything, and understands everything. But how much more of authentic Truth shall we discern when the mists and shadows have dissolved! And how much more shall we understand when raised to that higher sphere and endowed with brighter faculties, none of us can tell.

Probably things that puzzle us here will be as plain as possible there. We shall perhaps smile at our own ignorance. I have fancied sometimes that the elucidations of learned doctors of divinity, if they could be submitted to the very least in the kingdom of Heaven, would only cause them to smile at the learned ignorance of the sons of earth. Oh, how little we do know, but how much we shall know! I am sure we shall know, for it is written, “Then shall I know even as also I have known.” We now see things in a mist—“men as trees, walking”—a doctrine here, and a doctrine there. And we are often at a loss to conjecture how one part harmonizes with another part of the same system, or to make out how all these doctrines are consistent.

This knot cannot be untied, that gnarl cannot be unraveled, but— ***“Then shall I see, and hear and know  
All I desired or wished below.  
And every power find sweet employ  
In that eternal world of joy.”***

But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, having kept you thus far in the outer courts, I would gladly lead you into the temple! Or, to change the figure, if in the beginning I have set forth good wine, certainly I am not going to bring out that which is worse. Rather would I have you say, as the ruler of the feast did to the bridegroom, “you have kept the good wine until now.”

HERE WE SEE JESUS CHRIST, BUT WE DO NOT SEE HIM AS WE SHALL SEE HIM SOON. We have seen Him by faith in such a way that we have beheld our burdens laid on Him, and our iniquities carried by Him into the wilderness, where, if they are sought for, they shall not be found. We have seen enough of Jesus to know that “He is altogether lovely.” We can say of Him, He “is all my salvation, and all my desire.” Sometimes, when He throws up the lattice and shows Himself through those windows of agate and gates of carbuncle—in the ordinances of His House—at the

Lord’s Supper especially, the King’s beauty has entranced us even to our heart’s ravishment.

Yet all we have ever seen is somewhat like the report which the Queen of Sheba had of Solomon’s wisdom. When we once get to the court of the Great King we shall declare that the half has not been told us! We shall say, “my eyes shall behold, and not another.” Brethren, is not this the very cream of Heaven? There have been many suggestions of what we shall do in Heaven, and what we shall enjoy. But they all seem to me to be wide of the mark compared with this one—that we shall be with Jesus! Be like He is, and shall behold His Glory.

Oh, to see the feet that were nailed! And to touch the hands that were pierced, and to look upon the head that wore the thorns! And to bow before Him who is ineffable love, unspeakable condescension, infinite tenderness! Oh, to bow before Him, and to kiss that blessed face! Jesus, what better do we want than to see You by Your own light—to see You, and speak with You, as when a man speaks with his friend? It is pleasant to talk about this, but what will it be there when the gates of pearl open? The streets of gold will have small attraction to us, and the harps of angels will but slightly enchant us—compared with the King in the midst of the Throne! He it is who shall rivet our gaze, absorb our thoughts, enchain our affection, and move all our sacred passions to their highest pitch of celestial ardor! We shall see Jesus!

Once again (and here we come into the deep things), beyond a doubt WE SHALL ALSO SEE GOD. It is written that the pure in heart shall see God. God is seen now in His works and in His Word. Little, indeed, could these eyes bear the Beatific Vision, yet we have reason to expect that, as far as creatures can bear the sight of the Infinite Creator, we shall be permitted to see God. We read that Aaron and certain chosen ones saw the Throne of God, and the brightness, as it were, of sapphire stone— light, pure as jasper.

In Heaven it is the Presence of God that is the light thereof. God’s more immediately dwelling in the midst of the new Jerusalem is its peerless Glory and peculiar bliss. We shall then understand more of God than we do now. We shall come nearer to Him, be more familiar with Him, be more filled with Him. The love of God shall be shed abroad in our hearts. We shall know our Father as we yet know Him not. We shall know the Son to a fuller degree than He has yet revealed Himself to us, and we shall know the Holy Spirit in His personal love and tenderness towards us. Beyond all those influences and operations which have soothed us in our sorrows and guided us in our perplexities here below, we shall know the Trinity.

I leave your thoughts and your desires to follow the teaching of the Spirit. As for me, I cower before the thought while I revel in it. I, who have strained my eyes while gazing at nature, where the things that are made show the handiwork of God! I, whose conscience has been awe-struck as I listened to the voice of God proclaiming His holy Law! I, whose heart has been melted while there broke on my ears the tender accents of His blessed Gospel in those snatches of sacred melody that relieve the burden of prophecy! I, who have recognized in the babe of Bethlehem, the Hope of Israel. In the Man of Nazareth, the Messiah that should come. In the Victim of Calvary, the one Mediator. In the risen Jesus, the Well-Beloved Son—to me, verily, God Incarnate has been so palpably revealed that I have almost seen God, for I have, as it were, seen Him in whom all the fullness of the Godhead bodily does dwell. Still, I “see through a glass, darkly.”

Illumine these dark senses, waken this drowsy conscience, purify my heart—give me fellowship with Christ, and you bear me up, translate me to the third heavens—so I may, so I can, so I *shall* see God! But what that means, or what it is, ah me, I cannot tell!

**II.**We proposed to enquire, in the second place, HOW THIS VERY REMARKABLE CHANGE SHALL BE EFFECTED? WHY IS IT THAT WE SHALL SEE MORE CLEARLY THEN, THAN NOW? We cannot altogether answer the question, but one or two suggestions may help us. No doubt many of these things will be more clearly revealed in the next state. Here the light is like the dawn—it is dim twilight. In Heaven it will be the blaze of noon. God has declared some things of Himself by the mouth of His holy Prophets and Apostles. He has been pleased, through the lips of His Son, whom He has appointed Heir of all things, to speak to us more plainly, to show us more openly the thoughts of His heart and the counsel of His will.

These are the first steps to knowledge. But there the light will be as the light of seven days, and there the manifestation of all the treasures of wisdom shall be brighter and clearer than it is now. For God, the only-wise God, shall unveil to us the mysteries, and exhibit to us the glories of His everlasting kingdom. The Revelation we now have suits us as men clad in our poor mortal bodies. The Revelation then will suit us as immortal spirits. When we have been raised from the dead it will be suitable to our immortal spiritual bodies.

Here, too, we are at a distance from many of the things we long to know something of, but there we shall be nearer to them. We shall then be on a vantage ground, with the entire horizon spread out before us. Our Lord Jesus is, as to His personal Presence, far away from us. We see Him through the telescope of faith, but then we shall see Him face to face. His literal and bodily Presence is in Heaven, since He was taken up, and we need to be taken up, likewise, to be with Him where He is that we may literally behold Him.

Get to the Fountain-Head, and you understand more. Stand in the center, and things seem regular and orderly. If you could stand in the sun and see the orbits in which the planets revolve round that central lumi

nary, it would become clear enough. But for many an age astronomers were unable to discover anything of order, and spoke of the planets as progressive, retrograde, and standing still. Let us get to God, the Center, and we shall see how Providence in order revolves round His sapphire Throne.

We, ourselves, too, when we get to Heaven, shall be better qualified to see than we are now. It would be an inconvenience for us to know here as much as we shall know in Heaven. No doubt we have sometimes thought that if we had better ears it would be a great blessing. We have wished we could hear ten miles off. But probably we should be no better off. We might hear too much, and the sounds might drown each other. Probably our sight is not as good as we wish it were, but a large increase of ocular power might not be of any use to us.

Our natural organs are fitted for our present sphere of being. And our mental faculties are, in the case of most of us, properly adapted to our moral requirements. If we knew more of our own sinfulness, we might be driven to despair. If we knew more of God’s Glory, we might die of terror. If we had more understanding, unless we had equivalent capacity to employ it, we might be filled with conceit and tormented with ambition. But up there we shall have our minds and our systems strengthened to receive more, without the damage that would come to us here from overleaping the boundaries of order, supremely appointed and divinely regulated.

We cannot here drink the wine of the kingdom—it is too strong for us. But up there we shall drink it new in our heavenly Father’s kingdom, without fear of the intoxications of pride, or the staggering of passions. We shall know even as we are known. Besides, dear Friends, the atmosphere of Heaven is so much clearer than this that I do not wonder we can see better there. Here is the smoke of daily care. The constant dust of toil. The fog of trouble perpetually rising. We cannot be expected to see much in such a smoky atmosphere as this. But when we shall pass beyond, we shall find no clouds ever gather round the sun to hide His everlasting brightness. There all is clear. The daylight is serene as the noonday. We shall be in a clearer atmosphere and brighter light.

**III.**The practical lessons we may learn from this subject demand your attention before I close. I think there is an appeal to our *gratitude*. Let us be very thankful for all we do see. Those who do not see now—ah, not even “through a glass, darkly”—shall never see face to face. The eyes that never see Christ by faith shall never see Him with joy in Heaven. If you have never seen yourself a leper defiled with sin and abashed with penitence, you shall never see yourself redeemed from sin, renewed by Grace, a white-robed spirit.  
If you have no sense of God’s Presence here, constraining you to worship and love Him, you shall have no sight of His Glory hereafter introducing you to the fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore. Oh, be glad for the sight you have, dear Brothers and Sisters. It is God that gave it to you! You are one born blind. And, “Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?” This miracle has been worked on you—you can see, and you can say—“One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.”

Our text teaches us that this feeble vision is very *hopeful*. *You shall see better by-and-by*. Oh, you know not how soon—it may be in a day or two that we shall be in Glory! God may so have ordained it, that between us and Heaven there may be but a step. Another lesson is that of *forbearance*one with another. Let the matters we have spoken of soften the asperity of our debates. Let us feel, when we are disputing about points of difficulty, that we need not get cross about them, because, after all, there are limits to our present capacity as well as to our actual knowledge. Our disputes are often childish. We might as well leave some questions in abeyance for a little while.

Two persons in the dark have differed about a color, and they are wrangling about it. If we brought candles in and held them to the color, the candles would not show what it was. But if we look at it tomorrow morning, when the sun shines, we shall be able to tell. How many difficulties in the Word of God are like this! Not yet can they be justly discriminated—till the day dawns, the apocalyptic symbols will not be all transparent to our understanding. Besides, we have no time to waste while there is so much work to do. Much time is already spent.

Sailing is dangerous. The winds are high. The sea is rough. Trim the ship, keep the sails in good order. Manage her and keep her off quicksand. As to certain other matters, we must wait till we get into the fair haven and are able to talk with some of the bright spirits now before the Throne. When some of the things they know shall be opened unto us, we shall confess the mistakes we made and rejoice in the light we shall receive! Should not this happy prospect excite our*aspiration* and make us very desirous to be there?

It is natural for us to want to know, but we shall not know as we are known till we are present with the Lord. We are at school now—children at school. We shall go to the college soon—the great University of Heaven—and take our degree there. Yet some of us, instead of being anxious to go, are shuddering at the thought of death—the gate of endless joy we dread to enter! There are many persons who die suddenly. Some die in their sleep, and many have passed out of time into eternity when it has scarcely been known by those who have been sitting at their bedsides. Depend upon it, there is no pain in dying.

The pain is in *living*. When they leave off living here, they have done with pain. Do not blame death for what it does not deserve. It is *life* that lingers on in pain—death is the end of it. The man that is afraid of dying ought to be afraid of living. Be content to die whenever the Master’s will shall bid you. Commit your spirit to His keeping. Who that has seen but the glimpses of His beaming Countenance does not long to see His face that is as the sun shining in His strength? O Lord! Your will be done! Let us speedily behold You, if so it may be—only this one word—if so it may be.

Do we now see, and do we expect to see better? Let us bless the name of the Lord, who has chosen us of His mercy and of His infinite loving kindness. On the other hand, let it cause us great anxiety if we have not believed in Jesus, for He that has not believed in Him, dying as he is, will never see the face of God with joy. Oh, unbeliever, be concerned about your soul, and seek after Him! Oh, that God would open your eyes now in this very House of Prayer! Blessed for you to know in part. Thrice blessed, I say. For as surely as you know in part now, you shall fully know hereafter! Be it your happy lot to know Him, whom to know is life eternal. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 5.**

SOME of the Sermon readers may not be aware that we issue a monthly magazine entitled *The Sword and the Trowel*, price 3d. In it will be found interesting descriptions of holy works in all denominations, theological articles, and periodical information as to the various institutions connected with the Tabernacle. It is believed that *The Sword and the Trowel* has the largest circulation of any magazine of its class, with the exception of those which attract readers by religious novels. Such a mode of gaining popularity the Editor will never employ. The volume entitled *Feathers for Arrows* was compiled by us with the view of furnishing fresh illustrations to religious teachers. The first edition of ten thousand was sold at once, and we went to press with a second ten thousand. It is a beautifully bound volume, and a very cheap half-crown’s worth. Passmore & Alabaster are the publishers.

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FALLEN ASLEEP  
NO. 2659

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 28, 1900. (C. H. Spurgeon Memorial Sabbath).

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 29, 1882.~~***

***~~[Just 10 years before he fell asleep in Jesus.] “Some are fallen asleep.”  
1 Corinthians 15:6.~~***

Writing concerning the brethren who had seen the Lord Jesus Christ after His Resurrection and of whom “above five hundred” were present at one time, Paul said, at the date when he was writing this Epistle, “the greater part” remained alive, “but,” he added, “some are fallen asleep.”

We might have thought that God, in great mercy, would have preserved the lives of those 500 brethren to an extreme old age, that, in every part of the globe, there might be extant, as long as possible,*someone* who would be able to say, “I beheld the Son of God when He was upon the earth. I heard Him preach. I saw Him die on the Cross and then I looked upon Him again after He had risen from the grave.” Every one of these witnesses would have been worth his weight in gold to the Christian religion! Wherever such a man lived, he would have been, under the blessing of God, the means of convincing many people of the truth of our glorious faith! Yet, dear Friends, it does not appear that these invaluable brethren were spared the shafts of death. These witnesses of Christ’s Resurrection died as other men did. They had no immunity from death and no extreme old age was granted to them, for the Apostle, writing not so very long after the event, said, “Some are fallen asleep.”

From this fact I gather that lives which appear to us to be extremely necessary, may not be so regarded by God! Your own observation will, I am sure, agree with mine, that the Lord sometimes takes from us those whom we can least spare. Those who seemed to be the pillars of the Church have been suddenly removed. The fathers among us—those who have been the bravest confessors of the faith—or the most useful servants of the Savior, have been called away. This should teach us—if we are wise enough to learn the lesson—to regard the most invaluable person in our own Israel as being only lent to us by the Lord, for a season, and liable to be summoned to higher service at any moment! Possibly, God takes some men away from us because we think them absolutely necessary. He will not let us trust in an arm of flesh—and if He is so condescending as to use human feebleness and we go and confide in the feebleness—and suppose that God’s strength is tied up to it—in secret jealousy He removes the instruments that He has used, that men may learn not to glory in their fellow men, or to make idols out of their Christian brethren and fathers!

It is probable that these witnesses of Christ’s Resurrection enjoyed a large measure of reverence from the members of the Christian Church. Had they lived very long, they might have been regarded with a superstitious and almost idolatrous reverence. God intended that His Church should increasingly live by faith, not by sight, so, while she was in her infancy He gave her the prop of miracles and also the support of living witnesses. But when she had somewhat increased in strength, He no longer gave the power to work miracles, but left her to rest upon His Word, alone. And as she further progressed, He, in a few years, took away the earthly witnesses of Christ’s life, death and Resurrection, that the Eternal Spirit, working through the Word, might stand, to all time, as the living and unfailing Witness of the fact that Jesus lived, died and “rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

The lesson for us all to learn is just this—let us not set too much store by any of God’s servants and, especially—let us never reckon that we are essential to the carrying on of His work! The fly upon the chariot wheel was easily to be dispensed with and so are we. Like shadows we have come—like shadows we shall go. We may be missed—I hope we shall all live so that many will miss us when we are gone. But they will brush their tears away and both the world and the Church—and especially the Church—will continue to go on without us! While Jesus lives, whoever may die, we shall never have to say, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” But still shall the Church of God flourish and increase, for the Spirit of God is with her.

Paul wrote, “Some are fallen asleep.” Of course *all* the witnesses who personally saw Christ have long ago fallen asleep, but, among ourselves, it is also true that, “some are fallen asleep.” And the Truth of God is impressed upon us more and more forcibly every week. I never expect, now, to come to this place on two succeeding Sabbaths without hearing that some one or other of our friends has departed. Our death-rate, for many years, has been wonderfully small, for God seems to have favored us by sparing us to one another. We must not forget that in past days more of our number were young than is the case with us now and, as we all march onwards towards the inevitable river, the deaths will naturally be more numerous among us than they have been. They are beginning to be so, already, and I am continually hearing of one or another of our most useful Brothers or Sisters being “called Home.” Almost every day this Truth of God is impressed upon me—“Some are fallen asleep.” I suppose that all the year round, almost as regularly as the clock ticks, about two a week of our Church members, beside others out of the congregation, are taken up to dwell in the Master’s Presence. So my subject concerns us just as much as it did those of whom and to whom the Apostle wrote.

**I.**Now, coming to the text, I call your attention, first, to THE FIGURE USED HERE—“Some are fallen asleep.”  
In the heathen part of the catacombs of Rome, the inscriptions over the place where their dead were buried are full of lamentation and despair. Indeed, the writers of those inscriptions do not appear to have been able to find words in which they could express their great distress— their agony of heart—at the loss of child, or husband, or friend. They pile the mournful words together to try to describe their grief. Sometimes, they declare that the light has gone from their sky now their dear ones are taken from them. “Alas! Alas!” says the record, “dear Caius has gone and with him all joy is quenched forever, for I shall see him no more.” Heathenism is hopeless to afford any comfort to the bereaved!  
But when you come into that part of the catacombs which was devoted to Christian burial, everything is different. There you may constantly read these consoling words, “He sleeps in peace.” There is nothing dreadful or despairing in the inscriptions there—they are submissive, they are cheerful, they are even thankful! Frequently they are victorious and the most common emblem is—not the quenched torch, as it is on the heathen side, where the light is supposed to have gone out forever—but the palm branch, to signify that the victory remains eternally with the departed one. It is the glow of the Christian religion to have let light into the sepulcher, to have taken the sting away from death and, in fact, to have made it no more death to die!  
The figure used here is that of falling asleep. It describes first, the act, and then the state. “Some are fallen asleep.” That is the act of death. Having fallen asleep, they remain so—that is the state of death. For a Christian to die, is, according to Scripture, *an act of the most natural kind,* for it is but to fall asleep. What that act really is, in its litera1 meaning, I cannot fully explain to you, though I know by long personal experience—and all of you know, and will soon know, again, if you are permitted to fall asleep, tonight, and to wake in the morning! Yet you never knew exactly when you went to sleep. You have often wanted to go to sleep, but you could not and, probably nobody has ever gone to sleep while he has tried to do so. But it is when all idea of forcing slumber has gone from us that gradually we pass into a state of unconsciousness. Such, perhaps, is death—the sinking away and becoming unconscious of this world, and asleep to it—though happily conscious of another world and sweetly awake to it. That is the act of falling asleep.  
Then, after the act of falling asleep, which is death, comes the *state of sleep in which rest is the main ingredient.*Are Believers, then, asleep? Yes, and no. Never make a figure run on four legs when it was only meant to go on two. Some people, when they get hold of a metaphor, want to make it have as many feet as a centipede—and they seek to draw all sorts of parallels which were never intended to be drawn. The fact is that the saints sleep, first, as to their bodies. There they are in the cemetery—which means the sleeping-place—till dawns the bright illustrious day when these bodies shall wake again. As for their souls, they are asleep as to this world—their memory and their love are things of the past—they are, alike, unknowing and unknown as far as this earth is concerned. As to that other world, we read that they shall be “forever with the Lord.” Our Savior said to the penitent thief—“Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” And the prayer of Christ for His people was that we might be with Him where He is—not to be asleep—but to behold His glory, the glory which the Father had given Him.  
Hence, the word, “sleep,” is not to be regarded as implying that the souls of the departed lie in a state of unconsciousness. It is nothing of the kind! It is unconsciousness as to the things of time and sense, but a blessed consciousness as to another and a fairer and brighter and better world than this! Even while I am in this mortal state, when I am asleep, though I may be unaware of anything that is happening in my bedroom, yet, full often, in my sleep, my mind is soaring on the wings of eagles, mounting up to Heaven, or diving into the depths, conscious of dreamland, and of the spirit land, though unconscious of the present world for the time being!  
The meaning of the term is evidently this—as sleep brings to us rest, the blessed ones, who have fallen asleep in Christ, are perfectly at rest. It is delightful for a man, who has worked very hard all day, to forget his toils and fall asleep. Well did Young write, in his *Night Thoughts,* con

cerning— ***“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”***In his sleep, the prisoner in the dungeon forgets his manacles. The slave in the galley forgets his bondage. The poor man forgets his poverty and he who dreads the approach of danger drinks a draught of the waters of Lethe and remembers his fears no more. What a blessing sleep is to this poor, weary frame and to the throbbing brain! The saints in Heaven have a better rest than sleep can give, but sleep is the nearest word we can find to describe the state of the blessed. They have no poverty, no toil, no anguish of spirit, no remorse, no struggling with indwelling sin, no battling with foes without and fears within. “They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Oh, what a sweet thing to fall asleep, if this is what it means—to enjoy perfect repose and to be beyond the reach of all influences which make life here to be so sorrowful! “Some are fallen asleep,” that is, they have entered into their rest.

By falling asleep, again, is meant a *state of security.*The man who is in the battle may be wounded and may die, but he who has gone up to his chamber to sleep is supposedly there to be at peace and out of the reach of danger, though that is not always the case. But, in those heavenly chambers where the Lord shall hide away His people, they shall be perfectly secure. They will never have to keep watch against “the arrow that flies by day,” or, “the pestilence that walks in darkness.” They are out of gunshot of the enemy! As Dr. Payson said, when he was dying, “The battle is fought,” so is it with them—the battle is fought and the victory is won forever! Therefore have they ascended to the hilltops of Glory and to the chambers of eternal rest! And there they sleep while we still struggle hand to hand with the enemy, with many a deadly thrust and many an ugly wound. God be praised that there is a place of safety for all the soldiers of the Cross! “Some are fallen asleep,” and so shall we, in due time, if we are fighting under the banner of Emmanuel, God with us!

Now let us learn, from this figure of falling asleep, a little about death and, especially, about a Christian’s death. I learn from it, first, that *the act is not a painful one, nor even a disagreeable one.*As I have said before, I cannot really tell what falling asleep is, for in the very act we, ourselves, pass out of the consciousness of it. But, as far as one has watched children falling asleep, there certainly is no appearance of any pain, for usually they drop off into slumber very happily—and that is how God’s people shall do when they fall asleep in Jesus. Do not regard your departure out of the world as a thing to be surrounded with horror! Do not conjure up hobgoblins, evil spirits, darkness and terror! “The Valley of the Shadow of Death,” of which David spoke, I do not think was ever meant to be applied to *dying*, for it is a valley that he *walks* through and he comes out the other side of it! And it is not the Valley of Death, but only of “the Shadow of Death.” I have walked through that valley many a time—right through from one end of it to the other—and yet I have not died! The grim shadow of something worse than death has fallen over my spirit, but God has been with me, as He was with David, and His rod and His staff have comforted me. And many here can say the same! And I believe that often those who feel great gloom in going through “the Valley of the Shadow of Death,” feel no gloom at all when they come to the Valley of Death itself! There has generally been brightness there for the most sorrowful spirits and those who, before going there, have groveled in the dust, have been enabled to mount as on eagles’ wings when they have actually come to the place of their departure into the future state.

The more you think this matter over, the more clearly will it appear to you that there cannot be any pain in death—all pain must be connected with *life*—it is the living who suffer. In death, we forget all pain. That gentle touch, that Divine love-pat that shall end all pain and sorrow is the thing which men usually call death, but which the Apostle rightly calls *sleep*. There is nothing to be dreaded in it! It may be altogether unattended with pain. I believe that full often it is so. To fall asleep is a very natural act and so it is for us to die. A little child has been playing in the field gathering buttercups and daisies all day long, but, at last, tired right out, he drops asleep upon his mother’s lap. What could he do better? So, though we may be unwilling to die, the time will come when we shall have finished our life-work or play, whichever you may please to call it—and we shall fall asleep upon the bosom of our God. What better thing could *we* do? There is a dear old friend of mine, now in Heaven and, when he came to this house, one Sunday, I said to him, “Our old friend, So-and-So, has gone Home.” The one to whom I spoke was an old man himself, one of our most gracious elders, and he looked at me in a most significant way and his eyes twinkled as he said, “He could not do better, dear Pastor! He could not do better and you and I will do the same thing one of these days. We, also, shall go Home!” Our aged friend, as I told you, has gone Home since that time, and now I may say of him, “He could not have done better.” Why, that is where good children always go at night—home! If they ran away, where would they go? When our night comes, beloved children of God, you and I also must go Home—do we feel at all afraid of such a prospect? If so, surely our love to our Heavenly Father, and to our Elder Brother, and to our Home above must be growing somewhat cold.

And then, again, *if we did not die, we would wish to do so.* Certainly, when people cannot sleep, that is the very thing they crave for! There have, perhaps, been times when you have been ready to take something which would help to keep you awake when you have needed to do some special work, or to watch over some precious sick one. But when night follows night and there has been no sleep for you, you do not want anything to keep you awake, then, but you long for sleep. “Oh, that I could sleep!” you cry. We regard it, always, as a bad symptom when the sufferer says, “I cannot sleep.” The disciples said, concerning Lazarus, “If he sleeps, he shall do well,” and they spoke wisely, although they misunderstood the meaning of the word, sleep, in that connection. And, surely, we shall do well when we fall asleep in Jesus! It shall become to us the most blessed thing that God Himself can send us. Oh, if we could not die, it would be indeed horrible! Who wants to be chained to this poor life for a century or longer?

There came to me one of whom I may tell the story, for he is now dead and he said that if I would do his bidding, I would live forever here, for he had discovered a great secret by which men need never die. I said to him, “Sir, you seem to me like a man of seventy, and I should say that you are getting on towards death, yourself.” He replied, “Oh, no! I expect some little rash will come out all over me, in a few years, and then I shall be quite young again, and start living for another hundred years.” He told me that the people would believe his teaching when he had been here six or seven hundred years. And I answered that I thought it was very likely that they would! He offered to share his great secret with me, dear good man that he was, but I replied, “I would not give a button to know it— why should I want to live in this wretched penal colony forever?” He talked to me for some little time and when he found that he could make no impression on me, to consummate his madness, he asked me to go outside my door with him. He lifted up the knocker and rapped two or three times, saying very solemnly, “Too late! Too late! You cannot enter now!” He said that he had shut me out of the blessing of living here forever and so I said to him, “I am very much obliged to you for doing me such a kindness!”

He printed books and gave lectures on the subject, being fully persuaded in his own mind that he would never die. But he has died—I knew he would and I told him so. He said it was my lack of faith which made me talk like that, but he himself was confident that he would never die. Oh, what an awful thing it would be if that man’s fad could be a fact! Superstition declares it to be the curse upon “the wandering Jew” that he should never die. God be thanked that such a curse has never fallen upon us! No, unless the Lord should come first, we shall fall asleep in Him—and what a blessed thing it must be to fall asleep on the bosom of Christ! The child may be afraid to be put to bed in the dark, but it never fears to fall asleep upon its mother’s breast. And we might dread to be laid to rest, out there in the cold cemetery, all alone, but we do not fear to sleep in Jesus! Such a state as that is a thing to be desired, not to be dreaded!

**II.**Now let us come to our second point, THE THOUGHTS AWAKENED BY THIS FIGURE—“Some are fallen asleep.”  
First, thinking about the many who have fallen asleep, let me *ask— How did you treat them?*If your conscience pricks you concerning that matter, I want you to act towards the *living* saints in such a way as you would like to have done supposing you never see *them* again. When there has been an angry meeting or parting—when there have been hard words spoken, or when there have been unkind thoughts—when you could not enjoy true fellowship with some Christian friend, suppose that, the next morning, somebody came to your house and said, “Brother So-and-So is dead?” You would feel deeply pained to think that he had fallen asleep after you had so treated him. People have killed their minister by their unkindness—and there have been, alas, many who have done so! Those who have killed other persons—and there have been many of that sort, who have vexed and worried other people into their graves—may well think, with great sorrow, “Some are fallen asleep, but we did not treat them with the love and kindness we ought to have shown them.” Think over that matter, dear Friends, and see to it that no such regrets shall be possible to you.  
“Some are fallen asleep.” Then, *who is to fill their place? Many* have already gone from us this year and others keep on going. Sunday school teachers go—who will be “baptized for the dead”—*by taking their places in the ranks and filling the gap*? Hear this, you Church members who are doing nothing for Christ! “Some are fallen asleep.” Let that little sentence be a clarion call to you to wake up and go and occupy the vacant positions, that the work of Christ may know no lack in any part of His vineyard! Wake up! Wake up! You who are asleep in another sense—now that so many are being taken away from us—dig up the talent that has been wrapped in a napkin and buried in the earth—and put it out to blessed usury by employing it in the Master’s service!  
“Some have fallen asleep.” *Then you and I will also fall asleep before long*. It cannot be a long while for some of you who are getting gray or white. It may be a very short time for some of us who have scarcely reached the middle of life. And even you young folk may soon fall asleep, too, for I have seen a child asleep in the morning as well as at night, and so have you. Oh, let us not live in this world as if we thought of staying here forever, but let us try to be like a pious Scotch minister who was very ill and, being asked by a friend whether he thought himself dying, answered, “Really, Friend, I care not whether I am or not for, if I die, I shall be with God. And if I live, He will be with me.” There is not much to choose between those two blessed states! But let us remember, by the memory of everyone who has fallen asleep, that the time of our own departure is coming, by-and-by, and it may be very soon!  
But, as for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, we need not fret or trouble ourselves about them. To cut their faces, in token of their mourning for the dead, was natural to the heathen—well might they torture themselves in their hopeless grief, for they believed the separation to be eternal! But as for us, when children go upstairs to bed, do their elder brothers and sisters, who sit up later, gather together and cry because the other children have fallen asleep? Ah, no! They feel that they have not lost them, and they expect to meet again in the morning—and so do we! Therefore, let us not weep and lament to excess concerning the dear ones who are fallen asleep in Christ, for all is well with them! They are at rest—shall we weep about that? They are enjoying their eternal triumph—shall we weep about that? They are as full of bliss as they can possibly be—shall we weep about that? If any of your sons and daughters were taken away from you to be made into kings and queens in a foreign land, you might shed a tear or two at parting, but you would say, “It is for their good, let them go.” And do you grudge your well-beloved their crown of glory and all the bliss which God has bestowed upon them? If the departed could speak to us, they would say, “Bless God for us! Do not sit down and mourn because we have entered into His Glory, but rather rejoice because we are with Him where He is.” Therefore let us comfort one another with these words.  
**III.**Lastly, Brothers and Sisters, let us think, for just a minute or two, of THE HOPES CONFIRMED BY THIS FIGURE—“Some are fallen asleep.”  
First, *then, they are still ours.*If they were really dead, we might say that we had lost them, but as they have only fallen asleep, they are still ours! Wordsworth proclaimed a great Truth of God in that simple little poem of his, “We are seven.” There were some of the family buried in the churchyard, but the girl still declared that they were seven—and so they were! Did you ever notice, concerning Job’s children, that when God gave him twice as much substance as he had before, he gave him only the same number of children as he formerly had? The Lord gave him twice as much gold and twice as much of all sorts of property, but He only gave him the *exact number of children that he had before*. Why did He not give the Patriarch double the number of children as well as twice the number of cattle? Why, because God reckoned the first ones as being still his! They were dead to Job’s eyes, but they were visible to Job’s faith! God still numbered them as part of Job’s family—and if you carefully count up how many children Job had, you will find that he had twice as many in the end as he had in the beginning! In the same way, consider your friends who are asleep in Christ as still yours—not lost, any one of them—and say of them, “Some are fallen asleep.”  
“Our membership has been diminished,” somebody says. Yes, it has been, according to the Church Book and the figures as we reckon them here, but it has not really been diminished. I have, by faith, seen our Brothers and Sisters flying, like doves to their windows, and ascending to Heaven from this place! Every week some of them are going to the land beyond the skies. My soul has often rejoiced as I have thought of the spiritual children whom God has given me. I might almost claim that great promise which was made to Abraham, “Look now toward Heaven, and count the stars, if you are able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall your seed be.” For, if they have not reached the number of the stars yet, they are no more to be reckoned than are the stars! As I remember how many of them have already reached the better land, I do not think of them as lost, for they only fell asleep, here, to wake in the Presence of Jesus. Their sleeping bodies shall also wake again when the Resurrection trumpet sounds. No matter what has become of the particular particles of dust of which those bodies were composed, the essence of each individual shall be preserved by Omnipotent power, and out of it shall spring an undying body, remodeled and fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body! And the soul shall enter it and that soul shall be here, again, at the coming of Christ, for when He shall come in His Glory, they, also, who sleep in Jesus will He bring with Him! *“Therefore,”* again I say unto you, *“comfort* one another with these words.”

This is our last thought—we *shall again meet those who have fallen asleep.* We said, “Adieu,” to them, and so committed them to God’s keeping. We said, “Good-bye,” that is, “God be with you,” and God has been with them. We said, “Farewell,” and they have fared well. And we shall see how well they have fared to be with Christ, for we shall see them again! I believe that we shall know them, have communion with them and shall admire Christ’s Grace in them, and that it shall be part of our Heaven to come not only “to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant,” but also, “to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven.”

Now I have finished my discourse, but, how far is there any comfort to some of you in all that I have said? Some of you work very hard—have you any hope of rest in Heaven? If not, I pity you from the very depths of my heart! Some of you fare very hard—have you any hope of better fare with Christ forever? If not, I do indeed pity you, more than I can say! To go from poverty and misery, here, to a place where there shall be no hope for you forever, will be dreadful, indeed! If there were no Hell, I could not endure the thought of being shut out of Heaven, for, to be with Christ, to be with the Father, to be with the Holy Spirit, to miss the company of gracious and just men forever, would be a Hell that might well make men gnash their teeth in torment! Oh, may God save us all through faith which is in Christ Jesus! May we be saved tonight and then it will not matter how soon anyone may say of us, also, “They have fallen asleep,” for all will be well with us forever! God bless you, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*REVELATION 7:9-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-28; 50-58.***

We will read two passages from the New Testament tonight. The first will show us where the glorified saints are and the second will tell us what is to become of their bodies.

**Revelation 7:9-13.***After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb! And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me.*In reply, as it were, to John’s question put by the very look of his countenance! Sometimes the Lord Jesus Christ gave an answer to men who had not spoken to Him—and the angelic elder here followed His example and also, in another respect, imitated his Lord by replying to the inquisitive glance of John by asking him a question.

**13-17.***Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and* made *them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*This is to be the future state of all those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and to whom the saving Grace of God has come! So that, concerning all who have thus fallen asleep, we sorrow not as those without hope, for we know that all is well with them forever!

Now let us read a little of what the Apostle Paul was inspired to write with regard to the resurrection of the body.  
**1 Corinthians 15:1, 2.***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.*What, then, was this Gospel which Paul had preached, and which the Christians in Corinth had received—the Gospel which Paul declared would save them if they truly believed it? Was it a Gospel made up merely of doctrines? No! It was a Gospel formed of *facts*.  
**3.***For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*That is the first fundamental fact in the Gospel system. Blessed is the man who believes it and rests his soul upon it!  
**4.***And that He was buried: and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*That grand fact of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is rightly put next to His substitutionary Sacrifice, for it is the very cornerstone of our holy faith! It is one of the essential doctrines which must be received by us, for we cannot truly believe the Gospel unless we accept the great Truth of Christ’s Resurrection!  
**5-8.***And that He was seen of Cephas—that is, Peter—then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this time, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.*I suppose, Brothers and Sisters, that we may have persons arise who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte. And when they do—when all reliable history is flung to the winds—then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane! The risen Christ was seen by many persons who knew Him intimately before He died—by those who saw Him put to death and who saw Him when He was dead. He was seen, on various occasions, privately, by one, by two, by 12 of those who had been His companions for years. At other times, He was seen in public by large numbers who could not all have been deceived. These men were so certain that this was, indeed, the same Christ who had lived, and died, that, although it was at first difficult to make them believe that He had risen from the dead, it was impossible to make them doubt it afterwards! And the major part of them died to bear witness to the fact! They were martyred because they confessed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. There is no fact in history, from the days of Adam until now, that is better attested than this great central Truth of God of the Resurrection of Christ! So we accept it and receive it gladly. Paul finishes up his list of witnesses by putting himself down as one of them, although his conversion was, to himself, such a marvelous display of Divine Grace that he was like “one born out of due time.”  
**9-14.***For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I; but the Grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and then your faith is also vain.*It is all emptiness! Our preaching evaporates—there is nothing left in it—unless Christ did really rise from the dead! And your faith has nothing in it, either—you are believing in that which is only vanity and nothingness—unless His Resurrection was a fact.  
**15-17.**Yes, *and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom, He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.*So that you cannot be a Christian if you deny the Resurrection of Christ! You must give up Christianity altogether and confess that your faith in it was a delusion unless you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that, therefore, there is a resurrection from the dead for the sons of men! Let it always be most clearly understood that what Christ is, that His people are! There is an unbroken union between the Head and the members, so that, if He lives, they live. And if He lives not, then they live not. And if they live not, then He lives not. Jesus and those for whom He died are so intimately joined together that they are really and truly one— and nothing can ever separate them!  
**18, 19.***Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable.* That is to say, if our hope for the future is all a lie, we have been dreadfully deceived and, moreover, if we could lose a hope so brilliant as that has been to us, there would fall upon us a sense of loss so great that no one in the world could be so wretched as we should be! Besides, the Apostles were always in jeopardy of their lives—if they were suffering poverty, persecution and the fear of death by martyrdom, all for a *lie*— they were, indeed, of all men the most deluded, and the most miserable! But the Corinthians would not admit that and neither will we.  
**20.***But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits.*He must always come first, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

**20-28.***Of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.* The mediatorial Person of Christ, as God-Man, shall bow before the eternal majesty of the Godhead, “that God may be all in all.” Now we will finish our reading with just a few verses at the close of the chapter.

**50, 51.***Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*We shall not all die, some will be alive when Christ comes to this earth, again, “but we shall all be changed,” if not by the process of death and resurrection, yet by some other means.

**52.***In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*Somehow or other, such a change as this must take place before we can enter Heaven, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

**53-58.***For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* That should be the practical outcome of receiving the great Truths of which we have been reading. God grant that it may be! Amen.

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A LEAP YEAR SERMON  
NO. 2663

[Although 1900 is not observed as a Leap Year, the last Sabbath in February is the nearest corresponding date to the Leap Year Sunday in 1880, when the accompanying sermon was delivered. It is therefore issued for reading on that day with the earnest prayer that it may be as profitable to those who read it as it was to those who were privileged to hear it.]

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1900.**

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 29, 1880.~~***

***~~“One born out of due time.”  
1 Corinthians 15:8.~~***

PAUL thus describes himself. It was necessary that Paul, as an Apostle, should have seen the Lord. He was not converted at the time of Christ’s Ascension, yet he was made an Apostle, for the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the way, as he was going to Damascus, to persecute the saints of God. When he looked upon himself as thus put in, as it were, at the end of the Apostles, he spoke of himself in the most depreciating terms, calling himself, “one born out of due time.”

Those who are acquainted with the Greek tongue know what a despicable term Paul here applied to himself—as though he was scarcely a man at all. At any rate, as the very last of the family, “born out of due time,” and not only the last, but also the very *least*, for he says, “I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” Scholars will know why I cannot exactly explain the word which Paul uses, but rather keep to the rendering of our translation, which, although it may not have the force and full meaning of the Greek expression, is, perhaps, none the less useful for public reading. “One born out of due time.”

Paul thought very humbly of himself. He reckoned himself less than nothing and put himself down at the very lowest estimate—and mentioned that he was brought to Christ and made an Apostle when the time for such a work was apparently over. Out of date altogether, beyond the period when it might have been thought that another Apostle would be called of God, there was Paul—found as “one born out of due time.”

My subject tonight is, first, *the singular time of Paul’s spiritual birth.*There are many of God’s true children who, like the Apostle, were “born out of due time.” When I have expatiated upon that fact, I shall speak of *the sure evidences* of *his spiritual birth* and show you that, although “born out of due time,” he was born—and there were sure evidences of his spiritual birth—which evidences, I trust, may be seen in many of us, also!

**I.**First, then, let us think of THE SINGULAR TIME OF PAUL’S SPIRITUAL BIRTH.  
There are still some who, like the Apostle, are born to God “out of due time.” They are truly born again, regenerated, converted, *at a most unlikely season.* There have been multitudes brought to Christ under earnest sermons, when the appeals of faithful men have thrilled the congregation and the Truth of God has been effectually carried home to the hearts of many of the hearers. But there have also been times when God’s ministers have waxed faint, when the sermon has appeared to be destitute of all force, when nobody has seemed to have felt the power of the sermon and, apparently, the Truth of God has fallen quite flat! Yet, on many such occasions there have been some sinners converted to God when we would hardly have thought it to be possible!  
Mr. Tennant, a famous American minister of Whitefield’s time—one of the most earnest and seraphic men who ever proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ—had a hearer who remained unmoved under many a score of his most faithful sermons. Others were saved, but not this man. He seemed unmoved and immovable, but it came to pass, on a certain Sabbath, that a very unusual thing happened. Mr. Tennant had prepared his sermon with great care. It was what we are known to call a laborious discourse into which he had put all the thought and all the pains possible. But he had not been preaching long before his memory completely failed him! His mind refused to work and, after floundering about for a while, he was obliged to sit down in great confusion and say that he could not preach to the people that day. The man I have mentioned, who had never before been impressed under Mr. Tennant’s ministry, was *that day* called by Sovereign Grace as “one born out of due time,” for he was led to see that there was a spiritual and supernatural force which had usually helped the pastor to preach—and that when this Divine influence was withdrawn—he was as weak as other men and could not speak with power as he had been accustomed to do! This Truth of God, somehow or other—for human minds are strangely constituted and things which have no effect upon certain people, very greatly affect others who are present at the same time—this Truth, I say, induced the man to think! And thinking, he was led to believe in God, and to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul. He was, without doubt, one “born out of due time.”  
I would like to break down, as Mr. Tennant did, if some of you would be born to God by that means! I would rather be dumb and win a soul for Jesus, than speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet men’s hearts should not be impressed by the Truth of God I proclaimed! How often I have found that when I have gone home and sighed, and cried, and groaned over a sermon in which I felt no liberty, but thought it was an utter failure, it has afterwards been proved that, here one, and there another, have come forward blessing and praising God for that very testimony which seemed to me so faulty and feeble, but which the Spirit of the Lord has savingly impressed upon them! So, still, there are some who in this way are “born out of due time,” through the Holy Spirit’s use, even, of the preacher’s weakness and apparent failure!  
Another illustration may be taken from the opposite side of the same Truth. Some are converted when they seem, themselves, to be in a state of mind in which they are the most unlikely to be impressible. I remember being in Dr. John Campbell’s house, one day, when he told me that a minister was preaching at Whitefield’s old Tabernacle in Moorfields, one evening, when there were present, under very strange circumstances, two young men who had fallen into dissipated habits and who had made an appointment with each other for the commission of some gross sin that very night. Had they committed what they had planned, it may be that they would have plunged themselves into a career of vice from which they might never have been extricated. They were passing by the Moorfields Tabernacle, which some of you remember, and as they needed to know the time at which they were to meet for this unholy purpose, one of them said to the other, “Go in and check the time—there is sure to be a clock in there.” But the clock was not fixed as it is here, at the back of the preacher, but the other way—so the young man had to go some little distance further in than he intended, in order to see the clock. If I remember rightly, the preacher that night was Matthew Wilks, and he was just uttering some quaint remark, something that arrested the young man’s attention and held him fast in the aisle. His companion waited outside for a time, but it was cold, so he thought he had better go in and look at the clock, himself, and fetch his friend out. He went in—the arrows of the Lord pierced the heart of both of them! The second of those young men was John Williams, the famous missionary and, at last, the martyr of Erromanga! Thus they, also, were “born out of due time.”  
You would not have thought it possible that those men would become, as they did, preachers of the Gospel, when they were, at that very time, desperately set on the commission of a great sin against God and their hearts were wholly given up to the pleasures and follies of this world! But so it happened and our Lord still knows how to stop men as He stopped Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. He is the man who says that he was “born out of due time” and he is a wonderful instance of this method of Divine interposition. He has in his possession the letters from the High Priest which will enable him to bind the saints and carry them off to Jerusalem. He is riding towards Damascus and is within sight of the city when, in the very midst of his high-handed course of persecution, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, intervenes and smites him down to the ground! Presently, Paul rises to pray and, in his three days’ blindness and fasting, to seek the Lord and then to find Him, to the salvation of his soul and the joy of his spirit—and thus to become an Apostle of that very Savior whom, in his ignorance, he had been persecuting! After such a triumph of Divine Grace, let us never despair of *any* sinner, however far he may have gone into sin!  
You know how Paul, writing to Timothy, said of himself, “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” The God who blessed the broken sermon of Mr. Tennant can bless our imperfect work in the pulpit, the Sunday school, or anywhere else! And the God who saved such men as John Williams and his companion, when they least thought of such a thing happening, can also save some who have strayed in here, tonight, little dreaming what designs of love God has toward them in bringing them at this time under the sound of His Word!  
I consider, next, that a convert may be described as one “born out of due time” when he is brought to Christ *after some great revival or notable religious movement has come to an end.*There are some of you who attended the recent special services conducted here by Messrs. Fullerton and Smith. What power there was in those hallowed gatherings! Some of your neighbors wept under conviction of sin, but you did not. Some of them came to Christ and are now rejoicing in Him, but you did not come to Him. You were not even impressed during the meetings, though, possibly, you wished to be. Or it may be that you began with a desire after better things, but you ended in indifference. And now the special services are all over and the good men who came among us to preach and sing the Gospel are gone—and you have been saying to yourselves, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Ah, but our Lord has a blessed way of picking up the stragglers behind the army! When the main body has marched on with sound of trumpet, praising God, there are a few left behind—and the Lord Jesus sometimes comes and picks them up! I do earnestly pray that some of you may be thus picked up by Him just now, so that you may be able to say, “We were not born for God when many others were, but, like Saul of Tarsus, we were ‘born out of due time.’ But, blessed be God, we were born again by the effectual working of His Spirit! We were brought to Christ, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, and now we, also, have become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.” Pray that it may be so dear Friends! O you Christian people, bow your hearts before God and ask that it may be so! Perhaps the very fact that those services are over and that a gracious opportunity has gone may be impressed upon the minds of some who were present during the meetings, but who were not converted—and they may now seek the Savior and find Him to their everlasting salvation and happiness!  
The Lord can bless strange methods to the awakening of the ungodly. When Puritanism seemed to be trodden under foot, in the reign of James I, and the king issued the Book of Sports, and gave commandment that every clergyman was to read from the pulpit, on Sunday, that it was the royal will and pleasure that the young people should play at football, cricket and other games and pastimes on the Lord’s-Day afternoon, godly ministers who really loved the Lord did not know what to do. One of them thought, perhaps, it would be well to do as the king ordered and to say something beside, so, when the Sunday came for reading the Book of Sports to the people, he said, “I am commanded by the king and the authorities to read to you the following document, but it grieves my heart and conscience to have to read it. I know it is wicked, wrong, shameful and abominable to desecrate the Sabbath as you are invited to do, and I wonder what will become of my country when even from the church, itself, Sabbath-breaking is recommended.”  
So, the good man spoke, to the relief of his own conscience and in hope of awakening the consciences of others. It happened that there was in the congregation, that day, a young man who had always been a ringleader in the Sabbath sports—he was no sooner out of church, in the morning, than he was on the village green, fast and furious in all the amusements of the time. But, when he heard that Book of Sports read, he said to himself, “well, I acted in that way on my own account and it was wrong enough for me to do so, but now I say with the minister, “What is to become of all the country if everybody is to be as bad as I have been? What will happen to the nation if this kind of thing is to go on?” The thought struck him so forcibly that he became, first, a serious character, and then a true seeker after God—and afterwards a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! So it came to pass that when the devil thought he was going to have everything his own way, that very day, this young man was born to God—truly, “born out of due time.”  
I remember reading a very striking saying of Mr. Bunyan’s. He said he had good reason to believe that in the generation after him, there would be many more saints than in the one of which he formed a part. He said his belief was based upon the fact that wherever he went, he found that there were so many great sinners that he hoped they would be converted and become eminent servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, there was a blessed truth at the back of that hope of his, for, very often, where sin has abounded, Grace does much more abound! And when the Word of God seems to grow scarce and the candle of the Gospel burns but dimly, we may pray and expect that even then some may be “born out of due time” to the praise of the glory of that Grace which saves as it wills—and often selects the very chief of sinners to be the subjects of it’s almighty power!  
There have been some dear friends who may be said to have been “born out of due time,” for they have been converted to God after it seemed impossible that they ever should be. I remember well reading of one who imbibed skeptical notions and became exceedingly furious against the preaching of the Word. One day, in Edinburgh, he heard it said that a certain eminent minister of the Gospel intended, if he met him, to speak with him about his soul. Whereupon the man uttered some very strong expressions and, among other wicked things, he said, “I shall never be converted unless I lose my senses!” All who were acquainted with him and who knew how desperately he was set against the Gospel, thought that his was, indeed, a hopeless case. But, in the Infinite mercy of God, it turned out to be quite the opposite! He began to suffer from great incoherence of thought. His mind gradually wandered—when he was trying to speak, he often spoke utter nonsense. He became unfit for business and had to be put into the custody of someone who watched him as his keeper. Reason was not actually gone, but it was reeling upon its throne, and while he was in that sad state, the case of Nebuchadnezzar came to his mind and he wondered whether God had given him up, altogether, on account of what he had said—that he would never be converted while he was in his senses. He turned his mind, all shipwrecked and battered as it was, towards God, and out of the depths of his halfbewildered spirit, he cried unto the Lord as Nebuchadnezzar did—and his mind returned to him and he became a humble, gentle, holy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!  
Do you not think, dear Friends, that he also was “one born out of due time”? The time of salvation seemed utterly past so far as he was concerned. He had made a covenant with death and a league with Hell. He had cast off those ordinary beliefs which many men hold even though they do not obey them—yet, notwithstanding all that, the surprising Grace of God dealt with him after its own Sovereign manner and laid him low, that it might bring him up again! I do not pray that such a thing may happen to anybody here, but I do pray that God may bring you to Christ somehow and if, in order to attain that end, you have to be driven to the very gates of Hell—so long as you do not actually pass through them—I will rejoice if, afterwards, you are led to flee to Christ for refuge!  
Another instance of “one born out of due time” occurs in the case of one *converted after the spiritual father is dead.*We sometimes see posthumous children, that is, those who are born after the father is deceased, and there is generally much sorrow mingled with the thought of such births, for the poor widow’s heart is doubly troubled by the extra care needed for the little stranger who arrives after the bread-winner of the family is taken away. But if a man is the means of bringing another to Christ after he, himself, is dead, there need be no sorrow about that matter! There have been many, many instances in which earnest Christian people have sought the conversion of their relatives or friends. They have prayed for them, and wept over them, and pleaded with them—but all their efforts have been unsuccessful. Yet, after their death, the memory of their holy zeal has touched the conscience of the one who would not yield, before, and brought him to Christ. I wish, dear Friends, that your godly mother, who is in Heaven and who died leaving her son unsaved, might seem to come to you just now. I ask for no apparition, but that she may be consciously present to your mind and that her dying words may ring in your ears, for perhaps the remembrance of what she said may be blessed to you even now.  
When I am taken away, I can but wish that any true and faithful word that I have spoken may still continue to speak to you from my grave. When good Mr. Payson died, he begged that his people might come and see him, if they wished, before he was interred and those who did so, read these words on his bosom, “Remember the word which I have spoken unto you being yet present with you.” It was thus his desire, you see, that he should have posthumous spiritual children—that they should be born to God even though they should seem to be “born out of due time.” Ah, you wives, who have been praying for your husbands these many years, never give them up, because they may be brought to Christ when you, yourselves, will be in Heaven! Mothers and fathers, never cease pleading for your children, for they, too, may be brought to Jesus when you are among the angels.  
Up in one of the northern counties of England there was a woman, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose prayer went up continually for her husband, but he never entered the House of God—and despised her for doing so. She was accustomed to go to her usual place of worship alone, so far as any human companions were concerned, yet she was not quite alone, for there was a dog that always went with her. This dog curled himself up under the seat and lay quite still during the service, and then walked home with his mistress. The first Sunday after she was dead, the poor dog went off to the Meeting House as usual, and curled himself up in his old place. He did the same the next Sunday, and the husband, noticing the dog start out so regularly, was struck by its action and wondered where the dog went, now that his mistress was gone. So he thought he would go and see. The dog went before him to his mistress’s old seat and curled himself up. The man went in after the dog and sat down in his wife’s place—and God helped the minister, that day, to show him that his good works and self-righteousness in which he had always trusted, would not be sufficient for his salvation. And the minister preached to him the full salvation of Christ Jesus—and the man believed and lived. Was not he, also, “born out of due time,” for his wife’s prayers for him were a all over, and she was gone? Yet he was brought to Christ.  
The subject is one upon which I might enlarge indefinitely, but I would rather have you to supply further instances of similar blessing by urging you to persevere in prayer, you who are seeking the salvation of others.  
Some have been “born out of due time” because they have been *converted to God in extreme old age.*I would like to encourage any very aged person who is here and still unsaved—and to drive away altogether the notion that it is too late to seek the Lord! It is never too late as long as life lasts and there is the power to repent of sin and to turn to the Lord— ***“While the lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner may return.”***

I will not quote cases, but I have a vivid recollection of a good many persons who have been saved at the age of 70 or eighty. We have had persons, past both of those periods, baptized upon profession of their newlyfound faith. The world’s proverb says, “It is never too late to mend,” but Christ would tell you, if He were here in bodily Presence, that it is never too late for Him to mend you, or rather, for *Him to make you anew*, for that is the work He undertakes to do. It is never too late for Him to stretch out His pierced hands and help the man who is tottering on his staff, to become a babe in Christ! Yet, surely when very old men are born again, they seem to be “born out of due time.”

Many of you have not yet come to old age, yet if God should save you, tonight, you would be as those who are “born out of due time,” because you are *on the*ve*ry brink of the grave.*Consumption has laid its cruel hand upon you and pulled down all your strength. In all probability you will not be long in this world. You have come out, tonight, but you are half-afraid that you have done wrong in coming in the state you are in, with that terrible cough that you have—and you have not found the Savior. O my dear young Friend, wherever you may be, it is a sad, sad thing to be carrying about with you, your death-warrant, as you certainly are doing, and yet to have no warrant to believe that when you die, it will be well with you! Oh, I pray you, do not let Satan tempt you with the idea that now, when sickness is upon you, there is no hope for you!

Come to Jesus, however consumptive you look! Come to Jesus, young man, with that chest that scarcely allows you to breathe! Come unto Him, for He will not cast you away! I remember one, whom I met at Mentone, who had gone there in the hope of lengthening his life, but that was quite out of the question, for he was too far gone when he came. He had two sisters who were sent for to come to him, for it was certain that he could not live long. He himself was under deep concern of soul, earnestly seeking the Lord, but he could not find Him. Day after day, week after week, he had been getting worse and worse and showing all the signs of his approaching departure, but he could not find peace with God. At last, his sisters came from England. They arrived just in time. They found him very anxious about his soul. That night they spoke with him of Jesus and in the morning, early, when they woke, they went to him and he was sitting up in bed, all pale and ghostlike. He said, “Sisters, Christ has forgiven me!” And he fell back on his pillow and he was gone Home. There was an end of his suffering and weakness here below, but the consolation of that last word to them, and of the joy that beamed from his poor eyes was enough to make them gladly commit his body to the tomb. “Sisters, Christ has forgiven me!” Ah, he was, indeed, “born out of due time”—born between the very jaws of death! But death’s jaws could not close upon him till he had received forgiveness from his Savior. I beseech any of you who are in a similar condition to his, do not put off seeking the Lord, but hasten to find Him even now!

Once more, there are some who are “born out of due time” because they *are born all of a sudden.* They suddenly come to Christ. They suddenly find peace. They are suddenly saved. I wish that might happen to some here tonight. There is no need of any set period for this allimportant matter! Time is no element in the matter. God can work conviction and conversion in a single instant. You know that, sometimes, you see a flash of lightning and then you wait several seconds before you hear the thunder. But when a storm is right overhead, the flash and the slap are simultaneous, and down comes the pouring rain at the same time! And, in like manner, the Lord knows how to send a flash of conviction and, at the same instant, to make His deep voice of mercy to be heard in the soul—and to send the floods of Grace upon the spirit then and there! Why should He not do so tonight for any of you who need these blessings?

Now I will tell you the special reason why I chose this text. It is because this is the 29th of February and it is a Sunday. There is a large number of you who never saw a 29th of February on Sunday, before, and there is a still larger number who will never see the 29th of February on a Sunday, again. I suppose it will be 28 years before that will occur again. So, this is a Sunday thrown in, as it were. It is an odd kind of day, an extra day in the calendar. If you ask our friends of the Greek Church, the Russians, they will tell you that there is not such a day at all, for they keep to the old system of reckoning time. This plan of putting in an odd day every four years, to make our days square with the sun, is a very good and proper one. Still, it is a kind of a day thrown in, and it seemed to me that, if the Lord would convert some souls on this odd day in this leap year, it would make the 29th of February, that came on a Sunday, to be specially memorable! You will not forget it if it is the day of *your* conversion! You will say to your children, it may be, 28 years hence, if you are alive, “Ah, I recollect when the 29th of February last came on a Sunday—that was the day when I sought and found the Lord! Mr. Spurgeon said that I was like the Apostle Paul, ‘one born out of due time,’ and so I was. Yet I was born in due time, I know, according to the Covenant of Grace.”

Oh that the Lord, in His Infinite mercy, having given us this special day, would now give us a special blessing and bring many to Himself this leap year! Oh, that all of you who are still unsaved, would make a leap right out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son, His Holy Spirit enabling you so to do by a simple act of faith in Jesus Christ! And you Christian people, pray for a special and unusual blessing, a 29th of February blessing. Ask God to give it to us, in His infinite mercy, that many and many a soul may be “born out of due time” this very night!

Who shall it be? And where shall the work of repentance begin? Does not somebody over there say, “Lord, let it be me”? There is said to be a special opportunity of making proposals in leap year, but I can tell you, if you make a proposal to come to Christ, that He has long ago set His heart on you! You would never have thought of proposing to Him if He had not first of all ordained to bring you to Himself! If you come to Him, He will receive you and oh, in His great mercy, may the Holy Spirit incline you to come to Him this 29th of February that falls upon a Sunday!

**II.**Now I have only two or three minutes left for the second part of my subject—THE SURE EVIDENCES OF PAUL’S SPIRITUAL BIRTH.  
Though Paul was, in a spiritual sense, “born out of due time,” he was truly born again. And those persons who have been converted at singular times and, under strange circumstances, have been really converted. How do we know that Paul was born again and that he was called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ?  
I answer, first, because *he had seen the Lord.*After mentioning those who saw the risen Christ, he says, “Last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.” The first evidence that he was an Apostle was that he had actually beheld the Lord. Now, in a spiritual sense, one of the marks of a true Believer is that he has seen the Lord. My dear Friend, if you have looked to Christ for forgiveness, even though you have only looked to Him, tonight, and this is an odd night—the 29th of February, yet, if you have, by faith, seen Jesus on the Cross, and truly trusted Him, you are as much saved as the man is who believed in Christ 50 years ago! Looking to Jesus is the evidence that we are born again—and happy is everyone who can truthfully say, concerning Christ, “He was

seen of me, also.”— ***“I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood.”***

I looked to Him. He looked on me and we were one forever. I trusted Him and, therefore, I am saved. If you can say that from your heart and the Holy Spirit bears witness that what you say is true, you need not raise any question about your new birth! If you are trusting in Jesus, it is well with your soul in time and to eternity!

The next evidence of his spiritual birth, which Paul gave, was that *he confessed his sin*. Read the verse following our text. “For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” See how he confessed his sin and forsook it? “He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but who confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.” Are you, dear Friend, willing, now, to confess your sin? Do you turn from it with loathing? Do you desire, henceforth, to be delivered entirely from it? Well, then, your repentance is another sure evidence that you are born again! If you have seen Jesus taking your sin upon Himself and suffering its dread penalty. If you have confessed your sin and, by faith, laid it upon Him as your Sacrifice and Substitute, you are born again, though you may have been, in a certain sense, “born out of due time.”

Next, we are sure that Paul was really born again because *he was thoroughly converted.*Never was there a greater change in any man than there was in him! He never went back to his former life and he had no hankering to return to it. With him, old things had passed away and all things had become new—he was, indeed, a new creature in Christ Jesus!

I am sure he was converted, also, because he praised the Grace of God. Read the 10th verse. “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Even when he truthfully says, “I labored more abundantly than they all,” he humbly adds, “yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.” It its a sure sign of conversion when a man knows that he is saved by Grace, alone, and does not attribute it to his own merit, or his own works, but praises and adores the Sovereign Mercy and Grace of God. Have you that evidence, dear Friend? Then you are born aright, even though “born out of due time.”

And, lastly, Paul proved that he was a true citizen of the New Jerusalem because he became, of all men, *most zealous for Christ,*zealous for the Gospel, zealous for the winning of souls. He seemed to try to do all he could to undo the mischief he had worked in the days of his unregeneracy and to work with both his hands and all his heart to establish and extend the Kingdom which once he tried to overthrow. O God, by Your great mercy, cause another Paul to be born in this House of Prayer tonight! You can do it. Will You not bring to Yourself, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, some wild, threatening, blustering, blaspheming hater of Christ? Lay him at the dear feet of the Crucified and cause him to look up and live!

Pray for this, dear Christian people. Pray for it tonight when you reach your homes as well as now! And then we shall have special reason to remember this 29th of February. Possibly, someone who will, in days to come, stand on this very spot preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will say to you, “Do you remember the 29th of February, 1880? Do you remember the text, ‘One born out of due time’?” I trust that some of you will be here to hear him say, “I remember it better than any of you do, for that was the night when I was born to God, glory be to His holy name!” Now pray for it with all your hearts, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *JOHN 3:1-18.***

If you were sent for to visit a dying man and you wished to select a chapter which would set the Truth of God before him very briefly and very clearly, you could not make a better choice than this 3rd Chapter of the Gospel according to John. So, as we are all dying men and women, let us read it with that same desire—and may the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it.

**Verses 1, 2.***There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night.* That was better than not coming at all. “Better late than never.” Better come to Christ in the dark than not come to Him at all.

**2.***And said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that You do, except God be with him.* This was good reasoning on the part of Nicodemus. If he did not at first go as far as he afterwards did, it argued well for him that he went as far as he could. O you who are troubled with unbelief, believe as much as you can, and then cry, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief and, especially, help me to get rid of it.” Confess to Christ what you do believe, and He will add more to your belief.

**3.***Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*He cannot understand what it is. He cannot know anything about it. He cannot see it.

**4, 5.***Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*If the “water” mentioned here relates to Baptism—which I greatly question— then, certainly, it shows the way of entrance for a Believer, publicly, into the Kingdom of God. But if it relates to the purifying power of the Spirit of God—as I believe it does—then it teaches us that no man enters into the Kingdom of God and becomes a partaker of its privileges—which is something more than merely seeing it—except the Spirit of God shall be to him as water purifying him from sin. This is the reason why a man cannot enter into the *spiritual Kingdom* until he is born again—born from above.

**6.***That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* And “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.”  
**6.***And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* And only the new creature, which is thus born, can, by any possibility, understand or enter into the possession of the spiritual things which belong to the Kingdom of God.

**7, 8.***Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is mysterious, like the wind, and so is the creature that is “born of the Spirit.” The spiritual man often cannot understand himself, he is so mysterious a being—how then shall he be able to fully comprehend how that wondrous new life is created within him? All we know is that he is a new creation, as much the work of eternal power as our first creation.

**9, 10.***Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things?* “These things” that lie at the very root of everything? “Are you a Rabbi and do you not know this?” Alas, good Master, there are still many Rabbis who do not understand this! Many who have taken the highest degree the University can give them, yet do not know in their own souls what it is to be born again!

**11.***Verily, verily, I say unto you, We speak what We know, and testify what We have seen; and you receive not Our witness.* Spiritual men declare that there are spiritual things. They know them and have seen them, and they have a right to be believed, for they are not liars. They are honest men and speak what they know, yet, often, their witness is not received. They need not be surprised at this, for it was the same with their Master!

**12.***If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?*If these elementary Truths of God about the new birth stagger you, what is the use of My going on to anything higher? You would not understand it, or receive it.

**13.***And no man has ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.*He alone knows the secrets of God who has been with God, who has come from God, and who is still with God.

**14-18.***And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.* God give us, even now, deliverance from condemnation through faith in His dear Son—and prevent our being condemned through our unbelief— for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—416, 222, 511.**  
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LESSONS ON DIVINE GRACE

NO. 2833

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 31, 1903.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1861.~~***

***~~“But by the Grace of God I am what I am.  
1 Corinthians 15:10.~~***

THIS confession, suitable on the lips of Paul, is equally appropriate in the mouth of each one of us who have known and proved the Grace of God. We must consider Paul, according to his own account of himself, as being “not meet to be called an Apostle”—though “not a whit behind the very chief Apostles”—because he had persecuted the Church of God. In respect of personal merit, he knew that he did not deserve to be accounted of at all, yet, when the sole ground of approbation was not the service he had rendered to his Sovereign, but the favor which his Sovereign had bestowed upon him, he could say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Take the meanest lamb in Jesus’ fold, the feeblest heir of Grace, the most timid and fearing—the most hopeless and helpless of all disciples, the man most devoid of talent, the man who stands the very lowest on the list of the saints of God—surely he may and must say that “by the Grace of God” he is what he is, so far as he is in Christ—a Believer, with all the privileges that Believers have a gracious right to claim! Let this be your comfort, you little ones, that the same Grace that made an Apostle of Paul has made a Christian of you. The same power that has quickened the mightiest man in the army of the Lord of Hosts has also quickened you. The Grace that saves the greatest saves the least. If the largest and brightest gem in the crown of Christ reflects His Grace and glorifies His love, even so shall you, though you are as the smallest pearl that shall be set in His glorious diadem of honor!

Then, next, take the Apostle Paul in the other way he describes himself in our text. In the preceding verse, he says he is the least of the Apostles, yet he also says, “I labored more abundantly than they all.” It is equally true, whether you put him in the meanest place among converts, or in the very forefront of the army of faithful soldiers of Christ—among the feeblest of pensioners or the most zealous of all the laborers in the vineyard of the Master—the acknowledgment must be made, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Be our attainments never so eminent, our knowledge never so extensive, our usefulness never so great, yet still we stand, in the sight of God, on the same footing as the very meanest member of the Church of Christ! The song which begins among the little and the timid gathers strength among the great and the brave. It is not altered in the slightest degree—the language is the same, the strain the same, the song the same—“By the Grace of God,” we, all of us, must say, “we are what we are”!

I am going to speak of my text, first, *doctrinally*. Secondly, *experimentally*. And, thirdly, *practically*.  
**I.** First, DOCTRINALLY. Each one of us who is a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can take this sentence as his creed and say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”  
That is to say, first, I am not what I am *as the result of something good which God foresaw would be in me*. God has not vouchsafed His love, His favor, His mercy to me because He foresaw that I would repent of my sin and trust in His dear Son. No, there is a deeper cause for His love than anything that could be found in me! Indeed, there is nothing that could be found in me that is lovely in His sight, but it would be proved, immediately, that He had, first of all, freely given that lovely thing to me, or created it within me. If I am a child of God, an heir of Heaven, the wellspring of God’s love to me is in His own Sovereign Grace. Nothing in my disposition or character could move His heart to me. His heart must have moved spontaneously—it must have welled up because of its own deep love—and it must have flowed towards me in its own Divine channel simply because God, in His Sovereignty, would have it so! “By the Grace of God,” I am elected unto eternal life—  
***“Grace first inscribed my name,  
In God ’s eternal book.”***  
‘Twas Grace which set me apart, in distinguishing love, before the stars were made! ‘Twas Grace that separated me from the mass of mankind. ‘Twas Grace that laid hold of me while I was but as a pebble in the brook—and ordained that I should be a bright diamond in Christ’s crown! It was God who, in the beginning, by His own Grace, decreed that I should be what I am and, therefore, to begin there, we take this as our creed, “By the Grace of God”—as manifested in eternity and, by that alone have I been caused to be “what I am.”  
Then, next, my text also means I am not what I am *as the result of any creature strength, or any means of my own*. I am not what I am because I chose to be what I am, for if I had been what I chose to be, I would still have been “dead in trespasses and sins.” If I had followed my poor, blind free will, it would have been, to this day, leading me to Hell! It would never have led me Heaven. If I had made it my guide, I would have wandered further and further, and further away from God. With my back to the Savior, I would never have moved towards God. It is the same with all of us—if there is anything good in any of us, we must confess that God Himself put it there. He taught our souls to pray. He made us feel our need of Divine Grace. He stripped us of our boastful pride. He delivered us from our refuges of lies. He leveled the legality of our hearts by bringing us low with labor, exhausting all our strength. ‘Twas He who cast the first ray of hope into our soul! He opened our blind eyes to see the beauty of Christ! He gave us the first glimmering of faith! He enabled us to see that our sins were washed away by the precious blood of Jesus and He has kept us alive to this day and will not let us go!  
We will maintain this Truth of God against all comers, that saints are what they are “by the Grace of God” and not by their own free will! I have sometimes heard men preach doctrines contrary to this. They have said that men are what they are as the result of the improvement of “universal Grace,” and that the distinction which is apparent in them is made by themselves. God gave them a Grace which they were to use—not a Grace which operated upon them, but a grace which they operated upon. According to that teaching, Divine Grace is given to men as a tool with which they are to work, not as a seal which God sets upon a man—Grace is subservient to man—he is not subservient to Grace. Yet I must say that although I have heard such doctrine as that preached from the pulpit, I have never known it to be practically received in the heart of a child of God. When you come to the point and ask a true Believer, “Why are you, now, a child of God and an heir of Heaven?” he tells you, once and for all, “God made the difference.” He will, perhaps, tell you that men can do much towards their own conversion, but He will deny that he has done anything towards his. He will loyally put the crown on the head of Christ, even though being clouded in his understanding, he may have talked as if he denied the Truth. But, Brothers and Sisters, what we hold is the Doctrine of the effectual working of God in the hearts of His chosen ones, as the Lord said to Zerubbabel, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, said the Lord of Hosts.” And as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”  
Now let us look at our text in another aspect. Some suppose that even if Divine Grace begins the work, we must at least carry it on. It cannot be denied that the living child of God has power, but it must not be forgotten that the power of the living child of God is not in himself, but in his Heavenly Father. For it is as true of him as of any sinner—“dead in trespasses and sins” that, without Christ, he can do nothing. The living child of God is still as powerless as the dead sinner apart from the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the constant inflowing of the Divine Life into his soul. “By the Grace of God” we not only are what we are, but we also *remain* what we are. We would long ago have ruined ourselves— and damned ourselves—if Christ had not kept us by His Almighty Grace!  
There has not been one hour in our whole Christian experience in which we have preserved ourselves! We cannot look back to any stage in our history and say, “Here I worked mighty marvels by my own unaided power.” We dare not say, when we have been made to stand on our high places, that we stood there by our own wisdom. Nor can we say, when we have run without weariness, that we did it in our own strength. No, Beloved, whenever we discover our own strength in our pilgrimage, it is in going backward and in tumbling down—never in going forward, or in mounting upward. With the Psalmist, we have to say to the Lord, “All my springs are in You” and, as all the springs are in the Lord, so are all the streams as well. As for myself, I must continually sing—  
***“Oh, to Grace, how great a debtor  
Daily I ’m constrained to be!”***  
Not only am I debtor to Grace, once and for all, but each day adds to the debt and each hour the bulk of my obligation grows. I must still say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” Some of you could say this 20 years ago, but you can say it with even greater emphasis now! And when you get gray-headed and totter down to Jordan’s brink, you will not be able to say, “By my own goodness I am what I am.” Even there must you give all the glory to that Divine Grace which, having been the Alpha, will also be the Omega—which, having been the beginning, will also be the end.  
So, doctrinally, I state the Truth of my text thus, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” I am elect. My election is of Grace. I am redeemed. Redemption is a mighty masterpiece of Grace. I am called—called by Grace. I am preserved— preserved by Grace and whatever there is in me that is commendable and virtuous, whatever there is in me which the Son of God can admire and which gives to my own soul real comfort, must be all of Grace and of Grace alone! I have spoken so much in the first person because the text is in the first person. Will each of you, also, speak in the first person and say in your heart, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” endorsing the text from your own experience, setting your seal to this part of God’s Word and declaring it to be true and going forth with this motto emblazoned on your banner as the Doctrine which you will hear, and which, if you are called to the ministry, you will preach, “By the Grace of God I am what I am”?  
**II.** Now, in the second place, I am going to take the text EXPERIMENTALLY.  
By this I mean that there are times in our experience when this Truth of God starts up in letters of light and we recognize it as an indisputable fact, not only taught to us as a Scriptural Doctrine, but proved to us by our own personal experience. Let me just narrate a few instances. Brothers and Sisters, have you ever had times when the fountains of the great deep of your depravity have been broken up? Have you ever been taken into the chambers of imagery and has the Spirit of God said to you, “Son of man, I will show you greater abominations than these!” And has He taken you, first, into one room, and then into another and made you stand aghast while He has shown you the idols of your heart, the deep depravity that still remains in you, the pride, sloth and various forms of sin which still lurk and find shelter there? Have you ever had the filthy rags unrolled before your eyes? Have you heard the chattering of the unclean birds in the cage of your heart? Have you ever been fully conscious of the stench arising from your Old Adam nature? Has your spirit sickened at the very thought of the depravity of manhood in general and of yourself in particular? Have you ever had your secret sins set in the light of God’s Countenance? Have you ever been made to see the blackness of your own sin, side by side with the brightness of Divine favor? Have you ever been made to taste the exceeding bitterness of your sin even at the Communion Table—even while you realized the preciousness of the blood of Chris and renewed your former fellowship with Him? If so, then I know that my text has been true to you, as it also has been to me, and that you have said, as I have often been compelled to say, “By the grace of God I am what I am.”  
You have looked at your heart and you have seen its barren soil. And if there has been any wheat growing upon it, you have said, “This is the result of the Grace of God.” You have looked at the huge black rock of your Old Adam nature and when you have seen rivers of Living Water flowing out of the very midst of it, you have been obliged to say, “This mighty miracle could only have been worked by the Grace of God.” Flimsy views of human depravity lead to very indistinct ideas of the Grace of God. There is nothing but deep sub-soil plowing that ever makes a man sound in the Doctrines of Grace—and I will defy any man who has had a deep experience of his own odious depravity to believe any other doctrines but the Doctrines of Grace which are commonly called Calvinism! No, more than that, the mind, unless it is most graciously taught by the Spirit of God, will be apt to go beyond the true Scriptural Doctrine and to push the term beyond its legitimate sphere.  
There have been other occasions on which you and I have been forced to cry, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” namely, *after some strong and terrible temptation*. Have you ever known what it is to feel some old lust which you thought was dead, suddenly come upon you with a whirlwind power and drive you before it like a sere leaf of the forest that could not resist its might? I have, sometimes, had this trying experience. When quietly meditating upon the things of God, some fierce and fearful impulse to sin has assailed me—as if a giant had seized me by the neck and pushed me onward until, at last, I came to the very brink of some awful iniquity and looked down upon it. And, just as it seemed as if I must plunge into it, my eyes have been opened and I have seen the horror of great darkness and I have exclaimed, “O God! How is it that I have not committed that sin? How is it that You have come to save me just in the nick of time and stretched out Your hand to rescue me just when ‘my feet were almost gone,’ when, ‘my steps had well-nigh slipped’? Not only had I thought of slipping, but ‘my steps had well-nigh slipped.’ Then, Your mercy, O God, held me up!” I do not know whether you have had strong impulses of that kind. Many of God’s people have, and especially those who, before conversion, plunged deeply into sin. You have sometimes had almost on your lips the oath which you have hated in your inmost heart. Iniquity has come before you in a fascinating guise and, although you abhorred it, yet, for the moment, a strange hallucination of dazzling witchery seemed to lay hold of your spirit—and if you had yielded to it, you would have been like Samson when he fell into the hands of the Philistines! So it is that we are often compelled to say, as we look back upon marvelous Providences and Divine interpositions, “Truly, by the Grace of God we are what we are

and by that Grace, alone, have we been preserved from falling into sin.”  
I think, too, that this Truth has often been brought home to us when *we have witnessed the fall of others*. You have, perhaps, walked to and from the House of God with some notable professor of religion and he has instructed you on many points. He seemed to be a man of deep experience and devout life. Your heart has been knit to him and you have said, “Here, indeed, is a Brother,” and you have, possibly, envied him his great attainments and his fluent speech. Then, all of a sudden, you heard that he had fallen into some terrible sin. You made enquiries and you found that it was only too true. You were present, one night, at the Church meeting when the solemn sentence of excommunication was pronounced upon him—and while the minister uttered it, all the members wept and prayed that the poor fallen one might be brought to repentance and that his soul might not be the prey of Satan. At such a time as that, you have said, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” and you have said, with good John Newton—  
***“When any turn from Zion’s way,  
(Alas, what numbers do)!  
I think I hear my Savior say,  
‘Will you forsake Me too?’  
Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine,  
Unless You hold me fast, I feel I must, I shall decline, And prove like they at last!”***  
Such instances may act as beacons to warn us of pride and to teach us, again, the lesson that by the Grace of God we are what we are.  
Then, Brothers and Sisters, I think there are other seasons when we learn this lesson. That is,*in times of great dullness in spiritual matters.* Heavenly trade is not always brisk, even in the best market—that is, in the breast of the Believer. Spiritual mariners do not find that the wind always blows and thus, though we should always have our sails up, (which, alas, is not always the case with us), even then the wind would not always blow, for it “blows where it wishes.” Like the sea, we have our ebb as well as our flood-tide. Do you not know what it is to go to the Throne of Grace when— as for words, you can find plenty of them, but as for heart and soul, and vigor in prayer—if your salvation depended upon your fervency, you must perish? Have you not gone to the Mercy Seat and groaned there—and groaned most of all because you could not groan as you ought? You have taken your needs to the Throne of Grace, but you have had to bring them away again. You have gone up to the House of God and though you could find no fault with the sermon, there was, somehow or other, nothing in it for you.  
You went home to read your Bible and though you knew that it was a precious Book, it did not seem precious to you. It might be like a honeycomb, but you could not get any of the honey out of it. You had lost all spiritual appetite and you felt as if you were drawing near to the gates of death. You remember, too, how you then sought the society of the godly, yet you received no consolation from them. Heavenly things seemed to be but dreams—the substantial things of eternity did not affect your spirit as they should have done and you could only cry, with the Psalmist, “My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken You me according to Your word.” And at such times, and especially if your prayer has been graciously heard, you have been compelled to say, “It is my natural state to be cold and dull and if, at any time, I run swiftly in the heavenly race—if my sails are filled and my boat is carried towards Paradise—surely this is by the Grace of God.”  
Just one more remark upon this point. *Times of great mercy often operate* upon some of us so as to bring us very low and to make us feel, “By the Grace of God we are what we are.” Simon Peter had this experience. When his boat was full of fish, so that it began to sink, he fell on his knees before his Master and said “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Their greatness of God’s mercy to him convinced him of his own unworthiness and it has been the same with some of us. The more the Glory of God’s Grace has been revealed to our souls, the humbler have we been made to lie at His feet. When the Lord has piled up His mercies till they were like the great mountains and His faithfulness has been like the bottomless depths, then have we been obliged to say, “These great things are, indeed, of God—they could not have come of man.” At such times we have felt that we could sit before the Lord, as David did, and ask, “Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me to this point?” God sometimes overwhelms His children with mercy quite as completely as He ever does with affliction. Pride may be overcome in two ways. It is sometimes overcome by trouble that crushes a man, but, at other times, the same result is produced by Almighty Grace which, in overwhelming waves of love, rushes in upon the man’s spirit, till, submerged in love and mercy, he can only resign himself to its depths and feel—yet always feel that he cannot feel enough—the wonders of God’s Grace and his own littleness in comparison with God’s amazing favor! God sometimes humbles His children by putting them in the dark, but He sometimes does it in another way, as David said, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?” How often have we also had to say, with David, “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” So I hope it will be with each one of us, that the greatness of God’s mercy to us, as a Church, and as individuals, will lead us to say, “By the Grace of God we are what we are.”  
**III.** Now, in closing, let us consider our subject PRACTICALLY. What is the practical use of this text, “By the Grace of God I am what I am”?  
Surely, as I have already reminded you, it is designed *to keep us humble*. Depend upon it, if we do not take this text for our motto every day, there is the rod of the Covenant ready for us. He will soon be in a storm who does not see God’s Grace in the sunshine. If His mercies surround us and our days roll happily along, but we begin to ascribe our greatness and our riches to ourselves, it will not be long before God will bring us down. It may be so in your experience, especially if you soar upon the wings of self-confidence. As surely as you begin to get strong in your own strength, there is an hour of weakness close at hand! Whenever you are full of self, it will not be long before you learn your own emptiness, for he who begins to grow rich in himself is next door to poverty—no, he is already clothed in rags. No, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no safe walking unless we make this the staff on which we lean—“By the Grace of God we are what we are.” While we stick to this as our hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, everlasting motto, we shall not go astray, nor shall we experience those terrible downcastings which are the inevitable result of our flying up in self-confidence. Come then, Beloved, from this day let us learn humility, let us tread our pride in the dust and say, “Why should we be proud? By the Grace of God we are what we are.”  
Then, in the light of our text, *let us learn charity*. Why should I be harsh towards those who are not what I am? I wish that some persons who think themselves very sound in Doctrine, would recollect our text. If another Brother is thought to be unsound, they are ready to cut him in pieces! It would be better if they were to say, before using their sword for such a purpose, “By the Grace of God we are what we are.” Though you should be ever so sound and right, yourselves, be gentle with the Brother who has not received so much Grace as you have. Good John Newton used to say that for a Calvinist to be proud was the most inconsistent thing in the world, because, by his own profession, there were Truths of God which no man could receive or understand of himself—so, why should he boast of his own attainments and why should he blame others for not doing what he knows they cannot do of themselves? If our Brothers and Sisters cannot see as well as we can, why should we be angry with them because our eyes are better than theirs? I see no reason for being angry with a blind man because he cannot see—that is the very reason why we should pity his infirmity. So, let us seek to relieve those who are burdened, to bring back those who have wandered, to strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees and, to the best of our power, lead others into that glorious Light of God in which we ourselves are walking, for, by the Grace of God we are what we are!  
Moreover this should teach us *hopefulness concerning other men*. There is a drunken man—you think he can never be converted, but why not? The Grace that saved you is sufficient to save him. You sometimes meet with an infidel. Perhaps you have one in your family—a father, or brother, or sister—and you are apt to say, “Well, it is no use trying to get such an one to go to the House of God—all he would do would be to mock and jeer. If the minister should make a mistake, he would seize upon it and use it as his stock-in-trade for the abuse of the week. If there is a fault among God’s children, he is sure to notice it and to make it the theme of his reproach, so he had better be kept away from them.” But again I say the Grace that saved you is sufficient to save him—never give anyone up, even as God did not give you up! I always think that as God has converted me by His Grace, He can convert anybody! The conversion of any other sinner is not any more difficult to Omnipotence, neither is it any easier, for Omnipotence knows nothing of degrees. What marvelous things Christ has done and done in some of us, too! Some of you must weep over that verse in which the Apostle says, “And such were some of you, but you are washed.” And you say, “Yes, and to God be all the Glory that He has made us what we are.” Therefore let us continue to look after those whom Satan has ensnared—even the most hardhearted sinners— and seek to bring them under the saving influence of the Grace of God.  
Then, lastly, if we are what we are “by the Grace of God,” this should *teach us greater thankfulness*. Children of the Heavenly King, never forget to praise your God! We sometimes fail in this duty. We have had many meetings for prayer to ask God to bless us in our manifold labors. Now let us have some meetings for praise—to bless the Lord for His great goodness to us. I have heard that in some parts of New England, there used to be a day of fasting every month to mourn for the iniquity of the land and so on. And, at last, some senator proposed that they should have a feast and thank God for the mercies which they had received— and, truly, he was in the right. It is not good always to be fasting—we must sometimes feast! An old Puritan says that we take in breath by prayer by a sort of heavenly Inspiration—and that we breathe it out again by praise. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you and I were to sing as heartily as we ought to sing, what a joyous song of praise there would be! If our voices could but be tuned to the goodness of God, what songs and sonnets would make glad this wilderness!  
You remember Ralph Erskine’s sonnet on the battle in Heaven—the great contention of the bards in Paradise? He pictures them all contending as to who should have the lowest place and which should most loudly praise the Lord! There were the babes snatched from their mothers’ breasts—they claimed the lowest place because they had gone straight to Heaven without any trials or troubles. But the gray-headed men who had been Divinely supported under the afflictions of many years said that they owed the most to Sovereign Grace. Then came those who had been converted in their early years and who said that they had already had a Heaven below, so they could sing the loudest of all. Then came the penitent thief who said that he had the greatest cause to praise the Lord for he had been converted at the last. While some declared that they must praise God most because they had been the blackest sinners, others said that they would praise Him most for the restraining Grace which had kept them from sin. And so the strife went on until they agreed, each one, to sing with all his might to the praise of that Everlasting Love which inscribed their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life, that great Love which bought them with Jesus’ precious blood and that Omnipotent Love which attended them all their journey through and landed then at last in Heaven!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: NUMBERS 4:1-33.**

**Verses 1, 2.** *And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers*. There were three families, those of Kohath, Gershon and Merari—and to each of these families a different service was allotted. First, they were to be numbered. “The Lord knows them that are His,” and He takes count of all His people.

**3.** *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, all that enter into the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation*. They were to take up this work as a warfare, for, though it was a peaceful work, yet it is described as being a warfare. And he who serves the Lord, though that service is perfect peace, will not serve Him without also finding it to be a warfare.

**4.** *This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things*. They were to have to do with the Most Holy Place, to carry it and to carry the vessels of it—a very honorable position.

**5, 6.** *And when the camp sets forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the Ark of Testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skin, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.* These Kohathites might not so take the Ark as to handle it, much less might they ever look at it. But the priests and the sons of Aaron went in first and, after carefully covering the Holy Place, they covered up the sacred Ark with a cloth of blue. Blue was the token of holiness—of separation. Hence, every Israelite wore a border of blue upon his garment, but this, which was the symbol of the Divine Presence, was “all of blue.” It is all holiness. We wear, alas, but a border of blue, but this holy thing was “all of blue.”

**7.** *And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover all: and the showbread shall be thereon*. When they moved the sacred table, the bread was always there—twelve cakes for the twelve tribes—for the bread of God’s House is never lacking.

**8-10.** *And they shall all spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light and its lamps, and its tongs, and its snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers’ skin and shall put it upon a carrying beam*. There were means for handling these vessels without touching them. I mean the Ark had staves, and the vessels were put upon a bar for carrying them.

**11.** *And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall insert its poles*. A type of the holiness veiled in our Lord’s Humanity—the badger skin made apparent the simplicity, the poverty, the humility of our Lord—covering evermore that wondrous cloth of blue.

**12, 13.** *And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, herewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers’ skins and shall put them on a carrying bar: and they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon*. A royal altar is this, always grand and glorious in our eyes, covered with a purple cloth.

**14-20.** *And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the forks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers’ skins, and insert its poles. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the son of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, pertains the oil for the light and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof. And the LORD spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Cut you not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and anoint them, everyone to his service and to his burden: but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.* This is a very awful thing. I mean something which should produce a great awe and solemnity in our hearts. These men were chosen to carry the vessels of the Most Holy Place, yet they must never see them! They must be covered up by the hands of the priest—and they must never touch them. They must bear them by their staves, or upon the carrying bar upon which they were placed. Oh, how terrible a thing it is to draw near to God! The Lord our God is a jealous God. He will be served with holy reverence or not at all. Hence he says to Moses and Aaron, “Take care that you do not lead these men into any mistake. You go in first, and point out to each man what he is to carry. See that all is covered up, for if you do not, they may die in their work. Do not be accessories to their act and bring upon them this terrible judgment.”

I often wish that God’s people would be careful not to cause sin in any of His servants when they are engaged in the ministry. Perhaps in preaching, or otherwise, there may be something done which vexes the Holy Spirit and causes trouble and sin. And, oh, he who stands in the holy place and bears the holiest of the vessel, needs to fear and tremble before God! And he needs to ask his brethren to see that they do nothing which might inadvertently cause him to sin.

**21-24.** *And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, of their families, from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shall you number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This is the sequence of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens*. They were to bear the external coverings of the Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was in the custody of the Kohathites, but the Gershonites were to carry as follows—

**25-28.** *And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, its covering, and the covering of the badgers’ skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and you shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron, the priest.* There was a wise decision of labor. I wish we had the same kind of thing in every church, and that every member occupied himself in that to which God has appointed him. But there are some who want to do what they cannot do, and who do not care to do what they can do.

**29-32.** *As for the sons of Merari, you shall number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shall you number them, every one that enters into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name you shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.* They had the heaviest load to carry, but they were the more numerous. They carried the solid columns upon which the covering of the tabernacle rested. And notice that they had also to carry the pins. Sometimes God’s servants dislike carrying pins. They feel themselves too big—but blessed is that servant who, in his place, can be content to carry “their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments.”

**33.** *This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest.*

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PAUL’S PARENTHESIS  
NO. 3084

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1908.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 26, 1874.~~***

***~~“By the Grace of God I am what I am.”  
1 Corinthians 15:10.  
[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on the same passage is #2833, Volume 49—LESSONS ON DIVINE GRACE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]~~***

IF you will read the context of this passage, you will find that these words occur in one of Paul’s digressions, or parenthesis. He was a writer who very frequently went off at a tangent—he often left the subject on which he was writing, turned his thoughts in quite another direction— and then came back and went on with the subject which he had left for a while. In this respect, I have often, in my own mind, likened the Apostle Paul to Samson. When he was on the road to Timnah with his father and mother, he turned aside to slay the lion and afterwards to find the honey in the carcass. And each time he came back to his parents, just as if nothing had happened. So the Apostle Paul often turns aside from some grand argument upon which he is engaged and says something very valuable and important upon quite another topic—and then comes back again and calmly and deliberately goes on with his argument!

There are some kinds of parenthesis which we can always excuse and, indeed, commend. For instance, the parenthesis of prayer. When we are engaged in any duty, it will not delay us—really we shall make all the better speed—if we pause for a while to pray. I like to think of the Apostle Paul, while he was writing that grand Epistle to the Ephesians, turning aside from his main argument to offer that great prayer, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.” [See Sermon #707, Volume 12—

HEAVENLY GEOMETRY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] His argument would not suffer in the least— indeed it would be all the stronger for that little interval of prayer! At another time, it is very sweet to see how he pauses, after recording the Lord’s abundant mercy to him, to write that notable doxology, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and Glory forever and ever. Amen.” Such parenthesis of prayer and praise must be acceptable to the Most High.

Our text, then, is found in a digression of an exceedingly blessed kind. It would be well if preachers would digress thus nowadays, if by digressing they preached more of Free Grace and more about the Lord Jesus Christ! I have heard of a preacher who, on one occasion, when he entered his pulpit, found himself suddenly stricken with blindness. I think it was old Dr. Gouge, the great Puritan. Being unable to read the discourse which he had taken up with him, and being a man of unusual calmness of spirit, instead of making any outcry, or telling the people that he had lost the use of his eyes, he preached extemporaneously. And when he came down from the pulpit, a woman thanked him for the sermon. “Alas,” said the good man, “a great calamity has happened to me. I have lost my sight.” “Blessed be God for that,” said the woman, “if it makes you give up reading your sermons and enables you to preach as you have just done.” It is a good thing when a preacher loses the thread of his discourse if his discourse is made of thread, and he goes straight away to the Cross, and begins talking about Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. Or if he has been wandering in the mazes of modern thought, it is well when he gets back into the old paths and preaches about the Grace of God. That is, if he can declare, as Paul does here, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” God grant that they who preach Free Grace Doctrines may never get out of the habit of doing so! And may those who have almost forgotten the sound of the word, Grace—and those who never knew the music of it—be made to lose their way until they ramble into the blessed neighborhood of the Sovereign Grace of God, for I am sure that nothing but the Gospel of the Grace of God will ever drive Popery out of this country! The only antagonist that can ever overcome the self-righteousness and priestcraft of Romanism and Ritualism is a clear, bald, outspoken declaration of the great Truth of God that by the Grace of God the saints of God are what they are!

**I.**Coming to the text and speaking simply and plainly, and praying that God may speak to your hearts through my words, I want to prove to you, first, that THE TEXT CONTAINS A DOCTRINAL STATEMENT. “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

And that statement may be read, first, as meaning this—that *Paul ascribed his own salvation to the free favor of God.* He believed himself to be a regenerate man, a forgiven man, a saved man—and he believed that condition of his was the result of the unmerited favor of God. He did not imagine that he was saved because he *deserved* salvation, or that he had been forgiven because his repentance had made an atonement for his sin! He did not reckon that his prayers had merited salvation, or that his abundant labors and many sufferings had earned that gift for him at God’s hands. No, he does not for a moment speak of merit—it is a word which Paul’s mouth could not pronounce in such a connection as that. His declaration is, “It is by God’s free favor that I, Saul of Tarsus, have been converted, and made into Paul the Apostle, the servant of Jesus Christ. I attribute this great change entirely to the goodwill, the Sovereign benignity, the undeserved favor of the ever-blessed God.”

Now, my dear Hearers, let me put this Truth very plainly, so that you may not mistake it. If you are saved, you do not owe your salvation to anything that you have done. Nor, if you ever are to *be* saved, will it be the result of any goodness of your own. You may spin, but if you are ever saved, the first thing God will do will be to unravel that which you have spun. You may clothe yourself in the gaudy garments of a self-made righteousness, but God’s first act of Grace will be to strip you of them and to make you feel that all such garments are nothing but filthy rags, fit only for the fire. You must deny your own merits, or you cannot have the merits of Christ! Your Church attendance, your Chapel attendance, your Baptism, your so-called sacraments, your confirmation, your private prayers, your family prayers, your Bible readings, your good thoughts, your alms deeds—all these put together have no merit in them that could help you to go an inch towards salvation! Salvation is not of works, but of Grace alone! And they who do not obtain salvation in this way will as surely perish as the blasphemer and the drunk! There is but one way of salvation—the way of free favor. That was the way in which Paul went and that is the way in which we must go if we would enter into eternal life!

The word, Grace, in Scripture, also means something else besides free favor—it very often means *operative power.*When the Spirit of God works savingly upon the heart, the influence which He exerts is called His Grace. So the Apostle means here, “By the Grace of God I am what I am” that is, “Whatever I am that is right, God made me that. If I am regenerate, I must have been born-again from above by the power of God. If I have repented, my repentance was the gift of God. If I have believed, my faith was the work of God. If I have perseverance in faith, that perseverance has been the effect of the work of God in my soul. If I have ever prayed an acceptable prayer, it was God’s Grace that enabled me to do it. If I have ever sung God’s praise so as to please Him, that praise was first written in my heart by the Holy Spirit.”

“What have you which you have not received?” is a question to which the answer from every true heart is, “I have nothing which I have not received, except my sin. But all I have that is good must have come from God.” If any of you are to be saved, God must save you. Sinner, you are lost, and lost beyond recovery by any hand but that which is Divine and Omnipotent! “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Let that text roll like thunder over the heads of those who think that they can save themselves. The Lord must do it from first to last! His is the first act of Grace when He quickens the spiritually dead—and His must be the last act of Grace when we lay down our vile bodies and our spirit enters into the joy of our Lord!

Now, these two things being true, and being surely believed among us, that salvation is by the free favor of God and that it is by the power of Divine Grace, I think I may say that if Paul had been here, he would have pushed this matter a little further. There are some of our dear Brothers and Sisters, and true Brothers and Sisters, too, who do not see the Doctrines of Grace quite clearly. They see men as trees walking, for they seem to attribute the fact of their salvation in part to themselves. I do not say as to merit, for I believe they abhor that idea. And I do not say as to power, for I believe they hold as earnestly as we do that the sinner is dead in sin and that the power to act comes from the Holy Spirit. But, somehow or other, they make a great deal more of man’s will than I think they should, just as, on the other hand, some speak too little of the will of man and treat men as if they had not any wills, but were so many logs of wood! There is Truth of God on both sides of the question and, as some of my Brothers preach the other view of the Truth, I will preach that view of it which my text gives me.

If I am a saved man, how came I to be saved? Somebody asks, “But why are you saved, and not other men?” My dear Friend, there are two questions there, so I must take them one at a time. Will you kindly let me take the first one, only altering it thus—Why are you saved? If you are saved, there is a great difference between you and others who are not saved. You were once a lover of pleasure and of the world, but you are now a lover of God. Now, somebody made that difference, and whoever did it did a good job, so let his head be crowned! Here is the crown. Now, Sirs, upon whose head shall I put it? Have *you made yourself to differ* from what you used to be, and from what others still are? Are you prepared to wear the crown? You bow your head and say, “Oh, no! Let the Lord have the Glory of it.” Well, then, it is quite evident that God has made a difference between you and others and that it was a commendable thing for Him to do so. And as it was commendable for God to do it, it must have been so for God to purpose to do it. And if it was commendable for Him to purpose to do it the day He did it, it was commendable for Him to purpose to do it from all eternity! And thus we get back to the old and glorious decrees and Covenant of Divine Grace of which some are so afraid, though, as surely as this Book is written of God, it stands there that He has, “from the beginning,” chosen His people unto salvation. “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

If there is an Antinomian here, he will very boldly declare the meaning of this passage. But I will speak as boldly as he does and dare to do it with the Truth of God on my side! I am sure that this is pure unadulterated Truth of God, that Grace, Grace, Grace, Grace saves the soul from beginning to end. But if you ask me, “Why is a man lost?” then the Antinomian and I will differ altogether. I say if he is lost, it is his own fault—it is his sin and his willful rejection of Christ that cause him to be lost. And if there is any Arminian here who will lay the guilt of sin on the sinner’s conscience, I can do that as much as he can, and I believe I shall have Scripture with me in so doing! Damnation is all of man from first to last—and salvation is all of Grace from first to last! Someone asks, “How do these two things agree?” No, Brother, how do these two things *disagree*? If you will tell me when they quarrel, I will try to reconcile them. They stand in this Book side by side as two grand Inspired Truths of God and they should be preached side by side! They never did fall out and they never will. If you love self-righteousness, they will quarrel with you—but they will never quarrel with each other.

**II.**Now, secondly, I shall briefly treat our text, AS A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT. Here is a child of God who stood very high among his fellow Believers, one who had many gifts, much Grace, great success, and high honor in the Church—yet he says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” It would be right for any of us who are nobodies, and who never did anything, to talk thus. But this is Paul who is speaking, the one who could truthfully say, “I was not a whit behind the very chief Apostles.” Yet he says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

Paul’s grateful acknowledgment means, first, that *he forbade himself ever to boast.* Why should he boast? Whatever he had that was good had been given to him by the great Benefactor, so he might well have said, “What have I in which I can glory? I am nothing and I have done nothing except what God has made me, and what His Grace has worked in me and by me.” Beloved Friends, it is an astonishing thing that we should be the subjects of pride! Yet, considering what poor creatures we are, it is not astonishing that we are proud, or that we are anything that is bad. But if we are proud, what fools we are! Proud?—just a heap of dust and ashes that the wind would blow away if it were not for a daily miracles— just a mass of corruption that would be putrefying in a few hours if the life were gone out of it! Yet we sell out and think ourselves some great ones—and, oh, what big somebodies we are until the Grace of God brings us down to our proper level! The heavens themselves are scarcely high enough for our tall heads, we think ourselves so great! But it is a deathblow to boasting when anyone can say, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.”

And, dear Friends, this grateful acknowledgment *incites us to holy service.* If everything that we have already received has come from God, let us surrender ourselves and all we have to God! As He has made us, let us live for our Creator! As He has worked all our works in us, let us give up to Him our spirit, soul, and body as our reasonable service. Debtors to Free Grace as we are, if others talk about good works, let us go and do them! While the idle dream of self-righteousness leads some men to make sacrifices, let gratitude for Free Grace compel us to make still greater sacrifices.

Moreover, our text, I think, as a grateful acknowledgment, *leads us to further confidence in God.* If by the Grace of God I am what I am, then by the Grace of God I shall be, by-and-by, something better. He who has brought us to repent and to believe will bring us to greater faith, to fuller assurance and to completer conformity to Christ. And He will preserve us unto the end. When any tell us that God will leave us to perish at the last, I never care to answer them, for it always seem to me that those who talk so of my Master do not know Him. What? Leave His beloved, leave His spouse, leave the members of His own body to perish? It is useless to tell us that! He loves His own with too mighty a love to ever cast them away. Let others say what they will, I join with Paul in saying, “By the Grace of God I am what I am” and I am persuaded that, by that same Grace, I shall one day be with Christ and be like He. You who are not the subjects of Divine Grace may well fear that you will perish! But you who have received God’s Grace may rest assured that since Grace was the motive which began the good work in you, the same motive will continue even to the end! If God had begun saving us because we were good, He would, of course, leave off saving us when we were not good! If he had begun to save us because we were pure in heart and gracious in life, He would leave off when we ceased to be so. But as He began to save us from no motive but His own Sovereign determination to save us, how can that be affected by anything that may happen to us? So let us fall back upon this comforting assurance—by the Grace of God we are what we are, and by the Grace of God we shall one day share Christ’s Glory!

**III.**I will not say more upon that part of the subject, though it is one upon which I might profitably talk for an hour. But, in the third place, I want you to regard the text as A SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT.

A sweet encouragement to whom? Why, first, *to the minister.* Beloved Friends, he who is now speaking to you feels himself to be a marvel of the Grace of God and he can say to you honestly and without any mock humility, that since God saved him, he has never doubted the possibility of the salvation of anyone else of the whole human race! Preserved from outward sin of the grosser kind, I nevertheless had for some years such a full sense of my own depravity and such a horror of darkness on account of the evil that I saw within myself, that I can have sympathy with the most despairing soul that is here. If you are sitting at Hell’s dark door, I can tell you that I sat there month after month! And if you are tempted even to destroy yourself, I can assure you that I have known the misery that Job felt when he said, “My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life.” Yet I am saved by the Sovereign Grace of God, Glory be to His holy name! If the Lord sent me to preach the Gospel to the devil, himself, I would believe that God was able to convert even him! I know that He never will, but if there is any man who is as bad as the devil, and the Gospel is sent to him, I shall never despair of the possibility of that man being reclaimed and made to stand among the redeemed at the last!

I know that there are many here who were drunks, swearers and worse than that—but they have obtained mercy, they have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus—and tonight they are rejoicing that their many sins have been forgiven them for Christ’s sake! Those who have been in such a plight as that do not despair of the salvation of the greatest sinners here. You have gone far into sin, but you have seen another saved who was once just what you now are, so why should you not be saved? There have been murderers saved, then why not you if your hands are red with the blood of others? There was a thief who was saved at the last hour, then why not you if you are a thief? There have been many Magdalens saved, then why not you if you belong to that sad sisterhood? O you who lie despairing at the gates of Hell, the silver trumpet of the Gospel is sounded in your ears by one who has enjoyed the music of it in his own soul! What an encouragement it is to the preacher when he can stay, “By the Grace of God I am what I am!”

And what an encouragement it should be *to the hearer*when he is told that salvation is all of Grace! If Christ came to you and said, “You cannot be saved unless you perform so many good works,” there would be no hope for the most of you, though I fear that there are some who think that such a message would just suit them, for they fancy that they have done a great many good works. In cherishing that delusion, they are like a Hindu of whom I once heard. He believed that he must not eat any animal substance, or that if he did, he would perish. A missionary said to him, “That idea is ridiculous. Why, you cannot drink a glass of water without swallowing thousands of living creatures.” He did not believe it, so the missionary took a drop of water and put it under a microscope. When the man saw the innumerable living creatures in the drop of water, what did he do? Why, he broke the microscope! That was his way of settling the question. So, when we meet with persons who say, “Our works are pure, clean and excellent,” we bring the great microscope of the Law of the Lord, and we bid them look through that. And when they *do* look through it and discover that even one sinful *thought* destroys their hope of salvation by self-righteousness—and when they see a whole host of sins in their prayers, or acts, or thoughts—then they are angry with the preacher and they try to break the microscope! But, for all that, the Truth of God remains, “By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.”

But salvation comes by Grace. Catch at that, Sinner, for if it is by Grace that sinners are saved, why should not you be saved? If a thing is given away, nobody can be too poor to have it. If it is the gift of charity, poverty is a recommendation rather than a hindrance. My Lord and Master does not tell me to come and say to you that salvation is by your own feelings. It would be as impossible for you to *feel* right as to *do* right—but salvation is entirely by God’s Grace! “But,” says someone, “my heart is hard.” Then come to God to have it softened! “But I have no good thing to bring Him.” Then come to Him for every good thing! “But I cannot even bring a sense of need.” Then come without a sense of need— for the man who feels that he has not a sense of need is often the one who has the best sense of need! He who says, “I have at last a sense of need,” shows that he has not yet got to the bottom, for if he were brought to the bottom, he would feel that he had not any feeling—he would groan that he could not groan and grieve that he could not grieve! Dear Friends, you have to *do* nothing, and to *be* nothing, and to feel nothing by way of fitness for salvation—but just come and accept, free, gratis, for nothing—the abundant mercy of God in Christ Jesus! He is the empty sinner’s fullness, the dead sinner’s life, the perishing sinner’s salvation! I do not know any Truth of God that can encourage poor sinful souls to pray, to repent and to believe in Jesus except the Truth that salvation is all of Grace from first to last! As the Apostle was saved by Grace, so must it be with all the rest of us—and so may it be with you!

**IV.**Now, to close, I think our text gives us A SUGGESTION FOR SELFEXAMINATION.

“By the Grace of God I am what I am,” says Paul. And I want each one of you to ask yourself, *“What am I?”*My eyes cannot reach you all, but I want you to feel that God’s eyes are looking at you and that He puts this question to you, “What are you?” Paul tells us what he is, but what are you? An unregenerate sinner? An unpardoned sinner? An impenitent sinner? An unbelieving sinner? Will you put on the right label and wear it? I almost wish I had some labels to put on you, but let your own consciences do it—and when you get home, will you take your pen and write down what you really are? You are either condemned or uncondemned! Write down whichever you are and look the truth in the face. No man is usually so near bankruptcy as the one who dares not look into his books—and that man must be bad who dares not search his own heart. What are you, then, dear Friend? Let that question begin your self-examination.

Here is another question, *How much do you know about the Grace of God?*Paul says, “By the Grace of God I am what I am.” You see that the mark of a child of God is that by the Grace of God he is what he is—what do *you*know about the Grace of God? “Well, I attend my place of worship regularly.” But what do you know about *the Grace of God?*“I have always been an upright, honest, truthful, respectable man.” I am glad to hear it. But what do you know about the Grace of God? You think you do not need it, though you are not a saved soul—yet none are so certainly lost as those who think they do not need the Grace of God. *Has that Grace ever changed you?*“Well, I was born-again in baptism.” Yes, I have seen a great many of those who were said to have been born-again in baptism, but I have not seen any difference between them and those who were not born-again in baptism! And nor can anybody else. “You must be bornagain,” even you baptized heathens who know no more about the Grace of God than if you had never lived in a land where the Gospel is preached!

I will put to you another straight question, *Is Christ Jesus your only hope?*Were you ever made to feel that there was no merit in anything that you ever did? Were you ever thrown flat on your face on the Grace and mercy of God, and made to pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? If not, what is your hope? If there is, in the matter of your supposed salvation, anything that is not of the Grace of God, do with it what the man did with the forged bill—bury it in the earth and run away from it—and be afraid that anybody should think it was yours. Your own righteousness is such an abominable thing that it will as surely damn you as the greatest profanity! The best thing for you to do with it is to bury it and run away from it.

If you cannot say that you are what you want to be. If you cannot say that you know anything experimentally about the Grace of God, the last question I will put to you is this, *What must that principle be which does rule you?*The Grace of God made Paul what he was—what has made you what you are? “Well, Sir, I think I am as good as my neighbors, and rather better than most of them.” Who made you so? I suppose you are a self-made man and it is a matter of fact that everybody worships his creator, so that if you believe that you made yourself, I am not surprised that you worship yourself. But I do wonder where you expect to go when you die, you who have never done any wrong, and have been so good that you do not need a Savior. Do you expect to go to Heaven? Well, if you could go there, what would you do? I read of the multitude that no man could number, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.” But if you could get there because your garments never needed any washing, surely you would throw up your cap and say, “Well done myself!” And what a discord that would cause in the music of Heaven! What a stranger you would feel among those multitudes who would all praise the blessed God! But you will never go there until you fling that righteousness of yours back to the pit from whence it came, for there is nothing in it that God can look upon with pleasure. It is a vile compound of pride and ignorance. May the light of the Holy Spirit shine upon it and make you loathe it, hate it and flee from it! And may He teach you that there is life in Jesus, there is pardon in Jesus, there is salvation in Jesus for every soul that comes to Him! If you say, “By my own merits and abilities I am what I am,” may God save you from that dreadful delusion and bring you humbly to trust in the merits and Sacrifice of His dear Son! So you shall find salvation and He shall have the Glory, world without end. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ACTS 9:1-31.***

**Verse 1.***And Saul, yet breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.* Notice that little word, “yet.” “Saul *yet* breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” But there was to be a point beyond which he could not go. I pray God that there may be such a “yet” as that put into the histories of any here who are opposing God and His Christ. “Saul, yet breathing out threats and slaughter”—as if they were his very breath, as if he only lived to blaspheme the name of Christ and to persecute His followers—“went unto the high priest.”

**2.***And desired of him letters to the synagogues of Damascus, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*He wanted his hunting ground enlarged! He had not enough to gratify his malice among the thousands of Believers in Jerusalem, so he must go to Damascus to hunt out the Christians there. Paul was always very thorough in all that he did. So, when he was a persecutor, he was a very bitter one. It mattered not to him whether the saints were men or women. In ordinary warfare it is the custom to spare the women. A brave man is satisfied to fight with men like himself—but a bigot’s zeal knows no bounds—and so Saul asked for letters so that, “if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”

**3.***And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus.*The lion is about to leap upon his prey! The sheepfold lies in the valley and the wolf surveys it from the hillside. “Alas for the Church of God at Damascus!” you and I would have said if we had been there.

**3.***And suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven.*A supernatural blaze, as though Heaven’s gate had been thrown open and the Glory had come streaming down upon this rebellious man.

**4.***And he fell to the earth, and heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?*Most people are converted in a somewhat similar fashion to this. There is “a light from Heaven” shining through the Gospel upon them. They fall to the ground in penitent selfabasement and then they hear the Voice of the Son of God speaking to their hearts. I do not mean that the external phenomena are the same as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, but the work is the same in its effects and in some of its processes. Saul “heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” It was a Divine Voice—majestic, piercing, affectionate, convincing. Saul’s mind was of a deeply-logical kind, so Christ’s question was an appeal to his reasoning faculties—“Give the reason for your present action. *‘Why*do you persecute Me?’”

**5.***And he said Who are You Lord? And the lord said, I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks.* I do not doubt that he had been already pricked in his conscience and he had kicked out as an ox kicks against the ox-goad when he is pricked by it to make him go forward. Saul was a man of strong will and determined purpose. He had already felt in his own heart some of the sorrows that follow from a wrong course of life, yet he resolved to persevere in it, so the Lord said to him, “It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.” And if any of you resist the thrusts of conscience and the strivings of God’s Spirit, you will be like a man with naked feet kicking against iron spikes, and hurting himself, but not injuring that against which he kicks.

**6.***And he, trembling and astonished, said Lord, what will You have me to do?*This was a very natural question from one who had always tried to live by doing. He had been a work-monger up to that very moment, so he naturally cried, “Lord, what will You have me to do?”

**6.***And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.*“You must become a disciple and sit at the feet of another man, of a humbler sort, and you must learn from him.” Christ will never teach us by visions what we can learn by the ordinary means of instruction, nor will he work miracles where common methods may suffice.

**7.***And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless.*They were struck with astonishment—  
**7.***Hearing a Voice, but seeing no man.* A loud Voice stunned their ears, but they could not understand its message.  
**8, 9.***And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*What a whirl of anguish must his mind have been in all that time! The panorama of Stephen’s martyrdom and of the holy men and women against whom he had breathed out threats and slaughter would pass before his inward eyes, even though his outward eyes were closed.  
**10, 11.***And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold, he prays.* God knows where every sinner is—the street he lives in, the number of the house, and the name of the owner of the house, so that he can find him when He pleases, or send one of His servants to him. You remember what John Bunyan said to the Quaker who came to see him in prison? The Quaker said to him, “Friend John, I am glad I have found you at last, for the Lord sent me to you, and I have been through half the prisons in England trying to find you.” “No, no,” said Bunyan, “do not tell me that. The Lord did not send you to me, for He knows I have been here all these years. If He had sent you, you would have come straight to the prison door.” When the Lord calls a man to go on an errand for Him, He puts His finger on the right spot and says, “Go there.”  
**12.***And has seen in a vision, a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* You see how true Revelations fit into each other? Something is revealed to Ananias, and it is also revealed to Saul and, therefore, it is proved to be true. Some years ago, a brother told me that he had had it revealed to him that I was to let him preach for me in the Tabernacle. I said that of course I would agree to that when it was revealed to me that I was to let him, but I did not believe in lopsided Revelations. You will find a great many of those crazy revelations about and you may generally judge them in some such common-sense way as that.  
**13-16.***Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem: and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Your name. But the Lord said unto him, Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.* He had made God’s people suffer because of their loyalty to Christ—so it seemed only right that he, himself, should suffer for the same reason.  
**17, 18.***And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared to you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been, scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*As he believed in Jesus, it was right that he should confess his faith in the way that Christ appointed.  
**19.***And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.*Do admire the tenderness of the Holy Spirit in recording that Saul received meat and was strengthened. He had been without food or drink for three days and nights, so that it was as right for him to partake of food as to confess his faith by being baptized!  
**19.***Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.* Thus did the lion lie down with the lamb and the wolf with the kid!  
**20.***And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.*How he must have startled his Jewish Brothers and Sisters that day! They knew why he had come to Damascus, but, behold, he was preaching the very faith that he had gone there to destroy!  
**21-25.***But all that heard him were amazed, and said: is not this he that destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* I never heard of a more precious basketful of material than that! Sometimes the greatest of men may owe their safety to the very poorest of instruments and I think it is the duty of a Christian to avoid trouble if he can, just as our Lord bade His disciples, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee to another. Paul was carrying out that command of his Master. It was not cowardice—it was the very soul of courage—that he might go elsewhere to proclaim the Gospel that he had received in Damascus.  
**26.***And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.*They did not admit anybody and everybody into the Church. They guarded it as Christ’s Church should be guarded, that unworthy people might not enter it. If any of you should be kept back a little while, you can say to yourself, “Well, they kept back Paul.” We are poor fallible creatures, but we try to judge rightly concerning those who wish to unite with us.  
**27-31.***But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.*Blessed be God for such a conversion as that of Saul of Tarsus!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2287 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION”  
NO. 2287

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 18, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 20, 1890.~~***

***~~“Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also in vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom~~***

***~~He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men  
most miserable.”  
1 Corinthians 15:12-19.~~***

OUR religion is not based upon opinions, but upon facts. We hear persons sometimes saying, “Those are your views, and these are ours.” Whatever your “views” may be, is a small matter—what are the *facts* of the case? We must, after all, if we want a firm foundation, come down to matters of *fact*. Now, the great facts of the Gospel are that God was Incarnate in Christ Jesus, that He lived, here, a life of holiness and love, that He died upon the Cross for our sins, that He was buried in the tomb of Joseph, that the third day He rose, again, from the dead, that after a while He ascended to His Father’s Throne where He now sits—and that He shall come, by-and-by, to be our Judge—and in that day the dead in Christ shall rise by virtue of their union with Him.

Now, very soon, within the Church of God, there rose up persons who began to dispute the fundamental and cardinal principles of the faith— and it is so even now. When those outside the Church deny that Christ is the Son of God, deny His atoning Sacrifice and deny His Resurrection, we are not at all astonished. They are unbelievers, and they are acting out their own profession. But when men *inside* the Church of God call themselves Christians and yet deny the resurrection of the dead, then is our soul stirred within us, for it is a most solemn and serious evil to doubt those holy Truths of God. They know not what they do, they cannot see all the result of their unbelief! If they could, one would think that they would start back with horror and let the Truth of God stand where it ought to stand, where God has put it.

The resurrection of the dead has been assailed and is still assailed by those who are called Christians, even by those who are called Christian *ministers*, but who, nevertheless, spirit away the very idea of the resurrection of the dead, so that we are, today, in the same condition, to some extent, as the Corinthian Church was when, in its very midst, there rose up men professing to be followers of Christ who said that there was no resurrection of the dead! The Apostle Paul, having borne his witness and recapitulated the testimony about the Resurrection of Christ, goes on to show the horrible consequences which must follow if there is no resurrection of the dead, and if Christ is not risen. He showed this to be a foundational Truth of God and if it were taken away, much more was gone than they supposed—indeed, *everything* was gone—as Paul went on to prove.

Beloved Friends, let us never tamper with the Truth of God. I find it as much as I can do to enjoy the comfort of the Truth and to learn the spiritual lessons of God’s Word without setting up to be a critic upon it. And I find it immeasurably more profitable to my own soul to believingly adore, than unbelievingly to invent objections, or even industriously to try to meet them. The meeting of objections is an endless work. When you have killed one regiment of them, there is another regiment coming on, and when you have put to the sword whole legions of doubts, doubters still swarm upon you like the frogs of Egypt! It is a poor business. It answers no practical end. It is far better to firmly believe what you profess to believe and to follow out to all the blessed consequences all of the Truths of God which, in your own heart and soul, you have received of the Lord.

One of the Truths most surely believed among us is that there will be a resurrection of all those who sleep in Christ. There will be a resurrection of the ungodly as well as of the godly. Our Lord Jesus said to the Jews, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and has given Him authority to execute judgement, also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Paul declared before Felix the doctrine of the “resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,” but his argument with the Corinthians specially referred to Believers who will rise from the dead, and stand with Christ in the day of His appearing, quickened with the life that quickened Him, and raised up to share the Glory which the Father has given to Him.

**I.**Paul’s argument begins here, and this will be our first head, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, CHRIST IS NOT RISEN.  
If the resurrection of the dead is impossible, Christ cannot have risen from the dead. Now, *the Apostles bore witness that Christ had risen*. They had met Him, they had been with Him, they had seen Him eat a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb on one occasion. They had seen Him perform acts which could not be performed by a spirit, but which needed that He should be flesh and bones. Indeed, He said, “A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have.” One of them put his finger into the print of the nails and was invited to thrust his hand into Christ’s side. He was known by two of them in the breaking of bread, a familiar token by which they recognized Him better than by anything else. They heard Him speak, they knew the tones of His voice—they were not deceived. On one occasion, 500 of them saw Him at once, or, if there was any possibility of a mistake when they were all together, they were not deceived when they saw Him, one by one, and entered into very close personal communion with Him, each one after a different sort. “Now,” says Paul, “if there is no resurrection of the dead, if that is impossible, then, of course, Christ did not rise, and yet we all assure you that we saw Him, and that we were with Him— and you must think that we are all liars, and that the Christian religion is a lie, or else you must believe that there is a resurrection of the dead.”  
“But,” says one, “Christ might rise and yet not His people.” Not so! According to our faith and firm belief, Christ is one with His people. When Adam sinned, the whole human race fell in him, for they were one with him—in Adam, all died. Even those that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression have, nevertheless, died. Even upon infants, the death sentence has taken effect because they were one with Adam. There is no separating Adam from his posterity. Now, Christ is the second Adam, and He has a posterity. All Believers are one with Him and none can separate themselves from Him. If *they* do not live, then *He* did not live. And if He did not rise, then they will not rise—whatever happened to Him must also happen to them. They are so welded together, the Head and the members, that there is no dividing them! If He had slept an eternal sleep, then every righteous soul would have done the same. If He rose again, they must rise again, for He has taken them unto Himself to be part and parcel of His very Being! He died that they might live. Because He lives, they shall live, also, and in His eternal life they must forever be partakers.  
This is Paul’s first argument, then, for the resurrection of the righteous, that, inasmuch as Christ rose, they must rise, for they are identified with Him.  
**II.**But now he proceeds with his subject, not so much arguing upon the resurrection of others as upon the Resurrection of Christ. And his next argument is, that, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, APOSTOLIC PREACHING FALLS. “If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain” (see the 14th verse). “Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not.”  
*If Christ was not raised, the Apostles were false witnesses*. When a man bears false witness, he usually has a motive for doing so. What motive had these men? What did they gain by bearing false witness to Christ’s Resurrection? It was all loss and no profit to them if He had not risen. They declared in Jerusalem that He had risen from the dead and straightway men began to haul them to prison and to put them to death! Those of them who survived bore the same testimony. They were so full of the conviction of it that they went into distant countries to tell the story of Jesus and His Resurrection from the dead. Some went to Rome, some to Spain— probably some came even to this remote island of Britain. Wherever they went, they testified that Christ had risen from the dead and that they had seen Him alive—and that He was the Savior of all who trusted in Him!  
Thus they always preached and what became of them? I may say, with Paul, that, “they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” They were brought before the Roman Emperor again and again, and before the pro-consuls, and threatened with the most painful of deaths—but not one of them ever withdrew his testimony concerning Christ’s Resurrection! They still stood to it, that they had known Him in life, many of them had been near Him in death, and they had all communed with Him after His Resurrection. They declared that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, that He died and was buried, that He rose, again, and that there was salvation for all who believed in Him!  
Were these men false witnesses? If so, they were the most extraordinary false witnesses who ever lived! What were their morals? What kind of men were they? Were they drunkards? Were they adulterers? Were they thieves? No, they were the purest and best of mankind! Their adversaries could bring no charge against their moral conduct. They were eminently honest and they spoke with the accent of conviction. As I have already said, they suffered for their testimony. Now, under the law, the witness of two men was to be received, but what shall we say of the witness of 500 men? If it was true when they first declared that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, it is equally true now. It does not matter though the event happened nearly 1900 years ago, it is just as true now! The Apostles bore witness which could not be denied and so it still stands. We cannot assume that all these Apostolic men were false witnesses of God.  
If we even suppose that they were mistaken about this matter, we must suspect their witness about everything else. And the only logical result is to give up the New Testament altogether. If they were mistaken as to Christ having risen from the dead, they are not credible witnesses upon anything else! And if they are discredited, the whole of our religion falls with them—the Christian faith and especially all that the Apostles built on Christ’s Resurrection must be turned out of doors as altogether a delusion! They taught that Christ’s rising from the dead was the evidence that His Sacrifice was accepted, that He rose again for our justification, that His rising again was the hope of Believers in this life—and the assurance of the resurrection of their bodies in the life to come. You must give up all your hope of salvation the moment you doubt the Lord’s rising from the dead!  
As for Paul, who puts himself with the rest of the Apostles, and says, “If Christ is not risen, we are found false witnesses of God.” I venture to bring him forward as a solitary witness of the most convincing kind. I need not remind you how he was, at first, opposed to Christ. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, one of the most intolerant members of the sect that hated the very*name* of Christ! He had a righteousness that surpassed that of the men of his times. He was a religious leader and persecutor and yet he was so convinced of the appearance of Christ to him on the way to Damascus, that from that time he was completely turned round and he preached with burning zeal the faith which once he blasphemed! There is an honesty about Paul which convinces at once—and if he had not seen the Savior risen from the dead, he would not have been the man to say that he did.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, you may rest assured that Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead! You cannot put down these good men as impostors. You cannot reckon the Apostle Paul among those readily deceived, or among the deceivers of others. So you may be sure that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, according to the Scriptures.  
**III.**Once more, Paul’s argument is that IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, FAITH BECOMES A DELUSION.  
As we have to give up the Apostles and all their teaching *if Christ did not rise from the dead*, so we must conclude that *their hearers believed a lie*—“your faith is also in vain.” Beloved, I speak to you who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and who are resting in Him with great comfort and peace of mind, yes, who have experienced a great change of heart and a great change in your lives through faith in Christ. Now, if He did not rise from the dead, you are believing a lie! Take this home to yourselves—if he did not *literally* rise from the dead on the third day, this faith of yours that gives you comfort—this faith which has renewed you in heart and life, this faith which you believe is leading you Home to Heaven—must be abandoned as a sheer delusion! Your faith is fixed on a lie. Oh, dreadful inference! But the inference is clearly true if Christ is not risen—you are risking your soul on a lie if Christ did not rise from the dead. This is a solemn statement. I said last Sabbath, and I repeat it—  
***“Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die  
I risk my whole eternity.”***  
It is so. If Jesus Christ did not die for me, and did not rise again for me, I am lost. I have not a ray of comfort from any other direction. I have no dependence on anything else but Jesus crucified and risen—and if that sheet-anchor fails, everything fails with it, in my case—and so it must in yours.  
“Your faith is also in vain,” wrote Paul to the Corinthians, for, if Christ is not risen, the trial will be too great for faith to endure, since it has for the very keystone of the arch the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. If He did not rise, your faith rests on what never happened, and is not true! And certainly your faith will not bear that, or any other trial. There comes to the Believer, every now and then, a time of great testing. Did you ever lie, as I have done several times, upon the brink of eternity, full of pain, almost over the border of this world, fronting eternity, looking into the dread abyss? There, unless you are sure about the foundation of your faith, you are in an evil case, indeed! Unless you have a solid rock beneath you *then*, your hope will shrink away to nothing and your confidence will depart!  
When you are sure that “the Lord is risen, indeed,” then you feel that there is something beneath your feet that does not stir. If Jesus died for you and Jesus rose for you, then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you are not afraid, even, of that tremendous day when the earth shall be burned up and the elements shall melt with fervent heat! You feel a confidence that will bear even that test. If Christ did not rise from the dead and you are resting your soul on the belief that He did, what a failure it will be for you in another world! What disappointment when you do not wake up in His likeness! What dismay if there should be no pardon of sin, no salvation through the precious blood! If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain. If it is in vain, give it up! Do not hold on to a thing that is not true! I would sooner plunge into the water and swim or wade through the river, than I would trust myself to a rotten bridge that would break down in the middle. If Christ did not rise, do not trust Him, for such faith is in vain! But, if you believe that He *did* die for you, and *did* rise, again, for you, then believe in Him, joyously confident that such a fact as this affords a solid basis for your belief!  
**IV.**Now I am going to advance a little further. Paul says, next, that, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, THEY REMAINED IN THEIR SINS. “If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.”  
Ah, can you bear that thought, my Beloved in Christ, that you are yet in your sins? I think that the bare suggestion takes hold upon you, terrifies you and chills your blood! A little while ago you were in your sins, dead in them, covered with them as with a crimson robe—you were condemned, lost. But now you believe that Christ has brought you out of your sins, and washed you and made you white in His precious blood. Yes, and has so changed you that sin shall not have dominion over you, for now you are, by Grace, a child of God! Well, but, if Christ did not rise again, you are yet in your sins.  
Observe that—*for then there is no Atonement made.* At least, no satisfactory atonement. If the Atonement of Christ for sin had been unsatisfactory, He would have remained in the grave. He went there on our behalf, a hostage for us, and if what He did upon the tree had not satisfied the Justice of God, then He would never have come out of the grave again! Think for a minute what our position would be if I stood here to preach only a dead and buried Christ! He died nearly 1900 years ago, but suppose He had never been heard of since? If He had not risen from the dead, could you have confidence in Him? You would say, “How do we know that His Sacrifice was accepted?” We sing right truly—  
***“If Jesus ne’er had paid the debt,  
He ne’er had been at freedom set.”***  
The Surety would have been under bonds unless He had discharged all His liability. But He has done so and He has risen from the dead— ***“And now both the Surety and sinner are free.”***Understand clearly what I am saying. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, took upon Himself the sum total of the guilt of all His people. “The Lord has made to meet upon Him the

iniquity of us all.” He died, and by His death obtained the full discharge of all our obligations. But His rising again was, so to speak, the receipt in full, the token that He had discharged the whole of the dread liabilities which He had taken upon Himself. And now, since Christ is risen, you who believe in Him are not in your sins. But, if He had not risen, then it would have been true, “You are yet in your sins.”  
It would have been true, also, in another sense. The life by which true Believers live is the Resurrection-life of Him who said, “Because I live, you shall live also.” But if Christ is not risen, there is no life for those who are in Him. If He were still slumbering in the grave, where would have been the life that now makes us joyful and makes us aspire after heavenly things? There would have been no life for you if there had not first been life for Him. “Now is Christ risen from the dead,” and in Him you rise into newness of life. But, if He did not rise, you are still dead, still under sin, still without the Divine Life, still without the life immortal and eternal that is to be your life in Heaven throughout eternity!  
So, you see, once more, the consequences that follow—“If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.”  
**V.**Now follows, if possible, a still more terrible consequence! IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, ALL THE PIOUS DEAD HAVE PERISHED. “Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” “Perished,” by which is not meant “annihilated”—they are in a worse condition than that!  
One phrase must be explained by the other which went before it—*if Jesus Christ is not risen, they are yet in their sins.* They died and they told us that they were blood-washed and forgiven, and that they hoped to see the face of God with joy. But if Christ rose not from the dead, there is no sinner who has gone to Heaven—there is no saint who ever died who has had any real hope—he has died under a delusion and he has perished!  
If Jesus Christ is not raised, the godly dead are yet in their sins, and *they can never rise,* for, if Christ did not rise from the dead, they cannot rise from the dead! Only through His Resurrection is there resurrection for the saints. The ungodly shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt, but Believers shall rise into eternal life and felicity because of their oneness with Christ. But, if He did not rise, they cannot rise. If He is dead, they must be dead, for they must share with Him. They are, they always must be, one with Him—and all the saints who ever died, died under a mistake if Christ did not rise! We cast away the thought with abhorrence! Many of us have had beloved parents and friends who have died in the Lord and we know that the full assurance of their faith was no mistake. We have seen dear children die in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection! And we know that it was no error on their part. I have stood by many deathbeds of Believers, many triumphant, and many more peaceful and calm than a sweet summer evening. They were not mistaken. No, dear Sirs—believing in Christ who lived, and died, and rose again—they had confidence in the midst of pain, and joy in the hour of their departure! We cannot believe that they were mistaken and, therefore, we are confident that Jesus Christ *did* rise from the dead!  
**VI.**Once more, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION, OUR SOURCE OF JOY IS GONE. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we who believe that He did are, of all men, the most miserable. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ,” and we certainly have no hope of any other life, apart from Christ, “we are of all men most miserable.”  
What does Paul mean? That Christian men are more miserable than others if they are mistaken? No, he does not mean *that*, for even the mistake, if it is a mistake, gives them joy. The error, if it is an error, yields them a present confidence and peace. But supposing they are sure that they are under an error, that they have made a mistake—then their comfort is gone and they are, of all men, the most miserable!  
*Believers have given up sensuous joys*. They have sedulously given them up. They find no comfort in them. There are a thousand things in which worldings find a kind of joy, all of which the Christian loathes. Well, if you have given up the brown bread and cannot eat the white, then are you starved, indeed. If we consider the mirth of the worldling to be no better than the husks of swine—and there is no bread for us in the fact that Christ rose from the dead—then we are hungry, indeed.  
And, more than that, *we have now learned superior things*. We have learned to love holiness and we seek after it. We have learned to love communion with God and it has become our Heaven to talk with our Father and our Savior. We now look after things which are *spiritual*. And we try to handle the things that are carnal as they should be handled, as things to be used, but not abused. Now if, after having tasted these superior joys, they all turn out to be nothing—and they must turn out to be nothing if Jesus did not rise from the dead—then we are, indeed, of all men, the most miserable!  
More than that, *we have had high hopes*, hopes that have made our hearts leap for joy. We have been ready, sometimes, to go straight away out of the body, with high delights and raptures, in the expectation of being “with Christ, which is far better.” We have said, “Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” We have been transported with the full conviction that our eyes “shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” And if that is not sure, if it can be proved that our hopes are in vain, then are we, of all men, the most miserable!  
You will wonder why I have been so long in bringing out these points, and what I am driving at. Well, what I am driving at is this. After all, everything hinges upon a fact, an ancient fact, and if that fact is *not* a fact, it is over with us. If Jesus Christ did *not* rise from the dead, then His Gospel is all exploded. What I want you to notice is this, that there must be a basis of *fact* in our religion—these things must be facts or else nothing can give us consolation.  
Our eternal hopes do not depend upon our moral condition, for, observe, these men in Corinth would not have been better or worse if Christ had not risen from the dead. Their character was just the same. It had been fashioned, it is true, by a belief that He *did* rise from the dead, but whether He did or did not, they were the same men, so that their hope did not depend upon their good moral condition. The Apostle does not say, “If you are or are not in such and such a moral condition,” but, “If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.” So, my Beloved, the reason of your being safe will be that Christ died for you and that He rose again! It is not the result of what you *are*, but of *what* He *did*! The hinge of it all is not in you—it is in Him—and you are to place your reliance, not upon what you are, or hope to be, but wholly and entirely upon a great fact which transpired nearly 1900 years ago! If He did not rise from the dead, you are still in your sins, be you as good as you may! But if He did rise from the dead, and you are one with Him, you are not in your sins—they are all put away and you are “accepted in the Beloved.”  
Now I go a step further. The great hope you have does not hinge, even, upon your spiritual state. You must be born again. You must have a new heart and a right spirit, or else you cannot lay hold of Christ and He is not yours. But still, your ultimate hope is not in what you are spiritually, but in what He is. When darkness comes over your soul and you say, “I am afraid I am not converted,” still believe in Him who rose from the dead and when, after you have had a sight of yourself, you are drifting away to dark despair, still cling to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, and rose again from the dead for you! If you believe that Christ is risen from the dead and if this is the foundation of your hope of Heaven, that hope stands just as sure whether you are bright or whether you are dull— whether you can sing or whether you are forced to sigh—whether you can run or whether you are a broken-legged cripple only able to lie at Christ’s feet!  
If He died for you and rose again for you, that is the groundwork of your confidence, and I pray you keep to it. Do you see how Paul insist upon this? If Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain and you are yet in your sins. The inference is that if Christ is raised, and you have faith in Him, your faith is not in vain and you are not in your sins—you are saved! Your hope must not be here, in what your hands can do, but there, on yonder Cross, in *what He did,* and there, on yonder Throne, *in Him who has risen again for your justification*!  
The hardest thing in the world seems to be to keep people to this Truth, for I have noticed that much of the modern-thought doctrine is nothing but old self-righteousness tricked out again. It is still bidding men to trust in *themselves*, to trust in their *moral character*, to trust in their *spiritual aspirations*, or something or other. I stand here, tonight, to say to you that the basis of your hope is not even your own *faith*, much less your own *good works*—it is what Christ has done once and for all, for “you are complete in Him,” and you can never be complete in any other way!  
Here, again, I would have you notice that Paul does not say that your being forgiven and saved depends upon your sincerity and your earnestness. You must be sincere and earnest—Christ is not yours if you are not—but still, you may be very sincere, and very earnest, and yet be wrong, all the while. And the more sincere and earnest you are in a wrong way, the further you will go astray. The sell-righteous man may be very sincere as he goes about to establish a righteousness of His own, but the more He does it, the more He ruins Himself. But here is the mark for you to aim at, not at your sincerity, though there must be that—but if Christ was raised and that is where you are resting your hopes—then you are not in your sins, but you are accepted in Christ and justified in Him.  
This is where I stand and I pray every Believer to stand here. There are many new discoveries made in science. We are pleased to hear it. I hope that we shall be able to travel more quickly and pay less for it. I hope that we shall have better light and that it will not be so expensive. The more true science, the better, but when science comes in to tell me that it has discovered anything about the way to Heaven, then I have a deaf ear to it! “If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also in vain; you are yet in your sins.” But if Christ is risen, then I know where I am. If it is really so, that He is God in human flesh—if He took my sin and bore the consequences of it, and made a clear sweep of it from before the Judgement Seat of the Most High—and if His rising, again, is God’s testimony that the work is done and that Christ, who stood as Substitute for me, is accepted for me, oh, hallelujah, hallelujah! What more do I need, but to praise and bless the name of Him who has saved me with an effectual salvation? Now will I work for Him! Now will I spend and be spent in His service! Now will I hate every false way, and every sin, and seek after purity and holiness, but not, in any sense, as the groundwork of my confidence! My one hope for time and eternity is JESUS, only JESUS! Jesus crucified and risen from the dead!  
I do not know any passage of Scripture which, more thoroughly than this one, throws the stress where the stress must be—not on man, but on Christ alone—“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain; and your faith is also in vain.” O dear Hearer, if you would be saved, your salvation does not lie with yourself, but with Him who left His Father’s bosom and came down to earth a Babe at Bethlehem, and hung upon a woman’s breast—upon Him who lived here, for 33 years, a life of suffering and of toil, and who then took all the sin of His people upon Himself—carried it up to the tree and there bore all the consequences of it in His own body— ***“Bore all that Almighty God could bear,  
With strength enough, but none to spare.”***Jesus Christ bore that which has made God’s pardon an act of justice and vindicated His forgiveness of sin so that none can say that He is unjust when He passes by transgression! Christ did all that and then, dying, was laid in the tomb, but, the third day His Father raised Him from the dead in token that He spoke the Truth when He said, on the Cross, “It is finished.”  
The debt is now paid! Then, O Sinner, leave your prison, for your debt is paid! Are you shut up in despair on account of your debt of sin? It is all discharged if you have believed in Him who was raised from the dead! He has taken all your sin and you are free. That handwriting of ordinances that was against you is nailed to His Cross. Go your way and sing, “The Lord is risen, indeed,” and be as happy as all the birds in the air, till you are, by-and-by, as happy as the angels in Heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON *1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-20.***

**Verse 1, 2.***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.*Paul preached the Gospel. His hearers received it and also stood in it—“wherein you stand.” It is essential to salvation to hear the Gospel, to receive it, and then to stand in it. Now, what was this Gospel? Paul is going to tell us and, instead of making a list of doctrines, He mentions a set of *facts*.

**3.***For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received.*Notice that the *preacher* does not make the Gospel. If he makes it, it is not worth your having! Originality in preaching, if it is originality in the statement of doctrine, is falsehood! We are not makers and inventors—we are *repeaters—*we tell the message we have received.

**3.***How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*This, then, is the Gospel, that Jesus “died for our sins,” taking our sins upon Himself. He bore the death penalty for us, “according to the Scriptures.” There are plenty of Scriptures—Old Testament Scriptures—which teach this great Truth of God by way of prophecy.

**4.***And that He was buried.*This was necessary as a proof of His death and as the groundwork of His rising again.  
**4.***And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*This is the Gospel—Christ dead, buried, risen again, always living. We must dwell upon these points, for they are the essentials of the Gospel.  
**5, 6.***And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present day.* When Paul wrote.  
**6, 7.***But some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles.* In different places, and at different hours; sometimes by one, sometimes by eleven, once by 500 brethren at once, Jesus was seen after He had risen from the dead! As I have often said, there is no historical fact that is so well authenticated as that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.  
**8.***And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.*Paul calls himself an abortion and speaks of himself as one hardly worth mentioning. Yet he had seen the Lord after His Resurrection from the dead. He was not a man to be deceived, for he had persecuted the Church of Christ. He was exceedingly mad against the Messiah, so that if he said that he had seen Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was converted by the sight, we may be quite sure that it was so. Paul was not a man to undergo all the sacrifices he had to endure for the sake of a mere dream.  
**9, 10.***For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.* No man could be more thoroughly with Christ, heart and soul, than that Paul who, before, had been the blood thirsty Saul of Tarsus! His witness may well be believed and, in connection with all that went before it, it proves beyond all doubt that He who was crucified and was laid in the tomb, did certainly rise, again, and was seen in life after death.  
**11.***Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.*There was not a doubt about that. All the Apostles, all the early Christians preached the Resurrection of Christ, and the Corinthians, when they became Christians, believed it.

**12.***Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*What? Had they got so far as that, to call themselves Christians, and yet they doubted the Truth of the resurrection of the dead? Yes, they spirited it away. They made it into a kind of myth or fable—and yet they called themselves Christians! That the heathen should not believe it was not amazing—but that those who professed to believe that Christ had risen from the dead, yet doubted the resurrection of His people was, indeed, a strange thing! Paul argues with them about this matter.

**13, 14.***But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain; and your faith is also in vain.* If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, we are preaching a falsehood. If He did not rise from the dead, you are believing a falsehood and our preaching and your believing are nothing but vanity.

**15-17.***Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if it is so that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; you are yet in your sins.*If Jesus Christ is not risen, He has done nothing for you! You are not saved, you are not pardoned, you are not renewed. It is all a myth, all a piece of deceit! If that fact is given up, that Christ rose from the dead, everything connected with salvation is also given up!

**18.***Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* All the godly saints died resting in the risen Christ, but if He is not risen, they died under a delusion—and they have perished.

**19.***If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*Those who are Believers in Christ, says Paul, are miserable dupes if He has not risen from the dead. They are believing and resting all their hopes upon a lie! It makes them happy, truly, but if you can take that hope away from them by persuading them that what it is grounded upon is not true, you have made them, miserable, indeed!

**20.***But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.* Paul has been arguing on every supposition and now he comes back with his own positive witness that Christ is risen. You remember that Jesus died at the time of the Passover, as the one great Paschal Lamb, but He rose again on the first day of the week, and that was the feast of first-fruits with the Jews. They brought handfuls of wheat from the fields to show their gratitude to God and, in order that a blessing might rest on all the crop. And Paul uses Christ’s rising on that particular day as a figure—“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

He lives! He is the first-fruits and the full harvest will follow! All who are in Him will rise from the dead, for He is one with them, and none can separate them from Him, nor sever Him from them! They died in Him and they live because He lives, blessed be His name!

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

“ALAS FOR US, IF YOU WERE ALL, AND NOTHING BEYOND, O EARTH”  
NO. 562

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 27, 1864, BY THE REV. C, H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”  
1 Corinthians 15:19.~~***

You will understand that the Apostle is arguing with professedly Christian people who were dubious about the Resurrection of the dead. He is not saying that all men are now miserable if there is no hope of the world to come, for such an assertion would be untrue. There are very many who never think of another life who are quite happy in their way, enjoy themselves and are very comfortable after a fashion. But he speaks of Christian people—“If we, who have hope in Christ, are led to doubt the doctrine of a future state and of a resurrection, then we are of all men most miserable.”

The argument has nothing to do with some of you who are not Christians. It has nothing to do with you who have never been brought out of a state of nature into a state of Grace. It only respects those who are real, living followers of the Savior and who are known by this, that they have hope in Christ—hope in His blood for pardon, in His righteousness for Justification, in His power for support, in His Resurrection for eternal Glory. “If we who have hope in Christ, have that hope for this life only, then we are of all men most miserable.”

You understand the argument. He is appealing to their consciousness. They, as Christians, had real enjoyments, “but,” says he, “you could not have these enjoyments if it were not for the hope of another life. Once take that away, if you could still remain Christians and have the same feelings which you now have and act as you now do, you would become of all men most miserable.” Therefore to justify your own happiness and make it all reasonable, you must admit a Resurrection. There is no other method of accounting for the joyous peace which the Christian possesses. Our riches are beyond the sea! Our city with firm foundations lies on the other side the river!

Gleams of Glory from the spirit-world cheer our hearts and urge us onward. But if it were not for these, our present joys would pine and die. We will try and handle our text this morning in this way. First, we are not, of all men, most miserable. But secondly, without the hope of another life we should be—that we are prepared to confess—because thirdly, our chief joy lies in the hope of a life to come. And thus, fourthly, the future influences the present. And so, in the last place, we may today judge what our future is to be.  
**I.**First then, WE ARE NOT OF ALL MEN MOST MISERABLE. Who ventures to say we are? He who will have the hardihood to say so, knows nothing of us. He who shall affirm that Christianity makes men miserable is himself an utter stranger to it and has never partaken of its joyful influences. It were a very strange thing, indeed, if it did make us wretched, for see to what a position it exalts us! It makes us sons of God! Do you suppose that God will give all the happiness to His enemies and reserve all the mourning for His sons?

Shall His foes have mirth and joy and shall His own home-born children inherit sorrow and wretchedness? Are the kisses for the wicked and the frowns for us? Are we condemned to hang our harps upon the willows and sing nothing but doleful dirges, while the children of Satan are to laugh for joy of heart? We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Shall the sinner, who has no part nor lot in Christ, call himself happy and shall we go mourning as if we were penniless beggars?

No, we will rejoice in the Lord always and glory in our inheritance, for we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. But we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” The rod of chastisement must rest upon us in our measure, but it works for us the comfortable fruits of righteousness. And therefore, by the aid of the Divine Comforter, we will rejoice in the Lord at all times. We are, my Brothers and Sisters, married unto Christ! And shall our great Bridegroom permit His spouse to linger in constant grief? Our hearts are knit unto Him—we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. And though for awhile we may suffer as our Head once suffered, yet we are even now blessed with heavenly blessings in Him.

Shall our Head reign in Heaven and shall we have a Hell upon earth? God forbid! The joyful triumph of our exalted Head is in a measure shared by us, even in this vale of tears. We have the earnest of our inheritance in the comforts of the Spirit which are neither few nor small. Think of a Christian! He is a king—and shall the king be the most melancholy of men? He is a priest unto God, and shall he offer no sweet incense of hallowed joy and grateful thanksgiving? We are fit companions for angels— He has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And shall we have no days of Heaven upon earth?

Is Canaan ours from Dan to Beersheba and shall we eat no fruit from Eshcol’s vine on this side of Jordan? Shall we have no taste of the figs and of the pomegranates and of the flowing milk and honey? Is there no manna in the wilderness? Are there no streams in the desert? Are there no streaks of light to herald our eternal sun rising? Heritors of joy forever, have we no foretastes of our portion? I say again—it were the oddest thing in the world if Christians were more miserable than other men—or not more happy.

Think again of what God has done for them! The Christian knows that his sins are forgiven. There is not against the Believer a single sin recorded in God’s book. “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins.” More than that, the Believer is accounted by God as if he had perfectly kept the Law, for the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him and he stands clothed in that fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints. And shall the man whom God accepts be wretched? Shall the pardoned offender be less happy than the man upon whom the wrath of God abides? Can you conceive such a thing?

Moreover, my Brethren, we are made temples of the Holy Spirit and is the Holy Spirit’s temple to be a dark, dolorous place—a place of shrieks and moans and cries, like the Druidic groves of old? Such is not like our God! Our God is a God of love and it is His very Nature to make His creatures happy. And we, who are His twice-made creatures, who are the partakers of the Divine Nature having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust—is it to be supposed that we are bound by a stern decree to go mourning all our days? Oh, if you knew the Christian’s privilege! If you understood that the secret of the Lord is laid open to him! That the wounds of Christ are his shelter! That the flesh and blood of Christ are his food! That Christ Himself is his sweet Companion and his abiding Friend! Oh, if you knew this, you would never again foolishly dream that Christians are an unhappy race!

“Happy are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” Who can be compared with the man who is “satisfied with favor and full with the blessing of the Lord”? Well might the evil prophet of Bethor exclaim, “Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.” We will go a step farther. We will not only say that from the nature of his position and privileges a Christian should be happy, but we declare that he *is* so and that among all men there are none who enjoy such a constant peace of mind as Believers in Christ.

Our joy may not be like that of the sinner, noisy and boisterous. You know what Solomon says—“The laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns under a pot”—a great deal of blaze and much noise and then a handful of ashes and it is all over. “Who has woe, who has redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: men of strength to mingle strong drink.” The Christian, in truth, does not know much of the excitement of the bowl, the viol and the dance. Nor does he desire to know! He is content that he possesses a calm deep-seated repose of soul. “He is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”

He is not disturbed with any sudden fear—he knows that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” He is in the habit, in whatever society he may be, of still lifting up his heart to God. And therefore he can say with the Psalmist, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed—I will sing and give praise.”—

***~~“He waits in secret on his God;  
His God in secret sees;  
Let earth be all in arms abroad, He dwells in heavenly peace.  
His pleasures rise from things unseen, Beyond this world and time,  
Where neither eyes nor ears have been, Nor thoughts of sinners climb.~~***

***~~He wants no pomp nor royal throne  
To raise his figure here—  
Content and pleased to live unknown,  
Till Christ his life appears.”~~***

There is a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God. Believers drink of that river and thirst not for carnal delights. They are made “to lie down in green pastures,” and are led “beside the still waters.” Now this solid, lasting joy and peace of mind sets the Christian so on high above all others that I boldly testify that there are no people in the world to compare with him for happiness. But do not suppose that our joy never rises above this settled calm! Let me tell you, and I speak experimentally, we have our seasons of rapturous delight and overflowing bliss. There are times with us when no music could equal the melody of our heart’s sweet hymn of joy. It would empty earth’s coffers of every farthing of her joy to buy a single ounce of our delight!

Do not fancy Paul was the only man who could say, “Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knows,” for these ecstasies are usual with Believers. And on their sunshiny days when their unbelief is shaken off and their faith is strong, they have all but walked the golden streets. And they can say, “If we have not entered within the pearly gate, we have been only just this side of it. And if we have not yet come to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven, if we have not joined the great congregation of the perfect in actual body, yet still***—***

***“Even now by faith we join our hands  
With those that went before,  
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
On the eternal shore.”***

I would not change one five minutes of the excessive joy my soul has sometimes felt for a thousand years of the best mirth that the children of this world could give me. O Friends, there is a happiness which can make the eyes sparkle and the heart beat high and the whole man as full of bounding speed of life as the chariots of Amminadib. There are raptures and high ecstasies which on festival days such as the Lord allots to His people, the saints are permitted to enjoy. I must not fail to remind you that the Christian is the happiest of men for this reason—his joy does not depend upon circumstances. We have seen the happiest men in the most sorrowful conditions.

Mr. Renwick, who was the last of the Scotch martyrs, said a little before his death, “Enemies think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in mosses and upon mountains, but even amidst the storm of these last two nights I cannot express what sweet times I have had when I have had no coverings but the dark curtains of night—yes, in the silent watch my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy wherein the whole family of Heaven does swim. Each star led me to wonder what He must be who is the Star of Jacob and from whom all stars borrow their shining.”

Here is a martyr of God driven from house and home and from all comforts and yet having such sweet seasons beneath the curtains of the black night as kings do not often know beneath their curtains of silk. A minister of Christ going to visit a very, very poor man, gives this description. He says, “I found him alone, his wife having gone out to ask help of some neighbor. I was startled by the sight of the pale emaciated man, the living image of death, fastened upright in his chair by a rude mechanism of cords and belts hanging from the ceiling, totally unable to move hand or foot, having been for more than four years entirely deprived of the use of his limbs and suffering extreme pain from swellings in all his joints. I approached him full of pity and I said, “Are you left alone, my Friend, in this deplorable situation?”

He answered with a gentle voice—his lips were the only parts of his body which he appeared to have power to move—“No, Sir, I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” I began to talk with him and I soon observed what was the source of his consolation, for just in front of him lay the Bible upon a pillow, his wife having left it open at some choice Psalm of David so that he might read while she was gone, as he had no power to turn over the pages. I asked him what he had to live upon and found that it was a miserable pittance, scarcely enough to keep body and soul together, “But,” said he, “I never want anything, for the Lord has said, ‘Your bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure,’ and I trust in Him and I shall never want while God is faithful to His promise.”

“I asked him,” says this minister, “whether he did not often repine on account of suffering so acutely for so many years.” “Sir,” said he, “I did repine at first, but not for the last three years, blessed be God for it, for I know whom I have believed and though I feel my own weakness and unworthiness more and more, yet I am persuaded that He will never leave me nor forsake me. And so graciously does He comfort me that when my lips are closed with lock-jaw and I cannot speak a word for hours together, He enables me to sing His praises most sweetly in my heart.”

Now here was a man to whom the sun of all earthly comfort was set and yet the Sun of Heaven shone full in his face and he was more peaceful and happy in deep poverty and racking pain than all you or I have been in the health and strength of youth! John Howard spent his time in visiting the jails and going from one haunt of fever to another. He was asked how he could find any ground of happiness when he was living in miserable Russian villages, or dwelling in discomfort in a hospital or a jail. Mr. Howard’s answer was very beautiful, “I hope,” said he, “I have sources of enjoyment which depend not upon the particular spot I inhabit. A rightly cultivated mind, under the power of Divine Grace and the exercise of a benevolent disposition affords a ground of satisfaction that is not to be affected by heres and theres.”

Every Christian will bear witness that he has found his sad times to be his glad times, his losses to be his gains, his sicknesses means to promote his soul’s health. Our summer does not depend upon the sun, nor our flood-tide upon the moon. We can rejoice even in death. We look forward to that happy hour when we shall close our eyes in the peaceful slumbers of death, believing that our last day will be our best day. Even the crossing of the river Jordan is but an easy task, for we shall hear Him say, “Fear not, I am with you: be not dismayed, I am your God. When you

pass through the rivers I will be with you and the floods shall not overflow you.”

We dare to say it, then, very boldly—we are not of all men most miserable—we would not change with unconverted men for all their riches and their pomp and their honor thrown into the scale—

***“Go you that boast in all your stores,  
And tell how bright they shine,  
Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,  
And my Redeemer’s mine.”***

**II.**This brings us to the second point—WITHOUT THE HOPE OF ANOTHER LIFE WE WILL ADMIT THAT WE SHOULD BE, OF ALL MEN, MOST MISERABLE. Especially was this true of the Apostles. They were rejected by their countrymen. They lost all the comforts of home. Their lives were spent in toil and were daily exposed to violent death. They, all of them, suffered the martyr’s doom except John, who seems to have been preserved not from martyrdom, but in it. They were certainly the twelve most miserable of men apart from that hope of the world to come, which made them, of all men, the most happy.

But this is true, dear Friends, not merely of persecuted and despised and poverty-stricken Christians, but of all Believers. We are prepared to grant it, that take away from us the hope of the world to come we should be more miserable than men without religion. The reason is very clear, if you think that the Christian has renounced those common and ordinary sources of joy from which other men drink. We must have *some* pleasure—it is impossible for men to live in this world without it and I can say most truthfully I never urge any of you to do that which would make you unhappy.

We must have some pleasure. Well then, there is a vessel filled with muddy filthy water which the camels’ feet have stirred—shall I drink it? I see yonder a rippling stream of clear flowing water, pure as crystal and cooling as the snow of Lebanon and I say, “No, I will not drink this foul, muddy stuff. Leave that for beasts. I will drink of yon clear stream.” But if I am mistaken, if there is no stream yonder, if it is but the deceitful mirage—if I have been deluded—then I am worse off than those who were content with the muddy water, for they have at least some cooling draughts, and I have none at all.

This is precisely the Christian’s case. He passes by the pleasures of sin and the amusements of carnal men because he says, “I do not care for them, I find no pleasure in them—my happiness flows from the river which springs from the Throne of God and flows to me through Jesus Christ—I will drink of that.” But if there were no hereafter, if that were proven to be a deception, then were we more wretched than the profligate and licentious!

Again, the Christian man has learned the vanity of all earthly joys. We know when we look upon pomp that it is an empty thing. We walk through the world not with the scorn of Diogenes, the cynical philosopher, but with something of his wisdom and we look upon the common things in which men rejoice and say with Solomon, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” And why do we say this? Why, because we have chosen *eternal* things in which there is no vanity and which are satisfying to the soul. But, my Brethren, it is the most unhappy piece of knowledge which a man can acquire—to know that this world is vain—if there is not another world abundantly to compensate for all our ills.

There is a poor lunatic in Bedlam, plaiting straw into a crown which he puts upon his head and calls himself a king and mounts his mimic throne and thinks that he is monarch over all nations and is perfectly happy in his dream. Do you think that I would undeceive him? No, verily, if I could, I would not. If the delusion makes the man happy, by all means, let him indulge in it.

But, dear Friends, if you and I have been undeceived—our dream of perfect bliss beneath the skies is gone forever! What, then, if there is no world to come? Why then, it is a most sorrowful thing for us that we have been awakened out of our sleep unless this better thing which we have chosen, this good part which shall not be taken from us, should prove to be real and true, as we believe it is! Moreover, the Christian man is a man who has had high, noble, and great expectations! And this is a very sad thing for us if our expectations are not fulfilled, for it makes us, of all men, most miserable.

I have known poor men waiting and expecting a legacy. They had a right to expect it and they have waited and waited and borne with poverty and the relative has died and left them nothing. Their poverty has ever afterwards seemed to be a heavier drag than before. It is an unhappy thing for a man to have large ideas and large desires if he cannot gratify them. I believe that poverty is infinitely better endured by persons who were always poor than by those who have been rich and have had to come down to penury—for they miss what the others never had and what the originally poor would look upon as luxuries they consider to be necessary to their existence.

The Christian has learned to think of eternity, of God, of Christ, of communion with Jesus and if, indeed, it is all false, he certainly has dreamed the most magnificent of all mortal visions. Truly, if any man could prove it to be a vision, the best thing he could do would be to sit down and weep forever to think it was not true! For the dream is so splendid, the picture of the world to come so gorgeous, that I can only say if it is not true, it ought to be—if it is not true, then there is nothing here worth living for, my Brethren, and we are disappointed wretches, indeed— of all men most miserable.

The Christian, too, has learned to look upon everything here on earth as fleeting. I must confess every day this feeling grows with me. I scarcely look upon my friends as living. I walk as in a land of shadows and find nothing enduring around me. The broad arrow of the great skeleton king is, to my eyes, visibly stamped everywhere. I go so often to the grave and with those I least expected to take there, that it seems to be rather a world of dying than of living men. Well, this is a very unhappy thing—a very wretched state of mind for a man to be in—if there is no world to come. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then is the Christian, indeed, committed to a state of mind the most deplorable and pitiable.

But, O my Brothers and Sisters, if there *is* a world to come, as faith assures us there is, how joyous it is to be weaned from the world and to be ready to depart from it! To be with Christ is far better than to tarry in this vale of tears—

***“The cords that bound my heart to earth  
Are broken by His hands.  
Before His Cross I find myself,  
A stranger in the land.  
My heart is with Him on His Throne,  
And ill can brook delay;  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
‘Make haste and come away.’ ”***

May I not pant to be in my own sweet country with my own fair Lord, to see Him face to face? Yet, if it is not so and there is no resurrection of the dead, “we are of all men most miserable.”

**III.**OUR CHIEF JOY IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD TO COME. Think of the world to come, my Brothers and Sisters, and let your joys begin to kindle into flames of delight, for Heaven offers you all that you can desire. You are, many of you, weary of toil—so weary, perhaps, that you can scarcely enjoy the morning service because of the late hours at which you have had to work at night.

Ah, there is a land of rest—of *perfect* rest—where the sweat of labor no more bedews the worker’s brow and fatigue is forever banished. To those who are weary and spent, the word “rest” is full of Heaven. Oh, happy truth, there remains a rest for the people of God! “They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Others of you are always in the field of battle. You are so tempted within and so molested by foes without that you have little or no peace. I know where your hope lies. It lies in the victory—when the banner shall be waved aloft and the sword shall be sheathed and you shall hear your Captain say, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have fought a good fight. You have finished your course— from now on wear the crown of life which fades not away.”

Some of you are tossed about with many troubles. You go from care to care, from loss to loss—it seems to you as if all God’s waves and billows had gone over you. But you shall soon arrive at the land of happiness where you shall bathe your weary soul in seas of heavenly rest. You shall have no poverty soon! No mud hovel, no rags, nor hunger. “In My Father’s house are many mansions,” and there shall *you* dwell, satisfied with favor and full of every blessing. You have had bereavement after bereavement— the wife has been carried to the tomb, the children have followed—father and mother are gone and you have few left to love you here.

But you are going to the land where graves are unknown things! Where they never see a shroud and the sound of the mattock and the spade are never heard. You are going to your Father’s House in the land of the immortal, in the country of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed, in the habitation of God Most High, in the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all! Is not this your best joy—that you are not to be *here* forever, that you are not to dwell eternally in this wilderness—but shall soon inherit Canaan?

With all God’s people their worst grief is sin. I would not care for any sorrow if I could live without sinning. Oh, if I were rid of the appetites of the flesh and the lusts and the desires which continually go astray, I would be satisfied to lie in a dungeon and rot there—so as to be delivered from the corruption of sin. Well, Brothers and Sisters, we shall soon attain unto perfection. The body of this death will die with this body. There is no temptation in Heaven, for the dog of Hell can never cross the stream of death! There are no corruptions there, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defiles.

I think as I hear the joyous song of the glorified this morning, as I catch floating down from Heaven the sound of that music which is like many waters and like the great thunder, and as I hear the harmony of those notes which are sweet as harpers harping with their harps, my soul desires to stretch her wings and fly straight to yonder worlds of joy! I know it is so with you, my Brethren in the tribulation of Christ—as you wipe the sweat of your brow, is not this the comfort—there is rest for the people of God?

As you stand out against temptation and suffer for Christ’s sake, is not this your comfort—“If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him”? When you are slandered and despised by men, is not this your hope—“He will remember me when He comes into His kingdom. I shall sit upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits down upon His Father’s Throne”?

Oh, yes, this is the music to which Christians dance! This is the wine which makes their hearts glad! This is the banquet at which they feast. There is another and a better land and we, though we sleep with the clods of the valley, shall in our flesh see God when our Redeemer shall stand in the latter days upon the earth. I think you catch my drift—we are not of all men most miserable. Apart from the future hope we should be, for our hope in Christ for the future is the mainstay of our joy.

**IV.**Now, dear Friends, this brings me to a practical observation in the fourth place—THUS THE FUTURE OPERATES UPON THE PRESENT. I had some time ago a conversation with a very eminent man whose fame is familiar to you all, but whose name I do not feel justified in mentioning. He was once a professed Believer but is now full of skepticism. He said to me in the course of our argument, “Why, how foolish you are and all the company of preachers! You tell people to think about the next world, when the best thing they could do would be to behave themselves as well as they can in this!”

I granted the truth of the observation. It would be very unwise to make people neglect the present, for it is of exceedingly great importance. But I went on to show him that the very best method to make people attend to the present was by impressing them with high and noble motives with regard to the *future*. The potent force of the world to come supplies us, through the Holy Spirit, with force for the proper accomplishment of the duties of this life. Here is a man who has a machine for the manufacture

of hardware. He needs steam power to work this machine. An engineer puts up a steam engine in a shed at some considerable distance.

“Well,” says the other, “I asked you to bring steam power here, to operate upon my machine. “That is precisely,” says he, “what I have done. I put the steam engine there. You have but to connect it by a band and your machine works as fast as you like. It is not necessary that I should put the boiler and the fire and the engine close to the work, just under your nose—only connect the two and the one will operate upon the other.” So God has been pleased to make our hopes of the future a great engine wherewith the Christian man may work the ordinary machine of everyday life, for the band of faith connects the two and makes all the wheels of ordinary life revolve with rapidity and regularity. To speak against preaching the future as though it would make people neglect the present is absurd!

It is as though somebody should say, “There, take away the moon and blot out the sun. What is the use of them—they are not in this world?” Precisely so, but take away the moon and you have removed the tides and the sea becomes a stagnant, putrid pool. Then take away the sun—it is not in the world—take it away and light and heat and life—everything is gone! What the sun and moon are to this natural world, the hope of the future is to the Christian in this world. It is his light—he looks upon all things in that light, and sees them truly. It is his heat. It gives him zeal and energy. It is his very life—his Christianity, his virtue would expire if it were not for the hope of the world to come.

Do you believe, my Brethren, that Apostles and martyrs would ever have sacrificed their lives for Truth’s sake if they had not looked for a hereafter? In the heat of excitement the soldier may die for honor, but to die in tortures and mockeries in cold blood needs a hope beyond the grave! Would yon poor man go toiling on year after year, refusing to sacrifice his conscience for gain? Would yon poor needle-girl refuse to become the slave of lust if she did not see something brighter than earth can picture to her as the reward of sin? O my Brothers and Sisters, the most practical thing in all the world is the hope of the world to come.

And you see the text teaches this, for it is just this which keeps us from being miserable. And to keep a man from being miserable, let me say, is to do a great thing for him! For a miserable Christian—what is the use of him? Keep him in a cupboard where nobody can see him! Nurse him in the hospital, for he is of no use in the field of labor. Build a monastery and put all miserable Christians in it—and there let them meditate on mercy till they learn to smile—for really, there is no other use for them in the world!

But the man who has a hope of the next world goes about his work strong, for the joy of the Lord is our strength. He goes against temptation mighty, for the hope of the next world repels the fiery darts of the Adversary. He can labor without present reward, for he looks for a reward in the world to come. He can suffer rebuke and can afford to die a slandered man because he knows that God will avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him. Through the Spirit of God the hope of another world is the most potent force for the product of virtue. It is a fountain of joy. It is the very channel of usefulness. It is to the Christian what food is to the vital force in the animal frame. Let it be said of any of us that we are dreaming about the future and forgetting the present, but let the future sanctify the present to highest uses.

I fear our prophetical Brethren err here. They are reading continually about the last vials, the seventy weeks of Daniel and a number of other mysteries. I wish they would set to work, instead of speculating so much, or speculate even more if they will, but turn their prophecies to present practical account. Prophetical speculations too often lead men away from present urgent duty and especially from contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But a hope of the world to come is, I think, the best practical power which a Christian can have.

**V.**And now, to conclude, this will let us see very clearly WHAT OUR FUTURE IS TO BE. There are some persons here to whom my text has nothing whatever to say. Suppose there were no hereafter, would they be more miserable? Why, no. They would be more happy. If anybody could prove to them that death is an eternal sleep, it would be the greatest consolation that they could possibly receive. If it could be shown to a demonstration that as soon as people die they rot in the grave and there is an end of them—why some of you could go to bed at night comfortable! Your conscience would never disturb you, you would be molested by none of those terrible fears which now haunt you.

Do you see, then, this proves that you are not a Christian? This proves as plainly as twice two make four that you are no Believer in Christ. For if you were, the taking away of a hereafter would make you miserable. Since it would not tend to make you happy to believe in a future state, this proves that you are no Believer in Christ. Well, then, what have I to say to you? Why just this—that in the world to come, *you* will be, of all men, most miserable.

“What will become of you?” said an infidel once to a Christian man, “supposing there should be no Heaven?” “Well,” said he, “I like to have two strings to my bow. If there is no hereafter I am as well off as you are. If there is I am infinitely better off. But where are you? Where are you?” Why then, we must read this text in the future—“If in this life there is, indeed, a hope of a life to come, then you shall be in the next life of all men most miserable.”

Do you see where you will be? Your soul goes before the great Judge and receives its condemnation and begins its Hell! The trumpet rings! Heaven and earth are astonished. The grave heaves—yonder slab of marble is lifted up, and up you rise in that very flesh and blood in which you sinned and there you stand in the midst of a terrified multitude, all gathered to their doom. The Judge has come! The great assize has commenced. There on the Great White Throne sits the Savior who once said, “Come unto Me, you weary and I will give you rest,” but now He sits there as a Judge and opens with stern hand the terrible volume.

Page after page He reads and as He reads He gives the signal, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire,” and the angels bind up the tares in bundles to burn them. There stand you and you know your doom! You

already begin to feel it. You cry to the lofty Alps to fall upon you and conceal you. “O mountains, can you not find in your rocky bowels some friendly cavern where I may be hidden from the face of Him who sits upon the Throne?” In terrible silence the mountains refuse your petition and the rocks reject your cry. You would plunge into the sea, but it is licked up with tongues of fire! You would gladly make your bed even in Hell if you could escape from those dreadful eyes, but you cannot!

And now your turn is come. That page is turned over which records your history. The Savior reads with a voice of thunder and with eyes of lightning. He reads and as He waves His hand you are cast away from hope. You shall then know what it is to be, of all men, most miserable! You had your pleasure! You had your giddy hours! You had your mirthful moments! You despised Christ and you would not turn at His rebuke— you would not have Him to reign over you! You lived His adversary! You died unreconciled and now where are you? Now, what will you do, you who forget God, in that day when He shall tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you?

In the name of my Lord and Master I beg you, fly away to Christ for refuge! “He that believes in Him shall be saved.” To believe is to trust. And whoever this morning is enabled by faith to cast Himself upon Christ need not fear to live, nor fear to die! You shall not be miserable here! You shall be thrice blessed hereafter if you trust my Lord—

***“Come, guilty souls and flee away  
To Christ and heal your wounds!  
This is the welcome Gospel-day  
Wherein free Grace abounds.”***

O that you would be wise and consider your latter end! O that you would reflect that this life is but a span and the life to come lasts forever! Do not, I pray you, fling away eternity! Play not the fool with such solemn things as these, but in serious earnestness lay hold upon eternal life. Look to the bleeding Savior! See there His five wounds and His face bedewed with bloody sweat? Trust Him! Trust Him and you are saved!

The moment that you trust Him your sins are gone. His righteousness is yours! You are saved on the spot and you shall be saved when He comes in His kingdom to raise the dead from their graves. O that the Lord might lead us all to rest on Jesus, now and forever. Amen.

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RESURRECTION—CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS  
NO. 445

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 20, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.”  
1 Corinthians 15:20.~~***

THE fact of Christ’s resurrection is exceedingly well attested. It was necessary that it should be beyond dispute, since it lies at the very basis of our holy faith. It is consoling to think that it is so. For thus our foundation stands most secure. Our Lord was careful to show Himself after His resurrection to those who, having known Him before His decease, would be able to answer for the identity of His Person. Had He merely showed Himself to strangers who had not known Him before, they might have been able to say that they had seen such an one, but they could not have affirmed that He was the same person who had been buried.

But showing Himself to men like Thomas, and bidding them put their fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust their hand into His side, He gave to men the most absolute proofs of His resurrection and received from the most competent witnesses the most assured evidence that no deception had been practiced. “Handle Me and see that it is I, Myself,” was a challenge of identity all the more conclusive because it was addressed to the men who had known Him intimately during the whole period of His ministry.

The witnesses were men who had nothing to gain by giving their evidence, but everything to lose—they were unlearned men, utterly unfitted to found or promulgate an impostor. Their evidence was so clearly borne out by the absence of the Body of Christ from the tomb that it was found necessary to invent an impossible story in order to account for that absence. The eye-witnesses were just the right men, such as prudence would select if we had now to hand down such a transaction to future faith and history. Our Lord, to put the matter beyond controversy, took care to appear many times and to numerous companies.

Our Apostle gives a summary of those appearances which had most fully come under his own notice. “He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James. Then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:5-8). From the Evangelistic reports we are led to believe that Christ appeared no less than twelve times to His disciples. For some of these instances which the Apostle Paul mentions under one head, may include two or three appearances.

As, for instance, “then of the twelve” may denote His two visits to the Apostles. For you remember He first appeared to them when Thomas was absent and afterwards when Thomas was present. Isaac Ambrose gives a summary of these appearances to this effect. He showed himself to Mary Magdalene by herself, then to all the Marys, next to Simon Peter, alone, afterwards to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus. To the ten Apostles when the doors were shut. To all the disciples when Thomas was with them. To Peter, John and others while fishing in the lake of Tiberias.

To five hundred Brethren at once. To James, the Lord’s brother. To the eleven disciples in Galilee. To all the Apostles and disciples at Olivet before His ascension. And lastly to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. There may even have been more than these, for we have no proof that all His appearances are on record. Enough, however, we have, and more would answer no useful end.

So clear is the evidence of Christ’s resurrection, that when Gilbert West—a celebrated infidel—selected this subject as the point of attack, sitting down to weigh the evidence and to digest the whole matter, although filled with prejudice, he was so startled with the abundant witness to the truth of this fact, that he expressed himself a convert and has left as a heritage for coming generations a most valuable treatise, entitled, “Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.” He laid down certain laws of evidence to begin with, and then went to the matter as though he had been a lawyer examining the *pros* and *cons* of any matter in dispute. And this, which is the fundamental doctrine of our faith, seemed to him so exceedingly clear that he renounced his unbelief and became a professor of Christianity!

Does it not strike you that very many events of the greatest importance recorded in history and commonly believed, could not in the nature of things have been witnessed by one-tenth as many as the resurrection of Christ? The signing of famous treaties affecting nations—the births of princes—the remarks of cabinet ministers—the projects of conspirators— and the deeds of assassins—any and all of these have been made turning points in history, and are never questioned as facts. And yet few could have been present to witness them. I venture to assert that even the most recent political event, which has caused so much sorrow to our whole nation—the death of the lamented Prince Albert—had not nearly so many witnesses as the resurrection of Christ.

If it came to a matter of dispute, it were far easier to prove that Christ is risen, than to prove that the Prince is dead. If it came to the counting of the witnesses who saw the Prince die and could attest the identity of the body now resting in the royal vault with that which they saw feverstricken in the bed-chamber—it strikes me they would turn out to be far fewer than those who saw the Lord after He had risen and were persuaded that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified and had burst the bonds of death. If this fact is to be denied, there is an end to all witness and we say deliberately what David said in haste—“All men are liars.”

And from this day forth every man must become so skeptical of his neighbor, that he will never believe anything which he has not himself seen. The next step will be to doubt the evidence of his own senses. To what further follies men may then rush, I will not venture to predict! We believe that the very best attested fact in all history is the resurrection of Christ. Historical doubts concerning the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte, or the stabbing of Julius Caesar, or the Norman Conquest, would be quite as reasonable as doubts concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

None of these matters have such witnesses as those who testify of Him—witnesses who were manifestly truthful, since they suffered for their testimony and most of them died ignominious and painful deaths as the results of their belief. We have more and better evidence for this fact than for anything else which is written in history, either sacred or profane. Oh, how should we rejoice, we who hang our salvation wholly upon Christ, that beyond a doubt it is established that, “now is Christ risen from the dead.”

But you may ask the question at the outset, “Why is it that the resurrection of Christ is of so much importance?” Upon it we have said that the whole system of Christianity rests. For, “If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. You are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). The *Divinity* of Christ finds its surest proof in His resurrection, since the Apostle tells us in the first chapter of Romans, at the fourth verse, that Christ was, “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

It would not be unreasonable to doubt His Deity if He had not risen. Moreover, Christ’s *sovereignty* also depends upon His resurrection for Scripture affirms—“To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord, both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). Again, *our justification*, that choice blessing of the Covenant, hangs upon Christ’s resurrection. “He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). No, more—our very *regeneration* depends upon His resurrection, for Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, exclaims, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

And most certainly our *ultimate resurrection*rests here. For, “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). If Christ is not risen, then shall we not rise. But if He is risen, then they who are asleep in Christ have not perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. It would not be difficult to enlarge this catalog. The fact is that the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the blessings, from regeneration onward to our eternal glory, and binds them together.

It is time to pass on and come more fully to the text. “But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.” Let me draw your attention, first of all, to *the pictures here given of the death of the saints*. Further, we shall observe *the singular relationship which exists between Christ’s resurrection and the resurrection of the saints*. And before we leave the subject, we shall *suggest certain practical considerations arising from the doctrine before us*.

**I.**First of all, then, THE TEXT GIVES A VIEW OF DEATH VERY COMMON IN SCRIPTURE, BUT NOT SUFFICIENTLY ACCEPTED AMONG US.

The representations of the text, I take it, are twofold. Death is here compared to a sleep—“The first fruits of them that *slept*.” But moreover, you will plainly perceive it is compared also to a sowing. For Christ is pictured as being “*the first fruits*.” Now, to a harvest there must have been a sowing. If the resurrection of Christ is the first fruits, then the resurrection of the elect must be looked upon as a harvest, and death would, therefore, be symbolized by a sowing.

**1.**First, then, we have before us the picture so commonly employed in Scripture of *death as a sleep*. We must not make a mistake by imagining that *the soul sleep*s. Such a heresy was once received by a large number of persons—it has long ago been rejected as being inconsistent—as well as with natural as with revealed religion. The soul undergoes no purgatorial purification or preparative slumber in the limbo of the fathers. Beyond a doubt, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise,” is the whisper of Christ to every dying saint. They sleep in Jesus but their souls sleep not. They are before the Throne of God, praising Him day and night in His temple—singing hallelujahs to Him who has washed them from their sins in His blood. It is the *body* that sleeps in its lonely bed of earth, beneath the coverlet of grass, with the cold clay for its pillow.

But what is this sleep? We all know that the surface idea connected with sleep is that of *resting*. That is doubtless just the thought which the Spirit of God would convey to us. The eyes of the sleeper ache no more with the glare of light or with the rush of tears. His ears are teased no more with the noise of strife or the murmur of suffering. His hands are no more weakened by long protracted effort and painful weariness. His feet are no more blistered with journeying to and fro along a rugged road. There is rest for aching heads, and strained muscles, and overtaxed nerves, and loosened joints, and panting lungs and heavy hearts, in the sweet repose of sleep.

On yonder couch, however hard, the laborer shakes off his toil, the merchant his care, the thinker his difficulties and the sufferer his pains. Sleep makes each night a Sunday for the day. Sleeps shuts, too, the door of the soul and bids all intruders tarry for awhile, that the royal life within may enter into its summer garden of ease. From the sweat of his brow man is delivered by sleep, and the thorn and thistle of the curse cease to tear his flesh. So is it with the body while it sleeps in the tomb. The weary are at rest. The servant is as much at ease as his lord. The galley slave no more tugs the oar, the salve forgets the whip.

No more the worker leans on his spade, no more the thinker props his pensive head. The wheel stands still, the shuttle is not in motion, the hand which turned the one and the fingers which threw the other are quiet. The body and all its members find the tomb a couch of sufficient length and breadth. The coffin shuts out all disturbance, labor, or effort. The toil-worn Believer quietly sleeps, as does the child weary with its play, when it shuts its eyes and slumbers on its mother’s breast. Oh, happy they who die in the Lord! They rest from their labors and their works do follow them. We would not shun toil, for though it is in itself a curse, it is, when sanctified, a blessing.

Yet toil for toil’s sake we would not choose, and when *God’s* work is done we are too glad to think that *our*work is done, too. The mighty Husbandman, when we have fulfilled our day, shall bid His servants rest upon the best of beds, for the clods of the valley shall be sweet to them. Their repose shall never be broken until He shall rouse them up to give them their full reward. Guarded by angels, curtained by eternal mysteries, resting on the lap of mother earth, you shall sleep on—you inheritors of glory—till the fullness of time shall bring you the fullness of redemption.

Moreover, we look upon sleep as a season of forgetfulness and in this, too, it images death. “Their memory and their love are lost.” They are “alike, unknowing and unknown.” Their sons come to honor and they know it not. Or their seed degenerates but it causes them no grief. Let armies march over their tombs—their tramp shall disturb them no more than the crawling of a worm. Let the vault of Heaven blaze with the flaming bolts of God, let the earth shake at the awful voice of the thunder, let the cedars be broken, let the rocks be shivered, let the sea roar—there, under their green hillocks they slumber as peacefully as though it were a soft summer evening when the hum of a bee or the flitting of a fly were the only sounds. The dead may be remembered by their kinsfolk. But they remember not. They have forgotten the joys and the sorrows, the peace and the strife, the defeats and the victories of time.

The *soul* forgets not. And we have no reason to believe that the glorified are ignorant of what is going on below. We have far more presumptive evidence that they “know even as they are known”—that they still have communion with the living Church on earth and that the Church victorious is not sundered from the Church militant in point of knowledge. But as to their bodies, what do their bodies know? What does the human organism now understand? Take up the skull—see if there is memory there. Look at the place where once the heart was, and see if there is any trace of present emotion. Gather into your hands the bones—see if they are still obedient to muscles which could be moved at will as passing events might affect the mind. Try to discover any live coals amid your heap of ashes—a heart still quivering with delight, or an eye moistened by a sorrow. These dry bones are forgetful, indeed— steeped in forgetfulness, these decayed skeletons know nothing.

But yet once more—sleep *has its intent and purpose*. We do not close our eyes without aim and open them again without benefit. The old cauldron of Seder has its full meaning in sleep. In the old tradition we read of Medea the enchantress casting the limbs of old men into her cauldron that they might come forth young again. Sleep does all this in its fashion. We are old enough oftentimes, after hours of thinking and of labor—but we sleep and we wake refreshed—as though we were beginning a new life. The sun begins a new day when he rises from the eastern sea. And we begin a new life of renewed vigor when we rise from the couch of quiet rest.

***“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.”***

Now, such is the effect of the body’s visit to its grave. The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn. But such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin—they shall wake up in beauty and glory. The old man totters there, leaning on his staff. The palsied comes there, trembling all the way. The halt, the lame, the withered, the blind journey in doleful pilgrimage to the common dormitory. But they shall not rise decrepit, deformed, or diseased, but strong, vigorous, active, glorious, immortal! The shriveled seed, so destitute of form and comeliness, shall rise from the dust a beauteous flower.

A green blade all fresh and young shall spring up where before there was the dried decayed grain. Well said the holy martyrs, when their limbs were being torn away—“We cheerfully resign these members to the God who gave them to us.” Our members are not ours to hold or lose, no torment can rob us of them in reality. For when we wake up in Christ’s likeness it will not be as halt or lame, but full of strength and vigor— more comely than earthly sons of men. The winter of the grave shall soon give way to the spring of resurrection and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it answers all the ends of medicine to this mortal frame and through the Divine power disrobes us of the leprous rags of flesh, to clothe us with the wedding garment of incorruption!

One reflection must not escape our notice—this is not a dreamy slumber. The sleep of some men is much more wearying than refreshing. Unbidden thoughts steal away the couch from under them and throw them on the rack. The involuntary action of the mind prevents us at times from taking rest in sleep. But not so with the dear departed. In that sleep of death no dreams can come, nor do they feel a terror in undressing for that last bed, for no phantoms, visions, or terrors by night shall vex their peace. Their bodies rest in the most profound slumber. It is sleep, indeed, such as the Lord gives, for, “So He gives His Beloved sleep.”

Nor ought we ever to look upon it as a hopeless sleep. We have seen persons sleep who have been long emaciated by sickness, and we have said, “That eye will never open again. He will sleep himself from time into eternity.” We have felt that the sleep was the prelude of the eternal slumber, and might probably melt into it. But it is not so here. They sleep a healthy sleep—not thrown over them by death-bearing drugs, nor fell disease. They sleep to wake and not to die the second death. They sleep to wake—to wake in joyous fellowship, when the Redeemer stands in the latter day upon the earth. Sleep on, then, you servants of the Lord, for if you sleep, you shall do well. Indeed, concerning these departed ones we may well speak of taking rest in sleep.

Dear Friends, ought not this view of death as a sleep, prevent our looking upon it in so repulsive a light? I know we like not to look at dead bodies—we are afraid to touch them. Some foolish people do not like to remain in the same house with a corpse, at least alone, or at night. There is a certain horror connected with the ruins of our earthly house. Did you ever feel horror at a sleeping child? Do you feel any sort of dread of your sleeping mother, or your slumbering husband or wife? Have you felt anything dreadful to draw back the curtain of the little cot and to gaze upon the sweet young face when the eyes are closed in happy sleep? Oh, why, then, should you think it dreadful to look upon the sleeping Believer’s brow?

True, there are marks of decay which are not pleasant to nature. But are they not the footprints of the retreating enemy and signs that the corruptible is passing away to make room for incorruption? Do not those very marks which mar the form indicate that the ragged smoke-blacked tent of Kedar is being pulled down so that the curtains of Solomon may glitter in their place, and that the soul may dwell there as in a fair pavilion? Oh, look not upon the departed as though they were dead, but speak of them as Christ did of His friend—“Our friend Lazarus sleeps.” Let the ears of your faith hear the Master say, “And I come that I may awake him out of his sleep.” Let not the grave seem more abhorrent to you than your bedchamber.

Let there be, by no means, such a view of the death of the redeemed as to wish them back again. Would you wish, when your friend has long been in excruciating pain, and at last falls into sleep, to shake him in his bed, to awake him, to tell him some idle tale? No. You have been watching for hours and you have said, “Oh, that he could have a little sleep! Doctor! Can you not give some sleep to this poor tortured frame?” And at last you have said, “Thank God, his eyelids drop. Speak softly. Tread lightly. He sleeps!” And you have been afraid even to let your foot fall upon the ground, lest you should awaken him.

And what? After all the pain, the suffering, the temptation and the trial of your friends, do you wish to awake them? Rather I think you should say, “I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, that you ask not that he should be stirred up or awakened until Jesus please. Let him sleep on while the night lasts, and then, at the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God, he shall wake in the morning when the sun has risen upon the earth!

**2.**The text affords us, however, a second figure. *Death is compared to a sowing*. The black mold has been plowed, certain dry-looking seeds are put into a basket and the husbandman takes his walk and with both hands he scatters right and left, broad-cast, his handfuls of seeds. Where have they gone? They have fallen into the crevices of the earth. The clods will soon be raked over them and they will disappear. So is it with us. Our bodies, here, are like those dry grains of wheat. There is nothing very comely in a grain of wheat, nor yet in our bodies. Indeed, Paul calls them “these vile bodies.” Death comes—we call him a *reaper*—mark, I call him a sower—and he takes these bodies of ours and sows us broadcast in the ground.

Go to the cemetery and see his fields. Mark how thickly he has sown his furrows! How closely he has drilled the rows! What headlands has he left! We say, they are there *buried*. I say, they are *sown*. They are dead, say we—No, say I—they are put into the earth—but they shall not abide there forever. In some sense these holy bodies of the just are dead, “For that which you sow is not quickened except it die,” but it is not a death unto death. It is, rather, a death leading unto *life*. That molding body is no more dead than yonder decaying seed which you have just now disturbed in its bed of earth. It shall soon spring up again and you shall see a harvest.

We do lose sight, it is true, of those who have gone from us, for there must be a burial, how else can the seed grow? Truly it is never a pleasant sound, that rattle of the clay upon the coffin lid. “Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes,” Nor to the farmer, for it’s own sake, would it be a very pleasant thing to put his grain into the dull cold earth. Yet I know of no farmer who ever wept when he sowed his seed. We have not heard the husbandmen groan and sigh when they scatter their baskets of seed corn. Rather, we have heard them cheerily singing the song of mirth and have heard them anticipate the reaper’s joy, when they have trod the furrows.

Have you seen them robed in black, or wearing the dull weeds of mourning, while they tread the brown ridges of the fertile earth? We grant you, that in itself considered, it were no wise or gladsome thing to bury precious grain amid dead clods of earth. But viewed in the light of harvest, since there must be a burial, and after the burial a rottenness and a decay—both of these lose all traces of sorrow and become prophets of joy. The body must become worms’ meat. It must crumble back to its former elements, for “dust you are and unto dust shall you return,” but this is no more our sorrow, for—“In Christ shall all be made alive.”

Nor will we even mourn because of the stench and rottenness of death. The life germ in the grain of wheat must begin to feed on the food laid up in store for it—a kind of decay must seem to take place. But I know no farmer ever weeps because the seed which he has put into the ground has swollen and lost its former size and shape. He never mourns if he is told the seed he has put into the ground is undergoing the death that is necessary for its future growth. No, he rejoices in patient hope. Therefore, you Worms, should you force me to weep? And why, Corruption, should you make me sigh? Rather will I call you my Brothers and my Mother, for your kindly glooms are but part of the road to immortality.

After sowing and decay, comes a springing up and the farmer soon perceives, in a few short weeks, the little green blade—the son of the buried life. So with the dead. There is soon to come, and how soon we do not know—the springing up. We shall thus perceive that they were not lost but only committed to the grave, in readiness for “the redemption”—put there that our souls might, when reunited, receive them in a better and nobler form.

Dear Friends, if such is death—if it is but a sowing, let us have done with all faithless, hopeless, graceless sorrow. “The granary is empty,” says the farmer. Yes, but he does not sigh over it. For the seed is put into the ground, in order that the granary may be filled again. “Our family circle has been broken,” you say. Yes, but only broken that it may be formed again. You have lost a dear friend—yes, but only lost that friend that you may find him again, and find more than you lost. They are not lost. They are sown. And as “light is sown for the righteous,” so are the righteous sown for light. The stars are setting here to rise in other skies to set no more. We are quenched like torches only to be lit once more with all the brilliance of the sun.

**II.**We will not tarry longer on this point but rapidly carry you to the second—THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND THAT OF BELIEVERS.

The text tells us that Christ is “the first fruits of them that slept.” Some professors take very great delight in the hope that they may be “alive and remain,” at the coming of Christ and so may never die. I confess I greatly rejoice in the hope that Christ will come. But the prospect of never dying has no sort of charms for me, for methinks those who never die lose a great privilege. At least, to our comprehension it seems so, for Christ is “the first fruits of them *that slept*.” Oh, then, it is a blessed thing to sleep, that Christ may be to us in the relationship of first fruits. They who never die can hardly know so much of fellowship with Christ in His death as those who fall asleep in Jesus.

Whereas you and I, who feel the pin’s prick of the dart of death, will be able to say in eternity, “I, too, passed through the grave. He was with me passing through the valley of the shadow of death. I, in my own proper person, knew a death and a resurrection, too, even as did my Lord, which you who never died can only understand by hearsay and report.” Oh, happy they who die! They that are alive and remain shall not precede them in any privilege or honor.

But what is meant by Christ being “the first fruits?” You will remember that there was a feast of the Jews called the feast of first fruits. This was when the first sheaf was brought out from the harvest as a token of the whole. It was, first of all, heaved upward as a heave-offering, and then waved to and fro as a wave-offering. It was, thus, dedicated to God in testimony of the gratitude of the holders of the soil for the harvest which the Lord had given. Now, this happened on the first day of the week. You will remember that the Passover was celebrated first. Then came a Sabbath Day. Then after that came the feast of first fruits.

So Christ died on the Passover. He, as the slaughtered Lamb of God, of God’s Passover, died exactly at the Passover season. The next day was the Sabbatical rest—Christ’s Body, therefore, tarried in the grave. Then early in the morning of the first day, before it was yet light, while yet the sun was rising upon the earth, Christ rose—on the morning of the feast of the first fruits. And so He is revealed as the blessed wave sheaf preceding and consecrating the whole harvest.

But the uninstructed Believer asks me to explain at greater length. Beloved, remember then, *that Christ was the first that rose from the dead in order of time.*You will mention to me Enoch and Elijah. We answer that they never died but were translated that they should not see death. You will remind me of the widow’s son who was raised by Elijah and the young man restored by Elisha. Yes, but these are not cases in point. They were raised but they died again. All the instances in the Old Testament are only temporary restorations and so also those in the New. In no instance, save in that of Lazarus, were any of them buried at all, so that none of them came out of their graves.

And even in the case of Lazarus, he lived but to die. He had a furlough from the tomb. But at the expiration of the due time, his body was yielded to the appointed keeper. Christ was the first who really rose no more to die. He leads the vanguard through the dark, and his brow first salutes the light of the plains of Heaven beyond the gloom. Men admire the man who is first to discover a new country. The name of Columbus shall ring in the ears of ages, because he first crossed the stormy sea to win another world. The name of the man who climbed the mountains and first saw the broad Pacific with exceeding great joy, is well remembered. Oh, then, sing it in songs, sound it with voice of trumpet to the ends of the earth—Christ is the first who returned from the jaws of death to tell of immortality and light!

He is also *first in point of cause*. For as He comes back from the grave, He brings all His followers behind Him in one glorious train. We read of Hercules in the old mythology descending into Hades and bringing up his friend. Verily went Christ there and He gave no sop to Cerberus but cut off his head. Like a sun He suddenly flashed upon the night of death and scattered its darkness. Like Samson in Gaza, He tore up the gates of death and carried away the bars of the grave. Like David, He delivered His flock out of the jaws of the lion and took the monster by the beard and slew him.

Like Abraham, He resumed triumphantly from the slaughter of the kings. Like Moses, He led His Israel out of the house of bondage. With ten thousand times ten thousand He came forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Who is this that comes up from the land of darkness— from the gates of the grave? Who is this that drags behind Him captive the grim prince of the realms of death shade? Who is this, so strong, so mighty, that adamantine walls give way before Him and gates of brass are broken in two?

It is He! It is He! It is the same conqueror who came from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. The victory on the Cross is succeeded by a victory in the tomb. He who won Heaven for earth when He died, wins Heaven for the dead when He descends into the grave. Sound His praises! Proclaim His victories! Let Heaven itself take up the strain, He has “led captivity captive,” rifled the grave and robbed death of his sting. He is the death of death and Hell’s destruction.

But then, again, He is first *in point of pledge*. The first fruits were a pledge of the harvest. “From where, O husbandman, from where have you brought yonder sheaf?” “I gathered it,” says he, “from the fields that are waving with plenty.” “Verily,” says the priest,” the harvest is plenteous this year, and full, and many are the ears, for this sheaf bears good witness.” From where, O power Divine, did You bring this glorious sheaf, this Body of our Lord, so bright and glorious? From where did You bring it, O Spirit of the Lord? Is there a harvest of many shocks of corn such as this? “Yes, verily,” says the Teacher; “this is but One among many, the First Born among many Brethren.”

We know right well that there must be a glorious harvest of resurrection forms and immortal bodies, since Jesus Christ, clothed in immortality and light, walks among the sons of men, the pledge of all the rest. He was, again, the first fruits, not only as a pledge but as the *representative* of the whole. When the first fruit sheaf had been waved before God, it was considered that all the harvest had been brought into the sanctuary. It was all dedicated, all consecrated, from that very hour. So when Christ rose as a heave offering from the sepulcher and when He went about among the people as a wave offering, moving among His disciples, He consecrated the whole harvest. All the righteous dead were virtually risen in Him. All the chosen members of His body had a resurrection when their Head appeared as “risen indeed.” And moreover, they were all dedicated and consecrated to God, by His dedication as the first fruits to the Most High.

Triumph, you children of God, triumph in this. You are risen in Christ today! We see not the saints as yet ascended—rather, we see their bones dried in the valley, and we ask, “Can these dry bones live?” But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. And we know that He is risen, and sits at the right hand of the Father! And by faith we perceive that as our Covenant Head He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places even in Him—for He is the Head over all things to His Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. Never doubt, Believer, of your resurrection, since the second Adam was loosed from the bands of the tomb.

**III.**And now, lastly, we will close by noticing THE INFLUENCE OF THE WHOLE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION AND CHRIST’S CONNECTION WITH IT UPON OUR OWN SPIRITS.

First, let us look well to the *holiness of our bodies*. “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.” We do not believe in consecrated Churches. We think it altogether absurd to talk of holy bricks and mortar. But we do know by Scriptural authority that the *body* is holy—that the *body* of the saint is as really holy as men pretend that Churches and temples may be.

Now, Brethren, if our eyes look upon vanity, we have defiled the windows of God’s house. If our tongues speak that which is evil, have we not desecrated the gates of the temple of the Lord? Let us see to it that our feet carry us nowhere but where our Master can go with us, lest the pillars of our house become our destruction, like the pillars of the Philistine temple of old. Let us mind that our hands be outstretched for nothing but that which is pure and lovely, lest like Belshazzar we profane the vessels of the Lord’s temple.

They who pamper the body, they who look to its adornment, they who regard its physical health more than its moral purity, forget the higher end of their being. For what is beauty after all? What is the comeliness which human skill can give? See that skull? “Go, take that to my lady’s chamber and tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick, to that complexion must she come at last.” And say to all who think so much of comeliness and goodliness—That deadly brown which worms and earth shall bring upon us—that is the natural complexion of man—and to that the fairest must be bronzed at last.

But there is another way of minding your complexion—by seeing that your cheeks never need be reddened with shame, that your hands are never black with evil deeds—that your flesh is not soiled by lasciviousness, or contact with that which is evil. “Will you take the members of Christ and make them members of an harlot?” says the Apostle Paul, when he bids men see to it that their bodies are chaste and pure. Know you not that your very flesh, if you are Christians, has been bought with Christ’s blood, and that precious is your very dust in His sight?

Mind you, O mind you, that the slime of the serpent come not here, and that you defile not the members of your body, lest the Lord abhor you and cast you out from His Presence, as things He cares not for, being none of His. Let us look at things in this light, and so, by the Holy Spirit, escape from sin. What? Shall these eyes that are one day to, “See the king in His beauty,” be delighted with vanity? Shall these lips that are to be tuned to melodious sonnets, “sung by flaming tongues above,” talk that which is light and frivolous and ministers not unto edification? What? Shall these fingers that are to strike the golden harps be given up to work unrighteousness with greediness?

No, as we are to be fellows with the angels and more glorious than they. And as these bodies are to be made like unto Christ’s Body, let us keep them pure, washed with clean water by His Spirit, renewed and preserved, that we go not astray unto sin.

But, secondly, another thought arises here. *Are we among those for whom Christ thus stood as first fruits*? For Christ is to rise first. And as the first fruits, “afterwards they that are Christ’s, at His coming.” Then when do the *wicked* rise? There are two resurrections. And “blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power.” When the Lord shall come from Heaven, with the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God, then the dead in Christ shall suddenly start from their sleep and shall be offered to God as the great harvest, the great Pentecost, of which Christ’s resurrection was the first fruits.

What, then, shall become of the wicked? They shall continue rotting in their graves. The worm shall feed upon them. They shall be ashes beneath the feet of the saints. The righteous shall tread this earth, and on the scene of their conflict, enjoy a thousand years of triumph with Christ. In the latter day Christ’s feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet. His people shall bow around Him, and shall reign with Him triumphant over the creature that was once subject to vanity. Beneath their feet shall be the dead bodies of their ungodly persecutors and deep down in their graves shall rot those infamous kings and princes and those careless crowds and nations who knew not Jehovah, and would not be obedient unto His Son.

They said, “Let us break His bands asunder. Let us cast His cords from us.” And now where are they? “Death has dominion over them in the morning, and the righteous triumph over them, while they lie ignominiously like those who fall in battle, a portion for foxes.” But what then? When the splendors of the millennial age are over, then comes the end. The king shall ascend the Judgment Seat. He who came to reign with His people, shall suddenly, sitting upon His Throne, bid His angel proclaim the last assize. Then, unwillingly shall souls tormented in Hell come back from Tophet to be reunited with their equally guilty bodies, and He who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell, shall say, “Gather them together in bundles to burn them.”

He shall pronounce their sentence, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh, that you and I may be among the harvest and not the vintage. There are two ingatherings mentioned, you remember, in the Revelation. The harvest is the gathering in of the righteous. They are carefully housed in God’s barn. The vintage is the gathering of the wicked. They are cast into the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God, “and they are trod under foot till their blood runs forth up to the horses’ bridles.”

Now, how am I to know whether I belong to that portion of which Christ is the first fruits? Why, thus—If Christ rose for me and if I rose in Him, then I died in Him. Oh, Soul, do you believe that Christ died for you? Have you a part in His passion? Do you hope in His agonies? Do you rest on His Cross? If so, He that died for you rose for you, too, and you are a part of that holy lump of which Christ was the holy offering. Have you died with Christ yourself? Are you dead to the world? Do you hate the things that you did once love? Are you weaned from your old pleasures? Do you seek for something higher and better?

Ah, then, if you have died with Him, you are risen with Him. Say, now, do you desire to be one with Christ? For if you are one with Him in heart, you shall be one with Him in all His trophies and His glories. Do you say, “No. I care not for Christ”? Soul! Soul! If you die in that mind you shall have no part in the first resurrection. But when the wicked rise, then shall you, “Awaken to shame and everlasting contempt.”

But and if you say in your heart this morning, “I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. I put my sole and only trust in Him. He is to me all my salvation and all my desire,” go your way. You shall “stand in your lot at the end of the days.” You shall have your portion among them that are sanctified. You shall rejoice together with Him and sit down at His marriage banquet forever. God add His own blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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“HE MUST REIGN”  
NO. 2940

A SERMON  
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***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1875.~~***

***~~“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.” 1 Corinthians 15:25.~~***

“HE must reign.” Here was another, “must,” which His disciples were very slow to learn. Very much of our Lord’s teaching to His Apostles was concerning the necessity that He must suffer. That doctrine seemed so strange to them that at first they could scarcely catch the idea. When they perceived that Christ really meant it, they could not bear the thought of it. One of them even began to rebuke his Lord, but He sharply stopped him. The notion that Christ must suffer could not be drilled into the Apostles—their very spirits seemed to revolt against it. And do you wonder? If you had lived with that dear and blessed Lord and had seen the perfection of His Character, the liberality of His gifts and the tenderness of His heart and if you had known, as they did, in a measure—the Glory of His Nature and the marvel of His person—could you have endured the thought that He must be despitefully used, spit upon and nailed like a felon to a cross? No, even Christ Himself might have found it difficult to get that thought into your mind. It was such a cruel, “must”—that He must die! Why, even after He *had* died and all the prophecies concerning His death had been fulfilled, it was still a bewilderment to His disciples! The two who walked to Emmaus with Christ were in a maze concerning it and He had to say to them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered those things and to enter into His glory?”

That first, “must,” cost the people of God much before they learned it, but we know right well that the price of pardon for us was Christ’s suffering and death. We understand that there was no other way of access for us but by the Atonement—no other method by which the lost inheritance could come back except by that ransom price which was found in the pierced heart of Christ! And now there is another, “must,” which, I think, is almost as difficult for us to learn. The shadow of the Cross has fallen upon us and we live so much in its shade that it is not easy for us to catch the gleam of that necessity which comes from His Throne—“He must reign.” The Cross, too, is on our shoulder. It is not merely that we live under the *shadow* of the Cross, but the *burden* of the Cross has to be cheerfully endured from day to day. As we bear it, it is not easy for us to feel that, “He must reign.” O Brothers, when you preach and no man gives heed to your message—when you teach, but the children yield not their hearts to your Lord—when you sojourn in Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar and meet with hard and cold hearts in every place that thaw not even beneath the sunbeams of the love of Jesus, you are very apt to say that it does not appear that, “He must reign.”

The long rebellion against Jehovah still continues! The dread revolt against the majesty of Heaven seems as if it will never end and we sometimes fear that the treason will last on to all eternity! It appears impossible that the Crucified Christ shall yet be the universal Conqueror, that the Man of Nazareth will yet mount His white horse and lead His conquering armies to the last charge and to the final victory and yet, as surely as it was true that He must suffer, so surely, “He must reign”! And it becomes us to open our hearts to this predestinated necessity ordained of the Most High. Jesus must reign! His defeat is not to be thought of for a moment! Delay there may be, but the victory must come! “He must reign.” Let Heaven ring with the anticipation of it! “He must reign.” Let earth resound with the prophecy of it! “He must reign.” Let Hell’s darkest cavern hear the tidings of that imperative necessity! “He must reign.” And let each Christian feel revived and quickened by the joyful sound! He who had to die must surely reign! The second necessity shall be as certainly fulfilled as was the first—“He must reign.” Let me try to ring that bell, or to sound that trumpet.

**I.**There is, first, A FACT WHICH IS A SORT OF PRELUDE OR ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE NECESSITY IN ITS GREATER FULFILLMENT.

The fact is that He does now reign—that is in our text. It says, “He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet.” *Jesus is reigning even now in Heaven.*No shame can approach Him there and no scorn can even be whispered at His feet. He reigns there with undisputed sway. It would not be possible for me to fully depict the royal state in which Emmanuel sits enthroned above, but I would like your faith to endeavor to realize it. You may even venture to call in your sanctified imagination to aid you to sketch the scene where He reigns in Glory. There is no province of the celestial domain which does not acknowledge His sway and not one individual of all the happy tribes that dwell in Glory is not glad to call Him, King! The holy angels, whom He has made to be as flames of fire, delight to do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word. All the various orders of cherubim and seraphim yield Him their loyal homage and all the angels and principalities and powers in the Heavenly places acknowledge Him as their Lord forever. His redeemed occupy the most honorable place in Heaven. Nearest to the Throne you will find the 24 elders, the representatives of the Church. And then, in an outer ring, stand the angels worshipping and adoring—and all the redeemed spirits, as well they may, since they owe their glory to His blood—call Jesus their Lord and King! He is no servant there! He washes no disciples’ feet there! He goes not from there to Pilate’s Hall to be judged! Absolute and supreme is He—King of kings, for they are all kings whom He has redeemed—and Lord of lords, for they are all lordly ones over whom He reigns! And He occupies the highest seat amidst the splendors of the celestial realm!

But do not imagine that Christ’s reign is limited to these gates of pearl and streets of shining gold. Far from it, for *Jesus reigns today on earth*. It did my ears and heart good, just now, to hear you sing, “Crown Him Lord of All.” I dared not hope that every heart here was really crowning Him, but I did believe that there were thousands who, in their inmost souls, were wishing Him all honor and glory and delightedly confessing their allegiance to Him. O Jesus, You have still on earth myriads whose highest joy is found in Your name and who find their Heaven on earth as they think of You! In Your Church You are still Lord and Master! And if there be churches that revolt against You and play the harlot, You still have Your chaste spouse and You reign over her in undisputed Sovereignty!

Nor is Christ’s Kingdom limited to the Church in Heaven and the Church on earth, for *He reigns today over all things*. “All power,” said He, “is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” Providence is at the disposal of the Nazarene! Let those doubt it who will, we believe that every event which transpires—political, national, social, domestic—is overruled by Him for the accomplishment of the grand designs of mercy which He has for His own elect! Just as Joseph reigned in Egypt and all had to come to him for food in the time of famine, so does Jesus reign in the courts of earth for the good of His people. His cause must prosper, for He is always at the helm! Yes, even where confusion seems to rule, He is everywhere King, putting a bit into the mouth of the tempest and riding upon the wings of the wind. Just as the seas acknowledged His Presence when He was here Incarnate, so do they acknowledge His Presence now. And just as the earth then felt His footsteps, so does she feel them now, but it is no more the weary tramp of the Son of Man, but the majestic footsteps of the Son of God! He rules everywhere. “The sea is His, and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His, also.”

*He reigns, too, even in Hell itself* . The devils bite their iron bands in grim despair because He reigns. They tried to make this earth their own, but now they know the prowess, the strong arm and the valiant heart of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest and they must do His bidding! “To here shall you come, but no further,” is His command to the grim and fierce spirits—and they are compelled to submit to Him, however anxious they are to do still more mischief to the sons of man. Yes, Jesus reigns from the bottomless gulf to the heights of Heaven! Far off, where the sun now gilds the Western hills, and yonder in the East, where we shall watch for its return tomorrow morning—over all those regions Jesus

reigns— ***“Far as the eagle’s pinion  
Or dove’s light wing can soar.”***  
He reigns today and let His people proclaim it without fear, “The Lord is  
King.” The fact that He is now reigning cheers our hearts—  
***“Rejoice, the Lord is King!  
Your Lord and King adore.  
Mortals, give thanks and sing,  
And triumph evermore!  
Lift up the heart, lift up the voice,  
Rejoice aloud, you saints, rejoice!”*  
II.**But, to come still more closely to our text, we ring this bell again and call your attention to THE NECESSITY FOR CHRIST’S REIGN. “He *must* reign.” It is not merely that He shall, He can, or He may, but He *must*—“He must reign.” Let us see why He must.  
Well, the first and weakest argument of all, yet one that has much force in it—*all His servants say that He shall reign*. Weak as the 12 Apostles and the immediate followers of Christ were, they said that, “He must reign,” and they meant it and they lived to make it true—and almost all the nations on the earth heard of Jesus within a century after He had been taken up to Heaven! Then came the kings of the earth and set themselves against Him. And they said that He should not reign. But the martyrs came and yielded up their lives with joy, each one singing, “He must reign.” While the amphitheatres ran with blood, other champions came into the ring, each one uttering the watchword, “He must reign.” The kings of the earth mocked at the saints of God. “What are these feeble Jews doing?” they said, just as Pharaoh might have said, “The locusts, what can they do?” But the locusts might have answered, “We are, each one of us, weak, but there are myriads of us and we will come up and cover your land, and we will eat every green thing that is left in the land!” And they did. It was very much the same with the persecuted saints of God—each individual Believer was weak, but they came by tens, by hundreds, by thousands—they came in countless shoals till the kings threw away their swords and quenched their fires in sheer despair—and they agreed that, nominally at least, Christ should reign, for His disciples would have it so.  
And now, today, it becomes us not to speak proudly, but, if persecuting times should ever come again, many of those who say the least about it would be among the first to go boldly to be burned at the stake, or to submit their bodies to the torture of the rack for love of the Lord Jesus Christ! When Mutius Scaevola put his right hand into the fire to burn, he told the king that there were a thousand youths who had sworn that they would be put to death rather than that their country should fall into the king’s hands—and the tyrant trembled. And there are thousands now of Christians who only need the dire necessity to rise again, and they would come forward with cheerfulness to yield their lives for their Lord, declaring that, “He must reign,” whatever might become of them. We must never let His standard fall, or even tremble in the day of battle! Forward, you sons of heroes, in the name of Him who bled and died for you! Never let there be any question in your mind whether “He must reign” or not. The sun may cease to shine and the moon forget her nightly marches, but Jesus must reign! It must be so, for His people declare it!  
I said, however, that this was the weakest of reasons and there are many far stronger ones. “He must reign,” for *He is Jehovah’s Heir*—the “Heir of all things.” Kings cannot always ensure the putting of their crowns upon the heads of their sons. When they die, perhaps a rebellion breaks out and overthrows the dynasty—but what power can overturn the Divine dynasty and rob the Heir of God of His dominions? “He must reign,” for *by Nature He is a King*. He was *born* a King! You might have seen something of Sovereignty in His eyes when He first opened them upon earth’s light. The Wise Men from the East brought gifts which showed that they recognized the royalty of the newborn Babe of Bethlehem. Every characteristic of the life of Christ is royal. He is no tyrant king. He is the people’s King, but a true King in every part of His being! There is nothing mean, or low, or selfish, about Him. Every motion of His hand is princely, as He feeds the multitudes, or heals their sicknesses. And every glance of His eyes is kingly, as He weeps over man’s sin and fall, or as He rebukes man’s transgression.  
“He must reign,” *for He deserves that honor*. You cannot see Him voluntarily yielding up His soul unto death in order that He might redeem His people by His blood—you cannot hear His cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”—without feeling that if there is justice in the courts of Heaven, the death of Christ upon the Cross cannot be the end of Him! That terrible shame must be rewarded and how can it be rewarded except by the brightest crown that can possibly be conceived, or by something brighter, even, than that? Reign He must, for He was so good, so generous, so self-sacrificing, so oblivious of Himself in death! We would lose our faith in the Deity if we could lose faith in the reign of Christ as the reward of all that He suffered upon the Cross. Besides, “He must reign,” *for who is to stop Him?*In the olden days, many tried to do so, but He defeated them all. The Prince of darkness came to Him in the wilderness and offered Him a paltry bauble in the place of His true crown, but the tempter was repulsed by the sentence, “It is written.” The Prince of darkness came again and again, but he found nothing in Christ upon which he could lay his hand and, before long, Christ will have the great adversary beneath His foot and finally bruise his head. All the evil forces upon the face of the earth cannot stand against Christ, for if, upon the accursed tree, *He defeated them in His weakness*, He will surely conquer them in the time of His strength! He trod them under His feet when He died—how much more completely shall He vanquish them, now that He is risen again? He scattered them like chaff before the wind with His dying breath—how much more shall He do it, now, in the fullness of His Resurrection Life? Rejoice, O Christians, in the fact that there is nothing that can stand against Jesus! “He must reign,” for the best of all reasons—*the Father has decreed it*. “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” God wills it and that stands for us as a sufficient reason. And God is working it. Omnipotence is on the side of Christ. We see Him not yet at the head of His Heavenly armies, but He is there and He is even now going forth conquering and to conquer—and everything that happens is working out the decree that Christ must be King of kings, and Lord of lords!  
**III.**Not only does Christ reign and must Christ reign, but THERE IS A PROGRESS ABOUT HIS KINGDOM. It is growing. It becomes more and more visible among the sons of men. I am not going into prophecies—I leave them for wiser persons than I am. I am more at home in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John than in the deeps of Revelation—but this one thing I do know from the Word of the Lord, that, first of all, *“He must reign” lovingly over all His elect*. Some of them are hard to bring in, but they must come, sooner or later. Christ Himself said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.” Some of them are with us now—they have long resisted Mercy’s call, but they will have to yield! Sovereign Grace has determined it, so yield they must. The Lord says, “Compel them to come in,” and come in they must, for, “He must reign.” He will not suffer one of the sheep He bought with His blood to be lost in the mountains, or one single soul that He ransomed from the enemy to abide forever in captivity. “He must reign” over them and He will! And the day shall come when He shall pass all His sheep, one by one, under the hand of Him that counts them—and they will all be there, all with the blood mark upon them as they come through the gate—and the count of the flock shall be complete, not one shall be devoured by the wolf. The Shepherd shall say to His Father in that day, “Those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost.”  
It also seems to me to be clear from the Scriptures that *in future ages, Jesus Christ will reign over all nations*. I do not believe that the great drama of the world’s history will end till the Truth of God is triumphant. I read, concerning the Messiah, “He also shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust.” The North shall give up, and the South shall no longer keep back, but they shall bring His sons from afar and His daughters from the ends of the earth. I cannot help expecting a period when “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” Happy day! Oh, that it might soon arrive! Push on with mercy’s work, O missionaries and evangelists! Toil on, preachers and teachers, for, “He must reign.” Ours is not a losing cause—Jesus must yet subdue the nations and be acknowledged by them as Lord and God!  
I also know that He must *one day reign over all mankind*, whether by their willing consent, or in spite of their opposition, “for to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father”—  
***“He shall reign from pole to pole,  
With illimitable sway.”***  
And over and above that, I look for a time when *Jesus Christ will reign  
upon this earth over all nature.*When all His enemies being subdued, the  
new Jerusalem shall come down out of Heaven upon the earth, prepared  
as a bride adorned for her husband. Read the Revelation and you will  
find that much which we generally apply to Heaven is really a description  
of what is to take place upon this earth. I hope it is not mere poetic fancy  
that leads me to believe that the mists, which now swathe this planet  
and make her dim in comparison with her sister stars, will one day all be  
swept away and she shall shine out as bright as in that pristine morning  
when the sons of God shouted for joy at the sight of the new creation! I think it is no fiction to believe that the day shall come when restored manhood, in connection with the personal reign of Christ, shall have dominion over all the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the sea—and when it shall not be a metaphor, but a realized fact that—“the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” When whispers of blasphemy shall not merely be drowned in thunders of adoration, but shall not even be known—when the last taint and trace of sin shall have disappeared and the earth shall shine as if she had never been defiled, and the days of her mourning shall be forever ended! And, “Glory, glory, glory,” shall be the song from sunrise to sunset and the night watches shall be kept with music of praise, and angels shall go to and fro between the Throne above and the Throne below, and the new Heavens and the new earth shall be seen, wherein dwells  
righteousness—  
***“Hallelujah!—Hark! The sound  
From the center to the skies  
Wakes above, beneath, around,  
All creation’s harmonies!  
See Jehovah’s banner furled,  
His sword sheathed! He speaks—‘tis done! And the kingdoms of this world  
Are the kingdoms of His Son!”***  
Then comes the grand climax when He shall “put all enemies under  
His feet”—not annihilate them, not exterminate them, not convert them—  
but put them under His feet. There shall still be a devil but He shall be a  
devil under Christ’s feet. Lost spirits there shall still be, but the great  
Conqueror shall hold them down beneath His almighty heels. Death shall  
be destroyed—“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” We shall  
remember that men died. We shall ourselves remember that we passed  
beneath the power of death, but all the bitterness of death will be past as  
far as we are concerned. Through Christ’s death, eternal life has become  
ours. Oh, what a prospect opens up before me! My time flies so nimbly,  
as it always does when I have such a subject as this, so I must forbear to  
speak of it as I gladly would. But let your faith project itself into the  
glorious future of which I have been reminding you. It may be much  
nearer than you have imagined. If you listen intently, you may hear the  
chariot wheels of the coming King! Be ready to greet Him whenever He  
comes! It may be that tonight, before the clock has sounded out the  
midnight hour, the cry may be heard in Heaven and earth, “Behold, the  
Bridegroom comes!” And starting from your beds, you will have to meet  
Him. Will you be ready to hail Him joyfully as your long-expected King, or  
will you have to meet Him dolefully and to be trod beneath His feet? “For  
He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”  
So I close with this question—let each one take it to heart as best he  
may and may the Spirit of God send it home!—*How do I stand in relation  
to the great event thus predestinated?*What is my connection with the  
triumph of Christ? Am I one of His enemies? Suppose a gnat should be  
able to plunge itself into the inconceivably fierce heat that burns from  
the orb of day—its instant destruction must follow—and it must be so with you, also, if you are opposed to Christ! You potsherd of earth, strive with other potsherds like yourself! For you to strive with Jesus is for a potsherd to strive against a rod of iron which will break it in pieces! There is no hope of success for you, so give up the hopeless enterprise. Your utter insignificance will make your opposition to be contemptible in that day when the intelligences of the universe shall judge things aright. What then? Had we not better yield? I will not say because we must, but because we ought. For, in this case, Christ’s might is on the side of right and it is no disgrace to a man to yield to might when it is allied with right. “I yield to Christ” says one. How far do you yield? Do you yield so far as to be saved by Him? “Yes,” you say. Do you yield so far as to be forgiven by Him? “Yes,” you say. Do you yield so far as to become His disciple? “Yes,” you say. But do you yield that He should reign over you— that you should do as He bids you and not do what He forbids? Shall He be King over you? If you want to have Him on any other terms than these, you cannot have Him at all, for, “He must reign”—

***“Yet know (nor of the terms complain)  
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign!  
To reign and with no partial sway—  
Thoughts must be slain that disobey.”***

Will you have Him to thus reign over you? This is the all-important point! Alas, many say, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” Be not you so senseless as this, but yield to Jesus Christ and let Him be your Lord and King! If you will not do so, I must again remind you of the dread alternative. You must either let Him reign over you, or else you will have to lie beneath His feet! Have you ever reckoned what will be the weight of the rejected love of God Incarnate who died for sinners and yet is rejected by myriads despite His unspeakable love? Take your pens and calculate that weight if you can—Omnipotence indignant that Eternal Love was slighted! Omniscience aroused to anger by the fact that Divine Compassion, such as could never have been dreamt of, was trampled underfoot by impudent sons of men! In the name of the God who made the Heavens and the earth and who made each one of you, I entreat you to yield to that Christ who is your rightful King! As sinners, yield yourselves by trusting in Him! As men, yield yourselves to obey His commands! In the name of Him who will come with sound of trumpet and with angel guards attending Him, swift to judge and stern to punish, I implore you to bow before Him now! As though I felt death’s cold hand upon me and heard a voice saying to me, “Speak out now, man, for the last time, and obey your King’s command,” so I speak in the name of Him who will make earth and Heaven reel beneath His awful Presence when He comes to judge the quick and the dead!

In the name of Him who will shut the gates of Mercy on all those who reject His Gospel, I do not merely ask you, or beseech you, but I *command you*, in His name, to repent and be converted! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but He that believes not shall be damned.” O God, acknowledge this message, for it is Your own Truth! Prove it to be so, for Jesus sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*1 CORINTHIANS 15.***

**Verses 1, 2.***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.*What was this Gospel of which Paul thought so highly and which he says is the means of our salvation? Did it consist in sundry doctrinal statements? No, it *contained* doctrinal statements, but it did not consist entirely of them. Here is Paul’s declaration concerning the Gospel.

**3.***For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*This is the solid basis of the Gospel.

**4.***And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*This is the very keystone of the Gospel arch— the Christ who died on the Cross and was buried in Joseph’s tomb, “rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” This great Truth of Christ’s Resurrection is so important that Paul dwells upon it at length.

**5.***And that He was seen of Cephas.*Peter saw Him.  
**5, 6.***Then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present day.* When the Epistle was written.  
**6-8.***But some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time.*There is no fact, in all history, that is so well attested as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! Whether there ever was such a person as Julius Caesar might be contested, though there were, doubtless, thousands of witnesses who saw him and many who wrote about him. But as to whether Christ rose from the dead, no candid mind can entertain a doubt! He was seen by great companies of Believers and by various individuals who had long known Him most intimately and who had many opportunities of judging whether they were deceived or not. Christ’s Resurrection is not only well attested, but it is also the most important fact that ever happened in the history of the world, as Paul goes on to show.  
**9-14.***For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so you believed. Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how say among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* “We are deceivers, and you are deceived, and the whole Christian system crumbles into dust unless Christ did really rise from the dead.”  
**15.***Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.* Between Christ and His people, there is a union which can never be broken, so that if He rose from the dead, they also must rise. If we are one with Him, who shall separate us? And if we cannot be separated, then we must share and share alike with Him.  
**16-19.***For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*To have been quickened into a life which gives great pain and sorrow would be a miserable thing if this were not compensated by the hope of Glory which that life has brought to us! A man who has been always poor can bear his poverty. But let him taste of wealth and luxury for a while and then go back to poverty and how keen is the pang he feels! And let a man be quickened to know God and to rejoice in the new life—and then be told that there is no hereafter and he is, indeed, “of all men most miserable.”  
**20-22.***But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*All that were in Adam died in Adam—and all that are in Christ live in Christ and shall rise in Christ!  
**23-26.***But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must return till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* Death is an enemy, but it is the last one. And it is an enemy that shall be destroyed, but it shall be destroyed last.  
**27, 28.***For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in all.*There will, one day, be an end of the Mediatorial system. Christ shall have restored us to the Father and then He, as our Head, and we, as making up the family of the redeemed, shall rejoice in the God who is “All in all.”  
**29-32.***Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I affirm by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.* If there is no resurrection, the philosophy of the Epicureans is a true one. If we are to come an end when we die, let us enjoy life while we can. If it is to be a short life, let it be a merry one. You see to what a conclusion this theory would lead us, so let us start back from it with horror! The logical consequence convicts the statement of falsehood. There *is* a future state and there *is* to be a resurrection of the body.  
**33-35.***Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manner. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?*You know the almost endless questions that may be asked about this matter and you know the snares into which a man may fall if he begins to pry curiously into this mystery. Paul will have no prying into the mystery—and somewhat tartly he answers.  
**36.***You fool, that which you sow is not quickened, except it dies.*Would you take a seed into your hand and begin to argue, “How can that little seed ever become a flower?” Could you guess, apart from observation, what kind of flower would come out of such a seed as that? You would make a hundred foolish guesses if you tried it! So is it concerning the resurrection of the body—in due time we shall know and we shall see— but until then, we must wait and trust.  
**37, 38.***And that which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain—perhaps wheat, or of some other grain: but God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed its own body.*Every man shall have his own body. There will be differences and peculiarities, even as there are here—and we shall, therefore, know each other.  
**39-42.***All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption.*You know all about that.  
**42.***It is raised in incorruption.* What an anticipation for us!  
**43.***It is sown in dishonor.*For with all the honor that we can pay to our departed dear ones, it is a dishonor to them to have to lie encased in a coffin, in the cold clay of the cemetery.  
**43.***It is raised in glory.* Oh, the splendor of that resurrection!  
**43.***It is sown in weakness.* It is so weak that it cannot get into its own last resting place, but must be tenderly laid there by others.  
**43, 44.***It is raised in power: it is sown a natural body.*A soulish body, a body fitted for the human soul.  
**44.***It is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.* A body fitted for the newborn spirit which is given in regeneration.  
**45-48.***And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy.*You and I have every evidence about us that we are earthy!  
**48.***And as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly.*Glory be to the name of Christ, we belong to Him and already the Heavenly light begins to shine upon us! We are getting ready to soon put on the garments of immortality!

**49-51.***And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep.*For some will be here when Christ comes again to this earth.

**51-58.***But we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Therefore, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, “Let us weep and lament”? Oh, no! That is not the Apostle’s inference. Therefore, let us throw down our weapons and say, “It is no good to continue the fight, for we must all die”? Far from it!

**58.***Be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* “You know,” because Christ has risen and because you also shall rise and because there is a reward of Grace laid up in store for you! The Lord’s people may die, but the Lord’s Church never dies and the Lord Himself, the Ever-Living One, it always with us, blessed be His holy name!

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—426, 338, 417.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #807 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOOD NEWS FOR LOYAL SUBJECTS  
NO. 807

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“He must reign.”  
1 Corinthians 15:25.~~***

“MUST” is for the king, and concerning King Jesus there is a Divine necessity that He *must* reign. He was once the King of misery—in that kingdom He reigned supreme. That crown of thorns is preeminent in the sorrows which it signifies. O King of grief and tears and death, who shall rival You? Today He is the King of glory, enthroned far above all principalities and powers! He is so glorious that when seraphs are asked, “Who is the King of glory?” they mention no other name but His! He is the King once dishonored but now exalted in the highest Heaven. Of Him the text says not only that He must live, though that is a precious truth, for while He lives we shall live, also! Nor merely does it say that He shall enjoy a degree of reverence, though it is delightful to us to think of His being honored in any heart and being had in reverence by even a handful of men.

But it is said, “He must *reign*.” Not a place, but the *chief* place shall be His. Not bare existence, but preeminence. Not honor, but superlative glory. He must reign! No seat but the Throne shall become Him. No ornaments but those of royalty shall befit Him—“He must reign.” He must reign because He is *God*. “The Lord reigns” must ever stand a Truth. Jehovah exists eternally, infinite in power and wisdom. Who but He should be King of kings and Lord of lords? And since the Man of Nazareth is the Everlasting Father, since of His generation there was no beginning, and none can count the number of His years, He must reign from the very fact of His essential Deity. He must reign as Man—for the Lord has made a Covenant with David that the scepter should not depart from him, that of his seed there should sit upon the throne of Israel forever a King to rule in righteousness, and Jesus of Nazareth is that King!

Israel has no other monarch, neither have they sought after any other king. As a nation they have been broken and scattered and peeled. And as a united people they cannot be gathered under any other headship than that of the house of David, of which Jesus Christ is the lineal and rightful descendant, and who claims and keeps the scepter in His own hand. He must reign also as the Mediator, the Intercessor, the Interposer, the Interpreter, one of a thousand. “He must reign.” Behold, at this time the sovereignty of the world is committed to His keeping. He is the Headship of His Church, the Originator of Providence. His is the ruling of Heaven, and earth, and Hell, as the mediatorial Monarch. And until that time when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even our Father, He must reign, for so has God appointed and settled Him to be a King and a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.  
What a sweet comfort it is to think that none can snatch the government from the hand of Jesus, for, “the government shall be upon His shoulder.” None can drive Christ from the Headship of the Church, nor the Headship of Providence for the Church. He must be at the helm, none shall remove Him. Both as God and Man, and as the Mediator of the New Covenant, according to the express words of our text, “He must reign.” There seemed to me to be so sweet a thought wrapped up in these three words—so precious, so full of all manner of delights—that if the Holy Spirit did but enable us to enjoy it, we should not lack today for wines on the lees, well refined, and fat things, yes, fat things full of marrow!

I shall endeavor, as I may be helped, first, at some length to discuss the reasons for this “must.” Then, secondly, to draw out encouragement from it. And, thirdly, to dwell upon its admonitions.

**I.**First, “He must reign.” WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THIS “MUST”? The answer shall be sevenfold. The Lamb, as seen by John, had seven horns of power, and here are seven reasons why He should possess the Throne forever.

**1.**First, because His empire in itself is such as to ensure perpetuity. There have been many empires in this world of which men said, for the time, that they must exist—and they supposed that if they were overthrown, the very pillars of the earth would be removed. Yet in due time they grew gray with years and were swept away as worn out things, and it was a joy for the nations when the hoary abominations were consumed.

The most colossal empires have melted like visions of the night, and the most substantial creations of human power have passed away like the fleeting dew of the morning. But, “He must reign.” He must reign, first of all, because His reign over human mind is based upon the Truth of God. There have been various dynasties of thought—at one time Plato reigned supreme over thoughtful minds. Then Aristotle held a long and rigid rule—he so ruled and governed the entire universe of mind that even the Christian religion was continually infected and tainted by his philosophical speculations.

But another philosophy found out his weakness and supplanted him, to be in its turn subverted by the next. As men grow more enlightened, or the human mind passes through another phase of change, men say to their once-revered rabbis and honored teachers, “Stand out of the way! A new light has arisen! We have come to a new point of thought, and we have done with you.” Things which were accounted sure and wise in years gone by are now ridiculed by us as the height of folly. And why? Because these systems of philosophy and thought have not been based upon the Truth of God. There has been a worm in the center of the fair apple of knowledge. There has been a flaw in the foundations of the great masterbuilder—they have built upon sand, and their edifices have tumbled to irretrievable ruin.

But the Truth, which Jesus taught from the mountaintop, reads as if it were delivered but yesterday! Christianity is as suitable to the 19th century as to the first. It has the dew of its youth upon it. As Solomon’s Song says of Christ, His locks are bushy and black as a raven to show His youth and vigor. So may I say of the Gospel—it is still as young and vigorous—as full of masculine energy as ever it was! We who preach it fear not for the result—give us a fair stage and no favor, and the Samson of Divine Truth, its locks still unshorn—will yet remove the pillars of the temple of error, and bring ruin to the powers of Hell. Jesus must reign as the royal Teacher because all He teaches is based upon the surest Truth.

Our Lord’s dominion over human hearts, too, is absolutely sure, because it is based upon*love*. To illustrate what I mean, I need only remind you of the life of the great Napoleon. He founded an empire—an empire which has not always been justly estimated—for perhaps unwittingly Napoleon was a grand advancer of human liberty, since he first taught the old kings that the pretense of Divine right could not keep crowns upon unpopular heads, and that young men from the ranks might yet mount a throne. He produced a code of laws, which, for simplicity of justice, has never been surpassed. Still, he relied too much upon coercion and the sword—his enormous armies were his bulwark and security.

Strong battalions were the cornerstone of his empire, and though for awhile he stood firm, and armies advancing against him were only like so many waves dashing against the rocks of his tremendous power—yet, after all his many wars, he was overthrown and he was said to have uttered in St. Helena that memorable speech—“My empire has passed away. I founded it upon the sword, and it is gone. Jesus Christ established an empire upon love, and it will last forever.” So it *will* last. When all that kings and princes can do with state-craft, and with power, shall have dissolved as hoar frost in the sun, Christ’s kingdom must stand because it is based upon the law of love. His Person is the incarnation of love. His teachings are the doctrines of love. His precepts are the rule of love. His Spirit is the creator of love. His whole religion is saturated with love—and because of this His kingdom cannot be moved!

Once more, the empire of Jesus must exist because it is the one great remedy which this sad woe-begone world requires. Though men know it not, this is the only balm for earth’s poor bleeding wounds. Earth cries out every now and then like a sleeper in delirium. She cries out for the coming man, and eyes everywhere are watching! Men scarcely know why—they look for a man who shall right the wrong of mankind and commence on a glorious era—that good time coming for which men have looked so long. Jesus is the coming Man—He alone is the daystar from on high who shall visit us with light and healing—and replace our darkness with an everlasting morning!

The world is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, tossed to and fro, and there is but one foot which can tread its waves, and but one voice which can say, “Peace, be still.” The world’s joy lies now in the tomb. It has been dead four days already, and by this time it stinks and the poor world does not know that there is only one voice that can bring back earth’s paradise, give a resurrection to her buried mirth. Jesus of Nazareth it is who is the true Liberator of captive nations, “To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death.”

The world will never rest till it rests in Christ! It groans and travails in pain together until now, scarcely knowing what it wants. But to us it is given to know that earth needs her Lord to reign over her, and He shall bring her joy and peace. The agonizing groans of earth demand the sovereignty of Jesus and therefore we believe that He must reign, for God will yet give His creature what it needs. Our Lord’s dominion is, in itself, so securely founded upon Truth and love, and is so demanded by a bleeding world, that “He must reign.”

**2.**Secondly, He must reign because His Father decrees it. How delightful it is to think of the eternal purposes concerning our Lord! Our God did not make this world without a plan, nor does He rule it without a scheme. Whatever Jehovah decrees, stands fast and firm, for these are His words, “Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Whatever the eternal mind resolves upon is certain to be fulfilled! Though men should strive against it, and devils should rise with infernal rage, yet, if Jehovah decrees it, who shall stand against the eternal will?

Go, Fool, who thinks to stand against God, and dash yourself upon the bosses of His buckler and be broken in pieces! Or run upon the point of His glittering spear to your own destruction, for, against the Eternal, who shall stand? His thunder in the heavens, though it is but the whisper of His voice, makes the nations tremble! The going forth of His might in nature, though it is the hiding of His power, makes all the inhabitants of the earth shake. Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, “What are You doing?”

The eternal purpose of God has ordained that Jesus Christ shall reign eternally! He must reign from the river even to the ends of the earth. Up till now God has maintained the Throne of His Son. Read the second Psalm and see: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion.”

Yes, the Divine determination, the Everlasting Covenant, and the immutable promises of Covenant Grace all unite in the resolve that Christ shall reign, and therefore well says the text, “He must reign.”

**3.**But in the third place, Divine justice demands it. Jesus Christ must reign. Beloved, you cannot imagine for a moment that He who judges all the earth will be unjust, and unjust to His own Son! Our Lord came into this world to bleed and die that He might have a reward for His pains. And the Father covenanted with Him: “He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days.” “I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong.” The Father promised that He should be a leader and a commander of the people, and determined, as the result of His humiliation, that He should mount to a superior Throne as the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Shall God belie His word? Begone, blasphemous thought! Shall God defraud the Only-Begotten? Down, suggestion of the pit! Shall Jesus die in vain? Shall He pour out His soul unto death, and shall there be no crown for Him? Shall the promised diadem be withheld? Beloved, we know it cannot be so! As we stand at the foot of the Cross we feel that every pang He suffered guaranteed to Him that He should be King of kings, and Lord of lords. Oh, it were, indeed, sad for us to imagine that yonder wondrous work of His in redemption should remain unrewarded with the promised crown! It were vain for us to trust in the Redemption, for we might be as well deluded in it as He if there were no honor brought to Him for all that He endured for us. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, there can be no doubt about it—since immutable justice demands it, Jesus “must reign.”

**4.**The fourth reason is found in this, that Christ’s reigning is inwrought into the order of Providence. A few months ago snow was on the ground. The frost was sharp, the winds were cold, the trees were bare— but it was in the order of Providence that there should be a spring. And though the seasons grew colder and the dreary months passed on and not a snowdrop peeped up from under the soil, nor a golden crocus opened its cup, yet God had purposed it—the spring must come.

Walk in your gardens today when all the fruit trees are opening their blossoms and pouring forth their perfumes in the air, and the birds are at the highest point of song, and you will think, “Yes, it has surely come. Spring smiles on us, after all.” The cold blustering winds and the cold dark nights could not prevent it! The vernal blossoms are on every bough. Here is spring, and in its right hand it holds a faithful promise of the coming summer. We cannot say that in any one day in all these last months spring seemed to make any great advance. You cannot put your finger upon a certain day or hour, and say, “Now the weather is manifestly turning.”

But the sweet days of bud and blossom have been introduced with a beautiful gentleness and growth. Even when the days lengthened we saw no great progress, for the cold strengthened—and if we enjoyed a mild day, there came a biting night of frost. But, surely and steadily the veins of the trees were filled with the life-blood of sap, and the buds first swelled and then revealed their glories! Mother earth yielded to the roots of plants and trees fresh vigor, and helped them to put on their green array—and now we look for the beauties of summer and the golden sheaves of autumn with sure and certain hope.

So Christ’s reigning is woven into the warp and woof of Providence, and though He has long been lifted on high and has not yet drawn all men unto Him, it is coming—and if we have faith we may almost see it. His kingdom is coming! The time of the singing of the birds is drawing near! There have been dark times, but the light has arisen! There have been times of shameful lukewarmness, but, now and then a live coal has been sent from off the altar to touch the lip of some favored seer whose power has turned the tide of the Church’s zeal once more. Rest assured that nothing can possibly resist the kingdom of Jesus Christ—His kingdom shall come! He shall have dominion and His foes shall bow.

He shall come in His own proper Person and shall sit upon David’s throne. Though the wheels of Providence are so high that they are terrible, they are all full of eyes, and every eye looks to Christ. “Upon one stone shall be seven eyes,” yes, all the eyes of Providence look upon Jesus our Cornerstone, and in the Divine economy, “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose,” and chiefly for the glory of Him who loved God best of all, and was first chosen in the Divine decree.

That Jesus shall reign is the end, aim, and design of Providence. How I rejoice to believe that if we serve God the very stones of the field are in league with us, and the beasts of the field are at peace with us! And as it was said by Deborah in her memorable song, “The stars in their courses fought against Sisera,” so all created things are allies of the righteous cause and adversaries of evil. The marches of years, the advance of months, and the arrangements of days all fight like armed men the wrong, and march side by side with the armies of the Lord of hosts—sworn to do battle for Jesus and His Throne—for, “He must reign.”

**5.**I must not tarry long on any one point, and, therefore, our fifth argument for Jesus’ kingdom is that the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church to promote this glorious end. At the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out—then the whole Church was baptized with a sacred influence—and ever since then the Holy Spirit has never been withdrawn from the Christian Church. “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.”

We often unbelievingly pray for the Holy Spirit as if He were not still with us—as if He were not perpetually resident among the sons of men. He is here, always here—always dwelling in the Christian Church. Now consider who the Holy Spirit is—He is the blessed God Himself—one Person of the glorious Trinity in unity, and He is therefore the possessor of infinite power. In the world of mind He can work according to His own will, and can convince men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He can soften the most hardened! He can turn to kindness the most cruel, and lead into light the most darkened. There are none beyond the range of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and none who shall be able finally to resist His influence when He puts forth the fullness of His might, for who can stop Omnipotence?

Now, Brethren, the possession of the Holy Spirit is the Church’s treasury. Here is her battle-ax, and here her weapons of war. Do you speak of the tower of David where a thousand bucklers did hang, all shields of mighty men? The possession of the Holy Spirit secures a far greater power than all the bucklers of mighty men could be! Solomon speaks of the Church’s bed, and says that around it were fourscore men, each man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. But the Holy Spirit is a greater protection than the ablest bodyguard of warriors! His dove-like wings perpetually brood over the Lord’s chosen and guard them from every ill, according to the promise, “I, the Lord, do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”

Ho, you who preach Christ in the street, or teach Him in the school, do not become discouraged under difficulties when you remember that you are workers together with *God*, and that with you, when you speak the truth for Jesus, there goes forth an irresistible power from the Holy Spirit Himself which none shall be able to gainsay or to resist! This is the Church’s power—let her seek more of it, and, possessing it—let her rest assured that the purpose for which she has been raised up will be accomplished, for Jesus Christ *must* and*shall* reign if the Spirit of God is at work to ensure His Sovereignty.

**6.**Sixthly, our Lord Jesus Christ must reign because He is naturally the Chief of the human race. When all Israel were gathered together to choose a king, they selected Saul who was in stature head and shoulders taller than the rest. They would have the strongest soldier to lead the van. But if my Lord and Master were to come into this world—if men’s eyes were but opened, and their senses were but trained to right perception— they would no sooner put eyes on Him than they would say, “He is the chief among 10,000 and the altogether lovely: let Him wear the crown.” Remember that in this present state the good often go to the wall, and the most worthy are the least esteemed—but in the long run it is a rule of God’s government that the best shall be uppermost.

And when the last great rectification shall come, you will find that those who were really lowest in character will be lowest in perdition, and those who were highest in their service of God shall be highest in esteem among the sons of men. Jesus Christ must take the highest place, because He is highest and there is none to rival Him—

***“No creature can with Him compare  
Among the sons of men,  
Fairer He is than all the fair***

***That fill the heavenly train.”***  
Once but get a clear, spiritual glimpse of Him and you will acknowledge His surpassing superiority—

***“Soon as faith the Lord can see,  
Bleeding on the Cross for me,  
Quick my idols all depart,  
Jesus gets and fills my heart.”***

O stone-blind eyes, if you could but see Him, how you would be fixed on Him in one long fascinated gaze! O blind world, if you had Grace enough to see but half the beauties of Christ, how you would cease your rebellion and fall down to worship the matchless Prince! But the blindness and obduracy of humankind make men enemies to their best Friend and make them see no beauty where there is *all* beauty, and no perfection wherever perfection dwells.

As well might men say that there is no light from the sun as declare that there is no loveliness in Him! As well might they say that there is no salt in the sea as that there is no sweetness in Christ, for He is altogether lovely! All preciousness, at its very highest degrees, is found commingled in His gracious Character. Let Him be King, then! He must reign! It is impossible that yonder black prince, that fiend of Hell, that traitor, that enemy of the human race should always reign! Down with him! Down with him as they did in the town of Mansoul when they broke the images of Diabolus, casting them to the ground.

It is not possible that the devil should always be king over God’s creatures. Let Immanuel be exalted, and let His loyal subjects bow before Him and rejoice in His crown and scepter. He must reign, then, because of the excellence of His Character.

**7.**And lastly upon this point, He must reign because the power to reign belongs to Him. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” “He has all power given unto Him in Heaven and in earth.” “Go you, therefore,” says He, “and teach all nations.” Jesus Christ is no puny pretender to the Throne, nor a rightful owner without power to win His own, but as His cause is good His arm is strong. The power of Immanuel is equal to His right—He must, therefore, reign! What a vision that is of Christ on the white horse, riding forth conquering and to conquer, and all His saints following Him in the same triumphant style, His sword going out of His mouth, the preaching of the eternal Gospel being still the power of God unto salvation!

This is what He is doing now—this is what He shall do till He comes with His iron rod to break the nations in pieces, like a potter’s vessel, and dash His enemies to pieces. He has the power to reign, a power of love which He puts into the Gospel which, by-and-by, He will exchange for the power of vengeance, when He takes the Throne and sits there to judge the nations according to their works. What a total overthrow the powers of darkness will sustain! They will not have a thought with which to comfort themselves. When the last great battle shall come and the campaign between Christ and the Prince of Evil shall be over, there will not remain a handful of spoil in the hand of the enemy—not one old banner or tattered flag belonging to the Lord’s hosts to hang up in the hall.

“They will be beaten,” as the text puts it, “like the chaff on the summer’s threshing floor.” “And you shall winnow them,” says the Prophet, “and the wind shall carry them away.” The black horse went down to the sea of almighty love with his rider and began to drink up that sea, but he could not do it. He snorted, and drank, and drank again of the brine which sickened his very soul, but malice urged him on, and so he drank again, and waded breast-deep into the ocean. Nor stayed he in his fury, but plunged farther and farther, till he was drowned in the inexhaustible depths.

I think I see the black carcass submerged far down in the abyss—death and Hell drowned in the sea of almighty love and power, and the kingdom of Jesus rolling like a mighty stream over all those who were determined upon His destruction. Glory be unto God! We fight and victory flies to congratulate our banner. Ours is no desperate warfare, but a royal crusade in which every soldier is even now a priest and a king, and is on the way to the banqueting halls where men feast with God, and Jesus forever and ever wears the fadeless diadem.

**II.**Time allows but a few words upon THE ENCOURAGEMENT to be gathered from the “must” which lies in the soul of the text.

**1.**The first encouragement is that if He must reign, then all our enemies shall be subdued. This text occurs in that memorable chapter concerning the resurrection and it especially points to death. “He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.” “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” Now, beloved Believer, you are called to fight daily with sin and here is your consolation—Jesus must reign! The Christ in you must bruise Satan under your feet! His Atonement has forever destroyed the damning power of your sins. Christ reigns supreme on the milk-white Throne of mercy as the pardoning God.

Even so Jesus must reign over the active power of sin within your heart, for His death is the double death of sin. He has pierced its heart and nailed its hands and feet—it shall not have dominion over you. Jesus, the King of kings, must hold His court in the castle yard of your heart, and all your powers and passions must do Him cheerful homage. Most sweet Prince, You shall wear Your royal robes in the coronation chamber of my affections! You shall reign over my quick imperious temper! He shall put His foot on the neck of my pride and shall command my every thought and wish. Where I cannot rule, Jesus can!

Rebellious lusts acknowledge the spell of the Cross and indwelling sin falls like Dagon before that ark. Jesus has made us kings and priests that we may reign over the triple monarchy of our nature—spirit, soul, and body—and that by our self-conquest *He* may be undisputed sovereign of the Isle of Man. O you who are contending with your corruptions, push on in the war for He must reign! Corruption is very strong, but Christ is stronger, and Divine Grace must reign through righteousness unto eternal life—through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I think I hear you groaning, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Hearken to the answer! It rings like a sweet Sabbath bell, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” You may die with Jesus but you shall certainly rise with Him, for He will leave none of His members in the grave of their corruptions. This Joshua will slay all the Canaanites! He will drive out the old dragon from his throne with all his hellish crew and your entire manhood shall be a fair temple for the Holy Spirit’s indwelling!

As long as we live in this world, and when we live again in the coming world, Jesus shall be the Well-Beloved Monarch of our hearts! This ought to put away all fears of death, for Christ must reign, must reign over death! When the last enemy appears in view it shall only be an opportunity for new triumphs, when the Lord of life shall reveal Himself with renewed splendor. Imagine not that death shall ever reign over Christ! Ah no, in your departing moments you shall have most extraordinary Grace— so that with joyful heart your lips shall sing, “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?”

When your body shall have molded to ashes, Christ must reign, and every precious particle of that dust shall be attracted to its fellow—bone shall come to bone, and the flesh shall come upon the whole—and you shall live! Though worms destroy that body, yet in your flesh shall you see God. And so in your resurrection Jesus Christ shall reign! What a lamp is shining in the vaults of death! The day breaks upon all our darkness when we see that He must reign!

The next cool cup of encouragement springing from this well is this— our efforts are, after all, not in vain. If Christ must reign, then every soldier who fights for Christ is contributing to the victory, and everyone who in any way advances the cause is working with sure and great results. You have not wasted those many silent prayers and those bitter tears. Those feeble efforts of yours which were so imperfect that you could scarcely hope them to be successful are all co-operating to produce a victory the shouts of which shall be heard all down the ages!

You may but lay a single stone of the heavenly temple, but if it is done for Christ, it is a stone which will stand the fire and your share of the building will remain to the last, while many a great one who has built a mass of wood, and hay, and stubble shall see his labors all consumed in the day that tries every man’s work. O my fellow Soldiers, as we rest in this bivouac today waiting till another fight begins, let us be of good courage and the Lord shall strengthen our hearts! Wait, I say, on the Lord, for the Lord is on our side!

Our foes are tall as Goliath, and mighty as Pharaoh, and proud as Nebuchadnezzar—but in the name of God will we destroy them! In the name of Jesus we will again say Jehovah-Nissi, and setting up the banner we follow our Captain whose vesture is dipped in blood. He rides forth conquering and to conquer, and we follow Him to absolute victory! It is but a little before we shall hear the shout, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.” One sweet drop of comfort may be pressed from this text, “He must reign”—I must confess the sweetest comfort I have ever tasted. I know not why it is, but if I sink in spirit (and I do full often) I very seldom get any cordial anywhere except from this one thing—that Christ must reign.

“There,” I have said in my soul, “then what becomes of me is of no consequence at all! If He will only take me into the royal galley and chain me down to the oar, and let me tug and pull till I have no more life left, I will be satisfied if I may but row my Lord towards His Throne and have but the smallest share in making Him great and glorious in the eyes of men and angels.” What cares my heart for herself if she may but see Jesus set on high? It is a Heaven to me to think that Christ is in Heaven, and another Heaven to believe that He will reign among men! If Christ is glorious, it is all the Heaven I ask for! If He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, let me be nothing! If He shall but reign, and every tongue shall call Him blessed, it shall be bliss to me to know it! And if I may be but as one of the withered roses which lie in the path of His triumph, it shall be my paradise!

Comrade in arms, as you and I in this ditch lie bleeding on the skirts of the battle, it is sweet to hear the shouts of victory! This is better than wine, better than healing, better than life! See yonder He rides with His crown upon His helmet! There He rides on His white horse in the very front of the fray! Can you not hear Him as He cries, “Onward!” and the enemy flees, and His forces march on to victory? You and I may lie down and die—what matters it, for the cause is safe—Jesus is King! Rest assured that Christ’s victory is ours and He will no more forget us than a woman will cease to think of the son of her womb. Oh, to put our heart into Christ’s heart! To wish His wishes and to love His loves! This is to enjoy peace like a river, and bliss like the waves of the sea. Blessed thought for you who love Him! Treasure it. “He must reign.”

How this ought to inspire all of you who grow downhearted about the cause of Christ. Some of my friends are frightened with that everlasting bugbear of Roman Catholicism. According to some we are going back to Rome, every mother’s son of us, and old England is to be a rank popish country. Many in these days are fine hands at painting ugly pictures and believing them to be realities. But I believe my text, namely, that *Jesus* must reign. Therefore I do not fear the Pope or the devil. All the driveling priests of Rome with their Jesuitical tricks, shall find their master, for Hell itself cannot shake that decree, “He must reign.”

“Jesuits,” you say, “are creeping in unawares.” I know it! But behold, we shall tread upon the lion and the dragon—yes, the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet. Do you not believe in the Gospel as the power of God? Do you imagine that an unrighteous and unscriptural church establishment is needed as a bulwark to the Gospel? Shall rotten wood defend the steel? Nonsense! Blow the establishment to a thousand pieces with the big guns of Justice and then the Gospel will hold its own with all the greater ease. The Gospel is quite able to take care of itself without your hierarchies, and tithes, and royal headships—you encumber the Church with your bulwarks of wood, and hay, and stubble! You clog our David with the royal armor.

My Lord Jesus Christ can do well enough in Ireland without Caesar or his pennies. He needs you not to drain wealth from those who serve another Lord in order to uphold His cause. He hates your robberies which you call burnt-offerings. He always has taken care of Himself and His ministers and will continue to do so. The ark of God of old was never captured till it was defended with carnal weapons, and even then, as soon as it was left alone it rescued *itself*. When there was not a soldier to take care of it—when it was imprisoned in the temple of Dagon—Dagon fell, and Philistia was humbled.

And so in England and Ireland, State alliance is bringing the Gospel into jeopardy, but if that alliance can be broken which is the worst of ills, then the Gospel in its grandeur of unaided might will confound all adversaries. Never be afraid—it does not become a Christian to fear—it is unmanly, unchristian, to talk as if Christ’s cause were going to be trampled out like a spark under our feet! It cannot be! As enduring as the earth itself, and more eternal—as far as everlasting as the Throne of God are the Cross and honor and dignity of Christ. Let us feel this, for He must reign, and anticipated changes, instead of preventing Him from reigning, will help Him to reign more universally. And the shaking off of old abuses, instead of being an injury to the Cross of Christ, will give its glories ampler space, for He must reign, let men say what they will.

**III.**Once more, and I have done. There is an ADMONITION in the text, “He must reign.” My Hearer, has He ever reigned in *your* heart? Where are *you*, my Hearer? For I want you now. I must get you by the ear. “Jesus must reign.” What have you to say to this? You have been opposing Him, have you? You are kicking against the pricks with naked feet—you are stumbling upon this stone and you will be broken—and if the stone shall take to rolling down, like a massive rock, on you, it will grind you to powder.

Persecutor, beware! You have gone upon a very very desperate errand. You are like a crawling worm that is fighting with the fire—you wiggle already in the heat of it—but if you continue long, what can you expect? You are like stubble contending with the fire-brand, or like chaff wrestling with the whirlwind. What can you do? O Man, sheathe that sword! Take counsel while you are in the way, “whether you can, with 10,000 meet him that comes against you with twenty thousand.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Another thought, if Jesus Christ must reign, then you who have never submitted yourselves to Him to accept Him as your Monarch will find His reign as terrible as it is sure. He will reign over you, either by your own consent, or without it! He will either reign over you with that glorious glittering silver scepter of mercy in His hand, or He will rule over you with the heavy iron rod with which He will break you in pieces. Now, which is it to be? One or the other. His blood must be on you—either it must be on you to accuse and condemn you, as the Jews found it when they said, “His blood be on us, and on our children”—or else it shall be on you to cleanse, to pardon, to save. Which shall it be?

This morning, in the name of God I do entreat you answer this question for your own good! Does Jesus reign over you this morning, or not? Oh, if He never should reign over you in this life, then, when you *die* you shall find that you cannot escape from His power! He will reign over you while you are a prisoner, manacled in fetters of iron in the place of everlasting misery! He will reign over you, and you will be compelled to confess it, too, as you bite your iron bands and weep, and gnash your teeth in anger and in shame! He will reign over you absolutely, for you will not be able to lift a finger to contend against Him in the day when He comes to judge the quick and the dead—

***“You sinners, seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,  
And find salvation there.”***

May eternal mercy bring you, now, like loyal subjects, to bow before Jesus! May you be granted saving Grace to give yourselves up to Him, trusting in Him, and in Him alone. That is the matter—to confide simply in Him is life eternal! There is the whole sum and substance of godliness. Then shall it be your joy to know and feel that “He must reign.” The Lord bless you, and make you a blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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CHRIST THE DESTROYER OF DEATH  
NO. 1329

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 17, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Corinthians 15:26.~~***

DURING four previous Sabbaths we have been following our Lord and Master through His great achievements. We have seen Him as the end of the Law, as the Conqueror of Satan, as the Overcomer of the world, as the Creator of all things new. And now we behold Him as the Destroyer of death. In this and in all His other glorious deeds, let us worship Him with all our hearts! May the Spirit of God lead us into the full meaning of this, which is one of the Redeemer’s grandest Characters. How wonderfully is our Lord Jesus *one with man*! For when the Psalmist David had considered “the heavens, the work of God’s fingers,” He said, “Lord, what is man—that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You visit him?”

He was speaking of Christ. You would have thought he was thinking of man in his humblest estate, and that he was wondering that God should be pleased to honor so frail a being as the poor fallen son of Adam. You would never have dreamed that the glorious Gospel lay hid within those words of grateful adoration! Yet, in the course of that meditation David went on to say, “You made Him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands, You have put all things under His feet.” Now, had it not been for the interpretation of the Holy Spirit, we would still have considered that he was speaking of men in general, and of man’s natural dominion over the brute creation, but behold, while that is true, there is another and a far more important Truth of God concealed within it, for David, as a Prophet, was all the while chiefly speaking of the Man of men, the model Man, the second Adam, the Head of the new race of men!

It was of Jesus, the Son of Man, as honored of the Father, that the Psalmist sang, “He has put all things under His feet.” Strange, was it not, that when he spoke of man, he must of necessity speak also of our Lord? And yet, when we consider the thing, it is but natural and according to truth. It is only remarkable to us because in our minds we too often consider Jesus and man as far removed and too little regard Him as truly one with man. Now, see how the Apostle infers from the Psalm the necessity of the Resurrection, for if all things must be put under the feet of the man, Christ Jesus, then every form of evil must be conquered by Him and death among the rest. “He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”

It must be so and, therefore, death itself must ultimately be overcome. Thus out of that simple sentence in the Psalm, which we would have read far otherwise without the light of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle gathers the doctrine of the Resurrection. The Holy Spirit taught His servant, Paul, how, by a subtle chemistry, he could distil from simple words a precious fragrant essence which the common reader never suspected to be there.

Texts have their secret drawers, their box within a box, their hidden souls which lie asleep till He who placed them on their secret couches awakens them that they may speak to the hearts of His chosen.

Could you ever have guessed Resurrection from the eighth Psalm? No, nor could you have believed, had it not been told you, that there is fire in the flint, oil in the rock and bread in the earth we tread upon! Man’s books have usually far less in them than we expect, but the Book of the Lord is full of surprises! It is a mass of light, a mountain of priceless revelations. We little know what yet lies hidden within the Scriptures. We know the form of sound words as the Lord has taught us and by it we will abide—but there are inner store houses into which we have not peered— chambers of Revelation lit up with bright lamps, perhaps too bright for our eyes at this present time.

If Paul, when the Spirit of God rested upon Him, could see so much in the songs of David, the day may come when we, also, shall see still more in the Epistles of Paul and wonder at ourselves that we did not understand better the things which the Holy Spirit has so freely spoken to us by the Apostle. May we at this time be enabled to look deep and far and behold the sublime glories of our risen Lord!

To the text, itself, then— *death is an enemy. Death is an enemy to be destroyed. Death is an enemy to be destroyed last—*“the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

**I.** DEATH AN ENEMY. *It was so born*, even as Haman the Agagite was the enemy of Israel by his descent. Death is the child of our direst foe, for, “sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” “Sin entered into the world and death by sin.” Now, that which is distinctly the fruit of transgression cannot be other than an enemy of man. Death was introduced into the world on that gloomy day which saw our fall and he that had the power of it is our arch enemy and betrayer, the devil—from both of which facts we must regard death as the manifest enemy of man.

Death is an alien in this world. It did not enter into the original design of the unfallen creation, but its intrusion mars and spoils the whole. It is no part of the Great Shepherd’s flock, but it is a wolf which comes to kill and to destroy. Geology tells us that there was death among the various forms of life from the first ages of the globe’s history, even when as yet the world was not fitted up as the dwelling of man. This I can believe and still regard death as the result of sin. If it can be proved that there is such an organic unity between man and the lower animals that they would not have died if Adam had not sinned, then I see in those deaths before Adam the antecedent consequences of a sin which was then uncommitted.

If by the merits of Jesus there was salvation *before* He had offered His atoning Sacrifice, I do not find it hard to conceive that the foreseen demerits of sin may have cast the shadow of death over the long ages which came before man’s transgression. Of that we know little, nor is it important that we should, but certain is it that as far as this present creation is concerned, Death is not God’s invited guest but an intruder whose presence mars the feast. Man, in his folly, welcomed Satan and sin when they forced their way into the high festival of Paradise, but he never welcomed Death. Even his blind eyes could see in that skeleton form a cruel foe!

As the lion to the herds of the plain, as the scythe to the sowers of the field, as the wind to the sere leaves of the forest, such is Death to the sons of men. They fear him by an inward instinct because their conscience tells them that he is the child of their sin. Death is well called an enemy for *it does an enemy’s work* towards us. For what purpose does an enemy come but to root up and to pull down and to destroy? Death tears in pieces that comely handiwork of God, the fabric of the human body, so marvelously worked by the fingers of Divine skill. Casting this rich embroidery into the grave among the armies of the worms, to its fierce soldiery, Death divides “to everyone a prey of many colors, of many colors of needlework”—and they ruthlessly tear in pieces the spoil!

This building of our manhood is a house fair to look upon, but Death, the destroyer, darkens its windows, shakes its pillars, closes its doors and causes the sound of the grinding to cease. Then the daughters of music are brought low and the strong men bow themselves. This vandal spares no work of life, however full of wisdom or beauty, for it looses the silver cord and breaks the golden bowl. Lo, at the fountain, the costly pitcher is utterly broken and at the cistern the well-worked wheel is dashed in pieces! Death is a fierce invader of the realms of life and where he goes, he fells every good tree, stops all wells of water and mars every good piece of land with stones.

See a man when Death has worked his will upon him—what a ruin he is! How is his beauty turned to ashes and his comeliness to corruption! Surely an enemy has done this! Look, my Brothers and Sisters, at the course of death throughout all ages and in all lands. What field is there without its grave? What city without its cemetery? Where can we go to find no sepulchers? As the sandy shore is covered with the traces of the worm, so are you, O Earth, covered with those grass-grown hillocks beneath which sleep the departed generations of men! And you, O Sea, even you are not without your dead!

As if the earth were all too full of corpses and they jostled each other in their crowded sepulchers, even into your caverns, O mighty main, the bodies of the dead are cast! Your waves must become defiled with the carcasses of men, and on your floor must lie the bones of the slain! Our enemy, Death, has marched, as it were, with sword and fire ravaging the human race. Neither Goth, nor Hun, nor Tartar could have slain so universally all that breathed, for Death has allowed none to escape! Everywhere he has withered household joys and created sorrow and sighs! In all lands where the sun is seen, he has blinded men’s eyes with weeping. The tear of the bereaved, the wail of the widow and the moan of the orphan—these have been Death’s music of war and he has found, therein, a song of victory!

The greatest conquerors have only been Death’s executioners, journeymen butchers working in his shambles. War is nothing better than Death holding carnival and devouring his prey a little more in haste than is his common way. *Death has done the work of an enemy to those of us who have as yet escaped his arrows*. Those who have lately stood around a

new grave and buried half their hearts can tell you what an enemy Death is. It takes the friend from our side and the child from our bosom, neither does it care for our crying. He has fallen who was the pillar of the household. She has been snatched away who was the brightness of the hearth! The little one is torn out of its mother’s bosom though its loss almost breaks her heartstrings—and the blooming youth is taken from his father’s side though the parent’s fondest hopes are thereby crushed.

Death has no pity for the young and no mercy for the old! He pays no regard to the good or to the beautiful! His scythe cuts down sweet flowers and noxious weeds with equal readiness! He comes into our garden, tramples down our lilies and scatters our roses on the ground! Yes, and even the most modest flowers planted in the corner and hiding their beauty beneath the leaves that they may blush unseen—Death spies out even these! He cares nothing for their fragrance, but withers them with his burning breath. He is your enemy, indeed, you fatherless child, left for the pitiless storm of a cruel world to beat upon with none to shelter you! He is your enemy, O widow, for the light of your life is gone and the desire of your eyes has been removed with a stroke.

He is your enemy, husband, for your house is desolate and your little children cry for their mother of whom Death has robbed you. He is the enemy of us all, for what head of a family among us has not had to say to him, “You have bereaved me again and again!” Especially is Death an enemy to the living when he invades God’s House and causes the prophet and the priest to be numbered with the dead. The Church mourns when her most useful ministers are struck down, when the watchful eye is closed in darkness and the instructive tongue is mute. Yet how often does Death thus war against us! The earnest, the active, the indefatigable are taken away.

Those mightiest in prayer. Those most affectionate in heart. Those most exemplary in life—these are cut down in the midst of their labors, leaving behind them a Church which needs them more than tongue can tell. If the Lord does but threaten to permit Death to seize a beloved pastor, the souls of his people are full of grief and they view Death as their worst foe, while they plead with the Lord and entreat Him to bid their minister live. Even *those who die*may well count Death to be their enemy—I mean not *now* that they have risen to their seats and, as disembodied spirits, behold the King in His beauty—but earlier while Death was approaching them.

He seemed to their trembling flesh to be a foe, for it is not in nature, except in moments of extreme pain or aberration of mind, or of excessive expectation of Glory, for us to be in love with Death. It was wise of our Creator so to constitute us that the soul loves the body and the body loves the soul, and they desire to dwell together as long as they may, else had there been no care for self-preservation and suicide would have destroyed the race—

***“For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, The oppressor’s wrong, the proud men’s contumely, When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare knife?”***

It is a first law of our nature that skin for skin, yes, all that a man has, will he give for his life, and thus we are nerved to struggle for existence and to avoid that which would destroy us. This useful instinct renders Death an enemy, but it also aids in keeping us from that crime of all crimes—the most sure of damnation if a man commits it willfully and in his sound mind!

I mean the crime of self-murder. When Death comes, even to the good man, he comes as an enemy, for he is attended by such terrible heralds and grim outriders as do greatly scare us—

***“Fever with brow of fire.  
Consumption with palsy,  
Half-warmed with life,  
And half a clay-cold lump;  
Joint-torturing gout,  
And ever-gnawing rheum;  
Convulsion wild;  
Swollen dropsy; panting asthma;  
Apoplexy full gorged.”***

None of these add a particle of beauty to the aspect of Death. He comes with pains and griefs. He comes with sighs and tears. Clouds and darkness are round about him. An atmosphere laden with dust oppresses those whom he approaches and a cold wind chills them even to the marrow. He rides on the pale horse and where his steed sets its foot the land becomes a desert. By the footstep of that terrible steed, the worm is awakened to gnaw the slain!

When we forget other grand Truths of God and only remember these dreadful things, Death is the king of terrors to us. Hearts are sickened and reins are loosened because of him. But, indeed, he is an enemy, for what comes he to do to our body? I know he does that which ultimately leads to its betterness, but still, it is that which, in itself, and for the present, is not joyous, but grievous. He comes to take the light from the eyes, the hearing from the ears, the speech from the tongue, the activity from the hand and the thought from the brain. He comes to transform a living man into a mass of putrefaction—to degrade the beloved form of brother and friend to such a condition of corruption that Affection, itself, cries out, “Bury my dead out of my sight.”

Death, you child of sin, Christ has transformed you marvelously, but in yourself you are an enemy before whom flesh and blood tremble, for they know that you are the murderer of all born of woman, whose thirst for human prey the blood of nations cannot slake! If you think for a few moments of this enemy, you will observe some of his points of character. He is the common foe of all God’s people and the enemy of all men—for however some have been persuaded that they should not die—yet is there no discharge in this war. And if in this conscription a man escapes the ballot many and many a year till his gray beard seems to defy the winter’s hardest frost, yet the man of iron yields at last! It is appointed unto all men once to die.

The strongest man has no elixir of eternal life to renew his youth amid the decays of age. Nor has the wealthiest prince a price with which to bribe destruction. To the grave must you descend, O crowned Monarch, for scepters and shovels are akin! To the sepulcher must you go down, O mighty man of valor, for sword and spade are of like metal! The prince is brother to the worm and must dwell in the same house. Of our whole race it is true, “Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.” Death is also a *subtle* foe, lurking everywhere, even in the most harmless things. Who can tell where Death has not prepared his ambush? He meets us both at home and abroad. At the table he assails men in their food, and at the fountain he poisons their drink.

He waylays us in the streets and he seizes us in our beds. He rides on the storm at sea and he walks with us when we are on our way upon solid land. Where can we fly to escape from you, O Death, for from the summit of the Alps men have fallen to their graves and in the deep places of the earth where the miner goes down to find the precious ore, there have you sacrificed many a hecatomb of precious lives! Death is a subtle foe and with noiseless footsteps follows close at our heels when least we think of him. He is an enemy whom *none of us will be able to avoid*, take what bypaths we may, nor can we escape from him when our hour is come.

Into this fowler’s nets, like the birds, we shall all fly! In his great seine must all the fishes of the great sea of life be taken when their day is come. As surely as the sun sets, or as the midnight stars at length descend beneath the horizon, or as the waves sink back into the sea, or as the bubble bursts, so must we all, sooner or later, come to our end and disappear from earth to be known no more among the living. *Sudden*, too, full often, are the assaults of this enemy—

***“Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind’s breath, And stars to set—but all,  
You have all seasons for your own, O Death!”***

Such things have happened as for men to die without an instant’s notice. With a Psalm upon their lips they have passed away! Or engaged in their daily business, they have been summoned to give in their account. We have heard of one who, when the morning paper brought him news that a friend in business had died, was drawing on his boots to go to his counting-house and observed with a laugh that as far as he was concerned, he was so busy he had no time to die. Yet, before the words were finished, he fell forward and was a corpse. Sudden deaths are not so uncommon as to be marvels if we dwell in the center of a large circle of mankind.

This is Death—a foe not to be despised or trifled with! Let us remember all his characteristics and we shall not be inclined to think lightly of the grim enemy whom our glorious Redeemer has destroyed.

**II.** Secondly, let us remember that Death is AN ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ has already worked a great victory upon death so that He has delivered us from lifelong bondage through its fear. He has not yet *destroyed death*, but He has gone very near to it, for we are told that He has “abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” This surely must come very near to having destroyed death altogether.

In the first place, our Lord has subdued death in the very worst sense by having delivered His people from spiritual death. “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Once you had no Divine Life whatever, but the death of original depravity remained upon you and so you were dead to all Divine and spiritual things. But now, Beloved, the Spirit of God, even He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, has raised *you* up into newness of life and you have become new creatures in Christ Jesus! In this sense death has been subdued. Our Lord, in His lifetime, also conquered death by restoring certain individuals to life.

There were three memorable cases in which, at His bidding, the last enemy resigned his prey. Our Lord went into the ruler’s house and saw the little girl who had lately fallen asleep in death, around whom they wept and lamented. He heard their scornful laughter when He said, “She is not dead but sleeps,” and He put them all out and said to her, “Maid, arise!” Then was the Spoiler spoiled and the dungeon door set open! He stopped the funeral procession at the gates of Nain, from where they were carrying forth a young man, “the only son of his mother, and she was a widow,” and He said “Young man, I say unto you, arise.”

When that young man sat up and our Lord delivered him to his mother, then, again, was the prey taken from the mighty! Chief of all, when Lazarus had laid in the grave so long that his sister said, “Lord, by this time He stinks,” when, in obedience to the word, “Lazarus come forth!” forth came the raised one with his grave clothes still about him, but yet really quickened, then was Death seen to be subservient to the Son of Man! “Loose him and let him go,” said the conquering Christ, and Death’s bonds were removed, for the lawful captive was delivered!

When at the Redeemer’s Resurrection many of the saints arose and came out of their graves into the holy city, then was the crucified Lord proclaimed to be victorious over death and the grave. Still, Brothers and Sisters, these were but preliminary skirmishes and mere foreshadows of the grand victory by which Death was overthrown. The real triumph was achieved upon the Cross—

***“He Hell in Hell laid low  
Made sin, He sin overthrew:  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And Death, by dying, slew.”***

When Christ died He suffered the penalty of death on the behalf of all His people and, therefore, no Believer now dies by way of punishment for sin, since we cannot dream that a righteous God would twice exact the penalty for one offense! Death, since Jesus died, is not a penal infliction upon the children of God! As such He has abolished it and it can never be enforced.

Why do the saints die, then? Why, because their bodies must be changed before they can enter Heaven. “Flesh and blood,” as they are, “cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” A Divine change must take place upon the body before it will be fit for incorruption and Glory! And death and the grave are, as it were, the refining pot and the furnace by means of which the body is made ready for its future bliss. Death, it is true you are not yet destroyed, but our living Redeemer has so changed you that you

are no longer Death, but something other them your name! Saints do not die now, but they are dissolved and depart.

Death is the loosing of the cable that the boat may freely sail to the fair havens! Death is the fiery chariot in which we ascend to God! It is the gentle voice of the Great King who comes into His banqueting hall, and says, “Friend, come up higher.” Behold, on eagle’s wings we mount! We fly, far from this land of mist and clouds, into the eternal serenity and brilliance of God’s own house above! Yes, our Lord has abolished death! The sting of death is sin and our great Substitute has taken that sting away by His great Sacrifice! Death without a sting abides among the people of God, and it so little harms them, that to them, “it is not death to die.”

Further, Christ vanquished Death and thoroughly overcame him when He rose. What a temptation one has to paint a picture of the Resurrection, but I will not be led aside to attempt more than a few touches. When our great Champion awoke from His brief sleep of death and found Himself in the withdrawing room of the grave, He quietly proceeded to put off the garments of the tomb. How leisurely He proceeded! He folded up the napkin and placed it by itself, that those who lose their friends might wipe their eyes. And then He took off the winding sheet and laid the grave clothes by themselves that they might be there when His saints come there, so that the chamber might be well furnished and the bed ready sheeted and prepared for their rest.

The sepulcher is no longer an empty vault, a dreary morgue, but a chamber of rest, a dormitory furnished and prepared, hung with the drapes which Christ, Himself has bequeathed! It is now, no more, a damp, dark, dreary prison—Jesus hag changed all that—

***“‘Tis now a cell where angels use,***

***To come and go with heavenly news.”***  
The angel from Heaven rolled away the stone from our Lord’s sepulcher and let in the fresh air and light again upon our Lord—and He stepped out more than a conqueror! Death had fled. The grave had capitulated—

***“Lives again our glorious King!  
Where, O Death, is now your sting?  
Once He died our souls to save;  
Where’s your victory, boasting Grave?”***

Well, Brothers and Sisters, as surely as Christ rose, so did He guarantee an absolute certainty the resurrection of all His saints into a glorious life for their bodies, the life of their souls never having paused even for a moment! In this He conquered Death! And since that memorable victory, every day Christ is overcoming Death, for He gives His Spirit to His saints and having that Spirit within them they meet the last enemy without alarm. Often they confront him with songs. Perhaps more frequently they face him with calm countenance and fall asleep with peace. I will not fear you, Death, why should I? You look like a dragon, but your sting is gone! Your teeth are broken, oh old lion, why should I fear you? I know you are no more able to destroy me, but you are sent as a messenger to conduct me to the golden gate wherein I shall enter and see my Savior’s unveiled face forever!

Expiring saints have often said that their last beds have been the best they have ever slept upon. Many of them have enquired—

***“Tell me, my Soul, can this be death?”***  
To die has been so different a thing from what they expected it to be, so easy and so joyous! They have been so unloaded of all care, have felt so relieved instead of burdened, that they have wondered whether this could be the monster they had been so afraid of all their days! They find it a pin’s prick, whereas they feared it would prove a sword thrust! It is the shutting of the eyes on earth and the opening of them in Heaven, whereas they thought it would have been a stretching upon the rack, or a dreary passage through a dismal region of gloom and dread!

Beloved, our exalted Lord has overcome death in all these ways. But now, observe, that this is not the text—the text speaks of something yet *to be done*. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, so that Death, in the sense meant by the text, is not destroyed yet. He is to be destroyed, and how will that be? Well, I take it he will be destroyed in the sense, first, that at the coming of Christ, those who are alive and remain shall not see death! They shall be changed—there must be a change, even to the living, before they can inherit eternal life, but they shall not actually die. Do not envy them, for they will have no preference beyond those that sleep. Rather do I think theirs to be the inferior lot of the two in some respects. But they will not know death—the multitude of the Lord’s own who will be alive at His coming will pass into Glory without needing to die.

Thus Death, as far as they are concerned, will be destroyed. But the sleeping ones, the myriads who have left their flesh and bones to mold back to earth, Death shall be destroyed even as to them, for when the trumpet sounds they shall rise from the tomb! The Resurrection is like destruction of death! We never taught, nor believed, nor thought that every particle of every body that was put into the grave would come to its fellow and that the absolutely identical *material* would rise—but we do say that the identical *body* will be raised and that as surely as there comes out of the ground the seed that was put into it, though in very different guise, for it comes not forth as a seed but as a flower—so surely shall the same body rise again!

The same material is not necessary, but there shall come out of the grave, yes, come out of the earth if it never saw a grave, or come out of the sea if devoured by monsters—that same body for true identity which was inhabited by the soul while here below. Was it not so with our Lord? Then so shall it be with His people! And then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting! O grave where is your victory!” There will be this feature in our Lord’s victory, that Death will be fully destroyed because those who rise will not be one whit the worse for having died!

I believe, concerning those new bodies, that there will be no trace upon them of the feebleness of old age. None of the mark of long and wearying sickness, none of the scars of martyrdom! Death shall not have left his mark upon them at all, except it is some glory mark which shall be to their honor, like the scars in the flesh of the Well-Beloved which are His chief beauty, even now, in the eyes of those for whom His hands and feet

were pierced! In this sense Death shall be destroyed because he shall have done no damage to the saints at all—the very trace of decay shall have been swept away from the redeemed.

And then, finally, there shall, after this trumpet of the Lord, be no *more death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things will have passed away. “Christ, being raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him.” And so the quickened ones, His own redeemed, they, too, shall die no more. Oh dreadful, dreadful supposition, that they should ever have to undergo temptation or pain or death a second time! It cannot be. “Because I live,” says Christ, “they shall live, also.” Yet the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, having been given up by some, certain of them have felt obliged to give up with the eternity of future punishment the eternity of future bliss—and assuredly, as far as some great proof texts are concerned, they stand or fall together!

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.” If the one state is short, so must the other be! Whatever the adjective means in the one case it means in the other! To us, the word means endless duration in both cases—and we look forward to a bliss which shall never know end or duration! Then in the tearless, sorrowless, graveless country, Death shall be utterly destroyed.

**III.** And now last of all, and the word, “last,” sounds fitly in this case, DEATH IS TO BE DESTROYED LAST. Because he came in last, he must go out last. Death was not the first of our foes. First came the devil, then sin, then Death. Death is not the worst of enemies. Death is an enemy, but he is much to be preferred to our other adversaries. It were better to die a thousand times than to sin. To be tried by Death is nothing compared with being tempted by the Satan! The mere physical pains connected with dissolution are comparative trifles compared with the hideous grief which is caused by sin and the burden which a sense of guilt causes to the soul.

No, Death is but a secondary mischief compared with the defilement of sin. Let the great enemies go down first! Smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Let sin and Satan, the lord of all these evils, be smitten first and Death may well be left to the last. Notice that Death is the last enemy to each individual Christian and the last to be destroyed. Well now, if the Word of God says he is the last, I need to remind you of a little piece of practical wisdom—leave him to be the last. Brother, do not dispute the appointed order, but let the last be last! I have known a Brother wanting to vanquish Death long before he died. But, Brother, you do not need dying Grace till dying moments! What would be the good of dying Grace while you are yet alive?

A boat will only be necessary when you reach a river. Ask for *living* Grace, and glorify Christ and *then* you shall have dying Grace when dying time comes! Your enemy is going to be destroyed, but not today. There is a great host of enemies to be fought today—and you may be content to let this one alone for a while! This enemy will be destroyed, but of the times and the seasons we are in ignorance—our wisdom is to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ as the duty of every day requires. Take your trials as they come, Brother! As the enemies march up, slay them, rank upon rank! But if you fail, in the name of God, to smite the front ranks, and say, “No, I am only afraid of the rear rank,” then you are playing the fool! Leave the final shock of arms till the last adversary advances! Meanwhile, hold your place in the conflict.

God will, in due time, help you to overcome your last enemy, but meanwhile see to it that you overcome the world, the flesh and the devil! If you live well, you will die well. That same Covenant in which the Lord Jesus gave you life contains, also the grant of death, for, “All things are yours, whether things present or things to come, or life or death, all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Why is Death left to the last? Well, I think it is because Christ can make much use of him. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death, because Death is of great service before he is destroyed. Oh, what lessons some of us have learned from Death!

“Our dying friends come o’er us like a cloud to dampen our brainless ardors,” to make us feel that these poor fleeting toys are not worth living for! They remind us that as others pass away so must we, also, be gone— and thus they help to make us let loose of this world and urge us to take wing and mount towards the world to come! There are, perhaps, no sermons like the deaths which have happened in our households—the departure of our beloved friends have been to us solemn discourses of Divine Wisdom which our heart could not help hearing. So Christ has spared Death to make him a preacher to His saints.

And you know, Brothers and Sisters, that if there had been no death, the saints of God would not have had the opportunity to exhibit the highest ardor of their love. Where has love to Christ triumphed most? Why, in the death of the martyrs at the stake and on the rack! O Christ, You never had such garlands woven for You by human hands as they have brought You who have come up to Heaven from the forests of persecution, having waded through streams of blood! By death for Christ the saints have glorified Him the most. So is it, in their measure, with saints who die from ordinary deaths—they would have had no such test for faith and work for patience as they now have if there had been no death!

Part of the reason of the continuance of this dispensation is that the Christ of God may be glorified, but if Believers never died, the supreme consummation of faith’s victory must have been unknown. Brothers and Sisters, if I may die as I have seen some of our Church members die, I court the grand occasion! I would not wish to escape death by some byroad if I may sing as they sang! If I may have such hosannas and hallelujahs beaming in my very eyes as I have seen, as well as heard, from them, it were a blessed thing to die! Yes, as a supreme test of love and faith, death is well respited awhile to let the saints glorify their Master!

Besides, Brethren, without death we should not be so conformed to Christ as we shall be if we fall asleep in Him. If there could be any jealousies in Heaven among the saints, I think that any saint who does not die, but is changed when Christ comes, could almost meet me and you, who probably will die, and say “My Brother, there is one thing I have missed.

I never lay in the grave. I never had the chill hands of Death laid on me, and so in that I was not conformed to my Lord. But you know what it is to have fellowship with Him, even in His death.” Did I not well say that they that were alive and remain should have no preference over them that are asleep? I think the preference, if anything, shall belong to us who sleep in Jesus and wake up in His likeness!

Death, dear Friends, is not yet destroyed, because he brings the saints home! He does but come to them and whisper his message and in a moment they are supremely blessed!—

***“Have done with sin and care and woe,  
And with the Savior rest.”***

And so Death is not destroyed yet, for he answers useful purposes. But, Beloved, he *is* going to be destroyed! He is the last enemy of the Church collectively. The Church, as a body, has had a mass of foes to contend with, but after the Resurrection we shall say, “This is the last enemy. Not another foe is left!” Eternity shall roll on in ceaseless bliss! There may be changes, bringing new delights, perhaps. In the eternity to come there may be eras and ages of yet more amazing bliss and still more superlative ecstasy! But there shall be—

***“No rude alarm of raging foes,  
No cares to break the last repose.”***

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death and if the *last* is slain there can be no future foe! The battle is fought and the victory is won forever! And who has won it? Who but the Lamb that sits on the Throne, to whom let us all ascribe honor, glory, majesty, power, dominion and might forever and ever! The Lord help us in our solemn adoration! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 15:1-34.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—909, 843, 841.**  
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THE LAST ENEMY DESTROYED

NO. 721

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 18, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Corinthians 15:26.~~***

OUR Savior stooped to the lowest depths of degradation—He shall be exalted to the topmost heights of glory. “Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.” Our Lord was trampled beneath the feet of all, but the day comes when all things shall be trampled beneath His feet. By so much as He descended, by so much shall He ascend. By the greatness of His sufferings may we judge of the unspeakable grandeur of His glory. Already sin lies beneath His feet, and Satan, like the old dragon bound, is there also.

The systems of idolatry which were paramount in the days of His flesh, He has broken as with a rod of iron. Where are the gods of Rome and Greece? Where are Jupiter, Diana, and Mercury? Let the moles and the bats reply. The colossal systems of idolatry which still dominate over the minds of men must yet come down. The truth as it is in Jesus must before long prevail over those ancient dynasties of error, for Jesus our Lord must reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. In these last times, when sin in all its forms and Satan with all his craft shall be subdued, then Death itself, the unconquerable Death, the insatiable devourer of the human race who has swept them away as grass before the mower’s scythe—then shall Death who has feared the face of none, but has laid armies prostrate in his wrath, be utterly destroyed!

He who is immortality and life shall bring death of Death and destruction to the grave, and unto Him shall be songs of everlasting praise. Contemplate the glory of your Master, then, Believer! From the base of the pyramid, deep in darkness, He rises to the summit which is high in glory! From the depths of the abyss of woe He leaps to the tops of the mountain of joy. Anticipate His triumph by faith, for you shall partake in it! So surely as you share in His abasement, you shall also partake in His glory, and the more you shall become conformable unto Him in His sufferings, the more may you rest assured that you shall be partakers with Him in the glory which is to be revealed.

Come we now to the text itself. The text teaches us that Death itself is, at the last, to be vanquished by Christ. No, it is to be utterly destroyed by Him so that it shall cease to be! In handling the text, there are four things which at once strike you. Here is Death an enemy. But, secondly, he is the *last* enemy. Thirdly, he is an enemy to be destroyed, but, fourthly, he is the last enemy that shall be destroyed.

**I.**First, then, you have in our banquet of this morning, as your first course, BITTER HERBS—wormwood mingled with gall—for you have DEATH, AN ENEMY. It is not difficult to perceive in what respects Death is an enemy. Consider him apart from the Resurrection, apart from the glorious promises which spring up like sweet flowers sown by celestial hands upon the black soil of the tomb, and Death is preeminently an enemy. Death is an enemy because it is always repugnant to the nature of living creatures to die. Flesh and blood cannot *love* Death. God has wisely made self-preservation one of the first laws of our nature—it is an attribute of a living man to desire to prolong his life. “Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.”

Life is our dearest heritage. To throw away life by suicide is a crime, and to waste life in folly is no mean sin. We are bound to prize life. We must do so—it is one of the instincts of our humanity, and he were not greater but less than man who did not care to live. Death must always, then, by creatures that breathe, be looked upon as a foe. Death may well be counted as a foe because it entered into the world and became the master over the race of Adam through our worst enemy, SIN. It came not in accordance to the course of nature, but according to the course of evil. Death came not in by the door, but it climbed up some other way, and we may therefore rest assured that it is a thief and a robber.

It was not in the natural constitution of humanity that man should die, for the first man, Adam, was made a living soul. Eminent physiologists have said that they do not detect in the human system any particular reason why man should die at fourscore years. The same wheels which have gone on for twenty, thirty, forty years might have continued their revolutions for a hundred years, or even for centuries, so far as their own self-renewing power is concerned. There is no reason in man’s body, itself, why it should inevitably return to the dust from which it was taken. Or if there is now such a reason, it may be traceable to the disease which sin has brought into our constitution. But, as originally formed, man might have been immortal—he *would* have been immortal.

In that garden, if the leaves had faded, he would not. And if the animals had died (and I suppose they would, for they certainly did die before Adam came into the world), yet there is no need that Adam should have died. He could have renewed his youth like the eagle and remained immortal amidst mortality—a king and priest forever, if God had so chosen it should be. Instead of which, through sin, though he is even now a priest, he must, like Aaron, go up to the top of the hill and put off his priestly garments and breathe out his life. *Sin* brought in death, and nothing that came in by sin can be man’s friend.

Death, the child of Sin, is the foe of man. That the Truth of God before us is most sure, some persons know by very bitter experience, for it embitters their existence. To some men this is the one drop of gall which has made life bitter to them. The thought that they should die shades them with raven wings. By the fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Like Uriah the Hittite, they carry in their bosom the message which ordains their death—but, unlike he, they know that it contains the fatal mandate. Like cloth which feeds the moth which devours it, their fears and forebodings feed the fatal worm. When their cups are sweetest they remember the dregs of death. And when their viands are the daintiest they think of the black servitor who will clear away the feast.

They can enjoy nothing because the darkness of death’s shade lies across the landscape. The ghost of Death haunts them. The skeleton sits at their table. They are mournfully familiar with the shroud, the coffin, and the sepulcher—and they are familiar with these not as with friendly provisions for a good night’s rest—but as the cruel ensigns of a dreaded foe. This makes Death an enemy with emphasis, when our fears enable him thus to spoil our life. When Death rides his pale horse, roughshod, over all terrestrial joys, he makes us feel that it is a poor thing to live because the thread of life is so soon to be cut—a miserable thing even to flourish, because we only flourish like the green herb—and, like the green herb—are cut down and cast into the oven.

Many others have found Death to be their foe, not so much because they themselves have been depressed by the thought, but because the great enemy has made fearful breaches in their daily comforts. O you Mourners! Your somber garments tell me that your family circle has been broken into, time after time, by this ruthless destroyer! The widow has lost her comfort and her stay. The children have been left desolate and fatherless. O Death! You are the cruel enemy of our hearths and homes! The youthful spirit has lost half itself when the beloved one has been torn away, and men have seemed like maimed souls when the best half of their hearts has been snatched from them.

Hope looked not forth at the window because the mourners went about the streets. Joy drank no more from her crystal cup, for the golden bowl was broken and the wheel was broken at the cistern, and all the daughters of music were brought low. How often have the unseen arrows of Death afflicted our household, and struck at our feet those whom we least could spare? The green have been taken as well as the ripe—death has cut down the father’s hope and the mother’s joy, and, worse than this—he has pitilessly rent away from the house its strongest pillar and torn out of the wall the corner stone. Death has no heart of compassion. His flinty heart feels for none. He spares neither young nor old. Tears cannot keep our friends for us, nor can our sighs and prayers reanimate their dust. He is an enemy, indeed, and the very thought of his cruel frauds upon our love makes us weep.

He is an enemy to us in that he has taken away from us One who is dearer to us than all others. Death has even made a prey of Him who is immortality and life! On yonder Cross behold death’s most dreadful work! Could it not spare *Him*? Were there not enough of *us*? Why should it smite our David who was worth ten thousand of us? Did it not suffice that we, the common men who had been tainted by sin, should fall by a doom that was justly due to our sin—but must the virgin-born, in whom there was no sin—the immaculate Savior—must He die? Yes, Death’s vengeance was not satisfied till out of his quiver had been drawn the fatal arrow which should pierce the heart of the Son of God. Behold He dies!

Those eyes that wept over Jerusalem are glazed in death’s deepest darkness. Those hands that scattered blessings hang as inanimate clay by that bloodstained but lifeless side. The body must be wrapped in spices and fine linen and laid within the silent tomb. Weep, Heaven! Mourn, earth! Your King is dead! The Prince of Life and Glory is a prisoner in the tomb! Death, all-conquering tyrant, you are an enemy, indeed, for you have slain and led our dearest One into your gloomy cell!

We may more fully perceive Death’s enmity in our own persons. He is an enemy to us because very soon he will bear us away from all our prized possessions. “These things,” said one, as he walked through fine gardens and looked upon lawns, and parks, and mansions—“these things make it hard to die.” To leave the fair goods and gains of earth, and to return into the womb of mother earth as naked as first we came forth from it—to have the crown taken from the head, and the ermine from the shoulder, and to be brought down to the same level as the poorest beggar that slept upon a dunghill is no small thing.

Dives must be unwrapped of his scarlet, and if he shall find a tomb he shall be no more honored than Lazarus though Lazarus should die unburied. Death is an enemy to man, because though he may store up his goods and build his barns and make them greater, yet it is Death who said, “You fool, this night shall your soul be required of you.” Death makes wealth a *dream*! It turns misers’ gain to loss, and laughs a hoarse laugh at toiling slaves who load themselves with yellow dust. When the rich man has made his fortune he wins six foot of earth and nothing more, and what less has he who died a pauper?

Death is an enemy to Christians, too, because it carries them away from choice society. We have often said—  
***“My willing soul would stay  
In such a frame as this.”***

We love the Saints. The people of God are our company, and with our Brethren we walk to His house, who are our familiar companions, and alas, we are to be taken away from them! Nor is this all—we are to be parted from those who are nearer still—the wife of our bosom and the children of our care. Yes, we must bid farewell to every loved one, and go our way to the land from which no traveler returns, banished from the militant host of God and from the happy homes of men.

Death is an enemy because it breaks up all our enjoyments. No cheerful peals of Sunday bells again for us. No going up to the much-loved sanctuary where the holy hymn has often borne us aloft as on eagle’s wings. No more listening to the teachings of the Christian ministry where Boanerges has awakened us and Barnabas has consoled us until the desert of our life has blossomed like a rose. No mingling in communion around the Master’s table. No more drinking of the cup and eating of the bread which symbolizes the Master’s sufferings. At Death’s door we bid farewell to all Sunday enjoyment and sanctuary joys. Oh you enemy, you do compel us to give a long, a last farewell to all our employments!

The earnest and successful minister must leave the flock, perhaps to be scattered or torn by grievous wolves. Just when it seemed as if his life were most necessary, the leader falls, and like a band of freshly enlisted young recruits who lose the warrior whose skill had led them on to victory, they are scattered when he seemed necessary to make them one, and lead them on to conquest. He who was training up his children in God’s fear sleeps in the grave when the children need him most, and he who spoke for Christ, or who was a pillar in the House of God, who served his day and generation—he, too, must fall asleep—no more to feed the hungry, or to clothe the naked, or to teach the ignorant, or comfort the feeble-minded.

He is gone from the vineyard of the Church that needed him to trim the vines, and from the House of God which needed him as a wise master builder to edify it to perfection. Who but an enemy could have taken him away at such a moment and from such engagements? He is gone, too, dear Friends, from all the success of life—and herein has Death been his bitter enemy. He is gone from hearing the cries of penitent sinners—the true success of God’s ministers. Gone from leading pilgrims to the Cross and hearing their songs of joy. Great-Heart has led many a caravan of pilgrims to the Celestial City, but now he, himself, must cross the Jordan! It little avails him that he has fought with Giant Despair and brought him to his knees.

It matters little that he slew old Giant Grim who would have forced Christiana and the children to go back. Hero as he has been, the floods must still roll over his head! Of that black and bitter stream he, too, must drink, and that, too, very probably when God had honored him most, and favored him with the prospect of yet greater success. So, Brothers and Sisters, it may be with you. When you are most diligent in business, most fervent in spirit, and serving the Lord with the greatest joy—when your sheaves are heavy and you are shouting the Harvest Home it may be, then, that this unwelcome enemy will hasten you from the field of your triumph to leave to others the work you loved so well.

Nor is this all. This enemy is peculiarly so to us, because we are accustomed to surround the thought of his coming with many pains, with many infirmities, and above all, since the decay, corruption, and utter dissolution of the body is in itself a most terrible thing, we are alarmed at the prospect of it. The pains and groans and dying strife drive us back from the grave’s brink, and make us long to linger in our prison and our clay. We fear to pass through the gate of iron because of the grim porters of Pain and Sickness who sit before the gate. Certainly to some it is hard work to die!

While life is still vigorous it will not yield its dominion without a struggle. In other cases where old age has gradually smoothed the pathway we have known many of our Brothers and Sisters who sleep themselves into a better land—and none could tell when they passed the mysterious line which divides the realm of life from the domain of death. It is not always that Death is escorted by bodily griefs, but so often does he come with clouds and darkness round about him that men at the first glance conclude from his hostile array that he is no friend!

He is an enemy, no, *the* enemy, the very worst enemy that our fears could conjure up, for we could fight with Satan and overcome *him*, but who can overcome Death? We can master sin through the precious blood of Jesus, and can be more than a conqueror over all our fears—but we must bow before the iron specter of this grim tyrant. To the dust we must descend, and midst the tombs we all must sleep (unless, indeed, unless the Lord should speedily come), for it is appointed unto men once to die.

**II.**Having said enough upon this topic we shall now take away the dish of bitter herbs, and bring forth a little salt while we speak upon the second point—though death *is* an enemy, IT IS THE LAST ENEMY. I say salt, because it is not altogether sweet. There is a pungency as well as a savor, here. It is the last enemy—what if I say it is the dreaded reserve of the army of Hell? When Satan shall have brought up every other adversary, and all these shall have been overcome through the blood of the Lamb, then the last, the bodyguard of Hell, under the command of the King of Terrors, the strongest, the fiercest, the most terrible of foes, shall assail us!

It has been the custom of some great commanders to keep a body of picked men in reserve to make the final assault. Just when battalion after battalion have been swept away, and the main army reels. Just when the victory is almost in the enemy’s hands, the all but defeated commander pours his mightiest legions upon the foe, uncovers all his batteries and makes one terrible and final charge with the old guard that never has been beaten, and never can surrender, and then, perhaps at the last moment, he snatches triumph from between the enemy’s teeth!

Ah, Christian, the last charge may be the worst you have ever known. You may find in your last moments that you will have need of all your strength, and more—you will be constrained to cry to the Strong for strength—you will have to plead for heavenly reinforcements to succor you in that last article! Let no man conclude himself at the close of the war till he is within the pearly gates, for, if there is but another five minutes to live, Satan will, if possible, avail himself of it. The enemy may come in like a flood precisely at that flattering moment when you hoped to dwell in the land Beulah, and to be lulled to rest by soft strains from the celestial choirs.

It is not *always* so, it is not *often* so, for, “at eventide there shall be light” is usually the experience of the Christian. But it is sometimes so. It has been notably so with those whose previous life has been very peaceful—a calm day has ended with a stormy evening—and a bright sun has set amid dark clouds. Some of those whose candle never went out before have been put to bed in the dark. The soldiers of the Cross have been pursued by the foe up to the city walls, as if the Lord had said to His soldier, “There are more laurels yet to win. Behold I give you another opportunity of glorifying My name among My militant people.”

Brethren, if Death is the *last* enemy I do not think we have to fight with him *now.* We have other enemies who claim our valor and our watchfulness today. We need not be taken up with devising plans of present defense against an enemy that does not yet assail us. The present business of life, the present service of God and of His cause are our main concern, and in attending to these we shall, as Christians, be found best prepared to die. To live well is the way to die well! Death is not our first foe but the last! Let us then fight our adversaries in order and overcome them each in its turn, hoping that He who has been with us even until now will be with us until the end.

Notice, dear Friends—for here lies the savor of the thought—it is the LAST enemy. Picture in your mind’s eye our brave soldiers at the battle of Waterloo. For many weary hours they had been face to face with the foe. The fight had lasted so long and been so frequently renewed that they seemed to have encountered successive armies, and to have fought a dozen battles. Charge after charge had they borne like walls of stone. Imagine, then, that the commander is able to announce that they have only to endure *one more* onslaught of the foe. How cheerfully do the ranks close! How gallantly are the squares formed! How firmly their feet are planted!

“Now,” they say, “let us stand like a wall of rock! Let no man shrink for a moment, for it is the last the enemy can do. He will do his worst, but soon he will be able to do no more but sound to boot and saddle and leave the field to us.” The last enemy! Soldiers of Christ, do not the words animate you? Courage, Christian, courage! The tide must turn after this— it is the highest wave that now dashes over you—courage, Man, the night must close. You have come to its darkest hour, the day star already dawns!

Now that you are dying you begin to live. The last enemy conquered! Does it not bring tears to your eyes to think of bearing your last temptation? We little care who the foe may be if he is but conquered and is but the last, for have we not been perplexed with a succession of enemies? We have only conquered one foe to find another waiting for us. Our path has been, up to now, from temptation to temptation, from trial to trial, from tribulation to tribulation. We are growing weary, we cannot forever bear wave upon wave, grief upon grief, and temptation upon temptation. Like the warrior of old, our arm grows weary, but our hand (glory be to Divine Grace!) cleaves to our sword! We are faint, yet pursuing!

And what good news when we shall hear that the present enemy is the last! Though it is Death, we will rejoice! O Christian, there will be no more poverty to tempt you to murmur, no more losses and crosses to cast your spirit down, no more inbred sins to mar your devotion and to spoil the glory of your faith! There will be no outward temptation, no sinners with their trifling talk to vex your ears, no blasphemies to torment your soul, no more aches and pains of body, no more tortures and troubles of spirit!

The Dog of Hell will be silenced forever! There will be no more Canaanites to drive out of the land! The race of Amalek shall be utterly destroyed. And where will *you* be? In the land that flows with milk and honey! In the home of peace and the abode of rapture—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,***

***With God, eternally shut in.”***  
Well may you welcome Death! Let him come in his chariot of fire—he bears you to Elijah’s God! Let him lay hold of the shield and buckler and frown upon you like a king of fierce speech and terrible countenance—he carries you not into captivity, but delivers you out of bondage!

At his coming your sky may be darkened, the thunders may roll, and the solid pillars of your house may be shaken, but it is the last commotion, and is therefore the token of everlasting rest! Having overcome death, peace is proclaimed, the sword is sheathed, the banners furled, and you are forever more than a conqueror through Him that loved you!

**III.**Having come so far, we may now proceed another step. Death is an enemy, the last enemy—HE IS AN ENEMY TO BE DESTROYED. Here I take away the salt and bring the milk and honey, for surely here is much of exquisite sweetness and of true spiritual food to the child of God. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The destruction of Death will be perfectly achieved at the Resurrection, for then Death’s castle, the tomb, will be demolished and not so much as one stone left upon another.

All Death’s captives must go free! Not a bone of the Saints shall be kept as a trophy by the arch foe. Not so much as a particle of their dust shall he be able to show as a spoil which he has been able to preserve. He must disgorge the whole that he has fed upon. He must pay back all that he has stolen. The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered. From the land and from the sea, those that were lately dead, and those that centuries ago had dissolved into dust shall rise. The quickening trumpet shall achieve a work as great as the creation!

The voice of God which said, “Let there be light” and there was light, shall say, “Let there be *life*,” and there shall be life. And, as in the valley of vision—bone shall come to bone, and flesh shall come upon them, and life shall come into them—and they shall live! The same bodies shall arise, the same for identity, but not the same for quality! The same, but oh, how changed! They were the shriveled seed when Death sowed them in the earth—they shall be the fully developed flower when Resurrection’s springtime shall bid them blossom from the dust! They were battered and time-worn when he dragged them to his den—they shall come forth with the dew of their youth upon them when Christ shall give them life. Oh the sweet gains of death!

“It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” Oh the interest which we shall win from that arch usurer who thought to claim both principal and interest! “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” It is sown a natural body, it is raised a heavenly and spiritual body. O Death, you are no gainer by *us*! But we shall be mighty gainers by *you*! And though this poor body shall become worms’ meat, and decay shall drive its tunnels through and through and through this mortal frame and make its solemn way—though back to dust eye and arm and hand and brain must mold—yet not lost, nor in any degree injured, shall the whole fabric be! It will be as if it were filtered, purified by the grave, and my fair body shall emerge again!

The grave shall be to the Believer’s body as the bath of spices in which Esther bathed herself to make herself ready to behold the great King. Corruption, earth, and worms do but refine this flesh and make it pure according to God’s will, until we shall put it on afresh at His bidding. We throw aside a workday dress, all torn, and crumpled and dusty! We are glad to put it off, glad that evening time has come, and that it is time to undress. But when we awake we shall find, instead of that worn-out vesture, a noble change of raiment! The same dress will be there, but marvelously changed—the great Fuller shall have exercised His art upon it, and made it like the array which Moses and Elijah wore on Tabor!

How goodly will our royal robes be! How dressed with pearls, how stiff with threads of gold, and studs of silver! How fitted for God’s priests and kings! How meet for those who shall enter the pearly gates and tread the golden streets of the heavenly Jerusalem! How meet for those that shall walk in the golden light of the city that has foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God! Death is thus to be destroyed by the resurrection of the body when our Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout. A resurrection which shall prove to assembled worlds that to those who are in Christ Jesus, “to die is gain.”

But, dear Friends, although this is a great Truth of God with regard to the future, I desire to conduct your minds for a few minutes over the road by which Christ has, in effect, virtually destroyed Death already. In the first place, He has taken away the shame of death. It was once a shameful thing to die. A man might hold his head low in the presence of angels who could not die, for he might remember with shame that he is the brother of the worm and corruption is his sister. But now we can talk of death in the presence of archangels and not be ashamed, for *Jesus* died. It is from now on no degradation for man to die, to sleep in the bed where Christ reposed. It is an honor! And angels may almost regret that they have not the ability in this respect to be made like unto the angels’ Lord.

Oh, Christian, you need not speak of death with bated breath, but rather rejoice that you have fellowship with Jesus in His tomb, and shall have fellowship with Him as one of the children of the Resurrection! Christ has, moreover, taken away the sting of death. The sting of death lay in this—that we had sinned and were summoned to appear before the God whom we had offended. This is the sting of death to you, unconverted ones—not that you are dying, but that after death is the *judgment—*and that you must stand before the Judge of the quick and the dead to receive a sentence for the sins which you have committed in your body against Him.

This makes it death to die. This hangs the dying bed with black curtains, and puts out the light of the sick chamber. The second death makes death to be death, indeed, but—

***“If sin is pardoned I’m secure,***

***~~Death has no sting beside.  
The law gave sin its damning power,  
But Christ, my Ransom, died.”~~***

Christmas Evans represents the monster Death as being so intent to destroy our Lord that it drove the dart in its tail right through the Savior till it stuck in the Cross on the other side—and the monster has never been able to draw it out again! Christ on the Cross took away the sting of Death, so that he has no further power to hurt the Christian. “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law, but thanks be unto God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our Divine Lord has taken away from sin its slavery. The bondage of death arises from man’s *fearing* to die. Death has fitted fetters upon many a man’s wrists, and fixed an iron collar on his neck, and driven him with his whip about the world—but Jesus has taken away the yoke of Death from the necks of His disciples. The Christian is not afraid to die. He looks forward to it, sometimes, with equanimity, and frequently even with expectation! Hundreds of Saints have been able to speak of dying as though it were but everyday work, and there have been hundreds more who have looked forward to their last day with as much delight as the bride hopes for her wedding. Was not our song, which we sung just now, a truthful one?—

***“Sweet truth to me! I shall arise,  
And with these eyes My Savior see.”***

It was to some of us, at any rate, and we are still desirous to sing it, longing for that time when our death shall come and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord!

Moreover, Christ has abolished Death by removing its greatest sorrows. I told you that Death snatched us away from the society of those we loved on earth. It is true, but it introduces us into nobler society by far. We leave the imperfect Church on earth, but we claim membership with the *perfect* Church in Heaven. The Church militant must know us no more, but of the Church *triumphant* we shall be happy members! We may not see time-honored men on earth who now serve Christ in the ministry, but we shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the noble army of martyrs, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and the glorious company of the Apostles! We shall be no losers, certainly, in the matter of society, but great gainers when we are introduced to the general assembly and the Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven!

I said that we should be taken away from enjoyments. I spoke of Sunday bells that would ring no longer, of communion tables at which we could not sit, and songs of holy mirth in which we could not join—ah, it is small loss compared with the gain unspeakable! For we shall hear the bells of Heaven ring out an unending Sunday! We shall join the songs that never have a pause, and which know no discord! We shall sit at the banqueting table where the King Himself is present, where the symbols and the signs have vanished because the guests have found the Substance! And the King eternal and immortal will be visibly in their presence!

Beloved, we leave the desert to lie down in green pastures. We leave the scanty rills to bathe in the bottomless river of joy. We leave the wells of Elim for the land which flows with milk and honey. Did I speak of leaving possessions? What are the possessions? Moth-eaten garments, cankered gold and silver, things that rust consumes and that thieves destroy! But we go to the land where nothing corrupts or decays, where flowers fade not, and riches take not to themselves wings to fly away. Loss? Let the word be banished! Death gives us infinitely more than he takes away.

I spoke of Death as an enemy because he took us from sacred employments. It is so, but does he not usher us into far nobler employments? To stand before that Throne of God upon the sea of glass mingled with fire! To bow within the Presence chamber of the King of kings, gazing into the glory that excels! And to see the King in His beauty—the Man that once was slain wearing many crowns and arrayed in the vesture of His glory—His wounds like sparkling jewels still visible above. Oh to cast our crowns at His feet! To lie there and shrink into nothing before the Eternal All! To fly into Jesus’ bosom! To behold the beauty of His love and to taste the kisses of His mouth! To be in Paradise, swallowed up in unutterable joy because taken into the closest, fullest, nearest communion with Himself! Would not your soul burst from the body even now to obtain this rapture? Cannot you say—

***“I’d part with all the joys of sense  
To gaze upon Your throne,  
Pleasure springs fresh forever there,  
Unspeakable, unknown”?***

If death does but give us a sight of Jesus and makes it our employment forever to sing His praise, and forever to learn His Character—forever more lie in His bosom—then let him come when he wills—we will scarcely call him enemy again! An enemy destroyed in this case becomes a friend. The sting is taken away from you, you hornet, and you become a bee to gather sweet honey for us! The lion is slain, and like Samson we go forth to gather handfuls of sweetness. I shall not tarry longer, though greatly tempted, except to say this one thing more—the fear of death which arises from the prospect of pain and grief is also taken away by Christ when He reminds us that He will be with us in our last moments. He will make the dying bed feel soft, and in the midst of the river He will say, “Fear not, I am with you.” So that in *all* respects death is to be destroyed.

**IV.**Time warns us to clear the tables and send home the guests with the fourth consideration, THAT DEATH IS THE LAST ENEMY THAT WILL BE DESTROYED. Do not, therefore, give yourself so much concern if you do not feel death to be destroyed in you at present. Supposing that it does cause you pain and fear, remember that *dying* Grace would be of no value to you in *living* moments. Expect that if your faith is not faith enough to die with, yet if it is faith as a grain of mustard seed it will grow—and grow it will, into a more developed state, enabling you to die triumphantly when dying time comes.

When I looked at the Book of Martyrs and noticed the fearful pictures of Saints in their dying agonies, I asked myself, “Could I bear all that for Christ?” and I was compelled to say, “No, I know I could not as I am now.” But suppose I were called to martyrdom, could I bear it? And I thought I could say without presumption I could, for Christ would give me Divine Grace when dying Grace was needed. Now Death is to be destroyed, but not till the last. You have many enemies who are not destroyed, and you have inbred sins not slain. Look well to *them*. Until they are all gone you must not expect Death to be destroyed, for he is the last to die.

So then, Friend, let me whisper in your ear—expect, still, to lose your dear ones—for Death is not destroyed. Look not upon any of your friends as though they would be with you tomorrow, for Death is not destroyed yet. See the word “mortal” written upon all our brows. The most unlikely ones die first. When I heard during this week of several cases of dear friends who have gone to their reward, I could have sooner believed it had been others, but God has been pleased to take from us and from our congregation many whom we supposed to be what are called good lives, and they were good lives in the best sense, and that is why the Master took them!

They were ripe and He took them Home. But we could not see that. Now remember that all your friends—your wife, your husband, your child, your kinsfolk—are all mortal. That makes you sad. Well, it may prevent your being more sad when they are taken away. Hold them with a loose hand. Do not count that to be freehold which you have only received as a leasehold. Do not call that yours which is only lent you, for if you get a thing lent you and it is asked for back, you give it back freely. But if you entertain the notion that it was *given* you, you do not like to yield it up. Now, remember, the enemy is not destroyed and that he will still make inroads into our family circle.

And then remember that you, too, must die. Bring yourself frequently face to face with this Truth of God—that you must die. Do not forget it, Christian Friend! No man knows whether his faith is good for anything or not if he does not frequently try that faith by bringing himself right to the edge of the grave. Picture yourself dying. Conceive yourself breathing out your last breath and see whether, then, you can look at Death without quaking—whether you can feel, “Yes, I have rested upon Jesus. I am saved. I will go through Death’s tremendous vale with His Presence as my stay, fearing no evil.”

If you have no good hope, may God give you Divine Grace at this moment to fly to Jesus and to trust in Him. And when you have trusted in Him, then, and only then, will Death be to you a destroyed enemy. May God grant His blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2501 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ALL AND ALL IN ALL  
NO. 2501

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 24, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1885.~~***

***~~“Christ is all, and in all.”  
Colossians 3:11.  
“That God may be all in all.”  
1 Corinthians 15:28.~~***

IN our two texts there are three “alls” rising, one out of the other—the first leading to the second and the second conducting to the third. You will notice at once that the first two are in the present tense. “Christ *is*all” and, “Christ is in all.” The third one refers to the future—it is yet to be fulfilled. When the great consummation shall come, then shall God be, “all in all.” I shall not detain you with any sort of preface, for my sole endeavor at this time will be to impress these texts upon your memory—in the hope that the Spirit of God may make them a living and abiding influence upon your hearts and lives—that to you, Christ may be all, that Christ may be in you all, and that so, in all that you do, and say, and are, God may be all in all.

**I.**We begin at THE FOUNDATION WHERE ALL BLESSING BEGINS. “Christ is all.”  
These are but few words, yet what Divine shall ever fully expound them? “Christ is all.” Here is sea-room enough for all godly mariners! Yet with the best wind that ever blew to speed the ship along, and with every sail set and filled with the breeze from Heaven, who shall ever be able to go from one shore of this great Truth of God to the other—“Christ is all”? I shall not venture upon such a voyage! I can but look across this sea and ask you to kindly notice the connection in which the text stands that we may learn exactly what the Apostle meant. Writing, “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,” Paul says, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all.”  
That is to say,*in the matter of salvation,*“*Christ is all.”* That which had often seemed the most important thing in the world is here thrown into the background by the Apostolic declaration, “There is neither Greek nor Jew.” For a long time it seemed as if the eternal Light of God was only revealed to the eyes of the seed of the house of Israel. They sat in the brightness and all the rest of the world lay in dense darkness. But, behold, the Christ has come, “a Light to lighten the Gentiles,” and henceforth salvation is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,” but, “Christ is all.”  
It is a great privilege to be born of godly parents, to have come of a race that for generations has feared the Lord. But let no man trust merely in his natural descent. If you had sprung from a lineage of saints. If every one of your progenitors had feared God, yet still, nothing of all this could matter for your own salvation. “Christ is all.” Now may the Gentile dog eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table where He feeds His Israel! No, the dog is transformed into a child—he who was far off is made near! In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile are made one and all the sheep of the Good Shepherd are sheltered in the same fold! We who believe in Jesus are children of him who was called the father of the faithful and though, according to the flesh, “Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not,” yet by faith we become the spiritual seed of the great father of all Believers! As he believed in a son being born according to God’s promise, and in a seed to which the Covenant promises were given, even so do we. And entering into union with Christ Jesus, that blessed Son of the promise, we become joint-heirs with Him, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” You see, then, dear Friends, that it is not *race*, or *pedigree*, or *descent* that saves the soul, but that “Christ is all.”  
Then Paul goes on to say, “There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision,” from which I gather that *there is nothing in outward ceremonies which can save.* Everything is still of Christ—“Christ is all.” That circumcision in the flesh was ordained of God and it was the mark of the seed that He had chosen. It was not, therefore, lightly to be spoken of. But now, “we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” At this day even the ancient Divine ordinance is put in the background, for, “Christ is all.” So is it with every other ordinance, whether ordained of God or of man. It must never be placed in the front, as if it were the means of salvation! I say to you who may have been sprinkled, or to you who may have been immersed—to you who may bow at your altars, or to you who may come to the Communion Table—I do not place all these rites on a level, certainly, for some are of God and some are not, but I do place them all on a par in this respect—that they enter not into the essence of our salvation! And I say to all of you, “These things cannot save you, for, ‘Christ is all.’” Be you who you may, and do you what you may, you shall not be saved because of your natural birth, nor because of any supposed holy acts that you may perform! Neither shall you be saved by any transactions that may be the work of a human priest! You must have Christ as your Savior and you must rest in Him, alone, or you cannot be saved! He is the one foundation and, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” for, “Christ is all.” The Lord Jesus Christ sums up everything that ordinances can possibly mean and all that pedigree and descent can possibly bring—and He is infinitely more than all of them!  
Read on in this Epistle and you will find that as race and ceremonialism are both put into the background, so also is culture. “There is neither Barbarian nor Scythian, but Christ is all.” Of course it was for many reasons much better to be a Roman citizen than to be a rude barbarian. And it is much better, now, to be a civilized man than an untutored Indian of the Wild West. But so far as vital godliness and the soul’s salvation are concerned, there is no difference! The simplest and most illiterate, upon believing in Jesus Christ, shall find that “Christ is all.” And the most learned and most fully instructed, if they bring any of their learning and their culture and put it side by side with Christ as a ground of trust, shall sorrowfully discover that none of those things can be placed on an equality with Him, but that, “Christ is all.”  
I rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, in this Truth of God! If the Gospel of Christ were something eclectic which could only be received by a superior few, what a poor prospect there would be for the great mass of people among whom we dwell! If the Gospel of Christ were a matter so deep and profound that it could not be understood except by years of educated thought, where would they be who have never had any culture and, perhaps, can scarcely read the letters of a boy’s schoolbook, if, this day, they were lying upon the bed of sickness, expecting soon to stand before God? Blessed be God, we have a remedy for sin’s sickness which the Great Physician understands! And if *He* is well acquainted with it, it matters not whether the patient fully comprehends it or not! Blessed be God, the effect of Christ’s medicine does not depend upon the degree in which we can realize how it acts, but if we receive it by *faith*, if it penetrates into the *heart*, if it takes possession of the *affections*, it will work in us that wondrous change by which we shall be delivered from the love of sin and saved both from its condemnation and its power! Thank God for a simple Gospel! Blessed be His name that “Christ is all”! If, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you have learned that Christ died for the ungodly. If you know that He is the Son of God and the one great Propitiation for sin, and if you accept Him as such, you have that which has delivered you from going down into the Pit, for God has found a ransom even for you!  
Once more. By this expression, Paul means us to understand that *all conditions and position of men in this life are put on a level before Christ,* for He adds, “There is neither bond nor free; but Christ is all.” When the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into the world, it contemplated the saving of bondmen as well as of freemen. Of course there was a great distinction between being bond or free, and the Apostle wrote, “If you may be made free, use it rather,” but as to the real power of God’s Grace, there was no distinction between the noblest citizen of Rome and the poor slave who wore an iron collar and was fastened, like a dog, at his master’s gate! Christ’s Grace could enter into the heart of the servile, as well as into the heart of the noble—and could work alike in each.  
Now, hear you, Sirs! It is well that you should be industrious, that you should be thrifty and that you should make your way in the world. But this is not the way to eternal life! What if you should work till your fingertips were raw? What if you labor during the livelong day and night and deprive yourselves of needed sustenance, that you may hoard up gold and silver? With all this, you cannot buy salvation, or be an inch nearer to it. “Christ is all.” And if you lie penniless upon a workhouse bed, there is that in Christ which can save you! If you beg your food from door to door, yet shall you not stand at a disadvantage with this great and blessed Gospel, for it comes freely to you with this message and, as it asks of you no*learning*, so it asks of you no wealth, no rank and no position—for, from first to last—“Christ is all.”  
Thus have I taken the words in their connection and they are full of important teaching. Remember that they mean just this—that *to the man who is saved, Christ is all his trust.* Our healing lies in His stripes. Our life lies in His death. Our pardon lies in His having suffered the punishment due to us. Our eternal life is in the fact that He once died for us and that He now lives to make intercession for us. “Christ is all.” You must not add anything to Christ as your ground of confidence, but just lean the weight of your sin, your sorrow, your needs and your desires wholly and entirely upon Him who lives to stand for you before God. Christ, then, is all our trust!  
And, as for our belief, *Christ is all our creed.*What He has taught us personally and by His Holy Spirit through the Epistles—what He gives us in His Word—this is what we believe, and nothing else! The Bible and the Bible, alone, is the religion of a Christian! “Christ is all”—and all the Truth that there is in this Book is in Him. This revelation of the Word of God is the same revelation as that which is made in the Christ, Himself, who is the true Logos, the Word of God. “Christ is all” as our creed.  
And, further, *Christ is all as our example.* You may safely do what He did and you may not do what *He* would not have done. You may judge of the right or wrong of everything by this question—What would Jesus Christ do in these circumstances? You may thus know what you should do. And what you cannot suppose He would have thought of doing, you must not venture to do, for, “Christ is all.” He draws a ring around us and we must not go outside that circumference. He is the atmosphere in which we are to live. He is about us. He is above us. He is beneath us. He is within us. He is everywhere and, to us, if we are Christians, “Christ is all.”  
There is the foundation of all our faith and hope—and I want you who preach and you who teach the children to always keep to this one Truth of God—that “Christ is all.” Many other things have a measure of instruction in them, but Christ is all that is necessary. If you want to save men, if you truly wish to elevate men, if you desire still further to exalt them to the very highest degree of which human nature is capable, remember that “Christ is all” as your lever, and in Him is your fulcrum, and in Him is the power to use the lever! “Christ is all.” You need not go abroad for anything, for “you are complete in Him.” The ship is furnished from stem to stern in Him. The house, from its foundation to its rooftop, is all complete in Him. “Christ is all.” Oh, to know Him! Oh, to have Him as our own! Oh, to live wholly upon Him! Oh, to grow like He and always to keep before our mind’s eyes this great Truth that, “Christ is all”!  
**II.**Now we are going a step farther to consider the second part of our first text—“Christ is all, *and in all.”*This is a matter of experience and it reveals to us HOW THE WORK OF GRACE PROCEEDS. Christ is in all His people, this gracious possession is the work of the Spirit of God, by whose means Christ is formed in us, the hope of Glory.  
To my mind it is a very beautiful thing that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into the soul, does *not annihilate any part of the personality,* but shines in each separate being, for He is not only all, but He is *in* all His people! There is, for instance, the Greek—the “Gentile”—shall be the word. Very well, the Grace of God does not turn the Gentile into a Jew. He remains a Gentile, but Christ is in him and, therefore, he is made into a new creature. There have been some beautiful specimens of holiness and Grace found in many of the Gentile nations dwelling in the islands of the sea, or among all sorts and conditions of men scattered up and down the world—and Christ has shone gloriously in them. Then comes the Jew. When he is saved, Christ is in him. The Apostles of Jesus were mostly, at least, of that race, and many later Believers have been of the seed of Abraham. But Christ has been in them and He has gloriously displayed Himself in them. The Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling in the Jew, leaves him still a member of the house of Abraham, but, through the Presence of the Lord Jesus within him, how wondrously his whole character is exalted!  
Then you have the man who is circumcised and the man who is uncircumcised—and in each of these, if he is saved, Christ dwells. And each one, therefore, lives according to his light, his knowledge and his standing. Christ enters into the barbarian and though in certain natural respects he remains, to a large extent, what he was before, yet, as soon as Christ enters into him, all of his barbarism that is *sinful* disappears! He still retains the free spirit of the child of the wilderness or the son of the woods, but how grandly has Christ displayed Himself in such men as he is! The personal piety of a Red Indian, or of an African freshly taken from the wilds of the Dark Continent has been as brilliant and as beautiful— certainly as fresh, bright, clear and striking as the piety of the most educated of the Caucasian race! Whether he is barbarian or Scythian, if Christ is formed in him, the hope of Glory, it is only another form of the same exquisite beauty!  
It is always a pity when our missionaries try to make other nations into English people. If we have pride enough to think so, we may regard ourselves as the model for others to imitate, but it would be a great pity if we should be such a model that every native of India must copy the Englishman! I like the worship of our Black friends in Jamaica and in the Southern States of America, with its delightful simplicity, its vivacity— yes, and I venture to say, even its grotesqueness. And I would not have a black man begin slavishly to imitate the white man. Let him continue to be a black man and let Christ shine in the black man’s face right gloriously. Yes, let a man be a brown man, or a yellow man, or a red man, or whatever color God made him! The more he keeps to his own nationality and reflects the Glory of Christ from that angle, the more will Christ’s Gospel triumph and the more will Christ Himself be honored!  
The Apostle adds, as we have already noticed, “Neither bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” May the day speedily come when there shall not be a bondsman under Heaven! But in those days of the worst of all slavery, the Christian slaves were among the most brilliant gems in the Redeemer’s diadem. Oh, what brave deeds they did for the Crucified One! I should think that it was harder to be a Christian *freeman*, in those days, than to be a Christian slave. But whether bond or free, whether the man took his place in the Forum among the senators, or his lot was cast yonder among the slaves—either case, if Christ was in him—the Light of God shone gloriously from Him and God was magnified thereby! Christ is all, and Christ is in all His people, each one remaining the same in His individuality, but Christ shining in each one!  
I must again refer you to the connection of our text and ask you to read in the 9thand 10th verses, where Paul says, “You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*.”*You recollect that Adam was made in the image of God and that he lost that image by his sin. But when Christ enters into a man and he is created anew in Christ Jesus, then *he receives afresh the image of God.*The image of God is Christ Jesus*,*for He is the express image of His Father’s Glory. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father and, inasmuch as Christ enters into all Believers and makes them like Himself, the image of God is thereby restored in all Believers.  
So, note again that because Christ dwells in him, *every Believer becomes a copy of Christ.*Read the 13th verse—“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Is not that beautiful—Christ in every Believer—that Christ the image of God, and that Christian the image of Christ so that, just as Jesus freely forgave, so does every Christian freely forgive! Do you find it difficult to forgive one who has wronged you? Then you will find it difficult to get to Heaven! If you cannot enter Heaven unless you are like Christ, how can you be like Christ unless you can freely forgive? This seems a grand opportunity for you to stand on the same platform with Christ and, in some respects, to do the works of Christ when, having been slighted, ungratefully treated, misrepresented, slandered and injured, you can say, “I as freely forgive you as the Lord Jesus Christ forgave *me.”* This is the token and evidence that Christ is in you—when you become imitators of Christ as dear children!  
It is a remarkable fact, as I have often said to you, that, although our Lord Jesus Christ is more perfect than any other example—indeed, the *only perfect example*—yet it is more easy to imitate Christ than it is to imitate some of the best of His people! That is curious, but it is a fact. I know a Brother whom I greatly admire, an eminent Christian—I would not mention my own name in the same day with his, he lives so near to God and is such a truly gracious man—yet I could not imitate him. It is quite impossible that my nature should ever become exactly like his. Another Brother, whom I used to know—he is now with God—was equally good, but he was as different from the other good man as anyone could be. They were as opposite as the poles in their temperament and behavior. The first Brother I mentioned is solid, calm, quiet, unexcitable. And I should think that he very seldom laughs and that even then, he does not know that he has done it!  
My other friend used to, sometimes, literally roar with laughter! He was full of earnest love for the souls of men and God blessed him greatly in his service. He had a merry vein and a

humorous spirit—and I was more at home with him than I was with the first one. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ is far more easy to imitate than either of my two friends, for sometimes I am so depressed that I cannot show all the cheerfulness of the one. And at other times, having such a humorous vein in my nature, I would be hypocritical and unnatural if I suppressed it and always acted as if I were as solemn as death itself! But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, albeit that there is never any mention of laughter, yet there were ripples of holy pleasantry in His life and in His Character though He was *“*a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He is more of a Man than the best of other men, and more imitable, though altogether inimitable, than those who can be imitated and, perhaps, can even be excelled.  
What is more, Christ in each one of these Believers *creates them all into one body.* Read the 14th and 15th verses—“And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body and be you thankful.” The same life is in all Believers—in you and in me—well, then, we are one1 The same life is in ten thousand Christians—then they, also, are all one! If the same life quickens them and they live under the same influences, and they act according to the same rule, then are they one and Christ becomes the glorious Head of a body which He renders glorious by quickening it with His own indwelling!  
I like to think of this blessed Truth of God—Christ in all Believers creating them into one body—this is the beginning of true unity. Here, for instance, is a man who says that he is baptized as I am, but if he has not the life of God within him, I cannot get on with him, whatever he may call himself—I am not in union with him. There, perhaps, comes a Methodist, and we begin to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and I find that he loves Him with all his heart, and I know that I do, though I wish that I loved Him more. And directly we two get on together—we feel that we are one in Christ because of the one Life which quickens us. Do you not feel it to be so? Have you not been reading a book, sometimes, and said to yourself, “Oh, what a blessed book this is! How full of the Divine life”? Yes, and after you have read it, you have been surprised to find that the person who wrote it was a Romanist—for there are many books of that kind—or the writer was a member of some church that, in many respects, lies in very dangerous error! You say to yourself, “I do not care where this man lived, or what he did, I am one with him as far as he is one with Christ.”  
The one common feeling of union to Christ and Christ being in us makes us feel that we are one with each other. Wherever there is, as Augustine used to say, “*aliquid Christi”—*“anything of Christ”—there our love must go forth, we cannot help it! Christ in you all makes you into one body and unites you together in a mysterious and unique manner. There is not a parallel to it anywhere else—it gives such a living, loving, abiding, undeniable unity that even if you wish to forget it, you cannot! If the man is in Christ, you must love him, do what you may, for you are one body with him.  
Such is this manifestation of Christ in His people, that it leads, further, to *the offering of one oblation.*Read the 16th verse—“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Yes, all God’s people love God’s Word! They all find a great sweetness in “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” They all delight to sing praises unto the Most High. Montgomery truly wrote— ***“The saints in prayer appear as one,”***  
but it is equally true that the saints in *praise* appear as one. And the saints in love to the Word of God appear as one because Christ, being in them, and Christ being one, they are knit to one another. Oh, how blessed it is for us to have Christ in us!  
And lastly upon this point, all that I have said leads up to eac*h one acting to the glory of one name,*for if Christ is in you, the 17th verse is true of you—“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” What a life to lead—Christ taking such entire possession of a man that everything he does, he does as if Christ, Himself, were doing it, because he does it in Christ’s name and by Christ’s power! As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” so that it shall no longer be yourselves that do it, but Christ that dwells in you. This shall sanctify the most common actions of everyday life and make the whole of the Christian’s career to be sublime, so that while he treads the earth beneath his feet, literally, he is also doing it *spiritually—* and all the while his conversation is in Heaven.  
I must just linger one minute here. You all agreed with me when I spoke about Christ being all. You understood clearly that He is the only ground of our hope. Can you also go with me in this part of my subject— Christ is in all His people? Is Christ formed in *you,*the hope of Glory? Do you know anything about an *indwelling* Christ? Verily I say unto you, the Christ on the Cross will never save you unless there is also Christ *within you*! It is the Christ on the Cross in whom we trust, but the outcome of that trust is that He is born in our hearts! His power comes from His love, His Grace, His truth, Himself—and we live because He lives in us. Do you understand this? If you do not, I pray God that you may, for, unless Christ is in you, you know what the Apostle says—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are reprobate?” If you are disapproved of God, Christ is *not* in you. If Christ is not in you, you are disapproved of God. But if He lives in you, you are “accepted in the Beloved” and that life of yours shall never die out, but you shall, by-and-by, behold your Savior’s face in the kingdom of His Glory.  
Brothers and Sisters, we are not what we ought to be! We are not what we want to be, we are not what we shall be! But we are something very different from what we used to be. The change in us is as great as in that blind man who said, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” The change is not merely external, but it is vital! The Lord has taken away the heart of stone out of our flesh and given us back the heart of flesh which belonged to man in his unfallen nature—and then upon this heart of flesh He has also worked wondrously, making it conscious to spiritual influences which once did not affect it, and writing upon the fleshy tablets of that renewed heart, His perfect Law. Glory be to the name of Jehovah, a notable miracle has been performed upon us! A miracle so marvelous that it is comparable to the resurrection from the dead and, in some respects, it even surpasses the wonders of creation, itself! We shall tell this story in the streets of the New Jerusalem and we shall draw around us attentive crowds as we narrate our experience and tell the tale of the sin which ruined us, and of the mercy which reclaimed us!  
Thus have we gone up the second rung of this golden ladder. First, “Christ is all.” Next, “Christ is in all.”  
**III.**Now kindly turn back in your Bibles to our other text—the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chapter, and 28th verse—“That God may be all in all.” First, Christ is all. Next, Christ is in all His people, but THE CONSUMMATION, the top-stone of all is “that God may be all in all.”  
The passage in which this text stands seems to be a very difficult one to understand. The common meaning that is given to it by nearly every interpreter I have ever met with, I do not believe or accept. It seems to a great many to be taught here that there is to come a time, called, “the end,” when the Lord Jesus Christ, having conquered all His enemies, is to resign His position, abdicate His Throne and cease to be King, “that God may be all in all.” Let us read the connection of the passage—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself, be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”  
The general meaning given to these words is that there is to be a time when the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ will come to an end of itself and He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, ceasing, Himself, to be King. I can only say that if this is the teaching of this text, it is not taught anywhere else in the whole Bible—nobody can find any parallel passage to it, or anything like it. Neither do I believe that it is taught in the Bible at all— neither here nor anywhere else! And I can say that for this reason I cannot see that there is to be any end whatever to the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ.  
You perceive that *it is the Son who is to be subject to the Father* but it is of the Son that we read in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Unto the Son He says, Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever,” where the Father, manifestly speaking to the Son, in His complex Person declares that His Throne is to be forever and ever. Brethren, in the day when the Christ shall have overcome all His enemies and Death, itself, shall be destroyed, there will be no abolition of His mediatorial kingdom! There still stands in the Scriptures this promise of our Lord Jesus Christ—“To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” Does that mean that we are to have a temporary reign with a temporary Christ—a brief rule with a short-lived Monarch? I do not believe it!  
*Moreover, the priesthood enters into the mediatorial office most eminently,*yet “the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” If the priesthood is to continue forever— and Melchisedec was king as well as priest—then the kingdom of Christ is to continue, world without end. Moreover, in the Book of the Revelation—not to mention the almost innumerable passages to the same effect—we find that when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, it is added, “*and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.”*When the kingdoms are brought back, they will be the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Then we read of*“*the throne of God and of the Lamb.” And when all kingdoms are subdued and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, then we are told to expect the announcement, “The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready.” What does all this mean but a continuance of that dispensation in which the Christ, the Son of Man, as the Son of God, shall be still at the head of His people, still their Priest and still their King and still reigning? And that is exactly what this passage says, if you will kindly look at it again and dismiss all previous prejudices from your minds!  
The fact is our Lord Jesus Christ has performed and is still performing, *a work which will end in putting everything into its proper order.* Now, the proper order, according to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the 11th chapter, and the third verse, is this—“I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” This is how it stands—the woman with the man for her head, the man with Christ for his Head—and Christ with God for His Head. Such is the Scriptural order—an order which has been disturbed all through except with regard to the Father and the Son, for God has always been the Head of Christ! Now, Christ has come into the world to restore that right order from the bottom, right up to the top! And it is to be so restored, first, by Christ becoming the Head of men—when He shall have put down all His enemies under His feet and when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, “for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”  
Christ is come into the world that all the evil that is in the world should be subdued. And He will drive it out of the world. There shall remain no power that shall dare revolt against the majesty of Heaven! Over the whole surface of this globe, beneath the new heavens and on the new earth, there shall yet be the Kingdom established of which Jesus Christ shall be the supreme Head and over which He shall reign forever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The Lord hasten it in His own time!  
Well, and what then?” asks one. “Does it not say that He is to deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and to be subject to the Father?” Exactly so. Supposing that India had been in revolt against our Queen and that a Viceroy had been sent there, and that he had warred against all the rebellious tribes and kingdoms, and they had all been conquered. He telegraphs to the Queen, “Your Majesty’s empire is at your feet.” Does he therefore cease to be Viceroy? Not necessarily in the least degree! He may still remain as ruler and yet have delivered up the kingdom. I believe that to be the meaning of this passage—that Christ has so conquered the Kingdom that it is all God’s.  
But what does it mean when it says that *then* shall the Son also be subject unto the Father? It means that He is subject, now, and that *even then* He will continue to be subject to the Father, that is all. It cannot mean that at a certain time Christ will *become* subject to God, because He has been so ever since that day of His glorious humiliation when, for His people’s redemption, he took upon Himself the form of a Servant— and that condition is not to cease. He is still to be the Representative of God even when He shall have put down all power and all authority under His feet and when God has put all things under His feet. It is manifest that He that did put all things under Him is not, Himself, under Him. And it is clear, from the text, that even then, God shall be the Head of Christ. I do not know whether you catch my thought yet, but it is just this—all evil subdued, all the saints having Christ dwelling in them, Christ the Head of all these saints, and then God, still as God, all the more surely and securely supreme over all things—for the Head of Christ is God and God is all in all.  
The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that every day this should be the great consummation to be kept in view, “that God may be all in all.” For this, the heroic labors of the Son of Man here on earth! For this, His cruel death! For this, His rising again! For this, His grasping of the mediatorial scepter! For this, His ruling in Providence! For this, His management of the world’s affairs! For this, His Second Coming and the glory of His saints! All this, while it continues to bring Glory to Him, has been done in subjection to His great Father’s will. He has accomplished it all as the Father’s Representative and Messenger, sent by Him to do it and then, when it is all done, and He shall reign forever and ever, even then, the Son, Himself, shall continue in that position in which He put Himself long, long ago, “that God may be all in all.” Then will the whole universe, restored and brought back to its proper place, be ordered according to the eternal Covenant arrangement.  
And the practical outcome of it all is this. I want you, beloved Friends, so to live as to be persuaded that it will be so one day, that God shall be all in all—that there shall come a time when we shall stand before the Throne of God, God in us all, and everything in us of God, when all His elect, all His redeemed, all to whom Christ is all, and all in whom Christ is, shall only know God as their All in All! God all in their very existence. God their all in every hymn. God their all in every pulsing of their joy. God their all in every hope. God their all in every memory. God all to them and God *in* all of them to the very fullest—all redeemed, all delivered from the power of sin, all quickened into the Divine and God-like life, all summed up in Christ, Christ comprehending them all—and then Christ Himself Head over all things to His Church, standing and giving unto God the Glory forever and ever, that the Father may be All in All.  
I see no abdication of a throne here. I see not even a change of dispensation and I do not believe in any! But, as surely as God lives, our King lives, and our Priest still ministers before Him. And He shall still be King over His people, though still, as the Christ, in His infinite goodness, abiding as subject unto God, Himself, God forever and ever, and yet, in His complex Person, making the Father to be All in All. Looking forward to that glorious consummation, we can join again in the jubilant hymn we sang just now—  
***“Hallelujah!—hark! the sound,  
From the center to the skies,  
Wakes above, beneath, around,  
All creation’s harmonies!  
See Jehovah’s banner furled,  
Sheathed His sword! He speaks—‘tis done! And the kingdoms of this world  
Are the kingdoms of His Son.  
He shall reign from pole to pole,  
With illimitable sway.  
He shall reign when, like a scroll,  
Yonder heavens have passed away!  
Then the end—beneath His rod,  
Man’s last enemy shall fall!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All in All.”***  
Now let us begin at the beginning. This is very simple—“*Christ is all.”* Then may the Spirit of God help us to go on to the next rung of the ladder—“Christ *is in all His people.”* There is the difficulty! Is He in you, Beloved? Have you received Him by faith? Then comes the third step—this may be, at present, full of mystery, but we shall see it in brighter light, by-and-by—*God shall be all in all.*So shall He be to us even now! Amen and Amen.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN *BOOK”—412,*355, 813.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #828 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DYING DAILY  
NO. 828

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 30, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“I die daily.”  
1 Corinthians 15:31.~~***

IN a certain sense we all do this. The very moment we begin to live we commence to die. We are like hour-glasses—there are fewer sands left to run from the very moment they begin to trickle down. The whole of our life is like an ebbing tide—our first months and years may look like advancing waves, but the whole is retreating, and by-and-by the living flood will be replaced by the mire of death—

***“Our pulse, like muffled drums, are beating Funeral marches to the tomb.”***

Or, as Watts words it ***—  
“Every heating pulse we tell,  
Leaves but the number less.”***

This is no land of the living, but the land of the dying, and this so called life is but one protracted act of death. This is not our rest, our soul is ever on the wing. Like the swallows, we must depart for another land. Life is a long descent to the valley of the shadow of death—it shelves gradually to the precipice—and no man can prevent his feet from sliding down it every hour. We fly like arrows to that common target of mankind—the grave—so that we may all say in the words of the text, “I die daily.”

Of some, also, this may be affirmed in a very painful and unhappy sense. They die daily because they feel a thousand deaths in fearing *one*. They are those of whom the Apostle writes, “who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” This nightmare oppresses them and breaks their rest. This ghost stalks before them at all hours and makes life grim with foreboding—this gall-drop makes all their pleasant things bitter. They are afraid to die and yet are so fascinated by death that they cannot take their eyes off it. They cannot shake off the chill horror of the grave. Their clothes seem to them to smell of the coffin, and their bread tastes of the morgue. They are slaves to a fear whose chains are heavy.

These timorous doves ought to remember that Jesus Christ came into this world on purpose that He might deliver such as they are. It was never His intention that any of His people should be subject to the fear of death, nor ought they to be—nor, indeed, *would* they be if they walked by faith— for what can there be in death for a Christian to fear? “The sting of death is sin,” but that is pardoned! “The strength of sin is the Law,” but Christ has fulfilled it! What is dying but departing to be with Christ, which is far better? And why should a man fear that which is far better for him— which will rid him of all his ills, admit him into unlimited blessedness, take him away from all fear and all care—and conduct him to the fullness of the Glory which is laid up in Christ Jesus? I trust you and I may never have to moan out, in that mournful and gloomy sense, “I die daily,” but with *holy joy* may we look forward to the hour of our departure which is so near at hand.

Paul used this expression in an heroic sense, to which I fear you and I are not very likely to attain. He said, “I die daily,” because every day he deliberately put his life in jeopardy for the cause of Jesus Christ. One day he went into the Jewish synagogue, knowing that in all probability they would drag him out, scourge him with rods, or, perhaps, in fanatic zeal, stone him to death. Another day he was found in the street preaching to a multitude of idolaters and denouncing their gods—irritating them by exposing their vices and by advancing truths which were novelties—and so contrary to their prejudices that they could not endure them.

Behold him often crossing the sea in a frail ship, or passing over rugged mountains among robbers! He was often in peril from the mountaintorrents, and from cold and nakedness. In all places, he lived the life of one whose neck was always on the block—who stood ready at any minute to offer himself up as a sacrifice for Christ. In these more silken days we cannot run such serious risks, and it is to our shame that there are some who are not *willing* to run even the *little* risks which the times may demand. We know professors who cannot imperil their business by an admission of their faith, and others who cannot venture the breaking of some fond connection for the sake of the Cross of Christ.

Alas, there are many who are ashamed of Jesus because a father or a mother or a brother might, perhaps, ridicule them or sneer at them. They are ashamed to bear the loss of anything, when our Apostle *rejoiced* to suffer the loss of *all* things, and did count them but dung that he might win Christ! May the heroic age of Christianity return to us, and even if it should be necessary that the furnace should be heated once again, yet if God’s gold may but glow with that clear, bright luster which it exhibited in the former days, we may well be satisfied with the fury of the blazing coals! The persecuted were happy men despite their sorrows. They were honored men notwithstanding their shame. They were earth’s princes, Heaven’s peers—for they could say that for Christ’s sake they, every day, were delivered unto death—but did rejoice and were exceedingly glad that they were privileged to suffer for the Cross of Christ.

Our text we shall now take in a *spiritual* sense. Neither fixing our minds upon its universal sense, nor yet upon its mournful, nor even upon its heroic meaning—but taking it in a *spiritual* way common to all the saints, “I die daily.” Our subject this morning is the art and mystery of dying every day. First, we shall notice some previous necessities for the practice of this art. Secondly we shall speak upon in which this art consists. and thirdly, upon the great benefits which will accrue to those who shall learn to die daily.

**I.**First, there are CERTAIN THINGS PREVIOUSLY NECESSARY before a man can be a scholar in this great art of dying everyday. The first necessity is that he must be *willing* to die. If he shall shrink at death, and covet life and dread even the *thought* of departure, it will be a miserable necessity to him that he will have to die someday—but he will not be at all likely to be an apt pupil in the art of dying today, and tomorrow, and the next day—and every day that he lives. With a natural disinclination, with an awful fear and a terrible shrinking from the very fact of dissolution, he will not be at all forward to bring his mind to find delight and satisfaction in contemplation of the grave.

In order that a man should be willing to die daily he must be a saved man. He must have his sins forgiven and he must know it by infallible assurance or else death will be to him, of all things, the most terrible. He must be clad in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as with armor of proof, and he must know that he has it on or else death will be a dart that will afflict him terribly, and from it he will shrink with all his soul. He must be a man perfectly at peace with his Creator, not ashamed to look into his Maker’s face in Christ Jesus, nor afraid to stand before Jehovah’s solemn bar.

He must, in fact, have looked by faith to the blood-stained Cross and he must have seen Jesus making a full atonement, there, for sin. He must have accepted that Atonement as being made for *him*. He must be resting on it with an unstaggering faith, believing that all his sin is put away through that one dread Sacrifice. He must know that the righteousness of Christ is wrapped about him and that he is accepted in the Beloved, or else to talk to Him of dying daily would be somewhat analogous to inviting the thief to be hanged daily, or asking a culprit to be arrested daily. It will be enough, he thinks, to endure once that dread sharp stroke which will separate him from his joys. He certainly will not predict and anticipate the period, but be glad to forget it while he can, crying, “Let us drown care and live while we live.”

Yet more is necessary than this to make a good student of the art of daily dying. A man must not only submissively await his dissolution, but he must be even*desirous* of departure and *cheered* with the hope of the better land. A hard thing, you say, yet not impossible. Impossible, perhaps, to *nature*, for it shrinks from the hard thought of dissolution, but possible enough to Divine Grace, for Grace overlooks the temporary separation, anticipating the bright resurrection and the everlasting Glory.

To an ungodly man, to die can never be a thing to be desired, for what remains for him after death? His possessions go from him. Like birds that have rested for a little while upon the field, but take to their wings when the traveler claps his hands, so all the worldling’s riches must take to themselves wings and fly away. And what remains for the sinner in the next world? A fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation! Ungodly men and women, you know what you have to expect when you shall be called to the unknown land to face the Judge upon His Throne! You will be condemned, banished, accursed, executed, destroyed forever! It is not possible that death should be a welcome thing to drunkards and unclean persons, or even to merely *moral* men.

But the Believer, what of him? To him death is gain! What he loses of comfort, here, is made up to him a thousand fold by the joys of the hereafter. He knows that for him there is the crown of triumph and the palm of victory—for him the harp of ecstatic joy! For him the robe of immaculate purity! For him a place at the right hand of God, even the Father, in eternal security and ineffable delight! Therefore the Christian not only regards death as a necessity through which he hopes to be supported as a patient through a painful operation, but he *looks* for his departure as an heir looks forward to the day of his majority! As the bride anticipates her wedding day!

It is the time when his manhood shall burst its shell, when his imprisoned soul shall snap its fetters, when that which was long like a shriveled corn shall bud and blossom, and bear sweet fruit in the garden of God! When he is in his right mind and his faith is in active exercise, he longs to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better! Endowed with such a longing, he becomes an apt pupil in the art of dying daily.

Once more, if a man would learn to die daily, it is necessary that he should have a good understanding and a clear knowledge as to what death really is, and what are the matters that follow upon it. Nothing is more becoming our study than the departure of our souls from this mortal stage to the immortal Glory. What is it to die? Is it to cease to be? If it were so, then, indeed, we should be idiotic to speak of dying *daily*. To die! Is it to part with every comfort and lose every joy? If it were so, and we had to be driven forth from the body as naked spirits—houseless, restless, drifted about with everlasting winds—we might, indeed, be excused if we shut our eyes to the dreary prospect.

To die is nothing but for the soul to be separated from the body. The body remains to rest in the grave and mold back to mother earth while the soul ascends *immediately* to God who gave it—to be at once with Jesus, *immediately* in Paradise, without the body—a disembodied spirit, naked for a time, but yet most sweetly blessed! To die is, in its after consequences, to wait a little in a state of bliss, and then at the trump of the archangel to return to put on the body again—the same body which was buried, the same in identity but marvelously changed—as changed as the flower from the seed, or the crocus with its golden cup from the bulb which was put into the soil.

I say our souls shall come back to their bodies to a new marriage. The spirit and the body shall be knit together once again, so that our manhood shall be again entire—body, soul, and spirit, all being in Glory even as we are here on earth—but far more gloriously developed. Believers in Christ know that the first resurrection delivers them from all fear of second death. We shall reign with Christ upon the earth—a thousand years of glory shall be given unto the saints—on this same globe in which they suffered with their Master they shall triumph with Him! Then in the last time when Jesus shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, then the people of God shall reign forever and ever in unsurpassed and unimaginable delight!  
This it is, then, to die. There is nothing dreadful at all about it. It is altogether the very simplest of operations, although it involves afterwards the most wonderful of results. I suppose that to die is but a pin’s prick, or less than that. The pains which we call dying pains are really pains caused by *life’s* struggles to hold its own. Death gives us no pain whatever. It is the anodyne that lulls us into a blessed slumber. It is the obstinate grasp of life within us which causes all the agony of separation—but as soon as life relaxes its stern grip, grief is ended. As for Death, his hand is gentle and tender, and to those who know him his voice is music and his countenance a delights!

Now, Christian, if you can get an intelligent view of what dying is—and a clear view of what will follow dying—you will then be able to learn to die daily. And by the Grace of God you may yet be able to achieve it—and everyday, before you have mingled with the din of this world’s turmoil, you may bathe in Jordan’s river, and be refreshed!

**II.**Secondly, WHEREIN DOES DYING DAILY CONSIST? Many things go to make up this high achievement. The first is to consider with much care, everyday, the certainly of death to all those who shall not remain at the coming of Christ, and to let the certainty of our own death or change go with us as an undivided companion. We ought always to feel that we are mortal—it should be to us a garment that we never shake off. The fact that we are here but as sojourners and wayfarers should be painted on our eyeballs.

We are never right-hearted when we imagine that we are abiding inhabitants of this land. We are but strangers and sojourners in it! We are only right when we act as such. The Lord, knowing that we should try to shake off the remembrance of death, has so helped us as almost to *force* us to it. We have before us the frequent departures of others—the path to the cemetery is well trod. It is well for us that we live not always in the house of feasting—the grave’s brink is a healthier resort than the table of luxury.

Just think how often you have seen strong men who appeared to be as likely to live as yourselves taken away in their strength! How often have we marked others sickening gradually before our eyes like slowly fading lilies! God rings the funeral knell in our ears and bids us remember that the bell may next toll for us. Our dying friends cast their shadows over us and cool our worldly heats and madness. In the presence of the corpse we gather up our skirts and gird up the loins of our mind, because as surely as the soul is gone from yonder lifeless body we, too, must follow. We have no lease on life. We have no earthly immortality guaranteed to us. Let us, then, remember the myriads who have marched before us. Let us keep their track before our eyes, feeling that we are wending our way to the same goal.

The whole of Nature around us also helps us to remember that we are mortal. Look at the year. It is born amid the songs of birds and the beauty of flowers. It comes to its ripeness and luscious fruits and shouts of harvest home—but soon the old age of autumn comes and a lamentation is heard, “The harvest is passed and the summer is ended.” Amidst the fall of decaying leaves and the howling of the cold winds of winter the year finds its end. So, too, with each day. Well does Herbert sing***—***

***“Sweet day, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky,  
The dew must weep your fall tonight,  
For you must die.”***

Every flower we see lavishing its fragrance on the breeze trembles because it hears the footsteps of Death. It blooms that it may wither. “Its root is ever in its grave, and it must die.”

Where do you see immortal things beneath the moon? Lift up your eyes—look where you may—don’t you see everywhere, change and mutability, and departure written upon Nature’s brow? And all this God hangs up, as it were, as a notice upon the wall—like the mystic characters which amazed Belshazzar—that we may not dare to forget that it is appointed unto all men once to die. No, as if this were not all, not only is Nature full of helps to make us familiar with the grave but our own *bodies* also tell us of our appointed change. What is that gray hair but the beginning, the first sign, the foretoken of the coming winter which shall freeze the life current within the veins and chill the heart itself?

What is that loosened tooth but a part of the fabric crumbling to let us know that the whole tenement must soon come down? What are those aches and pains, and what that decay of the eyesight, and that dullness of hearing—what are those tottering knees, and why that cane but that we may receive clear warnings that the whole tabernacle is shaking in the rude winds of time and must soon totter to its fall? The Lord will not suffer us to win a freehold here! He puts affliction into our family and disease into our flesh in order that we may seek after a better country, even a heavenly one!

Let me exhort you then, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, seeing you have all these mementoes to keep the lamp of the sepulcher always burning in your chambers, to be well acquainted with the shroud and the winding sheet. Every time you take off your clothes at night think how you must be unrobed for your last narrow bed. And when you put on your garments in the morning, familiarize yourself with the time of the resurrection—when you shall put on your glittering garments in which you are to rejoice forever.

Do not, I pray you, put aside these reflections because at first sight they may seem somber. Familiarize yourself a little with the gray tints of death and they will brighten before your eyes—and before long you will see a transcendent beauty in such meditations to which you would not be a stranger if you could! Thus the first part of dying daily is to think constantly of death.

The next part of dying daily is to put your soul, by faith, through the whole process of death. It is a wise thing to sit down quietly and to picture your departure. You need not stretch your fancy much. You have seen the like with others—you can picture it for yourselves. There you lie, upon that bed grown hard with weeks of weariness, and loving watchers whisper in the silent chamber. They are anxious that you should not catch the sound, but your quick ear hears it, and you wistfully enquire, “What is it the physician says?” You gather, though they tell you not, that you must soon depart. As a Believer in Jesus you are glad to hear it! You have had enough of this world. You are like a child tired out with its day’s play and you are glad to fall asleep upon your father’s breast.

The solemn article comes nearer and nearer, the pulse is fainter. You have enough consciousness left to perceive that the eye is being glazed and outward objects are lost. Perhaps you have also enough strength to sing your last song, for Heaven has met you while you are yet here and your soul is flooded with a joy you never knew before! You have evidently arrived at the border land, for there are flowers beneath your feet, the like of which never bloomed in the wilderness! And you hear songs such as you never before heard in the desert. Then you, yourself, begin to sing. Perhaps it is some such song as this***—***

***“And when you hear my eye-strings break, How sweet the minutes roll;  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But Glory in my soul,”***

or perhaps you burst out with a song concerning the new Jerusalem, “your happy home,” name ever dear to you! And you rejoice that you are about to end your labors in the joy and peace which remains for the people of God.

The solemn instant has come, but will you be able, precisely, to distinguish it? May there not be so sweet a gradation from the earnest of the Spirit to the bliss, itself, that at no exact moment shall there be a wrench from time to eternity? All may be so Divinely ordered that pilgrims may advance by degrees from the tabernacle of earth to the Temple of Heaven. There will be a matchless change, but it will not necessarily be a shock to the spirit—the folding gates of Paradise may be opened by degrees that our eyes may be gradually prepared to endure the excessive Glory.

But while we linger, the spirit has mounted. Now, oh, joy of joys! You are in His bosom, who loved you with an everlasting love! The hand that embraces you still wears the nail print, and as you bow to kiss those sacred feet and cast the crown which has been placed upon your head before that Man, that God—you see that the feet are the feet of Him who was nailed to the tree for you. What joy! What blessedness to see that your Father smiles upon you! The Spirit of God fills you and you know Him and you grieve Him no more! The Son of God gives you to partake in all His Glory, for you are with Him where He is!

Now be sure that you rehearse such thoughts as these as though they were a sacred drama in which you are soon to take your part. Traverse the azure way. Plume your wings for the last solemn flight. Let faith, like a courier, march before to track the way. Every semblance of affectation upon dying beds is shocking. I have never been able to admire the oftquoted deathbed of Addison. “Come,” he said, “and see how a Christian can die.” It seems to me too like a *brag* to be a fitting utterance for a soul humbly resting at the feet of the Cross and looking out over the black waters which fringe the eternal shore.

The true idea of a Christian’s dying speech is a humble and gracious witness to those who look around—that though a sinner, he has found peace with God through the precious blood of Jesus—and would have others trust in the same Savior. *Prepare to deliver such a testimony*. Often picture yourself as bidding adieu to every earthborn thing. Anticipate the final stroke, the upward mounting, the soaring through tracts unknown, the sight of the Judgment Throne, the eternal Beatific Vision. So will you die daily.

But we have not come into the soul of the matter yet. The way to die daily, practically, is to hold this world with a very loose hand. Birdlime so much abounds. When a man wins a little gain in this world it sticks to him, holds him, prevents his aspiring to heavenly things and holds him bound to earth. Our dear friends, and our beloved children are all strong chains, binding our eagle-souls to the rock of earth. “Ah!” said one, as he was shown a rich man’s ample house and luxuriant gardens, “these are the things that make it hard to die.” And I suppose they are. When they are misused and wrongly applied, they birdlime us—they hold us to the soil when we would wish to mount.

But, Brothers and Sisters, you must not be the servants of the present. Look on your lands as a dying man would look on them. Look on your children and the comforts of your fireside, and your little savings, as so much hoar-frost to vanish in the sun. Look on your hourly cares and daily joys as on things which perish with use—mere visions of the night—things that flit at the rising of the sun. You will never enjoy earth rightly unless you know it to be a poor mutable thing! Earthliness eats as does a canker, and if you become so great a fool as to think that mortal things are *eternal*, or that you, yourself, will long endure, you will reserve for yourself many sorrows.

See you not how the glittering dew drops exhale as the day grows old— such and so fleeting are human joys! Mark how the meteor marks the brow of night, and soon is seen no more—such and so hasty is mortal bliss! Hold not earth’s treasures with too firm a grasp. Give them all up to your Father and use them as temporary comforts borrowed for awhile, to be returned soon. Our bereavements would not be half so sharp if we always viewed our friends as being lent to us. A man does not cry when he has to return a tool which he has borrowed. No, but as an honest man, he knew he borrowed it—he never called it his own—and he hands it back, thankful that he has had it so long.

When you weep, who have lost your friends, you do well. But if you carry that weeping to repining, you ought to remember the mercy of God in letting you retain these dear ones at all, and in sparing them to you so long. And you should mourn that a rebellions spirit should so reign in you as to make you lament because your God takes back His own. Gracious souls rejoice to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” To die daily, then, is to hold this world with a loose hand—and to look upon earthly possessions as fickle joys.

To die daily, again, is to test our hope and our experience very solemnly everyday. Alas, for that evil habit of taking our religion for granted—of looking back to some period a few years ago and believing that we were then converted—and reckoning that it must be all right now because of something that happened then! Brethren, it is most mischievous to live in the past and to be afraid, at any moment, to try our faith by *present* tests. We may live on experience if we will use experience in its proper place— but any man who is afraid to search present evidences and to try the foundation of his faith before God, today, is treating his soul most wretchedly.

How would you like to die today, dear Friend? Would you like to die with a hope too weak and tender to endure to be questioned? Can you enter into eternity with a hope that you dare not put into the crucible? Oh, no, you feel you need sure work when it comes to the last! You need a safe and stable foundation to build your soul upon in the trying moment! Well, then, Beloved, see that your hope is stable *now*. Each day examine yourself whether you are in the faith. Whether you have really repented of sin. Whether you have actually and truly laid hold of Jesus Christ. Search! See whether the root of the matter is in you and the fruits of the Spirit proceeding from you—whether God dwells in you—whether you walk after the flesh or walk after the Spirit.

I would not foment doubts and fears, but I would, above all things, press professors to avoid presumption. The man who is in a sound business does not object to overhaul his stock and examine his books. But the man to whom bankruptcy is eminent generally seeks to shut his eyes to his actual position. O Sirs, if you are right with God you will desire to be quite sure! You will not flinch at heart-searching preaching! You will be anxious to be put into the sieve and to be tried even as by fire! Your prayer will be, “Cleanse me, O God, from secret faults! Search me and try me, and know my ways!” You will not be among those who hunt after prophets with smooth tongues who prophesy in gentle strains. You will not desire to have your cradle rocked that you may be lulled into presumption, but you will labor to make sure work for eternity lest you suffer irreparable loss.

Beloved, do this everyday! Look into the glass of the Word and see what manner of men you are. Purge yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of your spirit. Put yourself under the lash of the severest texts of Scripture, and by all means labor that you are not deceived, for God will not be mocked but will deal with you according to *fact*. To die daily, it will be necessary that you come everyday, just as you did at conversion, to the Cross of Christ, as a poor guilty sinner and rest in Him. I do not know anything that is more delightful, more necessary, or more profitable than a renewal of the *look of faith*. I have always found, when I have been in fear as to my safety, or have had hard thoughts of death pressing heavily upon me, that my only resort has been a humble resort to the Atonement. Carey ordered that they should write on his tombstone***—***

***“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.  
He is my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus, and my All.”***

Here is an epitaph for each one of us. Just come with nothing of your own—no good feelings and no good works. Fall become the Cross of Jesus and rest there. Take Jesus to be everything that God’s Law and your conscience can require. I think, dear Friends, this is the way to die daily—and if you can always live as an empty sinner filled with the fullness of Christ, as a lost sinner saved wholly by a precious Savior—you are then fit to live and fit to die!

But I have not quite concluded. To die daily, the Christian should take care to be always in such a place and situation that he should not be ashamed to die therein. Therefore, the possessor of faith in Jesus Christ has no license to be found in places of ungodly and unclean amusement. How would he like to die there? The old story has it that the devil once carried off a very hopeful young man, hurrying him on a sudden to Hell. A monk of great saintliness called after the devil, “You have taken one of mine. You have no business with him!” “Well,” said Satan, “I found him in the theater. He was on my premises, and I took him.”

I should not wonder if many a professor is carried off in that style. If professors of religion go astray into the purlieus of iniquity, no wonder if they are shot at by that old hunter after souls! Where your treasure is there your heart is. Tell me where you go to find your amusement and I will tell you what you are—for where a man finds his highest joy—there his heart most truly abides. It may serve you as a guide when you have to question yourself, “Ought I to do this, or to go to this or that place?” Then ask yourself, “Should I be prepared to die in such company and in such an occupation?” If you could not, leave it alone. If you would, you may fairly go.

The Christian, also, should never be in a state of temper in which he would be ashamed to die. Who would like to die bearing malice against any man? Who would wish to die with hard thoughts of a neighbor? Who would like to die in a passion? You have no business to get into a passion at any time, but to die daily. The aim and strife of a Christian should be to keep himself in that delightfully equable frame of mind in which he should be prepared, at any moment, to stand before his God with his present emotions and feelings upon him. You say that is hard work? So it is, but you have a glorious Helper—the Holy Spirit shall enable you—and by His power you may accomplish miracles of holiness.

To die daily a Christian man should have all his affairs in such a condition that he is ready to die. I admire that habit in Whitfield, who was a man so very orderly that he would not go to bed at night until everything was in order, for he said, “I should not like to die with a pair of gloves out of place.” And yet I know some Believers who have not made their wills! And if they were to die today, and they may, their property would go far otherwise than it ought to do, and a wife whom they love so well might be put to serious suffering.

A Christian man has no right to leave his affairs in a tangle. If he cares not for the affairs of his own household he is worse than a heathen and a publican! Many traders keep their business transactions in such a confusion that if they were taken away their very character might be impugned—but such should not be! We must set our house in order, for we must die, and not live. We should watch because the Master comes as a thief, and a good servant would wish to have all things in good order at his Lord’s appearing.

So should it be with all our acts towards God. Some of you have not yet fulfilled the Master’s command with regard to Baptism. Now, if you died unbaptized you would be saved, but still, I am sure you would not wish to be taken away till you had fulfilled your Master’s bidding. Make haste, then, and delay not to keep His commandments. Some of you have dear children who are unconverted and you have not spoken to them about their souls. Now, if you were called, this afternoon, to sleep upon the bed of death I am sure you would wish that you had delivered your soul fully to these dear ones. This afternoon, then, call them into your room and plead with them. A thousand other things may press upon your conscience, but you have been putting them off—attend to them, I pray you, at once—as a dying man should do! Who would wish to die with a duty left undone? I would like to depart when the day’s work is quite finished.

It is said that that venerable divine, Watts Wilkinson, asked of God that he might never know consciously what it was to die, and he died, as many of you will remember, in his sleep, so that his admission into Heaven must have been almost without any recognition of death. In his case death was swallowed up in victory. Perhaps such an end may be given to us. I would choose so to die, that I should have nothing to disturb my mind of matters left undone, but be found waiting and ready. If we are thus prepared, we have acquired the art of dying daily.

**III.**What would be THE PRACTICAL BENEFIT of such daily dying? It will help us to live well, and this is no small matter. We would not be covetous and grasping if we knew that the heap would soon melt or we should be taken from it. We should not be so impetuous, and attach so much importance to trifles, if we felt that there were grander things close at our heels. We should not be so obstinate, and take so long to be persuaded to Christian duty, if we felt that the time was short and it behooved us to get much done in a little time. If we saw our candle flickering in its socket, we should be far more diligent. We should not be so groveling and so earthly if we saw that the world is founded on the floods, and therefore is utterly unstable.

Next to living close to Christ, I do not know of any better prescription for overcoming worldly-mindedness than this dying everyday. He whose mind anticipates a departure to be with Jesus is armed with weapons for warring a good warfare. But mark, Brothers and Sisters, the best practical effect is that it would help us to die. No man would find it difficult to die who died everyday! He would have practiced it so often that he would only have to die but once more—like the singer who has been through his rehearsals and is perfect in his part. He has but to pour forth the notes once and for all and have done.

Happy are they who every morning go down to Jordan’s brink and wade into the stream in fellowship with Christ, dying in the Lord’s death, being crucified on His Cross, and raised in His Resurrection! They, when they shall climb their Pisgah, shall behold nothing but what has been long familiar to them—as they have studied the map of death. I do not know how wide the benefits of dying daily may be, but they seem to me to be commensurate with the whole period of human existence. You young people, you would not be likely to plunge into youthful gaieties to your own damage if you felt that you might die while yet you are young. That wild oat sowing would never cause you a harvest of regrets if you felt that you might perish in the midst of sin! Graves are often short trenches for little prattlers. Beware, you boys and girls!

You men of middle age, how it would check you in that eager pursuit after gold—that hastening to be rich which never leaves a man innocent— if you felt that it is little matter, after all, to gain wealth since so soon you must be parted from it. And you who totter on a staff, I cannot conceive of anything which would keep you in a holier frame of mind, or in a happier and calmer state than to be always dying the death of Jesus that you might live His life! Put the Christian man in any position, and this art of dying daily will he useful to him. Is he rich? He will not be purse proud because he knows that he must soon be removed from all his treasures. Is he poor? He will not murmur, for he recollects the streets of gold which are so speedily to be his portion!

This is useful to a Christian in all pursuits. If he is seeking after knowledge, as he may, he will mingle with it the knowledge of Christ Crucified, for he knows that all else will not serve him. If he is toiling for a livelihood, as he may and as he *should*, he will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, because these things last when all else shall perish like faded leaves. Make a Believer a king or a pauper, and the art of dying daily will help him in either position! And whether he shall rule as a potentate, or suffer as a slave, dying daily will be an equal benefit to his soul. Put him under every temptation and this will help him, for he will not be tempted by the offers of so brief a happiness—his soul has a grip upon *eternal* realities, and vain shows it utterly despises.

“See here, Tempter,” he says, “I have a kingdom which cannot pass away. Vain is your offer of the kingdoms of this world. See here, foul Fiend, I have the beauty and the joy which never can fade—why tempt me with these vanities, these painted nothings?” Above temptation’s billows the Believer lifts his head with calm joy because he breathes the atmosphere of Heaven! Daily dying is as useful to the saint in his joys as in his griefs, in his exaltations as in his depressions. It is a blessed thing for him in the valley and on the mountain, in strength and in sickness, on the battlefield of activity or in the hospital of suffering. He shall be tutored for immortality, trained for bliss, fitted for Heaven by learning to die daily! God teach us this art, and He shall have the glory of it. Amen.

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RESURRECTION!  
NO. 306

***~~DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 1, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain;  
perhaps wheat or some other grain.~~***

***~~But God gives it a body as  
He pleases, and to each seed its own body.”  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38.~~***

We preach with words. God preaches to us in acts and deeds. If we would but perceive it, creation and Providence are two continual sermons, streaming from the mouth of God. The seasons are four Evangelists, each of them having his testimony to utter to us. Does not summer preach to us of God’s bounty, of the richness of His goodness, of that generousness with which He has been pleased to supply the earth, not simply with food for man, but with delights for both ear and eye in the beauteous landscape, the melodious birds and the flowers of various hue?

Have you ever heard the still small voice of autumn, who bears the wheat sheaf and whispers to us in the rustling of the seer leaf? He bids us prepare to die. “All we,” says he, “do fade as a leaf and all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.” Then comes winter, crowned with snow and he thunders out a most mighty sermon, which, if we would but listen to it, might well impress us with the terrors of God’s vengeance and let us see how soon He can strip the earth of all its pleasantries and enrobe it in storm, when He shall come Himself to judge the earth with righteousness and the people with equity.

But it seems to me that spring reads us a most excellent discourse upon the grand doctrine of revelation. This very month of April, which, if it is not the very entrance of spring, yet certainly introduces us to the fullness of it. This very month—bearing by its name the title of the opening month, speaks to us of the resurrection. As we have walked through our gardens, fields and woods, we have seen the flower buds ready to burst upon the trees and the fruit blossoms hastening to unfold themselves. We have seen the buried flowers starting up from the sod and they have spoken to us with sweet, sweet voices, the words, “You, too, shall rise again. You, too, shall be buried in the earth like seeds that are lost in winter, but you shall rise again and you shall live and blossom in eternal spring.”

I propose this morning, as God shall enable, to listen to that voice of spring, proclaiming the doctrine of the resurrection—a meditation all the more appropriate from the fact that the Sabbath before last we considered the subject of Death—and I hope that then very solemn impressions were made upon our minds. May the like impressions now return, accompanied with more joyous ones, when we shall look beyond the grave, through the valley of the shadow of death, to that bright light in

the distance—the splendors and glory of life and immortality.

In speaking to you upon this text, I would remark in the outset that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity. The heathen, by the feeble light of nature, were able to spell out the truth of the immortality of the soul. Those professors of religion who deny that immortality, are not so far advanced in learning as the heathen themselves. When you meet with any who think that the soul of man may possibly become annihilated, make them a present of that little catechism brought out by the Westminster Assembly, which bears the title, “Catechism for the Young and Ignorant.” Let them read that through and begin to understand that God has not made man in vain.

The resurrection of the body was that which was new in the apostolic times. When Paul stood up on Mars Hill, in the midst of the learned assembly of the Areopagites, had he spoke to them about the immortality of the *soul*, they would not have laughed. They would have respected him, for this was one of the sublime truths which their own wise men had taught. But when he went on to assert that the flesh and blood which was laid in the tomb should yet arise again, that bones which had become the dwelling place of worms, that flesh which had corrupted and decayed should actually start afresh into life—that the body as well as the soul should live—some mocked and others said, “We will hear you again of this matter.”

The fact is, reason teaches the immortality of the spirit—it is Revelation, alone, which teaches the immortality of the body. It is Christ alone who has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He was the clearest proclaimer of that grand Truth of God. Albeit that it had lain in the secret faith of many of the ancient people of God before, yet He it was who first set forth in clear terms the grand Truth that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. As far as I know, the doctrine has not been disputed in the Christian Church. There have been some few heretics who have denied it at different times, but they have been so few, so utterly insignificant, that it is not worth while to take any notice of their scruples, or of the objections which they have urged. Instead thereof, we will turn to our text. One will assume that the doctrine is true and so proceed to utter some words of explanation upon

it. First, then, our text suggests the real identity of the resurrection body.

The Apostle uses the figure of a seed, a shriveled grain of wheat. It is put into the ground—there it dies. All the starchy part of it decays and forms a peculiarly fine soil, into which the life germ strikes itself and upon which the life germ feeds. The seed itself dies, with the exception of a particle almost too small to be perceived, which is the real life contained within the wheat.

By-and-by we see a green blade starting up —that grows, swells and increases, until it comes to be corn in the ear and afterwards the full corn in the ear. Now no one has any suspicion but that the same wheat arises from the soil into which it was cast. Put into the earth, we believe it springs up and we are accustomed to talk of it in our ordinary language as being the very same seed which we sowed, although the difference is striking and marvelous. Here you have a plant some three feet high, bearing many grains of wheat and there you had the other day a little shriveled grain—yet no one doubts but that the two are the same.

So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The body is here but as a shriveled seed. There is no beauty in it that we should desire it. It is put into a grave, like wheat that is sown in the earth, there it rots and it decays. But God preserves within it a sort of life germ which is immortal and when the trump of the archangel shall shake the heavens and the earth it shall expand to the full flower of manhood. It shall blossom from the earth a far more glorious form than the manhood which was buried.

You are, my Brethren, today, but as a heap of wheat, a heap of poor shriveled corn. Despite that earthly beauty which makes glad our countenances, we are, after all, shriveled and worthless, compared with what our bodies shall be when they shall awake from their beds of silent dust and cold damp clay. Yet while they shall be different, they shall be precisely the same—it shall be the same body. The identity shall be preserved. Though there shall seem to be but little similarity, yet shall no man doubt but that the very body which was sown in the earth has sprung up to eternal life.

I suppose that if I should bring here a certain grain of seed and you had never seen the image of the plant into which it would ripen, and I should submit it to a thousand persona here present and ask them this question—“What form will this seed assume when it shall grow into a plant and bear a flower?”—none of you could possibly tell what it would be like. Yet when you saw it spring up you would say, “Well, I have no doubt that the sunflower sprang from its own seed. I am sure that a violet springs from a violet seed. I cannot doubt that the lily has its own appropriate root.”

And another time, when you come to see the seed, you perhaps imagine you see some little likeness, at least you never mistrust the identity. Though there are wide extremes of difference between the tiny mustard seed and the great tree beneath the branches of which the birds of the air build their nests, yet you never for a moment question but what they are precisely the same. The identity is preserved. So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. The difference shall be extraordinary, yet shall the body be still the same.

In order to affirm this, the ancient Christian Church was in the habit in their creed of adding a sentence to the Article which runs thus—“I believe in the resurrection of the dead.” They added, in Latin words to this effect—“I believe in the resurrection of the dead, of this very flesh and blood.” I do not know that the addition was ever authorized by the Church, but it was continually used, especially at the time when there was a discussion as to the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The very flesh and blood that is buried, the very eyes that are closed in death, the very hands which stiffens by my corpse—these very members shall live again—not the identical particles of the same matter any more than the self-same particles of the wheat spring up to make a blade and to make full corn in the ear. Yet shall they be identical, in the true sense of the term. They shall spring up from this body—shall be the true result and development of this poor flesh and blood, which we now drag about with us here below.

Ten thousand objections have been raised against this, but they are all readily answerable. Some have said, “But when men’s bodies are dead and are committed to the grave, they are often dug up and the careless

sexton mixes them up with common mold. No, it sometimes happens that they are carted away from the churchyard and strewn over the fields, to become a rich manure for wheat, so that the particles of the body are absorbed into the corn that is growing and they travel round in a circle until they become the food of man—so that the particle which may have been in the body of one man enters into the body of another. Now,” say they, “how can all these particles be tracked?”

Our answer is, if it were necessary, every *atom* could be traced. Omnipotence and Omniscience could do it. If it were needful that God should search and find out every individual atom that ever existed, he would be able to detect the present abode of every single particle. The astronomer is able to tell the position of one star by the aberration of the motion of another. By his calculation, apart from observation, he can discover an unknown orb—its hugeness puts it within his reach. But to God there is nothing little or great. He can find out the orbit of one atom by the aberration in the orbit of another atom—He can pursue and overtake each separate particle.

But remember, this is not necessary at all, for, as I said before, the identity may be preserved without there being the same atoms. Just go back to the excellent illustration of our text. The wheat is just the same, but in the new wheat that has grown up there may not be one solitary particle of that matter which was in the seed cast into the ground. A little seed that shall not weigh the hundredth part of an ounce falls into the earth and springs up and produces a forest tree that shall weigh two tons. Now, if there is any part of the original seed in the tree, it must be but in the proportion of a millionth part, or something less than that. And yet the tree is positively identical with the seed—it is the same thing.

And so there may only be a millionth part of the particles of my body in the new body which I shall wear but yet it may still be the same. It is not the identity of the matter that will make positive identity. And I shall show you that again. Are you not aware that our bodies are changing—that in about every ten years we have different bodies from what we had ten years ago? That is to say, by decay and the continual wearing away of our flesh, there is not in this body I have here, a single particle that was in my body ten years ago and yet I am the same man. I know I am precisely the same. So you. You shall have been born in America and lived there twenty years. You shall suddenly be transferred to India and live there another twenty years. You come back to America to see your friends—you are the same man, they know you, recognize you, you are precisely the same individual.

But yet philosophy teaches us a fact which cannot be denied—that your body would have changed twice in the time you have been absent from your friends. That every particle is gone and has had its place supplied by another. And yet the body is the same. So that it is not necessary there should be the same particles. It is not needful that you should track every atom and bring it back in order that the body should preserve its identity.

Have you ever heard the story of the wife of Peter Martyr, a celebrated reformer, who died some years before the time of Queen Mary? Since his enemies could not reach his body, they took up the body of his wife after she was dead and buried it in a dunghill. During the reign of Elizabeth, the body was removed from its contemptuous hiding place. It was then reduced to ashes, in order that the Romanists, if they should ever prevail again, might never do dishonor to that body, they took the ashes of Peter Martyr’s wife and mixed them with the reputed ashes of a Romish saint. Mixing the two together, they said, “Now these Romanists will never defile *this* body, because they will be afraid of desecrating the relics of their own saint.”

Perhaps some wiseacres man says, “How can *these* two be separated?” Why, they could be divided readily enough if God willed to do it. For granted that God is Omniscient, Omnipotent and you have never to ask how, for Omniscience and Omnipresence put the question out of court and decides the thing at once. Besides, it is not necessary that it should be so. The life germs of the two bodies may not have mixed together. God has set His angels to watch over them, as He set Michael to watch over the body of Moses and He will bring out the two life germs and they shall be developed and the two bodies shall start up separately at the sound of the archangel’s trump.

Remember, then, and doubt not that the very body in which you sinned shall be the very body in which you shall suffer in Hell—and the body in which you believe in Christ and in which you yield yourselves to God, shall be the very body in which you shall walk the golden streets and in which you shall praise the name of God forever and ever.

So much upon this first point. But observe, while the identity is real, the transformation is glorious. The body here is mortal, always subject to decay. We dwell in a poor uncomfortable tent, continually is the canvas being rent, the cords are being loosed and the tent pins are being pulled up. We are full of sufferings and aches and pains, which are but the premonitions of coming death. We all know, some by our decayed teeth, which are, as I said the other day, but the emblems of a decayed man. Others by those gray hairs which are scattered here and there. We all know that our bodies are so constituted that they cannot remain here except for a limited period and they must—so God has willed it—return to their native dust.

Not so, however, the new body—“It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” It will be a body upon which the tooth of time can have no power and into which the dart of death can never be thrust. Age shall roll after age, but that body shall exist in everlasting youth. It shall sing, but never shall its song be stayed by weakness. It shall fly, but never shall its flight flag with weariness. There shall be no signs of mortality. The shroud and the spade are never seen in Heaven. Such a thing as an open grave shall never appear in the celestial kingdom—there they live, live, live, but never, never, never shall they die. See then, how different the body must be. For as this body is made, every nerve and every blood vessel tells me I must die—it cannot be otherwise—I must endure this stern decree, “Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes.” But in Heaven every nerve of the new body shall cry, “Immortality.” Every part of that new frame shall speak for itself and tell to the immortal spirit that they are everlasting companions, managed in eternal wedlock.

There shall be, moreover, a great change in the new body as to its beauty. “It is sown in dishonor. It shall be raised in glory.” The old metaphor employed by all preachers upon this doctrine must be used again. You see here a crawling caterpillar, a picture of yourself, a creature that eats and drinks and may readily be trod on. Wait a few weeks, that caterpillar shall spin itself a cover, lie down, become inactive and sleep. A

picture of what you shall do. You must spin your winding-sheet and then be laid in the tomb. But wait awhile. When the warmth of the sun shall come, that apparently lifeless thing shall burst its sheath. The chrysalis shall fall off and the insect fly forth equipped with glittering wings. Having arrived at its full state of perfection, the image, the very image of the creature, shall be seen by us all dancing in the sunbeam.

So shall we, after passing through our wormwood here to our chrysalis state in the grave, burst our coffins and mount aloft glorious winged creatures made like unto the angels—the same creatures, but oh, so changed, so different, that we should scarce know our former selves if we could be able to meet them again after we have been glorified in Heaven!

There shall be a change, then, in our form and nature. Old master Spenser, who was a rare hand at making metaphors, says, “The body here is like an old rusty piece of iron, but Death shall be the blacksmith—he shall take it and he shall make it hot in his fire—until it shall sparkle and send forth burning heat and look bright and shining.” And so surely is it. We are thrust into the earth as into the fire and there shall we be made to sparkle and to shine and to be full of radiance—no more the rusty things that we once were, but fiery spirits, like the cherubim and the seraphim— we shall wear a power and a glory the like of which we have not even yet conceived!

Again—another transformation shall take place, namely, in power. “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” The same body that is weak, shall be raised in power. We are puny things here. There is a limit to our labors and our usefulness is straightened by reason of our inability to perform what we would. And oh, how weak we become when we die! A man must be carried by his own friends to his own grave. He cannot even lay himself down in his last resting place. Passively he submits to be laid out, to be wrapped up in his winding-sheet and to be shut up in the darkness of the grave. Silently, passively he submits to be carried away with the pall covered over him and to be put into the earth. The clods are shoveled over him, but he knows it not, neither could he resist his burial if he were conscious of it. But that powerless body shall be raised in power.

That was a fine idea of Martin Luther, which he borrowed from St. Anselm, that the saints shall be so strong when they are risen from the dead, that if they chose they could shake the world. They could pull up islands by their roots, or hurl mountains into the air. Some modern writers, borrowing their ideas from Milton, where he speaks of the battles of the angels, where they plucked up the hills with all their shaggy loads, rivers and trees at once and hurled them at the fallen spirits, have taught that we shall be clothed with gigantic force. I think if we do not go the length of the poets, we have every reason to believe that the power of the risen body will be utterly inconceivable.

These, however, are but guesses at the truth. This great mystery is yet beyond us. I believe that when I shall enter upon my new body, I shall be able to fly from one spot to another, like a thought, as swiftly as I will. I shall be here and there, swift as the rays of light. From strength to strength, my spirit shall be able to leap onward to obey the behests of God. Up, borne with wings of ether, it shall flash its way across that shoreless sea and see the glory of God in all His works and yet ever behold His face. For the eyes shall then be strong enough to pierce through leagues of distance and the memory shall never fail. The heart shall be able to love to a fiery degree and the head to comprehend right thoroughly. It does not yet appear what we shall be.

But, Brothers and Sisters, to come back to reality and leave fiction for a moment, though it does not *appear* what we shall be, yet we *know* that when he shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. And do you know what we shall be like, if we shall be like He? Behold the picture of what Jesus Christ is like and we shall be like He. “I saw,” says John, “one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. And His eyes were as a flame of fire and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace and His voice as the sound of many waters.

“And He had in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” Such shall we be when we are like Christ. What tongue can tell, what soul can guess the glories that surround the saints when they start from their beds of dust and rise to immortality!?

But now, to turn away from these, which I fear to very many of you are rather uninteresting particulars, let me give you one or two figures which may show to you the change which shall take place in us on the day of resurrection.

Do you see yonder beggar? He is picking rags from a dunghill. He pulls out piece after piece from the heap of dust, as he uses his rake. You may see the like any day, if you will go to those great dust yards in Agar Town. There he pulls out piece after piece and puts it in his basket. What can be the value of those miserable old rags? He takes them away, they are carried off, picked, sorted, rag to its own rag, like to like. By-and-by they are washed, they are put into the mill, they are beaten hard, they are smashed, they are ground to pulp and what is that I see just coming out of yonder mill? A clear white sheet, without a stain and from where came this?

“I am the son of the old rag,” says he, “no, I am the identical rag that was but a few hours ago picked from the dunghill.” Oh, strange! Does purity come out of impurity and does this beauty, this utility come out of that which was neither comely nor useful, but which men loathed and cast away as a  
worthless thing?

See here, Brothers and Sisters, the picture of yourselves. Your bodies are like rags, put away into this vast dunghill earth and there buried. But the angel shall come and sort you, body to its body, the righteous to the righteous, the wicked to the wicked—they shall come together, bone to his bone and flesh to his flesh. And what do I see?—I behold a body like unto an angel, with eyes of fire and a face like the brightness of the sun and wings like lightning for swiftness. Where did you come from, you bright spirit? “I am he that was buried, I am that thing that once was worms’ meat, but now I am glorious through the name of Jesus and through the power of God.” You have there before you a picture of the resurrection, a homely picture, it is true, but one which may vividly convey the idea to homely minds.

Take another—one used of old by that mighty preacher, Chrysostom— there is an old house, a straight and narrow cottage and the inhabitant of it often shivers with the cold winter and is greatly oppressed by the heat of summer. It is ill adapted to his wants—the windows are too small and very dark—he cannot keep his treasure safely therein. He is often a prisoner. And when I have passed by his house I have heard him sighing at the window—“Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

The good master comes, the landlord of the house—he speaks to the tenant and he bids him come away—“I am about to pull down your old house,” says he, “and I would not have you here while I am pulling it stone from stone, lest you be hurt and injured. Come away with me and live in my palace, while I am pulling your old house to pieces.” He does so and every stone of the old house is thrown down. It is leveled with the ground and even the foundations are dug up.

Another is built—it is of costly slabs of marble, the windows thereof are pure and clear, all its gates are of agate and all its borders of precious stones—while all the foundations are of chrysolite and the roof is of jasper. And now the master of the house speaks to the old inhabitant, “Come back and I will show you the house which I have built for you.” O what joy when that inhabitant shall enter and find it so well adapted to his wants—where every power shall have full range, where he shall see God out of its windows, not as through a glass, darkly, but face to face, where he could invite even Christ Himself to come and sup with him and not feel that the house is beneath the dignity of the Son of Man!

You know the parable, you know how your old house, this clay body, is to be pulled down, how your spirit is to dwell in Heaven for a little while without a body. And how afterwards you are to enter into a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, a mansion which is holy, incorruptible and undefiled and which shall never decay.

To use yet a fresh figure—I see a beggar passing by a rich man’s door. That poor wretch is covered with filth. His garments are hanging about him in pieces as if the wind would blow all away and drive both man and garments among the rags upon the dunghill. How he shivers, how he seeks to pull about him that scant cloak which will not meet around his loins and will not shield him from the blast. As for his shoes, they are, indeed, old and clouted and all his garments are of such a sort that one never could know the original, for they have been mended and patched a thousand times—and now they need to be mended and patched again.

He is freely invited to come into the rich man’s hall. We will not tell you what is done in the meantime, but we will see him come out of that door again and would you know him? Would you believe that he is the same man? He has been washed and cleansed. On his back there hangs the imperial purple, while on his head glitters a brilliant crown. His feet are shod with silver and on his hands there are rings of gold. About the paps he wears a golden girdle. And as he comes abroad bright spirits wait on him and do him honor—angels wait to be his servants and think it to be their highest pleasure to fly to do his will. Is this the same man and is this the same dress? It is the same. By some marvelous might, rather by a Divine energy, God has received this beggar, taken him into the inner chamber of the grave—has washed him from all imperfections. And now he comes out as one of the princes of the blood royal of Heaven. And as is his nature, such is his apparel. As is his dignity, such is his estate and such the company of servants who wait upon him.

Not to multiply illustrations, we will use but one more. I see before me an old and battered cup which many a sin-black lip has touched, out of which many a villain’s throat has received moisture. It is battered and covered over with filth. Who could tell what metal it is? It is brought in and given to the silversmith. He no sooner receives it, than he begins to break it into pieces—he dashes it into shivers again and again. He pounds it until he has broken it and then puts it into his fining pot and melts it. Now you begin to see it sparkle again and by-and-by he beats it out and fashions it into a goodly chalice, out of which a king may drink. Is this the same? The very same thing.

This glorious cup is this the old battered silver we saw just now. Silver did I say, it looked like battered filth. Yes it is the same and we who are here below like vessels, alas, too unfit for the Master’s use. Vessels which have even given comfort to the evil ones and helped to do the work of Satan—we shall be put into the furnace of the grave and be there melted down and fired and fashioned into a glorious wine cup that shall stand upon the banqueting table of the Son of God.

I have thus sought to illustrate the change, and now I will occupy your attention but one or two minutes on another thought which seems to lie within the range of my text. We have had the real identity under the glorious transformation. I bring you back to a thought kindred to the first. There will be in the bodies of the righteous an undoubted personality of character. If you sow barley, it will not produce wheat—if you sow tares— they will not spring up in the form of rye. Every grain has its own peculiar form—God has given to every seed his own body.

So, my Brothers and Sisters, there are differences among us here. No two bodies are precisely alike—there are marks on our countenances and in our bodily conformation that show that we are different. We are of one blood, but not of one fashion. Well, when we are put into the grave we shall crumble back and come to the same elements. But when we rise we shall everyone of us rise different from the other. The body of Paul shall not produce a body precisely like that of Peter. Nor shall the flesh of Andrew bring forth a new body like that of the sons of Zebedee, but to every seed his own body.

In the case of our blessed Lord and Master, you will remember that when He rose Himself from the dead He preserved His personality—there were still the wounds in His hands and still there was the spear mark in His side. I do not doubt that when He underwent His transfiguration and at the time of His ascension up to Heaven, He still retained the marks of His wounds. For do we not sing and is not our song based upon

Scripture?— ***“He looks like a Lamb that has been slain, And wears His priesthood still”?***

So, Brethren, though of course we shall retain no weaknesses, nothing which will cause sorrow, yet every Christian will retain his individuality. He will be like and yet unlike all his fellows. As we know Isaiah from Jeremy here, so shall we know them above. As I differ from you here, if we two shall together praise God, there shall be some difference between us above. Not the difference in failings, but the difference in the perfections of the form of the new body. I sometimes think martyrs will wear their scars. And why should they not? It were a loss to them if they should lose their honors. Perhaps they shall wear their ruby crown in Paradise and we

shall know them— ***“Foremost among the sons of light  
‘Midst the bright ones doubly bright.”***

Perhaps the men who come from the catacombs of Rome will wear some sort of pallor on their brow that will show that they came from darkness, where they saw not the light of the sun. Perhaps the minister of Christ, though he shall not need to say to his fellows, “know the Lord,” shall still be chief among the proclaimers of the ways of God. Perhaps the sweet singer of Israel shall still be foremost in the choir of the golden harps and loudest among them that shall lead the strain. And if these are fancies, yet am I sure that one star differs from another star in glory. Orion shall not be confounded with Arcturus, nor shall Mazaroth for a moment be confounded with Orion.

We shall all be separate and distinct. Perhaps we shall each one have our constellation there, as we shall cluster into our own societies and gather around those whom we best have known on earth. Personality will be maintained. I do not doubt but what you will know Isaiah in Heaven and you will recognize the great preachers of the ancient Christian Church. You will be able to speak with Chrysostom and will talk with Whitfield. It may be you shall have for your companions those who were your companions here. Those with whom you took sweet counsel and walked to the House of God, shall be with you there and you shall know them. And with transporting joy you shall there together tell your former trials and ancient triumphs—and the glories you are alike made to share. Treasure up, then, these things, the identity of your body after its glorious transformation and, at the same time, the personality which will prevail.

I want, now, your solemn attention for some five minutes, while I sketch a most fearful contrast here. The things I have already spoken should make the children of God happy. At Stratford-on-Bow, in the days of Queen Mary, there was once a stake erected for the burning of two martyrs, one of them a lame man, the other a blind man. Just when the fire was lit, the lame man hurled away his staff and turning round said to the blind man, “Courage, Brother, this fire will cure us both.” So can the righteous say of the grave, “Courage, the grave will cure us all, we shall leave our infirmities behind us.”

What patience this should give us to endure all our trials, for they are not of long duration. They are but as the carvings of the graver’s tool, shaping these rough blocks of clay, to bring them into the right form and shape, that they may bear the image of the heavenly. But the contrast is awful. Brethren, the *wicked* must also rise again from the dead. The lips with which you have drunk the intoxicating drink till you have reeled again—those lips shall be used in drinking down the fiery wrath of God. Remember, too, ungodly woman, the eyes that are full of lust will one day be full of horror—the ears with which you listen to lascivious conversation must listen to the sullen moans, the hollow groans and shrieks of tortured ghosts.

Be not deceived. You sinned in your *body*, you will be damned in your *body*. When you die your spirit must suffer alone—that will be the beginning of Hell—but your body must rise again, then this very flesh in which you have transgressed the Laws of God—this very body must smart for it. It must be in the fire and burn and crack and writhe throughout eternity. Your body will be raised incorruptible, otherwise the fire would consume it. It will become like the asbestos stone, which lies in the flame and yet is never consumed. If it were this flesh and blood it would soon die under the pangs we must endure—but it will be a body all but omnipotent.

As I spoke of the righteous having such great power, so shall you have. But it will be power to *agonize*, power to *suffer*, power to die and yet to live, uncrushed by the stern foot of death. Think of this, you sensualists, who care not for your souls, but who pamper your bodies. You shall have that fair complexion scorched away—those members that have become instruments of lust, shall become instruments of Hell. Rotting as they will do in the grave, they shall nevertheless rise with a fiery immortality about them and endure an eternity of agony and unutterable woe and punishment. Is not that enough to make a man tremble and cry, “God be merciful unto me, a sinner”?

But further, remember that while your body shall be identically the same, yet it, too, will be transformed and as the wheat brings forth the wheat, so the nettle seed brings forth the nettle. What your body will be like I cannot tell, but perhaps as the body of the righteous will come to be like Christ, yours may become like the body of the devil. Whatever that may be—the same hideous conformation, the same demon gaze and hellish stare which characterize that proud archangel shall characterize you. You shall have the image and the lineaments of the first traitor stamped upon your fire-enduring face. Seeds of sin, are you prepared to ripen into the full blown flower of destruction?

You Seeds of evil, are you ready to be scattered now from Death’s hand and then to spring up an awful harvest of tormented ones? Yet so it must be unless you turn to God. Except you repent, He has said and He will do it, He is able to cast both body and soul into Hell. And let me remind you yet once again, that there will be in you an undoubted personality—you will be known in Hell. The drunkard shall have the drunkard’s punishment. The swearer shall have the swearer’s corner to himself. “Bind them up in bundles to burn and cast them into the fire.” Thus says the voice of inflexible Justice.

You shall not suffer in another man’s body but in your own and you shall be known to be the very man that sinned against God. You shall be looked at by one who sees you today, if you die impenitent, who will say to you, “We went up to that hall together. We heard a sermon on the resurrection which had a frightful ending. We laughed at it, but we have found out that it is true.” And one will say to the other, “I should have known you, though we have not met these many years till we met in Hell. I should have known you, there is something about your new body which lets me know that it is the same body that you had on earth.” And then you will mutually say to one another, “These pangs that we are now enduring, this horror of great darkness, these chains of fire that are reserved for us—are they not well deserved?”

And you will curse God together again and suffer together and will be made to feel that you have only received the due reward of your deeds. “Did not the man warn us,” you will say, “did he not warn us, did he not bid us fly to Christ for refuge? Did we not despise it and make a jeer of what he said? We are rightly punished. We damned ourselves, we cut our own throats—we kindled Hell for ourselves and found the fuel of our own burning forever and ever.”

Oh, my dear Hears, I cannot bear to stay on this subject. Let me finish with just this word. “Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” That means you, poor man, though perhaps you were drunk last night and scarcely got up in time enough to come here this morning. If you believe, William, you shall be saved. This means you, poor woman, harlot though you are—if you cast yourself on Christ you are saved. This means you, respectable man, you who trust in yours own works—if you rely on Christ you shall be saved, but not if you trust in yourself.

Oh, be wise, be wise! May God give us grace now to learn that highest wisdom and may we now look to the Cross and to the quivering Lamb that bleeds upon it and see Him as He rises from the dead and ascends up on high—and believing in Him may we receive the hope and the assurance of a blissful resurrection in Him.

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A CHALLENGE AND WAR CRY  
NO. 2929

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 1905.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my Beloved brethren, be you steadfast, immovable,~~***

***~~always abounding in the work of the Lord, for so much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:55-58.~~***

THERE is little fear that the minister of this flock should forget that man is mortal. Where men are massed in such numbers, we not only believe in mortality, we see it. We hear the funeral knell like the striking of the clock—habitually. The mower always has work in this pasture— every week the great gleaner has some ears of corn to gather in this harvest field and every time we assemble in this house we have to remember that some who were with us when we met before have crossed the flood and entered into their rest. We cannot forget this.

But, my dear Friends, there is a danger lest you should forget it. Not being able to take a glimpse over so large a company as this, if your children have been spared to you, if your house has been unvisited by death for this last 19 or 20 years, you may be apt to think that you have immunity given to you—that you will never come to the grave—that death may arrest others, but that you sit alone in some privileged security and shall see no sorrow, that the arrows may fly and strike on the right hand and on the left, but that you walk invulnerable among the dead. It is well, therefore, in order to cool the hot blood of our youth and to stir the dull blood of our old age, that we should ofttimes make a journey to the tomb and reflect on death, judgment, resurrection, and eternity. In these busy times, when men have so much to do in order to live, it may be of much service to them to think how certainly they must die. ‘Tis greatly wise to talk about our last hours. The shroud, the grave, the shovel may teach us more of true wisdom than all the learned heads that ever pondered vain philosophy, or all the lips that ever uttered earth-born science!

Now, I intend tonight, as God the Holy Spirit shall enable me, to address my text first to Believers in Christ and then briefly to warn those who are as yet not included in that happy number. I must leave your conscience to judge to which class you belong. I fondly hope that no one will be so perverse as to take encouragement that does not belong to him, but that every man will be wise enough and honest enough to his own heart to take just that truth which fits his own case and lay it home to his conscience and to his heart.

**I.**First of all, THE MESSAGE TO BELIEVERS. We take this text, not with the hope of exploring it, but with the thought of skimming the surface with the swallow, rather than diving into its depths like leviathan.

There are three things on the surface—A brief but unparalleled challenge given to two dreadful and invincible foes “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?” A glorious paean of splendid triumph—“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory,” and a war cry addressed by a great commander to his soldiers—“Brethren, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

There is here, first, *a double challenge*: “O Death, where is your sting?” Death, you skeleton monarch, where is your sting? Fleshless rider upon the pale horse, we ask you, where is your sting? With a horrible and ghastly smile, he answers us, “My sting? You have but to open your eyes and see it and before long I shall make your flesh quiver with it when I send it in even to your very soul! Where is my sting? Is it no sting to you to know that you must leave everything you call dear on the earth, that your estates must be left behind you and your broad acres must be all renounced? Is it nothing to you that your houses and your lands, your merriments and your enjoyments, your feasts and your riots must be forsaken? That the hearth and everything that is genial in the family, friendship and the communion of generous hearts and everything that makes glad the eyes or cheers the ears must be left behind you? For your eyes—when filmed by my finger—to no more see the landscape, the rugged mountain, or the plain? For your ears, when I have sealed them in eternal silence, to no more hear the voice of them that make merry, no more hear the music or the choral hymn? You shall be deaf forever when I cast you into the grave! Is it no sting to you to leave the enjoyments of the House of God? For you no more the communion of the body and blood of Christ? For you no more the gladsome seasons when the tribes come up to the House of the Lord with willing footsteps to keep holy day and magnify Him who has loved them and given Himself for them? Is it no sting to remember that soon you must gaze, for the last time, upon the cheek which is now so fair in your sight? That soon you must take the last fond gaze of her who is the partner of your life? That you must leave everything, taking nothing with you, returning to the earth naked as you came from your mother’s womb, stripped, bereft of everything, a penniless beggar, going back to the vile dust from where you did spring— is there no sting in this?”

“Where is my sting? Ask the gray-headed,” the monster says, “whether they already do not feel the pangs of it! Their eyes grow weak, the strong pillars of the house of man begins to fail, the breath comes heavily, the hair is blanched—the grasshopper has become a burden and the teeth cease because they are few! Ask me where is my sting? Even the young can feel it, for, if they think at all, they know that every breath they draw is but a step towards the tomb and that their pulses—

***‘Like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.’”***

“Where is my sting?” asks Death. “Look to the widow in whose heart my sting is rankling now. The beloved of her soul has departed and she is left to mourn like a dove without her mate. Ask the fatherless where the sting of death is as they are driven into the street, received by the cold hand of public charity, scarcely housed and fed. Where is my sting? Ask the weeping child as he looks down into the coffin upon the dead face of the mother that once toiled and labored for him, who once cherished and loved him, but who has now gone to the place appointed for all living! Aha! Aha,” he says, “where is my sting? You have all felt it in the departure of your best beloved ones, when you most wished to have them. The State has felt it. I smote the fellow with the crowned head and laid him low! I smote again and took away the statesman when he had returned from a distant empire laden with the spoils of many years experience! I have with my sting taken away the rich and the mighty, the beautiful and the lovely, the learned, the pious, the good, the benevolent! I have taken them away just when the world needed them the most, till I made good men say, ‘The righteous perish and the godly man ceases from the earth.’ Ask me where is my sting?” he cries, and drives his white horse of terror onward and dashes from us in disdain!

Yes, Death, but we still defy you, and though you have thus vented your spleen, we cry to you again, “Have at you, Death! Have at you! You have no sting, for all your boast! To Believers you are now a stingless locust! Hold awhile till we hear the other tyrant, your powerful confederate.”

“O Grave, where is your victory?” From its hollow depth the Grave replies, “Ask me where is my victory? Why, O foolish son of Adam, do you not ask where is *not* my victory? From Machpelah to Gethsemane I have had my splendid triumphs. Onward, from the first age even until now I have proved to men that I am victor. Where are my triumphs? Open the soil upon which your fair world rests and see if every vault is not filled with a putrid mass of rotten mortality! Could you bring up your fellows from the grave and pile them above the sod, there would be so many dead that there would not be room for the living! Yes, heap them up, heap them up till they make a pyramid higher than the Egyptian Pharaoh ever reared—pile them up and they will outreach the Alps and salute the morning star with their dread heights of rottenness!

“Where is my victory? Ask every howling tempest as it drives the ship like a cockleshell before it. Ask every sunken rock and reef and icebound shore. Where is my victory? Ask the battlefield of yesterday, all gory with blood shed by a brother’s hands, where sons of Anglo-Saxon mothers lie upon the plains of their own country, slain by their own brothers’ hands! Where is my victory? From Waterloo go back to Trafalgar—stretch your wings and fly to ancient times, to Salamis and Marathon, or farther back still—speak of all that Sennacherib did, and the mighty host that went before him when he smote the loins of kings and slew hecatombs of their subjects in an hour!

“Where is my victory? There is not a spot of ground but feels it. There is not an age but must testify thereunto. The signs of it are everywhere! Look at yonder lovely nook where birds are singing and sweet flowers are springing up from the green sod. You will say, ‘Death has never been here.’ But what are those hillocks bound with the brown bramble? I *have* been here and here keep I my place! Look yonder where the white stones stand up like the very teeth of death and see how I have devoured my thousands! From yonder busy city they bring them out by scores each day and lay them in the tomb—and yet you ask me where is my victory? Why, you are, every one of you, captives of my perpetual triumphing! You are marching on, every one of you, downwards to my jaws! Go where you may, you are always coming down to my doors. I shall soon shut my gates upon you, every one of you. Strong and healthy men, men of brawny arms, men of massive intellect, men whose limbs totter not, though you bear mighty burdens, I shall one of these days receive you, helpless as little children—and you shall lie in your white cerements, in your wooden case—and I shall then prove to you and to the world where my victory is!”

Even as we tremblingly listen, the Grave shuts its yawning mouth and all is still save where the voice of faith, looking down upon the dry bones and believing that they shall yet live, cries, “Despite your vaunt, you braggart, your boastings are as hollow as yourself! Where is your victory? We will prove you impotent yet, O desperate Grave! You have no triumphs! Our Lord, Jehovah’s Christ, the Resurrection—He has broken open your portals and made through your territories a wide passage for all Believers to the Land of Promise. What though—

***‘An angel’s arm can’t snatch me from the grave, Legions of angels can’t confine me there!’”***

Turn now, O Believer, and sing a paean of triumph. “The sting of death is sin.” Through Jesus Christ that is forgiven. “The strength of sin is the Law.” Through Christ Jesus that has ceased to thunder, for it has been fulfilled and has become our friend. Therefore, “thanks be unto God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Prepare, then, the voice of joyous thanksgiving! Make ready your triumphal hymn! Death, we now triumph over you. You have spoken, but now we will speak and answer you to your face! Death has no sting to a Believer. Once death was the penalty of sin—sin being forgiven, the penalty ceases and Christians do not die, now, as a punishment for their sin, but they die that they may be prepared to live! They are unclothed that they may be clothed upon with that house which is from Heaven! They leave the tenement of clay that they may inherit the eternal mansion!

There is no sting left in you, O Death, in yourself. As for all you can tell us of aches and pains and groans, we know that all these things work together for our good! As for what you tell us of your gloom and of your horror, we believe in nothing that you say, for, if Christ is with us, we will walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and fear no evil!

As you have lost your sting in yourself, O Death, so you have also lost your sting as to all that we lose by you. You tell us that we lose the sights of earth, but, skeleton king, we gain the sights of Heaven! What are the landscapes of this dusky world compared with the azure skies, the lakes of crystal and the plains of everlasting green in the land of light and glory? What are the cities of this world—the giant cities of the West, the fairy cities of the East—what are they all compared with Jerusalem, the golden city, the pearly-gated, the city whose walls are jasper, whose very paving stones are laid with fair colors? Lose by losing earth? Surely in gaining Heaven the loss is all forgotten! You say our ears are closed—it is not so—they are opened to hear the seraph’s hymns and to listen to the music of the cherubim, awful, sublime and beautiful! You say we leave behind us wealth and wit and friends. Fool that you are, ‘tis wealth we gain—and all is dross we leave behind! And as for friends, we have as many—yes, and many more—and they are better, too, than those we leave on earth. We have beloved ones that have crossed the flood and at their head we have One who is better to us than a million friends, the Chief among Ten Thousand, the Altogether Lovely! As for all that you can take away, take it and welcome, since the joy which shall be revealed in us is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory! This far surpasses the light affliction of losing all that earth can give.

Death, we tell you again that your sting is taken away as to the friends we have lost. The widow, weeping, tells you that she does not feel your sting, for her husband is in Heaven and she is following him as speedily as time can carry her. The mother tells you, Death, that through Divine Grace you have no sting in her thoughts concerning her infants. She rejoices to know that at her breast there once did hang immortal spirits that now behold the Savior’s face! And we say to you, Death, concerning all beloved ones who have gone, that we sorrow not over them and would not—

***“Break their placid sleep,***

***Nor lure them from their home above.”***  
We devoutly thank the Father of spirits, who has safely housed them beyond fear of damage and brought them to the desired haven where no rough wind or tempestuous wave shall ever rock their keel again. “Blessed,” we say, as we repeat the voice from Heaven, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” And that voice from Heaven responds again, in tones articulate, “Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”—

***“Thus brighter hopes, that are not dreams, Their light around the spirit shed  
And Heaven itself breaks out in gleams  
Of Glory round the dying bed.”***

Death, you have no sting—your pains are loosed! So what if your face is pale, your shadow dark as you flit across the chamber? So what if frail nature shrinks and shudders at your dart? Kind Jesus, help us—we cling to You and all our spirit bravely cries in calm defiance, lively faith and holy rapture—“O Death, where is your sting? Thanks be unto God who gives us the victory!”

As for the grave, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us answer its foulmouthed boasts. We tell the grave that it has no victory in itself. ‘Tis true we shall sleep in it, but we sleep as victors! We hear the shout of triumph and we lie down as warriors taking their rest, not as vanquished ones. Christ has made the tomb, which was once a prison, a resting place for the bodies of His saints. He has made the tomb His royal closet where he bids His beloved lay aside the dusky garments of their work days till they shall be cleansed and made meet to be the garments of His everlasting holy days in Heaven! O Grave, when you do encompass our bodies, you are yourself defeated—you are our servant—call us not your slaves! We conquer before we come to nestle in your bosom. O, Grave, we have lost nothing but the like of that we committed to your keeping when we placed the slumbering forms of friends we dearly loved to lodge within your arms. Their relics are there, but they are in Heaven! Their corruption is there, but the earnest of their resurrection is on high and that which lives in deathless immortality is above! There they lie, for flesh and blood have sin—let them lie there, for flesh and blood must be purified. But they shall live and we tell you, Grave, that when the trumpet sound, you must give back our friends to us 10 times more dear than they were when, with hollow sound of, “Dust to dust and ashes to ashes,” we laid them in your cold embrace. You have no victory, ‘tis but a temporary triumph—you must give back your prey!

O Grave, you talk of corruption—what is it but as the fuller’s bath wherein the body lies till it is made of purest white? You speak of cold vaults, darkness and damp—what are all these but fit accompaniments of the process in which the corruption shall become incorruption and the mortal, immortality? We smile at all your horrors. We salute you as the place where we shall take repose awhile rather than as the dungeon of our souls’ imprisonment! O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?

I wish I could set these matters tonight in language such as Christmas Evans would have used in his glowing moments. This is a right glowing theme that might make a dumb man speak and might summon the ears of the deaf to listen! Christ has vanquished death by dying! He has disrobed the grave of its triumphal garments by wearing its cerements Himself! He consecrated the sepulcher by slumbering in its dark recess! Death is now no more the destroying angel, the tomb no more a morgue! Behold, as Samson carried the gates of Gaza to the top of Hebron—doors, posts, bars and all—so has Christ carried the gates of Death to the top of Heaven’s hill—posts, bars and all—and all the legions of Hell cannot bring back the trophies which our Samson has torn away! Once bound, Himself, with cords by His own brethren, He snapped them as though they were green withs and in heaps upon heaps He has laid His enemies dead at His feet! Sin, and Death and Hell—all are vanquished by the Man that once was bound, but who now binds captivity and leads it captive! Sing unto Him, you spirits that are redeemed before the Throne of God! Lift up your hallelujahs, clap your wings, sweep your harps and say, “All hail You, vanquisher of Death, destroyer of the grave!” Let the echo reverberate to the lowest depths of Hell and let the fiends bite their firetormented tongues and gnash their teeth in vain, while that song is echoed in notes like these, “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?”

Now listen! Oh, listen! Heed *the war cry of our Great Captain*. “Therefore, my Beloved brethren, be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Alas for the embattled hosts of God’s elect, if you, O Death, did seal the dispatch from the gory field of battle and you, O Grave, did hollow out the niche where the warrior should receive in holy fear his honorable due! “If in this life, only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

‘Twere a troublous and a toilsome thing, in truth, to be steadfast if there were no reward! Christian men and women, to you is this word of admonition given. Inasmuch as you shall not die but live. Inasmuch as you are the heirs of immortality and life, Christ bids you this day be steadfast! Be steadfast in your Doctrine. Hold the Truth of God, and especially the solemn Truth of Resurrection! Hold it firmly, as with an iron grip. Be you steadfast in holiness—let nothing move you—stand for the right. Remember, if the earth reels, your hands are on the stars and, therefore, you need not lose your hold. Be you steadfast in your profession—blush not, hide not your candle under a bushel. The glory that is to be revealed will make you good amends for all the shame and contumely that the reproach of Christ may bring upon you. Be you steadfast in everything that is a matter of faith to you—steadfast in your firm belief of Christ’s Redemption of your souls—steadfast in the full conviction that you are the adopted children of your Heavenly Father— steadfast in your continual perseverance in Sanctification that you may be fitted for the embrace of your Lord! Be you steadfast like mountains that never move, like the hidden pillars of granite on which, though eyes have never seen, this large globe rests! Like those under-lying rocks which bear up all the deep soil, be you everlastingly steadfast!

Temptation will come—“be you immovable.” Like cedars rocked in the storm, but never uprooted—like lighthouses against which the huge waves dash and over which the mountains of foam will leap, be you bright in testimony but never stirred in steadfastness. Like some peak that glitters in the sun and soon is shivered in the lightning, yet still stand looking up to the next storm and defying the next blow! “Be you immovable.” As the anvil to the stroke of the hammer, so bear you persecution, affliction, temptation—let none of these things move you, neither count your life dear unto you. Immortality! Be that your watchword as you stand in your ranks while the shot is flying and the foe is advancing. When you are bidden not to advance, but to stand still— “having done all to stand”—be this your reflection, “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Immortality shall make amends for all your pain and suffering here! Resurrection shall restore all you seem to lose in the fray.

Be you “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Be you working here and there, at home and abroad—in the morning when the first ruddy streak paints the brow of the young dawn—at noon when the hot sun pours out its lavish floods of light, at eventide when the birds are going to their rest and at midnight, if there is a fallen Sister who at no other hour can be reached. “In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand.” With a heart for any strife, be first and foremost in every conflict—dash in at every skirmish and be in your rank at every decisive struggle. Hide not your face from shame and spitting! Turn not back from labor or from scorn—“in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” on earth, but that bread which you eat in Heaven, so gloriously won by the Grace of God, shall be all the sweeter for the sweat that was lavished upon it! “Always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

But I hear some of you say, “To what end is all this strain?” “Ah,” says one young man, “I have been steadfast and immovable and I have lost my job. Instead of being prospered by it, I have suffered loss.” Well, there is another and a better land—your wrongs shall be righted there. Think of the rest which remains for the people of God! “Ah,” says a mother, “but I trained up my little child and she just began to gladden my heart with her first prayer—and then she died.” Refrain your eyes from weeping, for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord—she lives a better life than she could have lived with you. I, too, may ask, “To what end?” I may say that I see many brought to Christ and what becomes of them?—they die. In the college, out of our small numbers, two men we trained for the ministry have fallen asleep in Christ—one while yet a student and the other when he had but departed from us a few months. Well, but what of all this? They live! We trained them for the skies and made them choristers for eternity!

Our work is not lost. We must be steadfast, always abounding in God’s work while here. It seems to me that this is the end for which the Sunday school teacher, the mother, the father, the minister should always be working. What does the farmer look for? Is he content when he sees his corn turning yellow to say, “How straight it stands! What a good harvest there is!”? No, no, he never counts what he has in his harvest till they shout the “Harvest Home.” So we should think our work is never rewarded to the full till souls, saved through our means, get to Heaven and until we get there to meet them there! I see some dear Brothers and Sisters here who I have no doubt look for many souls to meet them at the gates of Paradise—and I can cast my eye over a Sister, here and there in this Church who, highly honored of God, will have young spirits to meet them at Heaven’s gate and salute them joyfully as mothers in Israel! Happy, happy we who, when we wing our way to Heaven, shall hear a band behind us—and when we turn our heads, wondering who they are, shall hear each say, “You did bring me to Christ! You did teach me His blessed name! You did rescue me from sin and vice! You have led me along the golden shining path to Heaven and here I am, to share your bliss forever.” Brethren, there is another and a better land”—therefore be you steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

**II.**We will pause a minute and then use our text for a very short time, indeed, for the other part of the congregation, uttering A WARNING TO UNBELIEVERS.

Where are they? Where shall I point my finger? Where shall I present my gaze? They are mingled everywhere—in almost every pew! In these aisles and in the pews we have men and woman who do not love Christ, who have not passed from death unto life. Strangers, yes, and those that hear us every Sabbath, too, to our pain and grief are here—hundreds, hundreds, hundreds that are still enemies to God and in the gall of bitterness!

Hear me, then, hear me! *To you death has a sting*. It will sting you in death. It will plague you on your pillow. It will make you toss your aching head. It will make your heart palpitate with a huge unutterable dread. You shall feel the sting and your friends shall see that you feel it by those dread expressions of awful gloom which shall come over you on the bed of death! And there will be a sting after death, a sting the moment you are dead. Summoned before your God, you shall hear your sentence and there will be a sting in judgment! When the body shall rise from the grave, then there will be a sting forever and forever, in the second death—forever and forever! Is there any man here who can measure eternity? Who can tell its everlasting years? Yet all the while there shall be a sting in death and such a sting, and such a terror, and such a misery, and such a torment as only they can know who have begun to feel it—and even they know it not, for still it is forever and forever, when twice ten thousand thousand years have gone—forever and still forever!

There a sting in Death*to you* and *over you the Grave will get the victory*, for the Grave shall devour you! When you wake up from it, again, it shall not be to newness of life—it shall not be in the image of the Second Adam, but in the image of the first—and perhaps in the image of the first Adam in all the decay and loathsomeness into which death brought him! I know not in what form the wicked dead shall rise. It may be they shall, even in their bodies, be the objects of everlasting contempt, devoured by the worm that never dies, so that their very flesh will give evidence of it. O my Hearers, if these things are true, it is time that we woke up! It is time that saints woke up to try and bring you to Christ! It is high time that you also awoke up out of slumber! “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” “for our God is a consuming fire.” Are you ready to meet God? Are you ready for the Judgment? Can you confront the Judge? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burning, or abide with the devouring flames? Do you shudder? Do you say, “Great God save us from our sin”?

The path is easy. The path is open—God wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn unto Him and live! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! Trust Jesus now and you are saved at once! Death has lost its sting in that moment and the Grave its victory! We said this morning in our simple discourse, “Repent and believe the Gospel.” This is the sum of the Gospel—to repent and to know Christ. Oh, that the Spirit of God may lead everyone in this assembly to do so at this very hour and then you can walk over your graves without fear, and descend into them without dread, for you shall come up out of them with triumph! You shall ascend to Heaven with glory and so shall you be forever with the Lord! The Lord add His own blessing for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 THESSALONIANS 3.***

**Verse 1.** *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the LORD may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.*A most important request. What can the ministers of the Gospel do if their people cease to pray for them? Even if their own prayers are heard, as they will be, and a measure of blessing be given, yet it will be but a scant measure compared with what it would be if all the saints united in their intercessions! Whenever we see the Word of God very mighty in one place it ought to encourage us to pray that it may be the same in another place, for it is the same Word and the hearts of all men are alike. The same spirit can give the same blessing in every place. Hence Paul says, “Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you.” Now, if any of you in your church are enjoying rich prosperity, pray for others, that they may have the same. And if you are without it, take courage from any church which you see prospering and ask the Lord to do the same things for you. Very likely if we prayed more for ministers, they would be more blessed to us. There is many a man who cannot “hear” his minister and the reason may be that God never hears him pray for his minister.

**2.***And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* I really do not know which is the worst to put up with—an unreasonable man or a wicked man. A wicked man may do you all sorts of mischief, but you soon know him. But an unreasonable man—you do not know where to find him and he can attack you from all sorts of places. Alas, there are some very unreasonable Christians—very good in some points, but very stupid—and a stupid man may set a village on a blaze quite as easily as a wicked man. The stupid man’s stupidity may be as dangerous as another man’s design. Pray also “that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men, for all men have not faith,” and all men have not sense, I may also add.

**3.***But the LORD is faithful.* There is the mercy. Whether men are fools or knaves, the Lord is faithful.  
**3.***Who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.*We are taught to pray for this Grace. We are here told that we shall have it. Since God is faithful He will keep us from evil.  
**4.***And we have confidence in the LORD touching you, that you both do and will do the things which we command you.* Our obedience to Apostolic ordinances should be of the present and of the future. It should be fixed in our souls. What the Lord has commanded in His Church by His Apostles should be carefully regarded by us.  
**5.***And the LORD direct your heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* The two things go together. When we love God, we long for the Glory and the appearing of His Son. The most loving spirits in the world have had, most, an eye to that glorious coming. Note Enoch who walked with God and prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes.” Note Daniel, “a man greatly beloved,” and a Seer who looked into the future and saw the Ancient of Days. Mark also John who leaned his head on Jesus’ bosom—we may say of him that he spoke more of the Second Coming than all the rest of the Apostles. When the heart gets right away from earth and is set upon God, then it is that we begin to long for the manifestation of the Lord from Heaven!  
**6.***Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.* Paul had been to Thessalonica and had given oral teaching. And now he commits to the Book what he had spoken, but he bids them take care not to associate with those who willfully broke the ordinances of the Church which he had taught them. There are some brethren with whom it is ill for us to associate, lest they do us harm—and it is ill for them that we associate with them, lest we seem to assist them in their evil deeds. Especially is this so in the case of brethren of the class that he is about to describe—mischief makers, troublers, people that can always tell you the gossip of a congregation, that can tear a neighbor’s character to pieces, that are able to perceive spots on the sun—people who delight in parading the fault of God’s own children and are never so happy as when they are making others unhappy by what they have to say! These are the kind of people to whom you should give a wide berth.  
**7-9.***For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man’s bread for nothing; but worked with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.*The Apostle had a right to be supported by those among whom he labored. He always insists upon that right, but for their good, knowing the tendency of that age, he forfeited that right—and he is indignant that there should be others who did nothing whatever as to Christian ministry, but who availed themselves of the charity of the Church at Thessalonica so as to be able to live upon it without work.  
**10.***For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* A very capital rule, indeed. There are some so very spiritually minded that to soil their hands is also to soil their conscience. They are afraid of hard work. They think it is unspiritual, whereas there is nothing in the world, next to the Grace of God, that is more likely to keep men out of mischief than having plenty to do!  
**11.***For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*Not doing their own business and, therefore, putting their noses into everybody else’s business. If they had minded their own affairs, they would have left other people alone. There are such people alive now. We must not be surprised if we meet them seeing that they were alive in the Apostle’s days—if they troubled him it must be small marvel if they trouble us.  
**12.***Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* The best bread and the sweetest is our own. We are to work for it. We are to work with quietness. I suppose to some that is very hard work, but they must labor after it, for quietness is a Christian Grace—it is, indeed, a high Christian attainment.  
**13-15.***But you, brethren, be not weary in doing good. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.* This kind of Christian discipline ought to still be carried out in reference not only to this one case of busybodies, but to all other cases. When a church grows large, there can be no efficient discipline from one man, or from all his officers with him. There must be the discipline of the whole church towards itself—each Christian, according to his measure of Grace, seeking the good of the whole—for while every man must bear his own burden, yet is it said, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” “Look not every man upon his own things, but also upon the things of others.” The careful desire to promote the Christian welfare of all our fellow members is a very different thing from being busybodies. We must have equal desire not in any way to interfere where we should not.  
**16.***Now the LORD of Peace, Himself, give you peace always by all means.* What a sweet benediction! And how he heaps the words together, as if peace was one of the greatest blessings a church could have. Indeed, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is the essential to all other blessings. I am quite certain that we never would have enjoyed the long years of perpetual prosperity here which we have had if it had not pleased the Lord to keep us always in peace. So may we be for many and many a year to come! May no root of bitterness ever spring up to trouble us, but may this text be fulfilled—“Now the Lord of Peace give you peace always by all means.”  
**16, 17.***The LORD be with you all. The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.*I suppose he always wrote a part of each Epistle. Probably through the failure of his eyesight, he was unable to write the whole of it with his own hands, but employed some one of his brethren to be his secretary. But, in order that everyone might know the Epistle to be genuine, there was always a little of Paul’s writing, sometimes in big text, as when he said to one church, “You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.”  
**18.***The Grace of our LORD Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*So with great courtesy and a comprehensive prayer he finishes his letter.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #23 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THOUGHTS ON THE LAST BATTLE  
NO. 23

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 13, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:56, 57.~~***

WHILE the Bible is one of the most poetical of books and though its language is unutterably sublime, yet we must remark how constantly it is true to nature. There is no straining of a fact, no glossing over a truth. However dark may be the subject, while it lights it up with brilliance, yet it does not deny the gloom connected with it. If you will read this chapter of Paul’s Epistle, so justly celebrated as a masterpiece of language, you will find him speaking of that which is to come after death with such exaltation and glory that you feel, “If this is to die, then it were well to depart at once.” Who has not rejoiced and whose heart has not been lifted up, or filled with a holy fire, while he has read such sentences as these— “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Yet with all that majestic language, with all that bold flight of eloquence, he does not deny that death is a gloomy thing. Even his very figures imply it. He does not laugh at it, he does not say, “Oh, it is nothing to die.” He describes death as a monster. He speaks of it as having a sting. He tells us wherein the strength of that sting lies and even in the exclamation of triumph he imputes that victory not to unaided flesh, but he says, “Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When I select such a text as this, I feel that I cannot preach from it. The thought overpowers me, my words stagger—there are no utterances that are great enough to convey the mighty meaning of this wondrous text! If I had the eloquence of all men united in one. If I could speak as never man spoke, (with the exception of that one godlike Man of Nazareth), I could not compass so vast a subject as this! I will not, therefore, pretend to do so, but offer you such thoughts as my mind is capable of producing.

Tonight we shall speak of three things—first, *the sting of death*. Secondly, the *strength of sin*. And thirdly, the *victory of faith*.

**I.**First, THE STING OF DEATH. The Apostle pictures death as a terrible dragon or monster, which, coming upon all men, must be fought with by each one for himself. He gives us no hope whatever that any of us can avoid it. He tells us of no bridge across the river Death. He does not give us the faintest hope that it is possible to emerge from this state of existence into another without dying. He describes the monster as being exactly in our path and with it we must fight—each man personally, separately and alone—each man must die. We all must cross the black stream. Each one of us must go through the iron gate. There is no passage from this world into another without death. Having told us, then, that there is no hope of our escape, he braces up our nerves for the combat. But he gives us no hope that we shall be able to slay the monster. He does not tell us that we can strike our sword into his heart and so overturn and overwhelm death. But pointing to the dragon, he seems to say, “You cannot slay it, Man, there is no hope that you should ever put your foot upon its neck and crush its head. But one thing can be done— it has a sting which you may extract. “You cannot crush death under foot, but you may pull out the sting which is deadly. And then you need not fear the monster, for monster it shall be no longer—but rather it shall be a swift-winged angel to waft you aloft to Heaven.” Where, then, is the sting of this dragon? Where must I strike? What is the sting? The Apostle tells us that, “The sting of death is sin.” Once let me cut off *that,* though death may be dreary and solemn, I shall not dread it. But holding up the monster’s sting, I shall exclaim, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Let us now dwell upon the fact that “the sting of death is sin.”

**I.**First, sin puts a sting into death from the fact that *sin brought death into the world*. Men could be more content to die if they did not know it was a *punishment*. I suppose if we had never sinned, there would have been some means for us to go from this world to another. It cannot be supposed that so huge a population would have existed that all the myriads who have lived from Adam down till now could ever have inhabited so small a globe as this. There would not have been space enough for them. But there might have been provided some means for taking us off when the proper time should come and bearing us safely to Heaven. God might have furnished horses and chariots of fire for each of His Elijahs. Or as it was said of Enoch, so it might have been declared of each of us, “He *is not*, for God has taken him.” Thus to die, if we may call it death. To depart from this body and to be with God, would have been no disgrace. In fact it would have been the highest honor—fitting the loftiest aspiration of the soul—to live quickly its little time in this world, then to mount and be with its God. And in the prayers of the most pious and devout man—one of his most sublime petitions would be, “O God, hasten the time of my departure, when I shall be with You.” When such sinless beings thought of their departure, they would not tremble, for the gate would be of ivory and pearl—not as now, of iron—the stream would be as nectar, far different from the present “bitterness of death.” But alas, how different! Death is now the punishment of sin. “In the day you eat, thereof, you shall surely die.” “*In Adam* all die.” By his sin everyone of us become subject to the penalty of death and thus, being a punishment, death has its sting. To the best man, the holiest Christian, the most sanctified intellect, the soul that has the nearest and dearest communion with God, death must appear to have a sting, because sin was its mother. O fatal offspring of sin, I only dread you because of your parentage! If you did come to me as an honor, I could wade through Jordan even now and when its chilling billows were around me I would smile amidst its surges. And in the swellings of Jordan my song should swell, too—and the liquid music of my voice should join with the liquid swellings of the floods, “Hallelujah! It is blessed to cross to the land of the glorified.” This is one reason why the sting of death is sin.

**2.**But I must take it in another sense. “The sting of death is sin”—that is to say, *that which shall make death most terrible to man will be sin, if it is not forgiven*. If that is not the exact meaning of the Apostle, still it is a great Truth and I may find it here. If sin lay heavy on me and were not forgiven—if my transgressions were unpardoned—if such were the fact (though I rejoice to know it is not so) it would be the very sting of death to me. Let us consider a man dying and looking back on his past life—he will find in death a sting and that sting will be his past sin. Imagine a conqueror’s deathbed. He has been a man of blood from his youth up. Bred in the camp, his lips were early set to the bugle and his hands, even in infancy, struck the drum. He had a martial spirit. He delighted in the fame and applause of men. He loved the dust of battle and the garment rolled in blood. He has lived a life of what men call glory. He has stormed cities, conquered countries, ravaged continents, overrun the world. See his banners hanging in the hall and the marks of glory on his escutcheon. He is one of earth’s proudest warriors! But now he comes to die. And when he lies down to expire, what shall invest his death with horror? It shall be his sin. I think I see the monarch dying. He lies in state. Around him are his nobles and his counselors. But there is someone else there. Hard by his side there stands a spirit from Hades. It is the soul of a departed woman. She looks on him and says, “Monster! My husband was slain in battle through your ambition—I was made a widow and my helpless orphan and myself were starved.” And she passes by. Her husband comes and opening wide his bloody wounds, he cries, “Once I called you Monarch. But by your vile covetousness, you did provoke an unjust war. See here these wounds—I gained them in the siege. For your sake I mounted first the sealing ladder. This foot stood upon the top of the wall and I waved my sword in triumph. But in Hell I lifted up my eyes in torment. Base wretch! Your ambition hurried me there!” Turning his horrid eyes upon him, he passes by. Then up comes another and another and another yet—waking from their tombs they stalk around his bed and haunt him. The dreary procession still marches on, looking at the dying tyrant. He shuts his eyes, but he feels the cold and bony hand upon his forehead. He quivers—for the sting of death is in his heart. “O Death!” he says, “to leave this large estate, this mighty realm, this pomp and power—this were somewhat—but to meet those men, those women and those orphan children, face to face, to hear them saying, ‘Have you become like one of us?’ While kings whom I have dethroned and monarchs whom I have cast down shall rattle their chains in my ears and say, ‘you were our destroyer, but how are you fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you brought down as in a moment from your glory and your pride!’” There you see the sting of death would be the man’s sin. It would not sting him that he had to die but that he had sinned—that he had been a bloody man, that his hands were red with wholesale murder—this would plague him, indeed, for, “the sting of death is sin.”

Or suppose another character—a minister. He has stood before the world proclaiming something which he called the Gospel. He has been a noted preacher—the multitude have been hanging on his lips, they have listened to his words. Before his eloquence a nation stood amazed and thousands trembled at his voice. But his preaching is over. The time when he can mount the pulpit is gone. Another standing-place awaits him, another congregation. And he must hear another and a better preacher than himself. There he lies. He has been unfaithful to his charge. He preached philosophy to charm his people, instead of preaching the Truth of God and aiming at their hearts. And as he pants upon his bed, that worst and most accursed of men—for surely, none can be worse than he—there comes up one, a soul from the pit of Hell and looking him in the face, says, “I came to you once trembling on account of sin. I asked you the road to Heaven and you did say, ‘Do such-and-such good works,’ and I did them and am damned! You did tell me an lie. You did not declare plainly the Word of God.” He vanishes only to be followed by another. He has been an irreligious character and as he sees the minister upon his deathbed. He says, “Ah, and are you here? Once I strolled into your House of Prayer but you had such a sermon that I could not understand. I listened. I wanted to hear something from your lips, some Truth of God that might burn my soul and make me repent. But I knew not what you said and here I am.” The ghost stamps his foot and the man quivers like an aspen leaf, because he knows it is all true. Then the whole congregation arises before him and as he lies upon his bed, he looks upon the motley group. He beholds the snowy heads of the old and the glittering eyes of the young. And lying there upon his pillow, he pictures all the sins of his past life and he hears it said, “Go! Unfaithful to your charge—you did not divest yourself of your love of pomp and dignity. You did not speak—

***As though you never might speak again,  
A dying man to dying men.”***  
Oh, it may be something for that minister to leave his charge, somewhat for him to die. But worst of all, the sting of death will be his sin—to hear his parish come howling after him to Hell—to see his congregation following behind him in one mingled herd. He led them astray. He was a false prophet instead of a true one, speaking peace, peace, where there was no peace, deluding them with lies, charming them with music, when he ought rather to have told them in rough and rugged accents the Word of God! Verily it is true, it is true, the sting of death to such a man shall be his great, his enormous, his heinous sin of having deluded others! Thus, then, having painted two full-length pictures, I might give each one of you miniatures of yourselves. I might picture, O drunkard, when your cups are drained and when your liquor shall no longer be sweet to your taste. When worse than gall shall be the dainties that you drink— when within an hour the worms shall make a carnival upon your flesh. I might picture you as you look back upon your misspent life. And you, O swearer, I think I see you there with your oaths echoed back by memory to your own dismay. And you man of lust and wickedness—you who have debauched and seduced others. I see you there and the sting of death to you, how horrible, how dreadful! It shall not be that you are groaning with pain, it shall not be that you are racked with agony, it shall not be that your heart and flesh fails. But the sting, the sting shall be your sin! How many in this place can spell that word, “remorse?” I pray you may never know its awful meaning. Remorse, remorse! You know its derivation—it signifies to bite. Ah, now we dance with our sins—it is a merry life with us—we take their hands and sporting in the noontide sun, we dance, we dance and live in joy!  
But then those sins shall bite us. The young lions we have stroked and played with shall bite. The young adder, the serpent whose azure hues have well delighted us, shall bite, shall sting when remorse shall occupy our souls. I might, but I will not tell you, a few stories of the awful power of remorse—it is the first pang of Hell, it is the ante-chamber of the pit of Hell. To have remorse is to feel the sparks that blaze upwards from the fire of the bottomless Gehenna. To feel remorse is to have eternal torment commenced within the soul. The sting of death shall be unforgiven, unrepented sin!  
**3.**But if sin in the retrospect is the sting of death, what must *sin in the prospect be*? My Friends, we do not often enough look at what sin is to be. We see what it is—first the seed, then the blade, then the ear and then the full corn in the ear. It is the wish, the imagination, the desire, the sight, the taste, the deed. But what is sin in its next development? We have observed sin as it grows. We have seen it at first a very little thing but expanding itself until it has swelled into a mountain. We have seen it like, “a little cloud, the size of a man’s hand,” but we have beheld it gather until it covered the skies with blackness and sent down drops of bitter rain. But what is sin to be in the *next* state? We have gone so far, but sin is a thing that cannot stop. We have seen where it *has* grown, but where *will*it grow? For it is not ripe when we die. It has to still go on. It is set, going, but it has to unfold itself forever! The moment we die the voice of Justice cries, “Seal up the fountain of blood, stop the stream of forgiveness! He that is holy, let him be holy, still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy, still.” And after that the man goes on growing filthier and filthier! His lust develops itself. His vice increases. All those evil passions blaze with ten-fold more fury and, amidst the companionship of others like himself, without the restraints of Divine Grace, without the preached Word of God, the man becomes worse and worse! And who can tell where his sin may grow? I have sometimes likened the hour of our death to that celebrated picture which I think you have seen in the National Gallery— of Perseus holding up the head of Medusa. That head turned all persons into stone who looked upon it. There is a warrior there with a dart in his hand—he stands stiffened, turned into stone, with the javelin even in his fist. There is another with a knife beneath his robe about to stab. He is now the statue of an assassin, motionless and cold. Another is creeping along stealthily, like a man in ambush—and there he stands a consolidated rock—he has looked only upon that head and he is frozen into stone!  
Well, such is death. What I am when death is held before me, that I must be forever. When my spirit goes, if God finds me hymning His praise, I shall hymn it in Heaven. If He finds me breathing out oaths, I shall follow up those oaths in Hell. Where death leaves me, Judgment finds me. As I die, so shall I live eternally—  
***“There are no acts of pardon passed  
In the cold grave to which we haste.”***  
It is forever forever, forever! Ah, there are a set of heretics in these days who talk of short punishment and preach about God’s transporting souls for a term of years and then letting them die. Where did such men learn their doctrine, I wonder?  
I read in God’s Word that the angel shall plant one foot upon the earth and the other upon the sea and shall swear by Him that lives and was dead, that *time* shall be no longer. But if a soul could die in a thousand years, it would die in *time*. If a million of years could elapse and then the soul could be extinguished, there would be such a thing as *time.* Talk to me of *years* and there is *time*. But, Sirs, when that angel has spoken the word, “*Time* shall be no longer,” things will then be eternal. The spirit shall proceed in its ceaseless revolution of weal or woe, never to be stayed, for there is no time to stop it. The fact of its stopping would imply time—but everything shall be eternal—for time shall cease to be! It well becomes you, then, to consider where you are and what you are. Oh, stand and tremble on the narrow neck of land between the two unbounded seas, for God in Heaven, alone, can tell how soon you may be launched upon the eternal future. May God grant that when that last hour may come, we may be prepared for it! Like the thief, unheard, unseen, it steals through night’s dark shade. Perhaps, as here I stand and rudely speak of these dark hidden things, soon may the hand be stretched and dumb the mouth that lisps the faltering strain. Oh, you who dwell in Heaven. You Power supreme! You everlasting King—let not that hour intrude upon me in an ill-spent season, but may it find me wrapped in meditation high, hymning my great Creator!  
So in the last moment of my life I will hasten beyond the azure, to bathe the wings of this, my spirit, in their native element and then to dwell with You forever—  
***“Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in.”*  
II.**“THE STRENGTH OF SIN is the Law.”  
I have attempted to show how to fight this monster—it is by extracting and destroying its sting. I prepare myself for the battle. It is true I have sinned and, therefore, I have put a sting into death, but I will endeavor to take it away. I attempt it, but the monster laughs me in the face and cries, “The strength of sin is the Law. Before you can destroy sin you must in some way satisfy the Law. Sin cannot be removed by your tears or by your deeds, for the Law is its strength and until you have satisfied the vengeance of the Law, until you have paid the uttermost farthing of its demands, my sting cannot be taken away for the very strength of sin is the Law.” Now, I must try and explain this Doctrine, that the strength of sin is the Law. Most men think that sin has no strength at all. “Oh,” many say, “we may have sinned very much, but we will repent and we will be better for the rest of our lives. No doubt God is merciful and He will forgive us.” And we hear many divines often speak of sin as if it were a very venial thing. Inquire of them what is a man to do—there is no deep repentance required, no real inward workings of Divine Grace, no casting himself upon the blood of Christ. They never tell us about a complete Atonement having been made. They have, indeed, some shadowy idea of Atonement—that Christ died just as a matter of form to satisfy justice— but as to any liberal taking away of our sins and suffering the actual penalty for us, they do not consider that God’s Law requires any such thing. I suppose they do not, for I never hear them assert the positive satisfaction and substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, without that, how can we take away the strength of sin?  
**1.**The strength of sin is in the Law, first, in this respect, *that the Law, being spiritual it is quite impossible for us to live without sin*. If the Law were merely carnal and referred to the flesh. If it simply related to open and overt actions, I question even then, whether we could live without sin. But when I turn over the Ten Commandments and read, “you shall not covet,” I know it refers even to the wish of my heart. It is said, “you shall not commit adultery.” But it is said, also, that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed that sin. So that it is not merely the *act*, it is the*thought*. It is not simply the *deed*, it is the very *imagination* that is a sin! Oh, now, Sinner, how can you get rid of sin? Your very thoughts, the inward workings of your mind—these are crimes—this is guilt and desperate wickedness. Is there not, now, strength in sin? Has not the Law put a potency in it? Has it not nerved sin with such a power that all your strength cannot hope to wipe away the black enormity of your transgression?  
**2.**Then, again, the Law puts strength into sin in this respect—that *it will not abate one tittle of its stern demands*. It says to every man who breaks it, “I will not forgive you.” You hear persons talk about God’s mercy. Now, if they do not believe in the Gospel, they must be under the Law, but where in the Law do we read of *mercy*? If you will read the commandments through, there is a curse after them, but there is no provision made for pardon. The Law, itself, speaks not of that. It thunders out, without the slightest mitigation, “the soul that sins, it shall die.” If any of you desire to be saved by works, remember, one sin will spoil your righteousness. One speck of this earth’s dross will spoil the beauty of that perfect righteousness which God requires at your hands! If you would be saved by works, Brothers and Sisters, you must be as holy as the angels, you must be as pure and as immaculate as Jesus. For the Law requires perfection and nothing short of it. And God with unflinching vengeance will smite every man or woman low who cannot bring Him a perfect obedience! If I cannot, when I come before His Throne, plead a perfect righteousness as being mine, God will say, “you have not fulfilled the demands of My Law. Depart, accursed one! You have sinned and you must die.” “Ah,” says one, “can we ever have a perfect righteousness, then?” Yes, I will tell you of that in the third point. Thanks be unto Christ, who gives us the victory through His blood and through His righteousness, who adorns us as a bride in her jewels, as a husband arrays his with ornaments.  
**3.**Yet again, the Law gives strength to sin from the fact that *for every transgression, it will exact a punishment*. The Law never remits a farthing of debt—it says, “Sin—punishment.” They are linked together with adamantine chains. They are tied and cannot be severed. The Law speaks not of sin and *mercy*. Mercy comes in the Gospel. The Law says, “Sin— die. Transgress—be chastised. Sin—Hell.” Thus are they linked together. Once let me sin and I may go to the foot of stern Justice and, as with blind eyes, she holds the scales. I may say, “Oh, Justice, remember, I was holy*once*, remember that on such-and-such an occasion I did keep the Law.” “Yes,” says Justice, “all I owe you, you shall have. I

will not punish you for what you have not done. But do you remember *this* crime, O Sinner?” And she puts in the heavy weight. The sinner trembles and he cries, “But can you not forget that? Will you not cast it away?” “No,” says Justice, and she puts in another weight. “Sinner, do you recollect *this* crime?” “Oh,” says the sinner, “will you not for mercy’s sake forget that one?” “I will not have mercy,” says Justice. “Mercy has its own palace, but I have nothing to do with forgiveness here. Mercy belongs to Christ. “If you will be saved by Justice you shall have your full of it. If you come to me for salvation, I will not have mercy brought in to help me, she is not my vicegerent. I stand here alone without her.” And again, as she holds the scales, she puts in another iniquity, another crime, another enormous transgression. And each time the man begs and prays that he may have that passed by—Justice says, “No, I must exact the penalty. I have sworn I will and I will. Can you find a Substitute for yourself? If you can, there is the only room I have for mercy. I will exact it of that Substitute, but even at His hands I will have the utmost jot and tittle. I will abate nothing, I am God’s Justice—stern and unflinching, I will not alter, I will not mitigate the penalty.” She still holds the scales. The plea is in vain. “Never will I change!” She cries, “bring me the blood, bring me the price to its utmost. Count it down, or else, Sinner, you shall die.” Now, my Friends, I ask you, if you consider the spirituality of the Law, the perfection it requires and its unflinching severity, are you prepared to take away the sting of death in your own persons? Can you hope to overcome sin yourselves? Can you trust that by some righteous works you may yet cancel your guilt? If you think so, go, foolish one, go! O madman, go! Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, without the God that works in you. Go, twist your rope of sand, go, build a pyramid of air. Go, prepare a house with bubbles and think it is to last forever. But know it will be a dream with an awful awakening, for as a dream, when one awakes will he despise, alike, your image and your righteousness. “The strength of sin is the Law.”  
**III.**But now, in the last place, we have before us THE VICTORY OF FAITH. The Christian is the only champion who can smite the dragon of death and even he cannot do it himself. But when he has done it, he shall cry, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” One moment and I will show you how the Christian can look upon death with complacency through the merits of Jesus Christ. First, Christ has taken away the strength of sin in this respect, *that He has removed the Law*. We are not under bondage, but under Grace. Law is not our directing principle, Grace is. Do not misunderstand me. The principle that I must do a thing—that is to say, the principle of Law—“do, or be punished. Do and be rewarded,” is not the motive of the Christian’s life. His principle is Grace. “God has done so much for me, what ought I to do for Him?” We are not under the Law in that sense but under Grace.  
Then Christ has removed the Law in this sense, *that He has completely satisfied it*. The Law demands a perfect righteousness. Christ says, “Law, you have it. Find fault with Me. I am the sinner’s Substitute, have I not kept your commandments? Wherein have I violated your statutes?” “Come here, My Beloved,” He says and then He cries to Justice, “Find a fault in this man? I have put My robe upon him. I have washed him in My blood. I have cleansed him from his sin. All the past is gone. As for the future, I have secured it by sanctification. As for the penalty, I have borne it Myself. At one tremendous draught of love, I have drunk that man’s destruction dry. I have borne what he should have suffered! I have endured the agonies he ought to have endured. Justice, have I not satisfied you? Did I not say upon the tree and did you not coincide with it, ‘It is finished! It is finished!’? Have I not made so complete an Atonement that there is now no need for that man to die and expiate his guilt? Did I not complete the perfect righteousness of this poor, once-condemned but now, justified spirit?” “Yes,” says Justice, “I am well satisfied and even more content, if possible, than if the sinner had brought a spotless righteousness of his own.” And now what says the Christian after this? Boldly he comes to the realms of death and entering the gates there, he cries, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect!” And when he has said it, the dragon drops his sting. He descends into the grave. He passes by the place where fiends lie down in fetters of iron. He sees their chains and looks into the dungeon where they dwell. And as he passes by the prison door, he shouts, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect!” They growl and bite their iron bonds and hiss in secret, but they cannot lay anything to his charge. Now see him mount aloft. He approaches God’s Heaven, he comes against the gates and Faith still triumphantly shouts, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” And a voice comes from within—“Not Christ, for He has died. Not God, for He has justified.” Received by Jesus, Faith enters Heaven and again she cries, “Who,” even here among the spotless and ransomed, “shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Now the Law is satisfied. Sin is gone. And now surely we need not fear the sting of the dragon but we may say as Paul did, when he rose into the majesty of poetry—such beautiful poetry, that Pope, himself, borrowed his words, only transposing the sentences—“O grave, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”  
If it were necessary, tonight, I might speak to you concerning the *Resurrection* and I might tell you how much that takes away the sting of death. But I will confine myself to the simple fact that “the sting of death is sin,” that, “the strength of sin is the Law,” and that Christ gives us the victory by taking the sting away and removing the strength of sin by His perfect obedience.  
And now, Sirs, how many are there here who have any hope that Christ Jesus died for them? Am I coming too close home, when most solemnly I put the question to each one of you, as I stand in God’s Presence this night, to free my head of your blood? As I stand and appeal with all the earnestness this heart is capable of? Are you prepared to die? Is sin pardoned? Is the Law satisfied? Can you view the flowing—  
***“Of Christ’s soul-redeeming blood  
With Divine assurance knowing  
That He made your peace with God?”***  
Oh, can you now put one hand upon your heart and the other upon the Bible and say, “God’s Word and I agree. The witness of the Spirit here and the witness there are one. I have renounced my sins, I have given up my evil practices. I have abhorred my own righteousness. I trust in nothing but Jesus’ doings. Simply do I depend on Him—  
***Nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”***  
If so, should you die where you are—sudden death were sudden glory! But, my Hearers, shall I be faithful with you? Or shall I belie my soul? Which shall it be? Are there not many here who, each time the bell tolls the departure of a soul, might well ask the question, “Am I prepared?” And they must say, “No”? I shall not turn Prophet tonight but were it right for me to say so, I fear not one half of you are prepared to die. Is that true? Yes, let the speaker ask himself the question, “Am I prepared to meet my Maker face to face?’ Oh, sit in your seats and catechize your souls with that solemn question! Let each one ask himself, “Am I prepared, should I be called to die?” I think I hear one say with confidence, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” I hear another say with trembling accents—  
***“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,  
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.  
He is my Strength and Righteousness,  
My Jesus and my All”***  
Yes, sweet words! I would rather have written that one verse than Milton’s “Paradise Lost.” It is such a matchless picture of the true condition of the believing soul. But I hear another say, “I shall not answer such a question as that. I am not going to be dull today. It may be gloomy weather outside today, but I do not want to be made melancholy.” Young man, young woman, go your way! Let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. But for all this the Lord shall bring you to judgment! What will you do, careless spirit, when your friends have forsaken you, when you are alone with God? You do not like to be alone, now, do you? A falling leaf will startle you. To be alone an hour will bring on an insufferable feeling of melancholy. But you will be alone—and a dreary alone it will be—with God your enemy! How will you do in the swellings of Jordan? What will you do when He takes you by the hand at eventide and asks you for an account? When He says, “What did you do in the beginning of your days? How did you spend your life?” When He asks you, “Where are the years of your manhood?” When He questions you about your wasted Sabbaths and inquires how your latter years were spent? What will you say then? Speechless, without an answer you will stand. Oh, I beseech you, as you love yourselves, take care! Even now begin to weigh the solemn matters of eternal life. Oh, say not, “Why so earnest? Why in such haste?”  
Sirs, if I saw you lying in your bed and your house was on fire, the fire might be at the bottom of the house and you might slumber safely for the next five minutes. But with all my might I would pull you from your bed, or I would shout, “Awake! Awake! The flame is under you.” So with some of you who are sleeping over Hell’s mouth, slumbering over the pit of perdition, may I not awake you? May I not depart a little from clerical rules and speak to you as one speaks to his fellow whom he loves? Ah, if I loved you not, I need not be here. It is because I wish to win your souls and if it is possible, to win for my Master some honor, that I would thus pour out my heart before you! As the Lord lives, Sinner, you stand on a single plank over the mouth of Hell and that plank is rotten! You hang over the pit of Hell by a solitary rope and the strands of that rope are breaking! You are like that man of old, whom Dionysius placed at the head of the table—before him was a dainty feast, but the man ate not, for directly over his head was a sword suspended by a hair. So are you, Sinner. Let your cup be full, let your pleasures be high, let your soul be elevated—do you see the sword? The next time you sit in the theater, look up and see that sword! The next time you are in a tavern, look at that sword. When next in your business you scorn the rules of God’s Gospel, look at that sword. Though you see it not, it is there. Even now you may hear God saying to Gabriel—“Gabriel, that man is sitting in his seat in the hall. He is hearing, but as though he heard not—unsheathe your blade. Let the glittering sword cut through that hair, let the weapon fall upon him and divide his soul and body.” *Stop! Gabriel, stop!*Save the man a little while. Give him yet an hour that he may repent! Oh, let him not die! True, he has been here these ten or a dozen nights and he has listened without a tear. But stop—perhaps he may yet repent! Jesus backs up my entreaty and He cries, “Spare him yet another year, till I dig about him and feed him and though he now cumbers the ground, he may yet bring forth fruit, that he may not be hewn down and cast into the fire.” I thank You, O God, You will not cut him down tonight. But tomorrow may be his last day. You may never see the sun rise, though you have seen it set. Take heed! Hear the Word of God’s Gospel and depart with God’s blessing—“Whoever believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him.” “Whosoever comes unto Him, He will in no wise cast out.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1111 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MOTIVES FOR STEADFASTNESS  
NO. 1111

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 11 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”  
1 Corinthians 15:58.~~***

THE Apostle had been putting forth all his strength to prove the doctrine of the Resurrection, yet he was not diverted from his habitual custom of making practical use of the doctrine which he established. He proves his point and then he goes on to his, “therefore,” which is always an inference of godliness. He is the great master of doctrine—if you want the Christian creed elaborated and its details laid out in order, you must turn to the epistles of Paul. But at the same time he is always a practical teacher. Paul was not like those who hew down trees and square them by rule and system, but forget to build the house. True, he lifts up a goodly axe upon the thick trees, but he always makes use of that which he hews down—he lays the beams of his chambers and forgets not the carved work.

He brings to light the great stones of Truth and cuts them out of the live rock of mystery—but he is not content with being a mere quarryman—he labors to be a wise master builder and with the stones of Truth to erect the temple of Christian holiness. If I shift the figure I may say that our Apostle does not grope among the lower strata of the Truth of God, hunting out the deep things and spending all his force upon them, but he plows the rich upper soil. He sows, he reaps, he gathers in a harvest and feeds many. Thus should the practical ever flow from the doctrinal like wine from the clusters of the grape. The Puritans were known to call the end of the sermon, in which they enforced the practical lessons, the “improvement” of the subject and, truly, the Apostle Paul was a master in the way of “improvement.”

Therefore in this present chapter, though he has been dealing with the fact of the Resurrection and arguing with all his might in defense of it, he cannot close till he has said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” My Brothers and Sisters, this is a lesson for us! Let us never reckon that we have learned a doctrine till we have seen its bearing upon our lives. Whatever we discover in God’s Word, let us pray the Holy Spirit to make us feel the sanctifying influence of it. You know not a man because you recognize his features—you must also know his spirit. And so the mere acquaintance with the letter of Truth is of small account—you must feel its influence and know its tendency.

There are some Brethren who are so enamored of doctrine that no preacher will content them unless he gives them over and over again clear statements of certain favorite Truths—but the moment you come to speak of *practice* they fight shy of it at once and either denounce the preacher as being legal—or they grow weary of that which they dare not contradict. Let it never be so with us. Let us follow up Truths of God to their practical, “therefores.” Let us love the practice of holiness as much as the belief of the Truth and, though we desire to know, let us take care*when* we know, that we act according to the knowledge. For if we do not, our knowledge, itself, will become mischievous to us. It will involve us in responsibilities, but will bring to us no effectual blessing. Let everyone here who knows anything, now pray God to teach him what He would have him to do as the consequence of that knowledge.

This morning our subject will be the practical outflow of the Resurrection, the great inference which should be drawn from the fact that death is swallowed up in victory. There should be fine flour from the grinding of such choice wheat. The text has in it two things—first, it mentions two great points of Christian character—“steadfast, unmovable,” and “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” And, secondly, it gives us a grand motive for the cultivation of these two characteristics—inasmuch as the doctrine of the Resurrection is true, “you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

**I.** First, then, let us consider THE TWO GREAT POINTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER here set before us.  
1. The first one is “be you steadfast, unmovable.” Two things are needed in a good soldier—steadiness under fire and enthusiasm during a charge. The first is the more essential in most battles, for victory often depends upon the power of endurance which makes a battalion of men into a wall of brass. We need the dashing courage which can carry a position by storm—that will be used up in the second characteristic—“always abounding in the work of the Lord.” But in the commencement of the attack, and at critical points all through the campaign, the most essential virtue for victory is for a soldier to know how to keep his place and, “having done all, to stand.”  
The Apostle has given us two words descriptive of godly firmness and we may be sure that as Holy Scripture never uses a superfluity of words, each word has a distinct meaning. “Steadfast,” alone, would not have sufficed, but, “unmovable” must be added. Let us look at the word, “steadfast,” first. Beloved, be you steadfast. By this the Apostle means, first, be you steadfast in the doctrines of the Gospel. Know what you know and, knowing it, cling to it. Hold fast the form of sound doctrine. Do not be as some are, of doubtful minds, who know nothing and even dare to say that nothing can be known. To such the highest wisdom is to suspect the truth of everything they once knew and to hang in doubt as to whether there are any fundamentals at all.  
I should like an answer from the Broad Church divines to one short and plain question. What Truth of God is so certain and important as to justify a man in sacrificing his life to maintain it? Is there any doctrine for which a wise man should yield his body to be burned? According to all that I can understand of modern liberalism, religion is a mere matter of opinion and no opinion is of sufficient importance to be worth contending for. The martyrs might have saved themselves a world of loss and pain if they had been of this school—and the Reformers might have spared the world all this din about Popery and Protestantism.  
I deplore the spread of this infidel spirit! It will eat as does a canker. Where is the strength of a Church when its faith is held in such low esteem? Where is conscience? Where is love of Truth? Where, soon, will be common honesty? In these days with some men in religious matters, black is white and all things are whichever color may happen to be in your own eye—the color being nowhere but in your eye. To them theology is only a set of opinions, a bundle of views and persuasions. The Bible to these gentry is a nose of wax which everybody may shape just as he pleases. Beloved, beware of falling into this state of mind! For if you do so I boldly assert that you are not Christian at all, for the Spirit which dwells in Believers hates falsehood and clings firmly to the Truths of God.  
Our great Lord and Master taught mankind certain great Truths plainly and definitely, stamping them with His, “Verily, verily.” And as to the marrow of them He did not hesitate to say, “He that believes shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned”—a sentence very abhorrent to modern charity—but Infallible, nevertheless! Jesus never gave countenance to the base-born charity which teaches that it is no injury to a man’s nature to believe a lie! Beloved, be firm, be steadfast, be positive! There are certain things which are true—find them out and grapple them to you as with hooks of steel. Buy the Truth at any price and sell it at no price.  
Be steadfast also in the sense of not being changeable. Some have one creed today and another creed tomorrow, variable as a lady’s fashions. Indeed, we once heard a notable Divine assert that he had to alter his creed every week—he was unable to tell on Monday what he would believe on Wednesday—for so much fresh light broke in upon his receptive intellect. There are crowds of persons nowadays of that kind described by Mr. Whitfield when he said you might as well try to measure the moon for a suit of clothes as to tell what they believed. Always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth of God. Shifting as sandbanks are their teachings and as full of danger. The Apostle says to us, “Be you steadfast.”  
Having learned the Truth hold it, grow into it, let the roots of your soul penetrate into its center and drink up the nourishment which lies there, and do not be forever transplanting yourselves from soil to soil. How can a tree grow when perpetually shifted? How can a soul make progress if it is evermore changing its course? Do not sow in Beersheba and then rush off to reap in Daniel. Jesus Christ is not yes and no—He is not today one thing and tomorrow another—but the “same today, yesterday, and forever.” True religion is not a series of guesses at Truth, but, “we speak what we do know and testify what we have seen.” That which your experience has proven to you, that which you have clearly seen to be the Word of God, that which the Spirit bears witness to in your consciousness—that hold with an iron grasp. Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life, and to us the holding of the Truth of God is essential to our life. The Holy Spirit has given His unction unto the people of God and they know the Truth—and moreover they know that no lie is of the Truth. Were it not for this anointing the very elect would have been deceived in this age of falsehood. Brethren, be you steadfast.  
But the Apostle meant much more. He intended to urge us to be steadfast in character. Right in the middle of the chapter upon the Resurrection he speaks about character. He shows that a change of view upon the doctrine of the Resurrection would legitimately lead to a change of action, for if the dead rise not, then it is clearly wisdom to say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” But inasmuch as the Resurrection doctrine is true, he urges us to keep to that holy living which is the natural inference from belief in eternal life and the judgment to come. As you have looked to the recompense of the reward hereafter and have sought to order your conversation by a sense of the coming judgment, so do you still, and be you steadfast.  
Alas, we might preach tearful discourses to many Christians upon steadfastness of behavior, for they have started aside as a deceitful bow. There was a time when their integrity was unquestioned, but now they have learned the ways of a faithless world. Truth was on their lips, but now they have learned to flatter. They have lost the pure speech of the New Jerusalem and speak in the Babylonian tongue. How many professors were once exceedingly zealous, but are now careless? The fire of their love burns dimly, its coal is all but quenched. Prayer was their delight, but now it wearies them. The praises of God were perpetually in their mouths, but now they forget their Benefactor. They labored abundantly in the Redeemer’s service, but now they can scarcely be stirred out of their luxurious indolence.  
Beloved, if God has sanctified you by His Spirit, be you steadfast in character! Suffer not your divinely-worked sanctity to be stained. Be not just *sometimes* watchful, but always so, by the help of the good Spirit. If you have attained in the things of God, walk by that rule. Be not corrupted by evil communications. Make your private and public life the same. Let not the worldling peep into your house and discover that your godliness is an article intended only for foreign consumption. Be such that if you are watched anywhere and at any time, your sincerity will be manifested. O for consistency among professors! Its absence is the weakness of the Church and its restoration will bring to us unnumbered blessings.  
In addition to being steadfast in doctrine and character, we need to be exhorted to steadfastness in attainments. O Brothers and Sisters, if we were now what we sometimes have been, how ripe for Glory should we be! If we could but keep the ground which we conquer, how soon would all Canaan be ours! But is not Christian life, with a great many, much like the condition of the sea? The sea advances, it gains gradually upon the beach—you would think it was about to inundate the land. But after it has reached its highest point it retires and so it spends its force in perpetual ebb and flow. Are not ebb-and-flow Christians common as seashells? Life to them is the unprogressive change of advance and recede— today all earnest, tomorrow all indifferent, today generous, tomorrow mean—today filled with the fullness of God, tomorrow naked, poor, and miserable. What they build with one hand they pull down with the other. Sad that it should be so.  
I must confess I find it far easier to climb the greatest heights of Grace and especially of communion, than to maintain the elevation. For a flight, now and then, our wings are sufficient. We mount, we soar, we rise into the spiritual regions and we exult as we rise. But our pinion droops, we grow weary of the heights and we descend to earth like stones which have been thrown into the air. Alas, that it should be so! Be you steadfast. When you climb, ask for Grace to stay there. When your wing has borne you up ask that you may be poised there till the Lord shall call you to your nest in Heaven. Is your faith strong? Why should it decline again? Is your hope vivid? Why should those bright eyes of yours grow dim and look no more within the golden gates?  
Is your love fervent? Why should it be chilled? Cannot the breath of the Eternal Spirit keep the fire at full blaze? Why is it that we run well and then are hindered? We are short-winded—we cannot watch with our Lord one hour—we grow weary and faint in our minds. Alexander could not thus have won a world if, after fighting the battle of Issus, he had stopped short of the Granicus. If the Macedonian hero had said, “I have done enough, I will go back to Greece and enjoy my victories,” his empire had never become universal. Nor would Columbus have discovered a new world if he had sailed a little way into the unknown ocean and then had turned his timid prow towards port. “Onward!” is the motto of the earnest all the world over, and should it not be the watchword of the Christian? Shall we be content with a wretched poverty of Grace? Shall we be satisfied to wear the rags of inconsistency? God forbid! Let us bestir ourselves and when we make headway along the river of life, may God grant us Grace to cast anchor and hold our place, lest we drift back with the next tide, or be blown back by the next change of wind. “Be you steadfast.”  
We shall not have brought out the full force of the text unless we say that the Apostle evidently refers to Christian work, for he says, “be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” So that he means be steadfast in your work which the Lord has laid upon you to do. Perseverance is at once the crown and the cross of service. It is very easy to preach for a little while, but I can assure you that preaching to a congregation year after year involves no little toil. Yet are we bound to be steadfast in this ministry. A spurt, a leap, a bound—these are easy, but to press on continually is the difficulty. Have you taken a class in the Sunday school? The novelty of it may carry you through a month or two, but, dear Friend, be steadfast and hold on year after year, for *there* will lie your honor and success.  
If you should be discouraged because you meet with no present success, yet persevere, yes, endure to the end. If God has given you any work to do, it is yours to press forward in it, whether you prosper in it or not. The young convert said, you remember, that if God bade him jump through a wall, whether he could go through it or not was no business of his. “Here I go,” says he, “right at it.” We may rest assured that the Lord never did command us to leap through a wall without causing it to give way when our faith brought us to the test. We have to obey the precept and leave the consequences. If God says, “Do it,” the command is both the warrant for our act and the security for our being aided with all necessary help.  
Noah preached for 120 years and when his term of warning ministry was over, where were his converts? He may have had a great many, but they were all dead and buried—and with the exception of himself and family, after 120 years of ministry—there remained not one that God would preserve alive. But into the ark he went, the grandest unsuccessful preacher that ever lived! Noah was faithful unto death, to be rewarded of his God as much as if he had induced half the world to flee from the wrath to come. Let us, therefore, remain steadfast in doctrine, in character, in attainment and in labor. To this end help us, O Holy Spirit.  
But the Apostle adds, “unmovable.” He supposes that our steadfastness will be tried and he bids us remain unmovable. Be “steadfast” in times of peace, like rocks in the midst of a calm and glassy sea. Be unmovable if you are assailed like those same rocks in the midst of the tempest when the billows dash against them. Brethren, when you are assailed by argument, be unmovable. I say, “argument,” but I am complimenting our adversaries—their objections do not deserve the name. It will never be possible for any man living to answer all the queries which others can raise, or reply to all objections which may be brought against the most obvious facts. If any person here were skeptical as to my standing at this present moment upon this platform, I am not certain that I should be able to convince him that I am here. I am quite sure of it myself, but I have no doubt a skeptic would be able to advance objections which would require a keener wit than mine to remove, notwithstanding that the matter would be plain enough if the objector would throw away his logic and use his common sense.  
Now the arguments against the Resurrection which the Apostle mentions were such as he could easily remove. Such a one as this, for instance—How are the dead raised up? Paul seems to have lost his patience in answering it and he called the man a fool—and you may depend upon it, he was a fool, or else the Apostle would not have called him so. Granted the existence of a God, you need never ask, “How?” If there is Omnipotence, there is no room for the question, “How?” God the Almighty can do what He wills and he is a fool who asks, “How?” after once he has believed in God. Most of the objections against the articles of our holy faith are contemptible, yet none the less difficult to answer because contemptible for an argument is not always apparently strong in proportion to its reasonableness. It may be easier to answer an objection which has some force in it than to overthrow another which has positively no force at all.  
In fact, the most difficult arguments to answer are those which are insane at the core, for you must be insane, yourself, before you can quite catch the thought which insanity has uttered. And as you do not wish to qualify for controversy with fools by becoming a fool yourself, you may not be able to reply to your antagonist. It will be your right course to be steadfast and unmovable, that your adversary may see that his deceptions are of no avail. Whatever may be said against our faith we can afford to ignore it since we know that our Lord Jesus Christ *has* risen from the dead—the evidence of that fact is beyond dispute—and that being proven, our faith rests on a rock. Prove the Resurrection (and we say it is proved by the best witnesses, and plenty of them), then our faith is true and we will hold it in the teeth of all opposition.  
Do not be carried away, therefore, by the sophistry of cunning men, neither be cast down. When it is rumored at any time that a learned man has found out some very wonderful thing which is to put an end to the Bible, you should calmly reply—“Let him find out another wonderful thing, if so it pleases him.” If our wise men have discovered a new origin for the human race, or if they have invented a new way of making a world, we hope their new toy will please them, but such things are of no concern to us—we have other and weightier concerns besides fiddling or philosophizing. We have no more reverence for these profane dreamers than they have for the Bible—they are nothing to us. Christ has risen from the dead. Nothing in physiology or geology can ever contradict that! And if He has risen from the dead, they, also, that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him, and in that faith we abide.  
We shall be met, in addition to argument, by what is far more powerful, namely, by surrounding example. The world never overcame the Church, yet, by argument, for it has always refuted itself. When let alone, the unbelieving world has eaten its own words, like Saturn devouring his own children. Whenever any smith in the world’s armory has forged a weapon against the Truth

f God, there has always been another smith at work in the same smithy preparing another weapon with which to break the first in pieces! The man has done it not in the interests of the Gospel, but in his own interest and with desire only for his own honor—but he has done the work of the Lord—not knowing that he did!  
The bad example of the world has often told upon the soldiers of Christ with far more powerful effect. What the arms of Rome could not do against Hannibal, his Capuan holidays are said to have accomplished—his soldiers were conquered by luxury, though invincible by force. When the Church lies down at ease, she is apt to feel the diseases of abundance. The current of the world runs furiously towards sin and the fear is lest the Lord’s swimmers should not be able to stem the flood. It is sad when professors of our holy religion do as others do. It is folly to be singular except when to be singular is to be right—but it often happens that we forget the rightness of the thing in the fear of being singular. Brothers and Sisters, care nothing about custom, for custom is no excuse for sin! Be you steadfast, and if all men are turned to this or that, listen not to their, “Lo, heres,” and, “Lo, theres,” but stand inflexible for holiness, God and Truth. “Be you steadfast, unmovable.”  
As you are not moved by the world’s custom, so take care not to be moved by its persecutions. Today the persecutions which we meet with are very petty. They amount to little more than here and there the loss of a situation, the denial of trade, the being turned out of a farm, or more commonly they go no further than a sneer, a bad name, or a slander. But be you steadfast, unmovable whatever may be. Never let a man, who is but a worm, frown you away from your God! Bid defiance to his fierce looks and angry words and like a man of God continue in the right way whether you offend or please. And equally be unmovable to the world’s smiles. It will put on its sweetest looks and tempt you with its painted cheeks and artful fascinations. Like Jezebel it will attire its head and look out of the window, but like Jehu do you say, “Fling her down!” No peace or truce are you to hold with this crooked and perverse generation.  
If God prospers you in business let not your riches make you proud. If you have to toil and there should come in your way an easy escape from hard labor by some crooked path, accept it not—be unmovable! Let neither the soft south wind nor the boisterous north wind stir you from your foothold. God help you to be faithful unto death! If ever there was a period in the Christian Church when professors needed to be exhorted to be “steadfast, unmovable,” it is just now, for the foundations are removed and all things are out of course. Men remove the old landmarks, they break down the pillars of the house. All things reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man and only He who keeps the feet of His saints can preserve our uprightness.  
I see the tackling loosed and the mast unstrengthened, and the brave vessel of the Church is in an evil case. Many have left their moorings and are drifting here and there, their helmsmen all amazed. No longer does the squadron of the Lord sail in order of battle, but the lines are broken and the vessels yield to the tossing of winds and waves. Alas, that it should be so! O where is He that trod the sea? The Pilot of the Galilean lake? I see Him walking the waters and He cries to us who still stand true to the one Lord, the one faith and the one Baptism, “Be you steadfast, unmovable.” Whatever other denominations of Christians do, be you true to your Lord in all things, for those who forsake Him shall be written in the dust. Beloved, never stir away from the Truth of God!  
Some are changeable by constitution like Reuben, “unstable as water, they shall not excel.” A mind on wheels knows no rest, it is as a rolling thing before the tempest. Struggle against the desire for novelty, or it will lead you astray as the will-o’-the-wisp deceives the traveler. If you desire to be useful, if you long to honor God, if you wish to be happy, be established in the Truth and be not carried about by every wind of doctrine in these evil days. “Be you steadfast, unmovable.”  
**II.** The second characteristic of a Christian, however, we must speak upon. He is described as “always abounding in the work of the Lord,” in which we will briefly show that there are four things. First, dear Brothers and Sisters, every Christian ought to be engaged “in the work of the Lord.” We should all have work to do for our Divine Master. True, our everyday labor ought to be so done as to render honor to His name. But in addition to that every Christian should be laboring in the Lord in some sphere of holy service. I shall not enlarge, but I shall pass the question round to each one. “What are you doing for Jesus Christ?” I pray each one here who makes a profession of faith in Jesus to answer the question, “What am I doing in the work and service of the Lord?” If you are doing nothing, I pray you bewail your slothfulness and escape from it, for talents wrapped in napkins will be terrible witnesses against you.  
Then the Apostle says, secondly, we are not only to be, “in the work of the Lord,” but we are to *abound* in it. Do much, very much—all you can do and a little more. “How is that?” asks one. I do not think a man is doing all he can do if he is not attempting more than he will complete. Our vessels are never full till they run over. The little over proves our zeal, tries our faith, casts us upon God and wins His help. That which we cannot do of ourselves leads us to call in Divine strength—and then wonders are worked! If you are only aiming at what you feel able to accomplish, your work will be a poor one, lacking in heroism and deficient in the noble element of confidence in the unseen Lord. Abound, then, and super-abound in the work of the Lord!  
Next note that the Apostle says, “always abounding.” Some Christians think it enough to abound on Sundays—Paul says, “always abounding.” That has reference to Mondays—to which day does it *not* refer? When you are young and in your vigor, abound in service! I recommend all young men to work for God with all their might while they can, for all too soon our energies flag and the sere and yellow leaf forbids any more young shoots. I would equally urge every man of middle age to use all his time, gifts and energies at once for the Lord—“always abounding.” Nor should the old man retire—he is to bring forth fruit in old age. The Apostle says nothing about retiring from the work of the Lord, but “always abounding.”  
“Oh, but we must give the young people an opportunity of doing something for God!” Do you mean that you will give the young people an opportunity of doing *your* work? Because if you do I am in arms against so gross an error, for Christian work can never be done by proxy! Throw such an idea away with abhorrence! This is the age of proxy. People are not charitable, but they beg a guinea from somebody else to be charitable with. It is said that charity nowadays means that A finds B to be in distress and therefore asks C to help him. Let us not, in this fashion, shirk our work! Go and do your own work, each man bearing his own burden, and not trying to pile a double load on other men’s shoulders. Brothers and Sisters, from morn till night sow beside all waters with unstinting hand.  
The text calls this service “the work of the Lord” and we must ever bear this in mind, so that if we are enabled to abound in Christian service we may never become proud, but may remember that it is God’s work in us rather than our own work—and whatever we accomplish is accomplished by God in us rather than by us for God. Jesus tells us, “Without Me you can do nothing.” “Always abound,” my Brothers and Sisters, not only in work for the Lord, but in the work of the Lord in yourselves, for only as He works in you to will and to do will you be able to work in His name acceptably. Put these two things together, the man is to be steadfast and to abound in work.  
To come back to my figure of a soldier, these two things are needed—we need a soldier who can hold his position under a galling fire, but we need him, also, to dash to the front and lead on a forlorn hope. We need many spiritual cavalrymen who can ride ahead and pioneer for others with dauntless courage, but we cannot dispense with the heavy-armed infantry who hold their own and wait till the battle turns. It is said that the French had courage enough on the spur of the moment to have rushed up to the cannon’s mouth, but that the German was the victor because he could quietly abide the heat of the battle and when affairs looked black, he doggedly kept his post.  
In the long run *stay* is the winning virtue—he that endures to the end— the same shall be saved. He who can wait with hope is the man to fight with courage. He crouches down until the fit moment comes and then he leaps like a lion from the thicket upon the foe. God grant that we may have in this place a body of Christian people who shall be steadfast and unmovable, yet at all times as diligent as they are firm, as intensely zealous as they are obstinately conservative of the Truth as it is in Jesus. “Steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”  
**III.** Our last point is THE MOTIVE WHICH URGES US TO THESE TWO DUTIES. There are a great many other motives, but the one mentioned in the text is, “knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” If we derive our motives for Christian labor or steadfastness from the things which we *see*, our spirit will oscillate from ardor into coldness—it will rise and fall with the circumstances around us. It is comparatively easy for a successful man to go on preaching or otherwise laboring for the Lord. But I admire the perseverance of the man who remains faithful under defeat. To get such a faithfulness we must disentangle ourselves from the idea of being rewarded *here—*we must be steadfast and unmovable though nobody praises us. And we must abound in the work of the Lord though no fruit should come from it, because we have looked beyond this present realm of death and have gazed into another world where the Resurrection shall bring with it our reward.  
Dear Brethren, let us be steadfast, for our principles are true. If Christ has not risen from the dead, then we are the dupes of an imposition and let us give it up! Why should we credulously adhere to that which is false? But if Christ has risen from the dead, then our doctrines are true and let us hold them firmly and promulgate them earnestly. Since our cause is a good one, let us seek to advance it! Only that which is true will live. Time devours the false—the death warrant of every false doctrine is signed. A fire is already kindled which will consume the wood and hay and stubble of error, but our principles are gold and silver and precious stones and will endure the flame. “Therefore, let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”  
Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, therefore what we do is not done for a dead Christ! We are not fighting for a dead man’s cause. We are not contending for an effete dynasty, or a name to conjure by, but we have a living Captain, a reigning King, One who is able both to occupy the throne and to lead on our hosts to battle! Oh, by the Christ in Glory, I beseech you, Brethren, be you steadfast! If it could be proven tomorrow that Napoleon still lived, there might be some hope for his party, but with the chieftain dead, the cause faints. Now Jesus lives! As surely as He died He rose and lives again and His name shall endure forever! His name shall be continued as long as the sun and men shall be blessed in Him! All generations shall call Him blessed! The colors of that grand old red-cross flag, which your fathers bled to defend, have not in any degree become faded. It has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze, but its history is as yet in its infancy.  
Our grand cause is imaged this day, not by a baby in the Virgin’s arms, nor by a dead man in the hands of His enemies, but by a living, reigning, triumphant, glorified Christ full of splendor and of majesty! Let us rally to His call, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Behold, He comes! Even now the angels bring forth the white horse for the Conqueror—He who is called the faithful and True One shall ride at the head of His elect armies! Even at this moment we see the ensign gleaming above the horizon. The Lord is on His way! Our Captain puts on His vesture dipped in blood, while on His head are many crowns. He shall smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron and He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.  
Let us continue true to Him, for evil would be our case if we were to desert His cause and *then* we should see Him come in the glory of His Father, attended by cohorts of angels. It would be a dreadful thing to have deserted the army just when the shout of “victory” was about to be raised! Be you steadfast, unmovable, for He is risen and He ever lives to secure the victory. Our work of faith is not in vain because we, too, shall rise again! If what we do for God were to have its only reward on earth, it were a poor prospect. Strike out the hope of the hereafter and the Christian’s reward would be gone. But, Beloved, we shall rise again! Our work is ended when our eyes are closed in death, but our life is not ended with our work. We shall preach no more, we shall no more teach the little children, we shall no more talk with the wayfarer about the Savior—but we shall enjoy better things than these, for we shall sit upon our Savior’s Throne even as He sits upon His Father’s Throne!  
Our heads shall have crowns to deck them. Our hands shall wave the palm of victory. We shall put on the white robe—the victors apparel. We shall stand around the Throne in triumph and shall behold and share the glories of the Son of God. O Brethren, shrink not, for the crown is just within your reach! Never think of diminishing your service—rather increase it—for the reward is close at hand. And remember that as you will rise again, so those whom you come in contact with will also rise again. When I have preached the Gospel on a Sunday I have thought, “Well, I shall never see many of these people again,” and the reflection has flashed across my mind, “Yes, I shall! And if I have faithfully, as God’s servant, preached the Truth of God, I shall not need to be afraid to see them either!” If they have received benefit and found Christ through the witness I have borne, they shall be my reward hereafter in the land of the living.  
And even if they reject the testimony, yet shall they bear their witness to my faithfulness in having preached to them the Word of God, for they shall rise again. O Beloved, what is this poor world? There, shut your eyes to it, for it is not worth your gaze. What is there here below? What do I see but fleeting shadows, dreams and phantoms? What shall I live for? What is there worth living for beneath yon stars? What if I hoard up wealth—I shall have to leave it to ungrateful heirs! What if I get fame, yet how can the breath of man add to my comfort when I lie tossing on the verge of eternity? What is there worth living for, I say, beneath yon stars?  
But there is a something that makes it worthwhile existing and makes life grand and noble! It is this—if I may crown with praise that head which for my sake was crowned with thorns. If I may honor Him who was dishonored for my sake. If to the manifestation of the glories of Jehovah I may have contributed a share. If at the reading of the records of all time it may be found that I put out my talent as a faithful servant and gained interest for my Master, it shall be well! Saved not of debt—far from the thought!—but of Grace alone! Yet shall it be no small thing, out of a sense of indebtedness to Grace, to have lived and loved and died for Jesus! What more can I say? Are there no ambitions among you? I know there are!  
Young men, consecrate yourselves to God this day. If you have looked to Jesus and trusted Him, serve Him forever! Preach Him if you can. Go abroad into the foreign field if you may. If you cannot do that, make money for Him that you may give it to His cause. Open your shop for His sake. Let everything be done for Jesus. Take this, from now on, for your motto—“All for Jesus, always for Jesus, everywhere for Jesus!” He deserves it! I should not so speak to you if you had to live in this world only. Alas, for the love of Jesus, if you were all and nothing beside, O Earth!  
But there is another life—live for it. There is another world—live for it. There is a Resurrection, there is eternal blessedness, there is Glory, there are crowns of pure reward—live for them! By God’s Grace live for them. The Lord bless you, and save you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Corinthians 15.**

COMFORTED AND COMFORTING  
NO. 2640

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1899,

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 15, 1882.~~***

***~~“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”  
2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.~~***

THE Apostle was a much-tried man and he lived in an age when all Believers were peculiarly tried. The persecutions of that time were excessively severe and every man who called himself a Christian had to carry his life in his hands. In this tribulation, the Apostle had the largest share, because he was the most prominent and indefatigable teacher that the Church of Christ then possessed. We have, here, a little insight into his inner life. He needed comfort and he received it. And be had it in such abundance that he became a comforter of others. Although, without Christ, he would have been, “of all men most miserable,” I think I may say that*with Christ* and the blessed hope of the Resurrection, he was among all men, one of the most happy.

In our text there are four things of which I would speak to you, dear Friends, hoping that they may bring good cheer to any who are cast down. The first is the comforting occupation in which Paul was employing himself—he was blessing God. “Blessed be God.” Then, secondly, we have the comforting titles which he gives to God—“The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.” Truly, they who know the Lord’s name do put their trust in Him. Paul knew the name of God right well and he used the most appropriate name for the time of sorrow. Then, thirdly, we shall have to consider for a little while the comforting fact which the Apostle here states, “Who comforts us in all our tribulation.” And, lastly, we shall try to see the comforting design of it all—“That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

**I.**First, then, you who mourn and are troubled and cast down, are invited to consider THE COMFORTING OCCUPATION of the Apostle.  
Most of Paul’s 14 Epistles begin with praise to God and he often breaks out into a doxology when you are hardly expecting it. He lays down his pen, bows his knees to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and pours out a flood of thanksgiving to the Most High. Here was a man who never knew but what he might be dead the next day, for his enemies were many, and cruel, and mighty. And yet he spent a great part of his time in praising and blessing God!  
This comforting occupation *argues that his heart was not crushed and vanquished by his troubles*. Paul was sore beset in many ways, yet he could say, and he did say, “Blessed be God.” Job was greatly tried and sorely bereaved, but he still said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” And as long as we can keep the blessing of God to the front, it is a sure sign that whatever the adversary may have been able to take away from us, he has not taken away our confidence, which has great recompense of reward and, whatever he may have crushed, he has not crushed our heart! He may have surrounded it with bitterness, but the heart itself is not made bitter—it is a fountain that sends out a stream of sweet waters, such as this utterance of the Apostle, “Blessed be God.”  
It is glorious to see how the Grace of God will enable a man to endure all the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil—how he will be laid aside by sickness and his pains will be multiplied. How reproach may go far to break his heart, how he may be depressed in spirit and lose all temporal benefits—and yet he will still be able to say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “Let Him do what He pleases with me, I have made no stipulation with Him that I will only praise Him when He does according to my will. I will praise Him when He has His own way with me, even though it runs exactly contrary to mine.” It is a brave heart that still, under all pressures, gives forth only this cry, “Blessed be God.” O dear Friends, if you want to keep up your hearts—if you desire to be established and sustained, if you wish to prevent the enemy from overcoming you—let this be your comfortable occupation and say with the poet—

***“I will praise You every day,  
Now Your anger’s turned away.”***  
Nothing can keep your head above the waters of trouble better than crying, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy

name.”

This occupation shows that the Apostle had not gratified Satan, for the devil’s purpose, so far as he has had to do with our trouble, is to make us “curse God and die.” After all the sorrow that Satan was permitted to bring to Job, the Patriarch’s heart still blessed the name of the Lord! So the devil was defeated—he could not carry out his own evil purpose and he had to slink away like a whipped cur—for Job glorified God instead of bringing dishonor upon His holy name. The tried and troubled ones who can still cry, “Blessed be the name of the Lord,” are not driven to despair, for despair shuts the mouth and makes a man sit in sullen silence, or else it opens his lips in bitter complaints and in multiplied murmurings. But, when a man can truly say, “Blessed be God,” then despair has not mastered him. He still holds his own and he has on his side a far greater force than the devil—and the most trying circumstances—can bring to bear upon him to vanquish him! O Friends, if you are afraid of being overcome, take to praising God! If you are in trouble and do not know how to bear it, divert your thoughts by praising God! Get away from the present trial by blessing and magnifying His holy name!

Next, this state of mind which made the Apostle say, “Blessed be God,” *prophesied that God would speedily send him something to call forth new praises*. When a man blesses God for the bitter, the Lord often sends him the sweet. If he can praise God in the night, the daylight is not far off. There never was a heart that waited and wanted to praise God but the Lord soon gave it opportunities of lifting up Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to Him. It shall never be said that we were ready to praise God, but that God was not ready to bless us! So, dear Friends, praise God and He will bless you! Praise God and exalt Him, and He will soon lift you up out of your troubles. I look upon a murmuring spirit as the forewarning of stormy weather in a *rebellious soul*—and I regard a praiseful spirit as the forecast of a happy time to come to the *loyal joyous soul*. God has prepared the heart to receive the joy which, otherwise, it might not have been fit to accept at His hands. Be comforted, then, dear Friends, if you find in your hearts the desire to praise God—and belief that the Lord will find in His heart the willingness to speedily bless you!

This comforting occupation *profits the Believer in many ways*. One advantage of blessing God is that it takes a man’s thoughts off his own trials and sorrows. We make our troubles much greater than they need be by turning them over, considering them from all points of view, weighing them and thinking and meditating upon them. You know very well that if you swallow a pill, you do not taste it—but if you get it between your teeth and bite and chew it, you will get all the bitter flavor of the drug. So, it is often a good thing to let our afflictions go right down into our soul, to swallow them at once, and say no more about them. God has sent them and, therefore, they are for your good—but when you keep brooding over your grief, you will probably hatch something out of it which you did not expect—it may be that you will find a young scorpion come from it to annoy you! They that will always be thinking upon their trials will soon find a sorrow within the sorrow which, haply, they might never have perceived if they had let it go! While we are blessing God, we are, at least for the time, taking our thoughts off our troubles and, so far, so good.

Moreover, we shall, by God’s gracious help, while we are praising Him, be lifting our soul out of our sorrow. In America, for many years they kept a day of fasting, but somebody suggested that they had better keep an annual day of thanksgiving—and they have done so ever since! The change was a good one and you and I, though sometimes we must fast, especially if the Bridegroom shall hide His face, will also find that it is a great improvement when we can turn our day of fasting into a day of thanksgiving! Do you not think, dear Friends, that sometimes, when you are very heavy of heart, it would be the best possible thing if you were to say, with Martin Luther, “Come, let us sing a Psalm and startle the devil”? If you sit down and groan and complain against God, your groans will be music to Satan’s malevolent heart! But you will vex and grieve him, if, instead of doing so, you say, “No, foul fiend, you shall never persuade me to rob God of His Glory—He shall have His full revenue of praise from me, whether I am on my bed, sick, or able to be up and actively engaged in the duties of my calling. Whether I stand well with my fellow men, or my name has an ill savor to them, God’s name has not an ill savor and, therefore, I will praise and bless Him even though nobody will praise me.”

O Beloved, if your heart is sad within you, praising God will so lift it up that you will even be able to forget the trouble of the present hour! What does the eagle do when the fowler is about with his net and gun? Why, the noble bird takes to his wings and flies upwards towards the sun! And, though his bright eyes can see the foe, he knows that no bullet can reach him at that great height. So, if you Christians have close communion with your God and praise and magnify His holy name, the shots of the enemy shall not reach you—you will have risen far beyond their range. Therefore, you see the excellence of blessing and praising the Most High.

Besides, this occupation may well tend to take away the sorrows of our mortality, since, by praising God, we get a taste of the joys of *immortality*. What are the angels doing now? I cannot tell you what men all over the world are doing, but I can tell you what the angels are doing! The holy spirits before the Throne of God find it is their very Heaven to be always blessing their God! So, if you want a sip of Heaven’s bliss. If on your leaf you would have a sparkling dew-drop which would tell you what the River of Life that flows at the right hand of God is like, commence at once to praise and bless the Lord your God—

***“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul would rise!  
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!”***

And there is no better way of anticipating the joys of being there than by beginning the praises of God while here!

You may also destroy your distresses by singing praises to God. By blessing the Lord, you may set your foot upon the neck of your adversaries—you can sing yourself right up from the deeps by God’s gracious help. Out of the very depths you may cry unto the Lord till He shall lift you up and you shall praise Him *in excelsis*—in the very highest—and magnify His name! I give you this as one of the shortest and surest recipes for comfort—begin to praise God. The next time that a friend comes in to see you, do not tell him how long the wind has been blowing from the North, how cold the weather is for this season of the year, how your poor bones ache, how little you have coming in and all your troubles—he has probably heard the sad story many times before! Instead of that, tell him what the Lord has done for you and make him feel that the Lord is good. Your griefs and your troubles speak for themselves, but your mercies are often dumb—so try, therefore, to give them a tongue and praise the Lord with all your heart!

**II.**Time would fail me if I dwelt, as I would like to dwell, upon the first point, so we must advance to the second, which is, THE COMFORTING TITLES which the Apostle gives to God in our text.

The first title we may call *a name of affinity—*“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, how near that brings God to us—that He is the Father of Jesus, the Father of Christ, “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—because Jesus has espoused our nature and become a Man. Though He is, “Light of light” and, “very God of very God,” yet is He also our Brother! “Father of Jesus”—what a delightful title that is for the good and glorious God! The great Jehovah has become very near of kin to you, my sorrowing Brother, for His Son is your Brother, your Husband, your Head and, now, the Father of Jesus is the Father of every Believer, so He is your Father if you are one of those who trust His Son! A child may not have a penny in his pocket, yet he feels quite rich enough if he has a wealthy father. You may be very, very poor, but, oh, what a rich Father you have! Jesus Christ’s Father is your Father! And as He has exalted His own dear Son, He will do the same for you in due time. Our Lord Jesus is the first-born among many brethren and the Father means to treat the other brethren even as He treats Him. Your Father has made you one of His heirs—yes, a joint heir with Jesus Christ— what more would you have? Therefore, comfort yourself with this blessed Truth of God! If you are distressed and troubled, this fact—that God is Christ’s Father and your Father—ought to be quite sufficient, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to fill you with intense joy!

In addition to this name of affinity, Paul gives to God a title which is *a name of gratitude—*“The Father of mercies.” Then every mercy I have ever had has been begotten of God, who is “the Father of mercies”! All temporal mercies come to God’s people from their Father. It is He who gives us bread to eat and clothes to put on. We are happy to be able to see in these common mercies a peculiar touch of the benign hand. But as for the high and heavenly mercies, the everlasting mercies, the satisfying mercies—the soul-filling mercies—these all come from God! As every beam of light comes from the father of lights [the sun], so do all mercies come from God. As all the rivers would be dried up if the sea were dry— for that is the ultimate source of the earth’s moisture—so would all our mercies be dried-up mercies, barren mercies, no mercies at all if they did not come from that great ocean of mercies, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Well, now, Beloved, as your Father is “the Father of mercies,” can you not go to Him for all the mercy you need? If your mercies seem, just now, to be very few, can you not go to the AllMerciful and ask Him to deal out to you from His abundant store, for, “His mercy endures forever”?

The third title which Paul applies to God ought to afford the deepest possible consolation to your soul. I venture to call it *a name of hope.* “The God of all comfort.” All sorts of comforts are stored up in God. No matter what you may require to bear you up under your affliction, God has just the kind of comfort which you need—and He is ready to bestow it upon you! Rest assured of that and also believe that He will bestow it upon you if you ask it at His hands. Oh, I think this is a name full of good cheer to everyone who has grown weary because of the trials of the way through this great and terrible wilderness! God is the God of all comfort—not merely of some comfort, but of *all* comfort. If you need every kind of comfort that was ever given to men, God has it in reserve and He will give it to you! If there are any comforts to be found by God’s people in sickness, in prison, in need, in depression—the God of all comfort will deal them out to you according as you have need of them!

This title is also *a name of discrimination*. It applies both to the persons and to the comfort—“who comforts us...by the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.” There are some things which are called comforts of which God is not the dispenser. Alas, alas, how many persons there are who fly to the bottle when they are in distress! That is *their* comfort—they drink and, for a while, forget their misery—but the process only leads to still greater misery and degradation. We cannot say that God is the God of such comfort as that! Indeed, we do not reckon it to be comfort! Some there are who turn to dissipation that they may forget their grief. God is not the God of dissipation and, therefore, that is not a comfort to a child of God—it would only increase his misery. If he were to be dragged to it, it would not relieve his pains in the least. Whatever there is in the world—and there are many such things which men call comforts—if you cannot be sure that they are such as God sends, let them be no source of consolation to you, but rather regard them with horror! May every child of God be able to make this discrimination and say, “If God does not give me what I look upon as a comfort, it will not prove to be a comfort.”

It is not a creature who supplies the comfort, it is only the Creator. The comfort may be brought to us by a creature, and brought in God’s name, but it must come from Him! The reason why bread feeds us is because God chooses to make it do so. When medicine heals us, it is because Jehovah makes it the means of healing. But if God does not work with the means, no cure will be worked. You who have the Creator, Himself, as your Comforter, are like the man who has a well in his garden— he may not have a tap to turn it off and on when he needs a supply of water to run through the pipe, but he has the well, itself, from which he may draw as much as he needs. Remember what we sang just now—

***“Why should the soul a drop bemoan,  
Who has a fountain near?  
A fountain which will always run  
With waters sweet and clear?”***

So much, then, upon the comforting titles which Paul uses in relation to God. I pray you to act like the bees when they dive into the petals of the flowers and suck out their honey—dive into these titles and extract the delicious honey which the Holy Spirit has stored there for you.

**III.**Now, thirdly, I am to speak of THE COMFORTING FACT which Paul here mentions. “The God of all comfort …comforts us in all our tribulation.”

This was Paul’s declaration and I, also, may speak in the name of many here present and say, “That is not only true of Paul, and the Christians in his day, but it is also true of us.” *The God of all comfort has comforted us in our tribulation*. Look back, now, on the pages of your diary that bear the record of your sorrow—do they not also bear the record of the Lord’s help in the sorrow and His deliverance from the sorrow? If I cannot speak for all of you, I will speak for myself. I must do so, or else surely the very timber on which I stand might cry out against me! The Lord has been very gracious to me in many an hour of affliction. Blessed be His name, He has never failed to bring the solace when He has made the smart—and if there has been the stroke with the rod, there has very soon been the caress of His love to follow the blow of His hand. It has been so with many of us.

But Paul speaks in the present tense—“Who comforts us in all our tribulation”—and we can also declare that *God is now comforting us who believe in Jesus*. Did you, Beloved, come into this building somewhat heavy in spirit? You are not half so heavy, now, as you were—and if you will take the good advice I am trying to give, you will go away quite relieved. Rutherford used to say that the Cross of Christ was no more a burden to the man who knew how to carry it than wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship! An affliction is a help to us, not a hindrance, when Grace comes with it to sanctify it! Remember what David said, long ago— “Cast your burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain you: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” But if you cast your burden upon the Lord, do not go looking for it when I have pronounced the benediction—leave it altogether! The fault with many of us is that when we have cast our burden upon the Lord, we beg Him to let us have it back! And if He grants our foolish request, it comes back twice as heavy as it was before. Oh, that we were wise enough to leave our troubles with our Father who is in Heaven as little children leave things with their father! Then we shall find that He comforts us in all our tribulation.

Yes, but our text is true of the future as well as the present. Here, if we cannot speak by experience, we can speak by faith. A little child who loves his father has no doubt about his father’s comforting him next year as well as this. And you must have no doubt about what God will do for you, dear Friends, especially you aged ones. When the veterans begin to waver and doubt, I do not know what excuse to make for them. I remember the story of one who said she was afraid she would be starved. Someone asked her, “How old are you?” “Seventy-five,” she replied. “How long have you been a Christian?” “Fifty years.” “Your Heavenly Father has fed you these 50 years and yet you fear that He will let you starve during the last few years you are likely to be here?” It was very wrong of the poor old soul—mind that you do not imitate her! It is due to every honest man that we should speak of him as we have found him—but much more is it due to our faithful God! He *has* comforted, He *is* comforting and He *will* comfort. And Paul puts it in such a way as to make us feel that *He will never leave off comforting us even for a single moment.* “Who comforts us in all our tribulation”—not in some of it, but in*all* of it! Our tribulations sometimes change and a new cross is generally a very heavy one. The old crosses get, at last, to fit the back and we can carry them better than we could at the first—but a new cross galls the shoulders that have not yet grown used to it. But the Lord your God will help you in your new tribulations as well as in your old ones! And if they come thick and threefold—tribulation upon tribulation, trouble upon trouble— still, as your days, so shall your strength be, and He who has comforted and is comforting, will continue to comfort you even to the last!

**IV.**Now I must close with just a few remarks upon THE COMFORTING DESIGN of which our text speaks.

Why does God lay trouble upon His people and comfort them in it? *It is that He may make them comforters of others—*“that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.” A man who has never had any trouble is very awkward when he tries to comfort troubled hearts. Hence, the minister of Christ, if he is to be of much use in God’s service, must have great trouble. “Prayer, meditation, and affliction,” says Melanchthon, “are the three things that make the minister of God.” There must be prayer. There must be meditation and there must be affliction. You cannot pronounce the promise correctly in the ears of the afflicted unless you, yourself, have known its preciousness in your own hour of trial. It is God’s will that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, should often work by men according to that ancient word of His, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem.” These comforting men are to be made—they are not born so—and they have to be made by passing through the furnace, themselves. They cannot comfort others unless they have had trouble and have been comforted in it.

More than this, *the intent of God is to make us able comforters—*“that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.” Some have the will to comfort the troubled, but they have not the power to do it. “Miserable comforters are you all,” said Job to his friends! And the same has been said to many of those who have really tried to comfort the sorrowing, but who, in the process, have put their fingers into the open wounds and so made them worse instead of better. Brethren, the able comforter must be a man who knows both the trial and the promise that is suited to meet it.

Beside that, *we are to be ready comforters*, for we are “to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Experimental knowledge helps a man to speak with power to the afflicted soul. He who has taken a certain medicine and proved the benefit of it, is the man to recommend it to another. Hence, the Lord often passes His ministers through trials which they would never have to endure if it were not for their people. Even as upon the Chief Shepherd, all the wanderings of the flock had to be laid, so, in a very minor sense, the wanderings of the flock must be borne by the under-shepherd, or else he cannot be a comforter to them. Dear Friends, the next time you get into any trouble, I would recommend you to take notes of it and to ask yourself, when it is over, “How did God comfort me?” Lay that cordial up in store, because, one of these days, you will need that comfort, again, or, if not, you will meet with somebody who is in just the same fix as you were in—and you will be able to say, “I know what will help you, for I have it down in black and white at home, how God helped me in a trouble exactly like yours.”

As I was reading a book, this afternoon, this sentence struck me— “whenever you come into the mouth of the furnace, say to yourself, ‘God has some great work for me to do and He is preparing me for it.’” I thought to myself, “I have not often said that in the time of trial. My thoughts have been too much taken up with the furnace to think of the good which was to result from the fire.” But I am sure that what that writer said is true—God means to do something more by us, which, speaking after the manner of men, He cannot yet do by us. We are not qualified for it. But He is going to put us through a still hotter furnace— the heat is to be more intense than any we have yet borne—and when we come out, we shall be more fit for the Master’s use!

Welcome your trials, then, Beloved! Open wide your doors and say to tribulations, “Come in, come in! This is the place where you are to lodge, for my Master said, ‘In the world you shall have tribulation.’” Welcome even that black trouble that has a mask on its face—it is no adversary coming to kill you—when the mask is taken off, you will see that, underneath it there is a bright smiling face! Some of us can say to affliction, “Come in and welcome, for the costliest jewels we ever possessed were brought by you! You have done us more good than all our joys put together.” We would have had no harvest if God had left us like the hard road outside the field. But the soil has been cut up by the sharp plow and often our very soul has been grievously tried as the harrow and the cultivator have gone over us, again and again! But all these processes have caused us to bring forth fruit to the praise and glory of God! Therefore, I say again, welcome your troubles! Do not be sorry if they travel with you for a while, for they are good guests. Many a time, by entertaining trouble, we have “entertained angels unawares.” God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, by making you a comfort to others! And probably it will be through the very trials which greatly vex you!

Now to close, there may be some poor soul here broken down under a sense of sin, some seeker who cannot find the Savior. He may speak to some of you who were brought to Christ without any strong emotion. He will begin telling you about his despair and you will look at him and say, “Dear me, where has this man come from?” Then do not try to help him, for you cannot—you have not had the experience through which he is passing. Go find the Brother who had a hard time of it in getting to the Wicket Gate, that poor fellow who tumbled into the Slough of Despond with his big burden on his back and nearly got choked in the mire. Say to him, “Brother Christian, here is another soul floundering about just as you were.” Hand him over to such a person because he will be the most likely to help him. Any of you who had great difficulty in laying hold of Christ at the first ought to be on the watch to find others who are as you were—stretch out the helping hand to them and say, “We would not have you suffer as we did if we can help it. We wish to show you the way to Jesus Christ and to get you to see it more quickly that we did. We even hope that you will, this very night, find joy and peace in believing.”

Do look after the broken-hearted ones, dear Friends! Watch for Mr. Feeble-Mind. Be on the look-out for poor Mr. Fearing, do not let them lie outside long. Help them over the wall and, as you have found mercy, administer it, in the name of God, to all who are longing to find it! May God bless you all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-20.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.*Paul is very careful to remind the Corinthians of that fact, since some of them had gone the length of denying his Apostleship altogether.

**1.***And Timothy our brother.*Whom, in all humility, he associates with himself, although he was a younger man, of far less consequence. But Paul loved him very much and, therefore, he put his name at the beginning of this Epistle side by side with his own—“and Timothy our brother.”

**1, 2.***Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* Christianity is a religion of benedictions! Whereas worldly people often use the language of courtesy towards one another without meaning what they say, the saints of God put a fullness of meaning into their expressions and really wish every good thing to those to whom they write. “Grace be to you.” That comes first, and then peace follows. Peace without Grace is a very dangerous possession. But a peace that grows out of the possession of Grace is a gracious peace and will lead to the peace of Heaven before long. This Grace and peace are to come “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no Grace for us apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. And though the Father is full of love and will give Grace and peace to His people, yet the Lord Jesus Christ must always be the channel through which these incomparable favors must flow to them!

**3, 4.***Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.* Nothing less, then, shall be given to the tried people of God than that same comfort which was enjoyed by the Apostle Paul! It shall be shared by all who are resting where Paul rested.

**5.***For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.*The Apostles were the most tried, but they were the most comforted. They had to stand the brunt of the battle, but the Lord was their strength in a very special sense. Observe the balance in this verse—“as the sufferings,” “so our consolation.” And “as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.” With little trial, we may expect little comfort. It is better to leave the whole matter entirely with God, or else we might almost desire to be dug about by the spade of affliction, that we might receive more of the living waters of consolation!

**6.***And whether we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* That is the grand objective of Christians, to live for others! When God has helped us to receive both our comforts and our sorrows as matters of trust that we are to take care of for the benefit of our fellow Christians, then have we learned the lesson which Christ would teach us by them!

**7.***And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you also be of the consolation.* How these things are put together! God does not call His people to the one without the other—no consolation without affliction and, blessed be His name, no affliction without consolation!

**8.***For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.*Why would Paul have them know this but that they might understand that he had to suffer as they did, and even more? Sometimes God’s people are apt to think that their ministers are not cast down as they are. They look upon them as a sort of superior order of beings who have no doubts and fears, no lack of strength, no despair. But that is an idle fiction and the sooner it is gone from our minds, the better! For those who lead the people of God will rather have *more* afflictions than less. Seeing that they need more instruction than others need, and that instruction usually comes with the rod—in all probability they will have more of the rod than others will. Paul, therefore, is anxious that the Corinthians should know in what seas of trouble he had to swim.

**9, 10.***But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.* It is supposed by some that the Apostle was in danger of being put to death in same extraordinary way—perhaps by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. We know that he speaks of having fought with beasts at Ephesus. We cannot tell whether there is any allusion, here, to that trial, or what it was. But it was evidently some death which, to the Apostle, seemed to be exceedingly terrible. And when he was delivered from it, it was to him like a resurrection! He speaks of it as having been worked by God that raises the dead. And he puts down this deliverance, together with some other of which he was at that very time the subject—“and does deliver”—and upon these experiences he builds his expectation that God “will yet deliver.”

**11.***You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*When many pray, after the blessings is received, many will give thanks. Paul rejoices to have been the object of interest to a large number of Christians everywhere in the time of his great peril. And when he escaped, he believed be would still be the object of their interest and that there would be more prayer in the world, and more praise, too, because of the dangers from which God had delivered him. It is worth while for any of us to be in sore sickness, or in great straits, if, thereby, the quantity of prayer and praise in the world shall be increased to God’s Glory!

**12.***For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you.*For to them he had been specially particular, that in no point they should speak of him as having used the wisdom of words. Among them he determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To them he was like the nurse who administers milk to babes.

**13, 14.***For we write none other things unto you, than what you read or acknowledge; and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end; as also you have acknowledged us in part.*Some of them disputed his Apostleship, but most of them did not—

**14.***That we are your rejoicing, even as you, also, are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.* What a happy condition of things it is when the teacher and the taught mutually rejoice in each other! When the teacher is the joy of the flock and when he can rejoice in his people! This is profitable to all, but when there are discards, and fault-finding and the like, this is neither glorifying to God nor profitable to the people.

**15-17.***And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yes, yes, and no, no?*There were some in the Church at Corinth who said, “He promised to come and see us, but he did not keep his word.” They declared that his promise could not be depended upon and that he very easily changed his mind. Now the Apostle had done nothing of the kind! He had solid reasons for his change of purpose and reasons full of love to them—but they misrepresented him. Do not, my dear Friends, count the fiery trial of misrepresentation to be any strange thing! Even some of those whom you have loved and for whom you have been willing to lay down your lives will turn against you! It is no new thing that they should do so. They may take anything which you have done in the simplicity of your heart and turn it against you. Whenever they do so, I say again, do not think that any strange thing has happened to you—it happened to Paul—then why should not you have a similar experience?

**18-20.***But as God is true, our word toward you was not yes and no. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not yes and no, but in Him was yes. For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*Paul loved to turn from some lower subject to his Lord. When he wrote the words, “yes and no,” they suggested to him the perfect constancy of the love of Christ and thankfulness for His faithful promises. So, as the thought came into his mind, he could do no other than put it into the Epistle he was writing, for he never missed an opportunity of praising the Lord Jesus Christ! I wish we could all imitate him, in this respect, far more than we have ever done, for, our Savior is worthy of all the praise we can ever give Him—and more, too!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #13 New Park Street Pulpit

CONSOLATION PROPORTIONATE TO SPIRITUAL SUFFERINGS  
NO. 13

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 11, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us,  
so our consolation also abounds by Christ.”  
2 Corinthians 1:5.~~***

SEEK you rest from your distresses, you children of woe and sorrow? This is the place where you may lighten your burden and lose your cares. Oh, son of affliction and misery, would you forget for a time your pains and griefs? This is the Bethesda, the house of mercy! This is the place where God designs to cheer you and to make your distresses stay their never-ceasing course. This is the spot where His children love to be found, because here they find consolation in the midst of tribulation, joy in their sorrows and comfort in their afflictions. Even worldly men admit that there is something extremely comforting in the sacred Scriptures and in our holy religion! I have even heard it said of some that after they had, by their logic, as they thought, annihilated Christianity and proved it to be untrue, they acknowledged that they had spoilt an excellently comforting delusion and that they could almost sit down and weep to think it was not a reality. Yes, my Friends, if it were not true, you might weep. If the Bible were not the Truth of God—if we could not meet together around His mercy seat, then you might put your hands upon your loins and walk about as if you where in travail. If you had not something in the world beside your reason, beside the fleeting joys of earth—if you had not something which God had given to you, some hope beyond the sky, some refuge that should be more than terrestrial, some deliverance which should be more than earthly, then you might weep—ah, weep your heart out at your eyes and let your whole bodies waste away in one perpetual tear! You might ask the clouds to rest on your head, the rivers to roll down in streams from both your eyes, for your grief would “have need of all the watery things that nature could produce.” But, blessed be God, we have consolation, we have joy in the Holy Spirit! We find it nowhere else. We have raked the earth through, but we have never discovered a jewel. We have turned this dunghill of a world over and over a thousand times and we have found nothing that is precious. But here, in this Bible, here in the religion of the blessed Jesus, we, the sons of God, have found comfort and joy. We can truly say, “As our afflictions abound, so our consolations also abound by Christ.”

There are four things in my text to which I invite your attention. The first is *the sufferings to be expected—*“The sufferings of Christ abound in us.” Secondly, *the distinction to be noticed—they are the sufferings of Christ*. Thirdly, *a proportion to be experienced—*as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolations abound. And fourthly, *the Person to be honored.*“So our consolation abounds by CHRIST.”

**I.**Our first division, then, is THE SUFFERINGS TO BE EXPECTED. Our holy Apostle says, “The sufferings of Christ abound in us.” Before we buckle on the Christian armor we ought to know what that service is which is expected of us. A recruiting sergeant often slips a shilling into the hand of some ignorant youth and tells him that Her Majesty’s Service is a fine thing, that he has nothing to do but walk about in his flaming colors, that he will have no hard service—in fact, that he has nothing to do but to be a soldier and go straight on to glory! But the Christian servant, when he enlists a soldier of the Cross, never deceives him like that. Jesus Christ Himself said, “Count the cost.” He wished to have no disciple who was not prepared to go all the way—“to bear hardness as a good soldier.” I have sometimes heard religion described in such a way that its high coloring has displeased me. It is true, “her ways are ways of pleasantness,” but it is *not true* that a Christian never has sorrow or trouble! It is true that light-eyed cheerfulness and airy-footed love can go through the world without much depression and tribulation—but it is not true that Christianity will shield a man from trouble. Nor ought it to be so represented. In fact, we ought to speak of it in the other way. Soldier of Christ, if you enlist, you will have to do hard battle! There is no bed of down for you, there is no riding to Heaven in a chariot. The rough way must be trod, mountains must be climbed, rivers must be forded, dragons must be fought, giants must be slain, difficulties must be overcome and great trials must be borne. It is not a smooth road to Heaven, believe me. For those who have gone but a very few steps therein have found it to be a rough one. It is a pleasant one, it is the most delightful in all the world—but it is not easy in itself. It is only pleasant because of the company, because of the sweet Promises on which we lean, because of our Beloved who walks with us through all the rough and thorny ferns of this vast wilderness.

Christian, expect trouble—“Count it not strange concerning the fiery trial and as though some strange thing had happened unto you.” For as truly as you are a child of God, your Savior has left you His legacy—“In the world, you shall have tribulation, in Me you shall have peace.” If I had no trouble I would not believe myself one of the family. If I never had a trial, I would not think myself an heir of Heaven. Children of God must not, shall not, escape the rod. Earthly parents may spoil their children, but the heavenly Father never shall His. “Whom He loves He chastens,” and scourges every son whom He has chosen. His people must suffer— therefore, expect it Christian. If you are a child of God, believe it—look for it—and when it comes say, “Well, suffering, I foresaw you. You are no stranger, I have looked for you continually.” You cannot tell how much it will lighten your trials if you await them with resignation. In fact, make it a wonder if you get through a day easily! If you remain a week without persecution, think it a remarkable thing. And if you should, perchance, live a month without heaving a sigh from your inmost heart, think it a miracle of miracles! But when the trouble comes, say, “Ah, this is what I looked for. It is marked in the chart to Heaven, the rock is put down. I will sail confidently by it—my Master has not deceived me”—

***“Why should I complain of need or distress Temptation or pain? He told me no less.”***

But why must the Christian expect trouble? Why must he expect the sufferings of Christ to abound in him? Stand here a moment, my Brothers and Sisters, and I will show you four reasons why you must endure trial. First, look upward, then look downward, then look around you and then look within you and you will see four reasons why the sufferings of Christ should abound in you!

Look upward. Do you see your heavenly Father, a pure and holy Being, spotlessly just, perfect? Do you know that you are one day to be like He? Think you that you will easily come to be conformed to His Image? Will you not require much furnace work, much grinding in the mill of trouble, much breaking with the pestle in the mortar of affliction, much being broken under the wheels of agony? Think you it will be an easy thing for your heart to become as pure as God is? Do you think you can so soon get rid of your corruptions and become perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect?

Lift up your eye again. Do you discern those bright spirits clad in white, purer than alabaster, more chaste, more fair than Parian marble? Behold them as they stand in Glory. Ask them from where their victory came. Some of them will tell you—they swam through seas of blood. Behold the sears of honor on their brows. See, some of them lift up their hands and tell you they were once consumed in fire—others were slain by the sword, torn in pieces by wild beasts, were destitute, afflicted, tormented. O you noble army of martyrs, you glorious hosts of the living God! Must you swim through seas of blood and shall I hope to ride to Heaven wrapped in furs and ermine? Did you endure suffering and shall I be hampered with the luxuries of this world? Did you fight and then reign and must I reign without a battle? Oh, no! By God’s help I will expect that as you suffered, so must I and as through much tribulation you entered the kingdom of Heaven, so shall I.

Next, Christian, turn your eyes downward. Do you know what foes you have beneath your feet? There are Hell and its lions against you! You were once a servant of Satan and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Do you think that Satan is pleased with you? Why, you have changed your country! You were once a liege servant of Apollyon, but now you have become a good soldier of Jesus Christ. And do you think the devil is pleased with you? I tell you no. If you had seen Satan the moment you were converted, you would have beheld a wondrous scene. As soon as you gave your heart to Christ, Satan spread his bat-like-wings—down he flew into Hell—and summoning all his counselors he said, “Sons of the pit, true heirs of darkness, you who once were clad in light but who fell with me from high dignities—another of my servants has forsaken me. I have lost another of my family. He is gone over to the side of the Lord of Hosts. Oh you, my compeers, you fellow helpers of the powers of darkness, leave no stone unturned to destroy him. I bid you all hurl all your fiercest darts at him. Plague him. Let Hell dogs bark at him. Let fiends besiege him. Give him no rest, harass him to the death. Let the fumes of our corrupt and burning lake ever rise in his nostrils. Persecute him, the man is a traitor, give him no peace! “Since I cannot have him here to bind him in chains of adamant. Since I never can have him here to torment and afflict him, as long as you can, till his dying day, I bid you howl at him! Until he crosses the river, afflict him, grieve him, torment him. For the wretch has turned against me and become a servant of the Lord.” Such may have been the scene in Hell that very day when you did love the Lord. And do you think Satan loves you better, now? Ah, no. He will always be at you, for your enemy, “like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour.” Expect trouble therefore, Christian, when you look beneath you.

Then, man of God, look around you. Do not be asleep. Open your eyes and look around you. Where are you? Is that man a friend next to you? No! You are in an enemy’s country. This is a wicked world. Half the people, I suppose, profess to be irreligious and those who profess to be pious often are not. “Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” “Blessed is he that trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.” “As for men of low degree, they are vanity.” The voice of the crowd is not worth having. And as for “men of high degree, they are a lie,” which is worse still. The world is not to be trusted, not to be relied upon. The true Christian treads it beneath his feet, with “all that earth calls good or great.” Look around you, my Brothers and Sisters. You will see some good hearts, strong and valiant. You will see some true souls, sincere and honest. You will see some faithful lovers of Christ. But I tell you O child of light, that where you meet one sincere man, you will meet 20 hypocrites. Where you will find one that will lead you to Heaven, you will find a score who would push you to Hell. You are in a land of enemies, not of friends. Never believe the world is good for much. Many people have burned their fingers by taking hold of it. Many a man has been injured by putting his hand into a nest of the rattlesnake—the world— thinking that the dazzling hues of the sleeping serpent were securities from harm. O Christian! The world is not your friend! If it is, then you are not God’s Friend. For he who is the Friend of the world is the enemy of God. And he who is despised of men, is often loved of Jehovah. You are in an enemy’s country, Man—therefore expect trouble—expect that the man who “eats your bread will lift up his heel against you.” Expect that you shall be estranged from those that love you. Be assured that since you are in the land of the enemy, you shall find the enemy everywhere. When you sleep, think that you sleep on the battlefield. When you walk believe that there is an ambush in every hedge. Oh, take heed, take heed! This is not a good world to shut your eyes in. Look around you, Man. And when you are upon the watchtower, reckon surely that trouble comes!

But then, look *within* you. There is a little world in here, which is quite enough to give us trouble. A Roman once said he wished he had a window to his heart, that all people might see what was going on there. I am very glad I have not. If I had, I would shut it up as closely as Apsley House used to be. I would take care to have all the shutters up. Most of us would have great need of shutters if we had such a window! However, for one moment, peep into the window of your heart, to observe what is there. Sin is there—original sin and corruption. And, what is more, self is still within. Ah, if you had no devil to tempt you, you would tempt yourself. If there were no enemies to fight you, you would be your worst foe. If there were no world, still you would be bad enough. For “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” Look within you, Believer, know that you bear a cancer in your very vitals. Know that you carry within you a bombshell, ready to burst at the slightest spark of temptation. Know that you have inside your heart an evil thing, a coiled-up viper, ready to sting you and bring you into trouble, pain and unutterable misery. Take heed of your heart, Christian! And when you find sorrow, trouble and care, look within and say, “Verily, I may well receive this, considering the evil heart of unbelief which I carry about with me.”

Now do you see, Brothers and Sisters? There is no hope to escape trouble! What shall we do, then? There is no chance for us. We must bear suffering and affliction. Therefore, let us endure it cheerfully. Some of us are the officers in God’s regiments and we are the mark of all the riflemen of the enemy. Standing forward, we have to bear all the shots. What a mercy it is that not one of God’s officers ever fall in battle! God always keeps them. When the arrows fly fast, the shield of faith catches them all. And when the enemy is most angry, God is most pleased. So, for all we care, the world may go on, the devil may revile, flesh may rise, “for we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us.” Therefore, all honor be unto God, alone. Expect suffering—this is our first point.

**II.**Now, secondly, there is A DISTINCTION TO BE NOTICED. Our sufferings are said to be the *sufferings of Christ*. Now, suffering in itself is *not* an evidence of Christianity! There are many people who have trials and troubles who are not children of God. I have heard some poor whining people come and say, “I know I am a child of God because I am in debt, because I am in poverty, because I am in trouble.” Do you, indeed? I know a great many *rascals* in the same condition. And I don’t believe you are a child of God any the more because you happen to be in poor circumstances. There are abundance who are in trouble and distress besides God’s children. It is not the peculiar lot of God’s family—and if I had no other ground of my hope as a Christian, except my experience of trials—I should have but very poor ground, indeed! But there is a distinction to be noticed. Are these sufferings the sufferings of Christ or are they not? A man is dishonest and is put in jail for it. A man is a coward and men hiss at him for it. A man is insincere and, therefore, persons avoid him. Yet he says he is persecuted! Persecuted? Not at all—it serves him right. He deserves it. But such persons will comfort themselves with the thought that they are “the dear people of God,” because other people avoid them when it so happens that they just deserve it. They do not live as they ought to do, therefore the world’s punishment is their desert. Take heed, Beloved, that your sufferings are the sufferings of Christ—be sure they are not your own sufferings. For if they are, you will get no relief—it is only when they are the sufferings of Jesus that we may take comfort.

“Well,” you say, “what is meant by our sufferings being the sufferings of Christ?” You know the word “Christ” in the Bible sometimes means the whole Church with Christ, as in 1 Corinthians 12:12 and several other passages which I cannot just now remember. But you will call to mind a Scripture where it says, “I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” Now, as Christ, the Head, had a certain amount of suffering to endure, so the body must also have a certain weight laid upon it. Our afflictions are the sufferings of Christ mystical, the sufferings of Christ’s body, the sufferings of Christ’s Church, for you know that if a man could be so tall as to have his head in Heaven and his feet at the bottom of the sea, it would be the same body and the head would feel the sufferings of the feet. So, though my Head is in Heaven and I am on earth, my griefs are Christ’s griefs. My trials are Christ’s trials, my afflictions, He suffers—

***“ I feel in My heart all your sighs and your groans, For you are most near Me, My flesh and my bones. In all your distresses, your Head feels the pain, Yet all are most necessary, not one is in vain.”***

The trials of a true Christian are as much the sufferings of Christ as the agonies of Calvary.

Still you say, “We want to discern whether our troubles are the trials of Christ.” Well, they are the trials of Christ if you suffer for Christ’s sake. If you are called to endure harshness for the sake of the Truth, then those are the sufferings of Christ. If you suffer for your own sake, it may be a punishment for your own sins. But if you endure for Christ’s sake, then they are the trials of Christ. “But,” say some, “is there any persecution nowadays? Do any Christians have to suffer for Christ’s sake now?” Suffer, Sirs? Yes! I could unfold a tale this morning, if I pleased, of insufferable bigotry, of persecution well near as bad as that in the days of Jesus! Only our foes have not the power and the law on their side. I could tell you of some who, from the simple fact that they choose to come and hear this despised young man, this ranting fellow, are to be looked upon as the offscouring of all things! Many are the persons who come to me who have to lead a miserable and unhappy life simply because from my lips they heard the word of Truth! Still, in spite of all that is said, they will hear it now. I have, I am sure, many before me, whose eyes would drop with tears if I were to tell their history—some who have privately sent me word of how they have to suffer for Christ’s sake because they choose to hear whom they please. Why, is it not time that men should choose to do as they like? If I do not care to do just as other ministers do, have not I a right to preach as I please? If I haven’t, I will— that is all. And have not other parties a right to hear me if they like, without asking the lords and governors of the present day whether the man is really clerical or not? Liberty! Liberty! Let persons do as they please. But liberty—where is it? You say it is in Britain. It is, in a measure, but not thoroughly. However, I rejoice that there are some who say, “Well, my soul is profited—and let men say what they will, I will hold hard and fast to the Truth of God and to the place where I hear the Word to my soul’s edification.” So, dear Hearts, go on, go on—and if you suffer for Christ’s sake, they are Christ’s sufferings! If you came here simply because you gained anything by it, then your sufferings would be your own. But since there is nothing to gain but the profit of your own souls, still hold on. And whatever is said, your persecution will but win you a brighter crown in Glory!

Ah, Christian, this ennobles us! My Brothers and Sisters, this makes us proud and happy to think that our trials are the trials of Jesus. Oh, I think it must have been some honor to the old soldier who stood by the Iron Duke in his battles, to be able to say, “We fight under the good old Duke, who has won so many battles—and when he wins, part of the honor will be ours.” Christian, you fight side by side with Jesus! Christ is with you—every blow is a blow aimed at Christ. Every slander is a slander on Christ—the battle is the Lord’s. The triumph is the Lord’s. Therefore, still on to victory! I remember a story of a great commander who, having won many glorious victories, led his troops into a valley and when there, a large body of the enemy entirely surrounded him. He knew a battle was inevitable on the morning. He, therefore, went round to all the tents, to hear in what condition his soldier’s minds were—whether they were dispirited or not. He came to one tent and as he listened, he heard a man say, “There is our general. He is very brave, but he is very unwise this time. He has led us into a place where we are sure to be beaten. There are so many of the enemy’s cavalry, so many infantry.” And then the man counted up all the troops on their own side and made them only so many. The commander, after he had heard the tale, gently drew aside a part of the tent and said, “How many do you count me for? You have counted the infantry and cavalry. But how many do you count me for— me, your mighty captain who has won so many victories.” Now, Christian, I say, how many do you count Christ for? How many do you put Him down for? Have you put Him down for one? He is not one, nor a thousand—He is the “chief among ten thousand.” But He is more than that! Oh, put Him down for a high figure. And when you count up your aids and auxiliaries, put down Christ for All-in-All, for in Him victory is certain—the triumph is secure!

**III.**Our third point is A PROPORTION TO BE EXPERIENCED. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so the consolations of Christ abound. Here is a blessed proportion. God always keeps a pair of scales—in this side, He puts His people’s trials, and in that He puts their consolations. When the scale of trial is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of consolation in nearly the same condition. And when the scale of trials is full, you will find the scale of consolation just as heavy. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, even so shall consolation abound by Christ. This is a matter of pure experience. Some of you do not know anything at all about it. You are not Christians, you are not born-again, you are not converted, you are unregenerate and, therefore, you have never realized this wonderful proportion between the sufferings and the consolations of a child of God. Oh, it is mysterious that when the black clouds gather most, the light within us is always the brightest! When the night lowers and the tempest is coming on, the heavenly Captain is always closest to His crew. It is a blessed thing, when we are most cast down, then it is that we are most lifted up by the consolations of Christ! Let me show you how.

The first reason is, because *trials make more room for consolation*. There is nothing that makes a man have a big heart like a great trial. I always find that little, miserable people, whose hearts are about the size of a grain of mustard seed, never have had much to try them. I have found that those people who have no sympathy for their fellows—who never weep for the sorrows of others—very seldom have had any woes of their own. Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper and makes more room for consolation. God comes into our heart—He finds it full—He begins to break our comforts and to make it empty—then there is more room for Grace! The humbler a man is, the more comfort he will always have. I recollect walking with a farmer one day—a man who was deeply taught, although he was a plowman and really, farmers would make a great deal better preachers than many college gentlemen—and he said to me, “Depend upon it, my good Brother, if you or I ever get one inch above the ground, we shall get just that inch too high.” I believe it is true. For the lower we lie, the nearer to the ground we are—the more our troubles humble us—the more fit we are to receive comfort! And God always gives us comfort when we are most fit for it. That is one reason why consolations increase in the same ratio as our trials.

Then again, *trouble exercises our grace*s and the very exercise of our graces tends to make us more comfortable and happy. Where showers fall most, there the grass is greenest. I suppose the fogs and mists of Ireland make it “the Emerald Isle.” And wherever you find great fogs of trouble and mists of sorrow, you always find emerald green hearts—full of the beautiful verdure of the comfort and love of God. O Christian, do not say, “Where are the swallows gone? They are gone—they are dead.” They are not dead, they have skimmed the purple sea and gone to a faroff land. But they will be back again by-and-by! Child of God, say not the flowers are dead. Say not the winter has killed them and they are gone. Ah, no—though winter has coated them with the ermine of its snow, they will put up their heads again and will be alive very soon. Say not, child of God, that the sun is quenched because the cloud has hidden it. Ah, no— he is behind there, brewing summer for you. For when he comes out again, he will have made the clouds fit to drop in April showers—all of them mothers of the sweet May flowers. And oh, above all, when your God hides His face, say not that He has forgotten you! He is but tarrying a little while to make you love Him more. And when He comes, you shall have joy in the Lord and shall rejoice with unspeakable joy! Waiting exercises our grace. Waiting, tries our faith—therefore wait on in hope. For though the promise tarry, it can never come too late!

Another reason why we are often most happy in our troubles is this— *then we have the closest dealings with God*. I speak from heart knowledge and real experience. We never have such close dealings with God as when we are in tribulation. When the barn is full, man can live without God. When the purse is bursting with gold, we somehow can do without so much prayer. But once your gourds are taken away, you need your God. Once cleanse away the idols out of the house, then you must go and honor Jehovah! Some of you do not pray half as much as you ought. If you are the children of God, you will have the whip and when you have that whip, you will run to your Father. It is a fine day and the child walks before its father. But there is a lion in the road—now he comes and takes his father’s hand. He could run half-a-mile before him when all was fine and fair. But once bring the lion and it is “Father! Father!” as close as he can be. It is even so with the Christian. Let all be well and he forgets God. Jeshurun waxes fat and be begins to kick against God. But take away his hopes, blast his joys, let the infant lie in the coffin, let the crops be blasted, let the herd be cut off from the stall. Let the husband’s broad shoulders be in the grave, let the children be fatherless—then it is that God is a God, indeed! Oh, strip me naked! Take all I have from me! Make me poor, a beggar, penniless, helpless! Dash that cistern in pieces, crush that hope, quench the stars—put out the sun, shroud the moon in darkness and place me all alone in space, without a friend, without a helper—still, “Out of the depths will I cry unto You, O God.” There is no cry so good as that which comes from the bottom of the mountains, no prayer half so hearty as that which comes up from the depths of the soul through deep trials and afflictions. Hence they bring us to God and we are happier. For that is the way to be happy—to live near to God. So that while troubles abound, they drive us to God and then consolations abound.

Some people call troubles weights. Verily they are so. A ship that has large sails and a fair wind, needs ballast. Troubles are the ballast of a Believer. The eyes are the pumps which fetch out the bilge-water of his soul and keep him from sinking. But if trials are weights, I will tell you of a happy secret. There is such a thing as making a weight lift you. If I have a weight chained to me, it keeps me down. But give me pulleys and certain appliances and I can make it lift me up. Yes, there is such a thing as making troubles raise me towards Heaven! A gentlemen once asked a friend concerning a beautiful horse of his, feeding about in the pasture with a clog on its foot, “Why do you clog such a noble animal?” “Sir,” he said, “I would a great deal sooner clog him than lose him—he is given to leap hedges.” That is why God clogs His people. He would rather clog them than lose them. For if He did not clog them, they would leap the hedges and be gone. They need a tether to prevent their straying and their God binds them with afflictions to keep them near to Him—to preserve them—and have them in His Presence. Blessed fact—as our troubles abound, our consolations also abound!

**IV.**Now we close up with our last point. And may the Holy Spirit once more strengthen me to speak a word or two to you. THERE IS A PERSON TO BE HONORED. It is a fact that Christians can rejoice in deep distress. It is a Truth—put them in prison and they will still sing. Like many birds, they sing best in their cages. It is true that when waves roll over them, their soul never sinks. It is true they have a buoyancy about them which keeps their heads always above the water and helps them to sing in the dark, dark night, “God is with me still.” But to whom shall we give the honor? To whom shall the glory be given? Oh, to Jesus, to Jesus! For the text says it is all by Jesus. It is not because I am a Christian that I get joy in my trouble—not necessarily so. It is not always the fact that troubles bring their consolations. But it is *Christ* who comes to me. I am sick in my chamber. Christ comes up stairs, He sits by my bedside and He talks sweet words to me. I am dying. The chilly cold waters of Jordan have touched my feet. I feel my blood stagnate and freeze. I must die. Christ puts His arms around me and says, “Fear not, Beloved. To die is to be blessed, the waters of death have their fountainhead in Heaven, they are not bitter, they are sweet as nectar, for they flow from the Throne of God.” I wade in the stream, the billows gather around me. I feel that my heart and my flesh fail. But there is the same Voice in my ears, “Fear not. I am with you! Be not dismayed. I am your God.” Now, I come to the borders of the infinite unknown—that country “from whose river no traveler returns.” I stand almost afraid to enter the realm of shades. But a sweet Voice says, “I will be with you wherever you go. If you should make your bed in Hades, I will be with you.” And I still go on, content to die, for Jesus cheers me. He is my consolation and my hope! Ah, you who know not that matchless name, Jesus—you have lost the sweetest note which ever can give melody! Ah, you who have never been entranced by the precious sonnet contained in that one word, Jesus—you who know not that Jesus means, I-ES-U, (“I ease you”), you have lost the joy and comfort of your lives and you must live miserable and unhappy. But the Christian can rejoice, since Christ will never forsake him, never leave him, but will be with him always!

A word or two to characters—first, I have a word with you who are *expecting troubles* and are very sad because you are looking forward to them. Take the advice of the common people and “never cross a bridge till you get to it.” Follow my advice—never bring your troubles nearer than they are, for they will be sure to come down upon you soon enough. I know that many persons fret themselves about their trials before they come. What on earth is the good of it? If you will show me any benefit in it, I will say go on, but to me it seems quite enough for the father to lay the rod on the child without the child chastising itself. Why should you do so? You, who are afraid of trouble, why should you be so? The trial may never overtake you. And if it does come, strength will come with it. Therefore, up with you, Man! Why are you sitting down groaning because of forebodings?—

***“Religion never was designed***

***To make our pleasures less.”***  
Up! Up! Why will you sit down and be frozen to death? When trouble comes, *then* fight it with manful heart and strong. Plunge into the stream, accoutered as you are and swim it through, but oh, do not fear it *before* it comes!

Then Christian *in trouble*, I have a word to say to you. So my Brothers and Sisters, you are in trouble—you have come into the waves of affliction, have you? No strange thing, is it? You have been there many times before. “Ah,” but you say, “this is the worst I ever had. I have come up here this morning with a millstone round my neck. I have a mine of lead in my heart—I am miserable, I am unhappy, I am exceedingly cast down.” Well, but, as your troubles abound, so shall your consolation! Brothers and Sisters, have you hung your harp upon the willows? I am glad you have not broken the harp altogether. Better to hang it on the willows than to break it. Be sure not to break it. Instead of being distressed about your trouble, *rejoice* in it. You will then honor God. You will glorify Christ. You will bring sinners to Jesus, if you will sing in the depths of trouble—for then they will say, “There must be something in religion, after all, otherwise the man would not be so happy.”

Then one word with you who are almost driven to despair. I would stretch my hands out if I could, this morning—for I believe a preacher ought to be a Briareus with a thousand hands to fetch out his hearers, one by one, and speak to them. There is a man here quite despairing— almost every hope gone. Brothers and Sisters, shall I tell you what to do? You have fallen off the main deck, you are in the sea, the floods surround you, you seem to have no hope, you grab at straws. What shall you do now? Why lie upon the sea of trouble and *float* upon it! Be still and know that God is God and you will never perish. All your kicking and struggling will sink you deeper. But lie still—for behold the life boat comes. Christ is coming to your help. Soon He will deliver you and fetch you out of all your perplexities!

Lastly, some of you have no interest in this sermon at all. I never try to deceive my hearers by making them believe that all I say belongs to all who hear me. There are different characters in God’s Word—it is yours to search your own hearts this day—and see whether you are God’s people, or not. As the Lord lives before whom I stand, there are two classes here. I do not acknowledge the distinction of aristocratic and democratic. In my sight and in God’s sight, every man is alike! We are made of one flesh and blood. We do not have china gentlemen and earthenware poor people. We are all made of the same mold of fashion. There is one distinction and only one. You are all either the children of God, or children of the devil! You are all either born-again, or dead in trespasses and sins! It is yours to let the question ring in your ears—“Where am I? Is yon black tyrant, with his fiery sword, my king? Or do I acknowledge Jehovah-Jesus as my Strength, my Shield, my Savior?” I shall not force you to answer it, I shall not say anything to you about it. Only answer it yourselves, let your hearts speak, let your souls speak. All I can do is to propose the question. God apply it to your souls! I beseech Him to send it home and make the arrow stick fast!—

***“Is Jesus mine! I am now prepared  
To meet with what I thought most hard.  
Yes, let the winds of trouble blow  
And comforts melt away like snow,  
No blasted trees, nor failing crops  
Can hinder my eternal hopes.  
Though creatures change, the Lord’s the same, Then let me triumph in His name.”***

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1536 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SENTENCE OF DEATH— THE DEATH OF SELF-TRUST  
NO. 1536

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 2, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead.” 2 Corinthians 1:9.~~***

WE are justified, dear Friends, in speaking about our own experience when the mention of it will be for the benefit of others. Especially is this the case with leaders in the Church such as Paul, for their experience is rich and deep and the rehearsal of it comes with great weight and is peculiarly valuable. We are all the better when we are distressed for discovering that such an one as Paul was also subject to heaviness—we feel safe in following the line of conduct which was marked out by the great Apostle and we are hopeful that if he came out of his troubles which were so great, we may, also, be delivered out of ours which are comparatively so little.

These footprints on the sand of time help us to take heart. By tracing the footsteps of the flock, we are helped to return to the fold and to the Shepherd. It would have been a great calamity if such men as David and Paul had, through a fear of seeming egotistical, withheld from us a sight of their inner selves. God has been pleased to fill a large part of the Bible with biographies and histories of human actions in order that we who are men, ourselves, may learn from them. Where a biography concerns mainly the inner rather than the outer life, as in the Psalms and in Paul’s Epistles, we are all the more strengthened, instructed, directed and comforted, for it is in the *inner* life that we are most perplexed and most in danger of going astray.

God grant us Grace to make good use of the treasure of experience which is stored up for us in His Word! How rich, how varied, how admirably selected! If one man can learn by the life of another, surely we ought to learn from such memorable lives as those immortalized in the Scriptures. Especially may we see ourselves as in a mirror while we steadily look into the heart of Paul. As to our own experience of trial and of delivering mercy, it is sent for our good and we should endeavor to profit to the utmost by it. But it was never intended that it should end with our private and personal benefit. In the kingdom of God no man lives unto himself. We are bound to comfort others by the comfort which the Lord has comforted us. We are under solemn obligation to seek out mourners and such as are in tried circumstances, that we may communicate to them the cheering testimony which we are personally able to bear to the love and faithfulness of God.

Our Lord has handed out to us spiritual riches of joy that we may communicate to others who are in need of consolation through great tribulation. You may think that you are not called upon to preach and possibly you may neither have the ability nor the opportunity for such public witness bearing, but your *experience* is a treasure of which you are the trustee and you are bound by the law of gratitude to make use of all you know, all you have felt, all you have learned by personal experience for the comforting and the building up of your Brothers and Sisters in Christ. To be reticent is sometimes to be treacherous—you may be found unfaithful to your charge unless you endeavor to improve for the general good the dealings of the Lord with your soul. I would exhort every Christian to reflect the light which falls upon him.

Brother, echo your Master’s voice faithfully and clearly! What the Lord has whispered to you in your ear in closets, proclaim according to your ability upon the housetops! If you have found honey, eat of it, yet eat not the feast*alone*, but call in others who can appreciate its sweetness that they may rejoice with you! If you have discovered a well, drink and quench your thirst, but hasten forthwith to call the whole caravan, that every traveler may also drink! If you have been sick and you have been healed, tell the glad news to all sick folk around you and let them know where they, too, may find a cure.

Perhaps your telling of the news may have more weight with men than all our preaching—they know you and have seen the change which Grace has worked in you and you will, by your own experience, give them proof and evidence which they cannot deny. May the Holy Spirit help you in this thing. Let this stand for the preface to our sermon and let us learn, once and for all, that, as Paul used his experience for the comfort and edification of the Churches, so is every Believer called upon to use their experience for the benefit of his fellow Christians. The particular experience of which Paul speaks was a certain *trial*, or probably *series* of trials, which he endured in Asia. You know how he was stoned at Lystra and how he was followed by his malicious countrymen from town to town wherever he went, that they might excite the mob against him.

You recollect the uproar at Ephesus and the constant danger to which Paul was exposed from perils of all kinds, but it must not be forgotten that he appears to have been suffering, at the same time, grievous sickness of body and that the multiple, together, caused very deep depression of mind. His tribulations abounded—outside were fights and within were fears. I call to your notice the strong expressions which he uses in the 8th verse—“We were *pressed*”—he says. The word is such as you would use if you were speaking of a cart loaded with sheaves till it could not bear up under the weight—it is overloaded and threatens to break down and fall by the way. Or the word might be used if you spoke of a man who was weighted with too great a burden, under which he was ready to fall. Or, perhaps, better still, if you were speaking of a ship which had taken too much cargo and sank nearly to the water’s edge, looking as if it must sink altogether through excessive pressure.

Paul says that this was his condition of mind when he was in Asia— “We were pressed.” To strengthen the language he adds, “out of measure.” He was pressed out of measure. He could convey no idea of the degree of pressure put upon him—it seemed to be beyond the measure of his strength. All trials, we are taught in Scripture, are sent to us in measure and so were Paul’s, but for the time being he, himself, could see no limit to them and he seemed to be quite crushed. Paul could not tell how much he was tried. He could not calculate the pressure—it was more severe than he could estimate! So great, so heavy was the burden upon his mind, that he gave up calculating its weight.

Then he adds another word, “above strength,” because a man may be pressed out of measure and yet he may have such remarkable strength that he may bear up under it all. The posts and bars and gates of Gaza must have pressed Samson and they must have pressed him out of measure, but still, not beyond his *strength* because gigantic force was given to those mighty limbs of his so that he readily *carried* what would have crushed another man! Paul says that the pressure put upon him was beyond his strength, He was quite unable to cope with it and his spirits so failed him that he adds, “insomuch that we despaired even of life.”

He gave himself up for a dead man, for no way of escape was visible to him. Into whatever town he entered, he was followed by the Jews. The fickle mob soon turned against him—even the converts were not always faithful. He had been stoned and beaten with rods and men had sworn to take his life. Perils of robbers beset him in lonely places while tumult and assault befell him in the cities. Meanwhile, the thorn in his flesh worried him, afflictions and cares of all kinds weighed upon him and altogether his mind was bowed down under the pressure which had come upon him. What a deep bass there is in this note, “We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life”! May we be spared so grievous a condition, or if that cannot be, may we be profited by

it. We shall, in the sermon of this morning, as the Holy Spirit, the Com

forter, may help us, endeavor to show the *reason* for such affliction and the good effect of it. First, I shall direct your attention to the disease mentioned in the text as one to be prevented by the sentence of death—“that we should not trust in ourselves.” Secondly, we shall dwell, for a little, upon the treatment, “we had the sentence of death in ourselves.” And thirdly, we will observe the cure—“we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead.”

**I.**The first point is THE DISEASE—the tendency to trust in ourselves. And we remark upon it, first, that this is a disease to which all men are liable, for even Paul was in danger of it. I do not say that Paul *did* trust in himself, but that he might have done so and would have done so, if it had not been for the Lord’s prudent dealings with him both in the matter of this great trial in Asia and in the incident of the thorn in the flesh. Where a sharp preventive is used, it is clear that a strong liability exists. My Brothers and Sisters, I should have thought that Paul was the last man to be in danger of trusting in himself!

He was so amazingly converted, so remarkably clear in his views of the Gospel! Indeed, he was so thorough in his faith, so intense in his zeal, so eminent in his humility that all could see that his reliance was upon Grace alone. No writer that ever lived has set in so clear a light the fact that all things are of God and that we must walk by faith and depend alone upon God if we would find salvation and eternal life! And yet you see, my Brethren, it was possible that the great teacher of Grace could have trusted in himself! He was a man in whose life we see no sort of selfconfidence. I cannot recall *anything* that he did or said which looks like vanity or pride. He exhibits deep humility of spirit and great faith in God and he evidently had no confidence in himself—such confidence he was always disclaiming. He looked upon his own works and his own righteousness as dross and dung that he may win Christ. And when he does speak of himself, it is generally with special self-denials—“I, yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.” “By the Grace of God,” says he, “I am what I am.”

It is plain, then, that no clearness of knowledge, no purity of intent and no depth of experience can altogether kill in our corrupt nature the propensity to self-reliance. We are so foolish that we readily yield to the witchery which would cause us to trust in ourselves. This wide-spread folly has no respect for knowledge, age, or experience, but even feeds upon them! I have heard men say several times and I have been ashamed as I have heard the boast—“I am sure there is no likelihood that I should ever trust in myself. I know better.” Brother, you are trusting in yourself when you say that—the subtle poison is in your veins even now! You do not know what folly you can commit. You are such a fool that even while you say, “I know my folly,” you are probably even, then, betraying your selfconceit.

What do we know? We know not of what spirit we are. We are capable of almost everything that the devil is capable of. Yes, and if the Grace of God should leave us, though we had been exalted to stand like Paul and say, “I am not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles,” yet should we fall, like Lucifer, and perish with pride! The silliest of the vices may overcome the wisest of saints! Trust in *self* is one of the most foolish of sins, though the commonness of it hides its contemptible character. When we say, “I am surprised that I should have acted so unwisely,” we betray our secret pride and confess that we thought ourselves wonderfully wise.

If, my Brothers and Sisters, you knew yourself, you would not be surprised at *anything* that you might do. If you had a proper estimate of yourself, it would rather cause you surprise that you were *ever* right than that you were sadly wrong, for such is the natural weakness, folly and vanity of our deceitful hearts that when we err, even in the most foolish way, it may be said of us that we are only acting out our own selves and we would do the same again, if not worse, were we left by the Spirit of God.

Notice, secondly, that trusting in self is evil in all men, since it was evil in an Apostle. Paul speaks of it as a fault which God, in mercy, prevented, “that we should not trust in ourselves.” Why, Beloved, if you or I were to trust in ourselves, we should be fit objects for ridicule and derision, for what is there in us that we can trust? But as for Paul, in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, laying himself out for the Church of God with heroic zeal and wearing himself out with self-denials—at first sight it seems that there was something in him whereof he might glory! He walked with God and was like his Master and Lord.

He was an humble but admirable imitation of the Lord Jesus and the mind that was in Christ was also in him! He was a noble man—we cannot find another man like he! He was one of the most beautiful, well-balanced, forceful and influential of human characters and yet it would have been a most injurious thing for him to have trusted in himself in any degree. He was singularly judicious, far-seeing and prudent—and yet he might not rely on himself. If this is so—if his Revelations from God; if his deep experience; if his intense consecration; if his remarkable wisdom; if his splendid education; if his logical mind and fervent spirit—if all these combined could not warrant his trusting in himself, what folly would be *ours* if we became self-sufficient?

If a lion’s strength is insufficient, what can the dogs do? If the oak trembles, how can the brambles boast? If such poor things as we are dare to be self-confident, we deserve to smart for it! May God keep us from this evil in all its disguises, whether it beguiles us in the form of boasting of our own righteousness, or flatters us into reliance upon our own judgment! In any shape it is a sin against God and a mischief to ourselves! May the God of all Grace destroy it, root and branch.

We see, dear Friends, in the next place, that it must be highly injurious to trust in ourselves, since God Himself interposed to prevent His dear servant from falling into it. The Lord warded off the evil by sending Paul a great trouble when he was in Asia—thus does our all-wise and almighty God arrange Providence to prevent His servants from falling into selftrust. Depend upon it, He is doing the same for us since we have even a greater need—He is arranging all our ways and steps that we may not wander into self-conceit. Perhaps our heavenly Father is, at this present time, afflicting some of you, denying you your heart’s desire, or taking from you the delight of your eyes. Perhaps He is placing you in circumstances where you are puzzled and bewildered and do not know what to do—and all for this reason—that you may become sick of yourself and fond of Christ—that you may know your own folly and may trust yourself with purpose of heart to the Divine Wisdom, for, rest assured, nothing can happen to you that is much worse than to trust yourselves!

A man may escape from poverty, but if he falls into self-confidence he has, of two evils, fallen into the worse! A man may escape from great blunders and yet if he grows proud because he was so prudent, it may happen that his conceit of his own wisdom may be a worse evil than the mistakes which he might have made. *Anything* is better than vain-glory and self-esteem. Self-trust before God is a monster evil which the Lord will not endure! Indeed, He so abhors it that He has pronounced a curse upon it—“Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” That dread word of warning emphatically applies to those who trust in*themselves*. Let me, then, think most solemnly of the fact that if I am relying upon myself for acceptance with God, or for power to serve Him, I am cursed!

I am so and I must be so, because trusting in myself means idolatry and idolatry is a cursed thing. The self-truster puts himself into God’s place, for God alone is to be relied upon. “Trust in Him at all times, you people. Pour out your heart before Him.” Trusting in yourself, you lift yourself into the Throne where God alone may sit and so you become a traitor. To trust yourself is the result of a gross falsehood and it also imputes falsehood to the God of Truth, for you do, as it were, deny that God can be believed and you assert that *you* can be trusted, whereas the Lord declares that no man is the proper object of trust. “He that trusts in his own heart,” He says, “is a fool.” But you will not have it so and, therefore, you make God out to be a liar!

To trust in one’s self is a piece of impertinent pride, insulting to the Majesty of Heaven. It is a preference of *ourselves* to God, so that we take our own opinion in preference to His Revelation. We follow our own whim in preference to His Providential direction. We, as it were, become gods to ourselves and act as if we knew better than God. It is, therefore, a very high crime and misdemeanor against the Majesty of Heaven that we should trust in ourselves. And in whomever this evil exists, it makes a man intolerable to God! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, this fourth remark must be made, that this evil is very hard to cure—for it seems that to prevent it in Paul it was necessary for the Great Physician to go the length of making Paul feel the sentence of death in himself—nothing short of this could cure the tendency.

On another occasion it is written, “Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” In the case mentioned in our text, the buffeting of Satan does not seem to have sufficed and God, in His Providence and love, deemed it necessary to cause the sentence of death to ring out its knell in the Apostle’s heart. A sentence of death! Can you conceive the feeling of a man who has just seen the judge put on the black cap and pronounce the sentence of death? The condemned cell, the iron bars, the prison fare, the grim guards—these are nothing compared to the death-sentence—the sentence of death! This is terrible! Paul must feel that woe!

A sharp knife was necessary to cut out the cancer of self-trust even from such an one as Paul. This bitter potion, bitter as gall, he must drink even to the dregs. The sentence must not only be in his ears, but be in his very *self*. “We had the sentence of death in ourselves.” Nothing short of this could prevent his being polluted with self-trust, for if less suffering would have sufficed, the Lord would have spared him so dread a sorrow. As stones fall towards the earth, so do we gravitate towards self. If we are zealous, self-trust says, “What a zealous man you are! You can certainly carry everything before you.” If we grow diffident, then this same pride whispers, “What a humble, modest person you are! You are not conceited or rash, you can well be trusted.”

If God grants us a little success in working for Him, we blow the trumpets that all men may be aware of it. Our Lord can scarcely send us on the most common errand without danger of our becoming like Jack-inOffice—too proud to be borne with! The Lord cannot allow us a little sweet communion with Christ but what we say, “Oh, what joy I have had! What delights at His table! What a precious season of private prayer! I am somebody!” Yes, we are prone to sacrifice before this most base idol—I say the most base idol—for surely there is no idolatry so utterly degrading as the worship of one’s self! Alas, we cannot get rid of the flavor of the Egyptian leeks and onions! Self clings to us as a foul odor not to be gotten out of our unclean flesh!

Does the Lord teach us much of His Word? Then we grow proud of knowledge. Does the Lord help us to comfort His people? Then we set up ourselves, at once, as something wonderful in the Church. Does Christ reveal Himself to us as He does not to the world? Ah, then our heads are ready to smite the stars, we are so great! God save us from this subtle malady, this spiritual leprosy! I think I may add, even, if nothing else *but* the sentence of death in ourselves can stop us from trusting in ourselves, then let even this remedy be used.

**II.**But now I invite you for a few minutes to look at THE TREATMENT ordained for the Apostle’s cure—“We had the sentence of death in ourselves,” which means, first, that he seemed to hear the verdict of death passed upon him by the conditions which surrounded him. So continually hounded by his malicious countrymen, he felt certain that one day or other they would cause his destruction he was so frequently subject to popular violence. He felt that his life was not worth a moment’s purchase and, therefore, so sick in body and so depressed in spirit he felt that he might, at any moment, expire.

The original conveys the idea, not only of a verdict from without, but of an answer of assent from within. There was an echo in his consciousness—an inward dread—a sort of apprehension that he was soon to die. The world threatened him with death and he felt that one of these days the threat would be carried out and that very speedily. And yet it was not so—he survived all the designs of the foe. My Brothers and Sisters, we often feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. We die before we die and find ourselves alive to die again! Death seems certain and yet the bird escapes even out of the fowler’s hands. Just when he was about to wring its neck it flew aloft. Listen! How it sings, far above his reach. “Unto God the Lord belong the escapes from death.”

A witty saying puts it, “Let us never say die till we are dead.” But then we shall most truly say we live forever and ever! Let us postpone despair till the evil comes. Into a low state of spirit was Paul brought—death appeared imminent and his eyes of faith gazed into the eternities and this prevented his trusting in himself. The man who feels that he is about to die is no longer able to trust in himself. After this manner the remedy works our health. What earthly thing can help us when we are about to die? Paul needed not to say, “My riches will not help me,” for he had no wealth. He had no need to say, “My lands and broad acres cannot comfort me, now,” for he had not even a foot of land to call his own—his whole estate lay in a few needles with which he made and mended tents.

His trade implements and a manuscript book or two were all his possessions. He says, in effect, “Nothing on earth can help me now. My tongue, with which I preached, cannot plead with Death, whose deaf ears no oratory can charm. My epistles and my power of writing cannot stand me in any stead, for no pen can arrest the death warrant—it is written and I must die. Friends cannot help me. Titus, Timothy, none of these can come to my aid. Neither Barnabas nor Silas can pass through the death stream with me—I must ford the torrent alone.” He felt as every man must who is a true Christian and is about to die, that he must commit his spirit unto Christ and watch for His appearing. He determined whether he died or lived that he would spend and be spent for the Lord Jesus.

Brothers and Sisters, we do not yet know what dying is—the way to the other land is an untrod path as yet. We read about Heaven and so on, but we know very little of the way there. To the mind of one about to die, the unknown frequently causes a creeping sensation of fear and the heart is full of horror. Paul felt the chill of death coming over him and by this means his trust in himself was killed and he was driven to rely upon his God! If nothing else will cure us of self-confidence we may be content to have the rope about our neck, or to lay our neck upon the block, or to feel the death rattle in our throats! We may be satisfied to sink as in the deep waters if this would cure us of trusting in ourselves!

Such was the case with Paul, when his gracious Master put forth His hand to turn Him aside from all glorying in the flesh. What was more, I think Paul means, here, that the sentence of death which he heard outside worked within his soul a sense of entire helplessness. He was striving to fight for the kingdom and Gospel of Christ, but he saw that he must be baffled if he had nothing to rely upon but himself—he was hampered and hemmed in on every side by the opposing Jews who would not permit him to go about his work in peace. He despaired even of his life. He was not able to get at his work, for these persons were always about him, howling at him, uttering falsehoods against him and hindering him. He became so worried and wearied that he was pressed and oppressed, immeasurably loaded and brought into such a state of mind that all inward comfort failed him and he was obliged to look above for succor.

His faculties were cramped as with a mortal rigor, his reason argued against him and his imagination rather created terrors than expectations. He knew the experience so poetically described by Kirke White in his hymn upon the star of Bethlehem—

***“Deep horror, then, my vitals froze,  
Death struck, I ceased the tide to stem.”***

And he also knew the joy of the other two lines of the verse ***— “When suddenly a star arose,  
It was the star of Bethlehem.”***

Paul’s mind was so struck with death within himself that he could not stem the torrent and would have drifted to despair had he not given himself up into the hands of Divine Grace and proved the loving power of God.

My Brothers and Sisters, you may never have experienced this and I do not wish that you may do so to the same extent as the Apostle, for the Lord may not bring you into a condition of exaltation where you are so exposed to the peril of self-confidence and, therefore, it may not be necessary to make you feel, to the same extent, this sentence of death. But I am aware that some of God’s people here know what it is to see death written upon everything within them and around them and these dare not trust in themselves!

Ah, there are times with some of us when we appear to lose all power to think aright; when we set ourselves to a subject and our brain will not exercise itself upon it; when we wish to do right and cannot tell which of two courses is the proper one. At times we cannot make out our way—we kneel to pray and find that we cannot pray as we would like to do—the whole energy and force of our spirit seems to be shriveled up as though the desert heat had blown over the meadow of our soul and left every blade of grass and flower dead beneath its burning breath. Such things *do* happen to men and when they happen, this is God’s severe but effectual treatment whereby He prevents their trusting in themselves!

You have said, sometimes, of a very useful person—“God honors that man and I am afraid he will be proud.” You might well tremble for him were it not that behind the door God whips the man and makes him loathe himself in dust and ashes! If the great Father favors any one of you with usefulness to any great extent or degree, depend upon it, He will favor you, also, with humiliations and spiritual conflicts, unless, indeed, you have so much Grace that you do not need these correctives and this is not the case with many. Brothers and Sisters, take the bitter with the sweet—*all* things work together for good, not one alone, neither the exaltation nor the depression, alone—but “all things work together for good to them that love God.”

The compound brings the benefit to us. As one drug in a compound medicine counteracts another and the whole result is health, so is it with the total sum of different Providences—it brings benefit to us and glory to God. I think I need not say any more about this remedy, except to notice that the Lord uses the same treatment in dealing with men who as yet are not saved. Why is it that one of the first works of Grace on a man is to take away all his comfort and hope? I will soon tell you. Suppose that a poor man had fallen into such a state of mind that he could not bear the sun, but lived in perpetual candle light? He dreamed that no light could equal his poor tapers and he despised the sun—only candles for him—he hated daylight!

By the way, I am not wild in this supposition, for there are people who cannot worship God without candles, even in the daylight and yet they are not said to be insane! But to return to the imaginary case, our poor, weakminded friend is prejudiced against the sun and we aim to bring him into brightness. How shall we proceed? I think we had better blow out his candles and leave him in the dark and then, perhaps, he will be willing to try the light of Heaven. Then I would take him outdoors and let him see the sun. And, after he had once beheld its superior light, he would never be able to praise his poor candles again! The first thing is to blow his candles out—and the first thing to bring a man to Christ, the Divine Light—is to put out his own feeble tapers of *self-trust*.

I have heard of one who fell into the water and sank and a strong swimmer standing on the shore did not at the same instant plunge in, though fully resolved to rescue him. The man went down the second time and then he who would rescue him was in the water swimming near him, but not too near, waiting very cautiously till his time came. He who was drowning was a strong, energetic man and the other was too prudent to expose himself to the risk of being dragged under by his struggles. He let the man go down for the third time and then he knew that his strength was quite exhausted and, swimming to him, he grasped him and drew him to shore. If he had seized him at first, while the drowning man had strength, they would have gone down together!

The first part of human salvation is the sentence of death upon all human power and merit. When all hope in self is quite gone, Christ comes in and, with His Divine Grace rescues the soul from destruction. As long as you think you can swim, you will kick and struggle and drown! But when you see the futility of all your own efforts and perceive that you are without strength, you will leave yourselves with Jesus and be saved. The *eternal* power will come in when *your* power goes out. The sentence of death in yourselves will prevent your trusting in yourselves—death recorded and death confessed to be a just penalty will expel all vain hope and Grace will be welcomed and the heart will believe with a true faith worked in it by the Spirit of God!

**III.**Thirdly, let us think of THE CURE. It was sharp medicine, but it worked well with Paul, for we find, first, that Paul’s self-trust was prevented—every rising token of it was effectually removed. He says, “We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves.” Under this influence he preached as though he never might preach again—a dying man to dying men! I have heard of Brethren who do not expect to die. I do not wish to disturb their hope if it gives them comfort, but I know there is something very salutary in my own sense of the nearness of death. Christ may come, it is true, and this faith has the same effect as the expectation of going Home to Him, but one way or the other, the sense of the *insecurity* of this mortal life is good for us.

To bring death very near to the mind is a solemn, searching, sanctifying exercise. Our forefathers of centuries ago were known to have a human skull on the table where they read their Bibles. I do not recommend so sickening a device—we can have a memento of death in better form than that! Still, it is greatly wise to talk about our last hours, to be familiar with the grave, to walk among those little hillocks where our predecessors sleep and to remember that all the world is like a sandy beach where, after the tide has gone, innumerable little worm casts cover all the plain. Such a worm cast, I, too, shall leave behind me. This world is full of death’s handiwork, a very morgue—no, better—name it a God’s acre, a sleeping place where myriads lie waiting for the awakening trumpet! We, too, may expect to sleep with them and, therefore, we must not confide in ourselves.

Are you a dying man and can you trust yourself? More frail than the moth, driven up and down like a sere leaf in the tempest, can you trust yourself? I hope a sense of death will work a cure of that tendency in us. When the sentence of death assumes the form of an experience of despair as to everything that is of our own selves, then it has thoroughly worked the cure. I have gone up and down in my own soul where once sweet things did sing and fair hopes bloomed and I have searched in every chamber to hear a note or find a flower and I have found nothing but silence and death. I have gone abroad into the fields of my imagination where once I saw much that made my heart right glad and I have seen a valley of dry bones where only death reigned. Everything which I formerly rejoiced in was touched by the paralyzing hand—all was dead within me, sentence was passed and apparently executed upon my whole being.

If a man does not trust God then, when will he? And if this does not take him off from self-confidence, what is to do it? This treatment never fails when the Holy Spirit uses it. Remember, this was only *half* the result in Paul’s case, for he does not only say that by this sentence of death he was delivered from trusting in himself, but he was led to trust “in God which raises the dead.” Now, my Brothers and Sisters, we have come out of the gloom of the sepulcher into the glory of the resurrection! “God which raises the dead” is our hope! The doctrine of the Resurrection is essential to the Christian system and Paul takes it for granted.

When he was delivered from trusting in himself because of the sentence of death, the first thing he did was to trust in the God and Father of His risen Lord. For first he argued thus—If I die, what does it matter? God can raise me from the dead. If they stone me, if they smite me with the sword, if they fling me headlong into the sea, I shall rise again! I know that my Redeemer lives and that I shall see Him when He appears. He inferred, also, that if God could raise him from the dead, He could preserve him from a violent death. He that could restore him, if he were dead and rotten in the tomb, could certainly keep him from dying till all his lifework was accomplished. This inference is unquestionably true—

***“Plagues and deaths around me fly,  
But till He bids I cannot die!  
Not a single shaft can hit  
Till the God of love thinks fit.”***

Immortal is every Believer till his work is done! Paul felt this and was comforted.

He argued yet further that if God can raise the dead and call together the separate atoms of a body long since dissolved and rebuild the house out of such ruin, then surely He could take his fainting powers, over which the sentence of death has passed and He could use them for His own purposes! Thus would I also reason with myself when I am deeply depressed. He can make me feel His life within me again! And He can make great use of me under all my weaknesses and difficulties. It needs Omnipotence to wake the dead! That same Omnipotence can make me triumph and enable me to do its will, whatever may stand in my way! Is not this a blessed form of argument—that God, who raises the dead can do for me, can do *in* me, can do *by* me great things for which His name shall have glory forever and ever?

Brothers and Sisters, we need to get away, more and more, from ourselves and we shall never do it till we write this down in our books—that *self* is dead—we *must* make a corpse of it. We sometimes hear that in setting forth the balance sheet of a banking establishment a mistake was committed by putting down a doubtful asset at too high a value—we must keep clear of such a blunder in making up our *spiritual* balances. There is no fear of undue depreciation if you say of anything which belongs to self, “it is good for nothing! Set it down as *worthless*.” If, then, you have written yourself down at twenty shillings in the pound, my dear Brother, I warn you that you will never realize it. But you say, “I never thought to get more than half-a-crown in the pound out of self”—you will never get that in good money!

“Well, I will put it down at a farthing in the pound.” You will never realize even that! It will cost you more to get it than it is worth—it is altogether a deception! He that trusts in himself not only gets not a farthing in the pound out of what he trusted in, but he is a loser by his foolish confidence. I should not like to realize myself—it would be an awful loss and leave a great gap in my checking account, for what am I but a mass of wounds, a bag of necessities, a mountain of weakness, a world of infirmities and nothing else worth mentioning? Do not put yourself down in your spiritual assets at all except as a *debt*, a*liability* and an *encumbrance*. Say, “Self is *dead*,” and you will be happy if you find that he *is* dead, for the most of your trouble will come from his being too much alive!

That old corrupt nature—ah, the vagabond—if he were, indeed, dead and would never struggle again, what a mercy! But there is still life in the old dog—life of a troublesome sort, full of mischief! Wisdom reckons self as a dead and worthless thing, to be mortified, but never to be trusted. Folly talks otherwise and bids you think well of yourself, but do not listen to its doting. He says, “You are getting to be an old man now; those gray hairs have brought experience and wisdom—you are not like those young chits of children that have just come into the Church.” No, but there is no fool like an old fool! Mind you, do not become another example of that old saying! Do not say to yourself, “Ah, now you are a man of wide experience, you are! You are not like those narrow-minded people who never went beyond their cottage or the hedges of their little farm. You have had a splendidly wide experience.”

Ah, but no blunder is so great as the blunder of a great man! No man is capable of doing so much mischief as the man who has capacity for doing great good. “Oh, but,” says someone, “I am so careful, so guarded, that there can be no fear of *me*.” Yet no one is so likely to sleep as the watchman who flatters himself that he does not even doze! So it used to be in the old days—and you watchful people are sure to go wrong if you are proud of being watchful. If, on the other hand, you feel that you are not as watchful as you ought to be and pray to be made more so, you will be kept right. Trust in ourselves is a kind of manna which will breed worms and stink and it will make our house unbearable and ourselves sick. Sweep it out! Oh, for a state of weakness that is strong in the Divine strength! Oh, to be nothing! To be NOTHING, that God may be All in All! Amen and amen! So let it be!

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THE TENSES NO. 2718

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 17, 1901.**

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1880.~~***

***~~Who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”  
2 Corinthians 1:10.~~***

WHEN children are learning their grammar, they have to pay particular attention to the tenses of the verbs. And it is also important for Christians to remember their tenses—to remember the past, the present and the future. Our text brings all three very vividly before us and reminds us that God has delivered, does deliver and will yet deliver.

First, let us think for a little while concerning the past. How old are you, my Friend? How many of your years have you employed profitably and how many have you allowed to run to waste? For how many years have you worked the will of the flesh and been a servant of sin and Satan? How long have you been born again? What is your age spiritually? Take down the record of your life and examine it, from the days of your childhood, through youth and early manhood, up till now. It is a book which should do us good to read. In some respects, all it’s pages may make us weep and yet, viewed in another light, many of them may give us cause to sing. This is the one book in the library that many people do not like to take down and read, for there are so many blots in it and so many humbling records. Yet “God requires that which is past,” and it is a token of wisdom for a man to talk with his past years and to learn from them the many lessons they are able to teach. All the days we have lived will go before us to the Judgment Seat and each one will bear its record and leave it there. So let us not be oblivious of that which God remembers, but let us remember it that we may be penitent for all that has been wrong in it, and that we may be grateful for all that has been right.

Next, think about the second part of life, namely, the time present. And here let me urge upon you, dear Friends, the importance of valuing the present. In fact, time present is the only time that you have. The past has gone and you cannot recall it—the future will never really be yours for, when it comes, it will be present, too. It is only in the present that we live, so that if we waste these precious hours that are now with us, we waste all that we have. If we serve not God today, when will we serve Him? Tomorrow? No, for when that opportunity comes, “tomorrow” will have been changed into “today.” Let us endeavor, as God shall help us, to watch our moments so as not to waste one of them.

It is a good thing to have our life divided up into short periods. The other day I saw John Wesley’s diary, or rather, horary, for it had in it not merely an entry for every day, but for every hour—and not only for every hour, but usually there was a distinct occupation for every 20 minutes! The good man made his days to have many hours in them—and his hours seemed to have more minutes in them than most men’s hours have—because he did not waste any of them, but diligently used them all in his Master’s service. God help us all to do the same by paying great attention to the present portion of our life!

As for the future, there is an idle curiosity which prompts men to try to live in it that we must renounce. But there is a gracious expectation which enables us to live in it—a holy anxiety which prompts us to prepare for it. It is greatly wise for us to talk with those years that are to come if we talk with them in view of their end. I would have you familiar with your graves, for you will soon be in them—and still more familiar with your resurrection dwelling place, remembering that God “has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Let us often project ourselves beyond the present into the future— to gather strength from the future is frequently the best way to deal with the present. You will be more easily able to bear your present burdens when you think how short is the time in which you will have to carry them. Your “light affliction, which is but for a moment,” will seem scarcely like a feather’s weight to you when you anticipate the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory” which God has prepared for you!

I recommend to you, therefore, this rule of three, and advise you always to consider the past, the present and the future. And just now I invite you to do so in connection with the delivering mercy of God. He *has* delivered us. He *does* deliver us. He *will*deliver us. And, first, I am going to point out to you *three trains of thought.* Next, *three lines of argument.* And, thirdly, *three inferences*.

**I.** First, THE TEXT SUGGESTS THREE TRAINS OF THOUGHT. The first is *memory, which tells us of the deliverances in the past—* “Who delivered us from so great a death.” Take the words exactly as Paul wrote them and recall how God has delivered some of us from death. A few here, perhaps, have been very near to death in battle or in tempest. Many more of us have been very near to death in sickness. Some of us have, several times in our lives, looked into eternity—our illness has been no child’s play and we have realized the possibility, or even the *probability* of our soon passing away from all the engagements of this mortal life—and standing before our God. But we have been raised up again—we have come forth from our chamber tottering on our staff, perhaps, through weakness, yet we are still preserved—the living, the living—to praise the Lord as we do this day. I have no doubt that almost all of you have had, at one time or another, some very special proof that, “unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.”  
Our past deliverances, however, have not only been from physical death. We have had greater deliverances than that. There was, first of all, our deliverance from *spiritual* death. Do you not remember the time, dear Brother, dear Sister, when you were brought out of nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous light? You say that you do not know the day when this great change took place—never mind if you do not—it is not at all essential if you can now say,” One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Some of us do remember the very day when we came to Christ and rested in Him and we do, with our whole heart and soul, bless Him that we were delivered from that terrible death which had so long held us in captivity! God rescued us by His Grace and enabled us to come forth from our grave of sin, looking unto Jesus and longing to be made like He.  
Further, some of you remember when you were delivered from despair. It is an awful thing to be driven away from all hope of salvation and to be at your wits end. You were not all brought to Christ in a terrible tempest, as some of us were—many of you came to Him under happier circumstances. Be very thankful that it was so—but some of us were hard put to it when we tried to touch the hem of His garment. We were pressed and crushed in the crowd and seemed to lose our very breath. I remember how, when I was under conviction of sin, my soul rolled to and fro and staggered like a drunken man, yet the Lord delivered me and taught me to rest upon Him—and thus even full assurance became possible although I had thought, before, that mercy could never reach me! Beloved, if I am describing your experience as well as my own, let us together bless the Lord for His mercy in delivering us from so great a death! The remembrance of our deliverance from sin and despair must take the first rank among our grateful reminiscences!  
But since then, have you not many times been delivered out of temptation? You said, with the Psalmist, “My feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped,” yet the Lord graciously preserved you. If you look back with careful eyes, you will see many occasions where, if it had not been for interposing mercy, you would either have fallen into the bog on your right hand, or into the quagmire on your left. If the Lord had not piloted your vessel, it would have been wrecked on the rocks of Scylla or engulfed in the whirlpool of Charybdis! Do you not wonder, sometimes, how you ever got through that peculiar temptation which was so suitable to your circumstances and so fascinating to your flesh? You did not know, at the time, that it was a temptation and you had not the necessary wisdom to meet the craft of Satan! Yet you were not taken captive in the Satanic net, cunningly as it was spread—and for that deliverance you must bless the name of the Lord!  
There are some of you who ought to praise Him for deliverances over which you wept at the time. He would not let you have what you desired—you were disappointed and you talked about your heart being broken. Ah, but the Lord’s dealings with you saved you from having a real broken heart! You said, “Alas! Alas! I have lost something which I fondly cherished!” It was well that you did lose it, for that which you thought was a bracelet sparkling with jewels was a viper which, had you grasped it, would have stung you to death! Blessed be God for not hearing some of our prayers! Blessed be the Lord for not gratifying many of our desires!  
We ought to praise Him, too, for our deliverances in the time of trouble. You are not all tried alike. I am very thankful that some of you are not troubled as others are, but I know that I am addressing some whose trials have been very many and very heavy. Your road has been a very rough one. John Bunyan truly says, “A Christian is seldom long at ease—when one trouble’s gone, another does him seize.” And that has been true in the lives of many of us. We can say with the Psalmist, “We went through fire and through water.” Some of God’s children have been brought very low in their circumstances so that they have had to live “from hand to mouth”—though I do not know that many of us live very differently from that—but there are some godly people who never have any reserve even if they do not actually come to need. I do not know that there is anything very grievous in that, for the sparrows and the ravens live in that style, yet God cares for them. But some of you find it to be a trial to have scantiness in the home, or sickness in your own person, or one who is dear to you as your own life constantly afflicted. There are all sorts of losses and crosses, trials and troubles for the godly to endure. Yes, but none of these things have crushed us yet, for the Lord has delivered us!  
Here is a poor widow and she wonders how she ever brought up that large family of little children. She scarcely knew how to provide for them all when she had a husband and yet, when the head of the house was gone, they were provided for! It is very wonderful, yet it was done. And you who seemed to see all your prospects suddenly dissolve like the mirage of the desert, were helped, too. You said at one time, “If such-andsuch a thing should happen it would kill me.” It did happen, yet it did not kill you, for you are here to testify to the Lord’s delivering mercy! One Job’s messenger after another came to bring you evil tidings, yet the Lord delivered you from the trials which threatened to crush you! I cannot stay to mention all those past deliverances and, probably, most of them are not even known to us. Glory be to God for unknown mercies—favors which came in the night when we most needed them, favors which helped us to sleep and to awake refreshed—favors that stole, with silent footfall, into our home and our heart and went away leaving traces of the sacred oil of Divine Mercy behind them!  
That is the first train of thought—*memory*, which tells of deliverances in the past.  
The second is *observation, which calls attention to present deliverance*—“and*does* deliver.” Open your eyes my Brothers and Sisters, and see how God is delivering you at this moment! I do not say that with the most widely opened eyes you will perceive all your deliverances, for, many times, you have been saved from trouble, while, on other occasions, you have been delivered out of it. I have often told you the story of the good old Puritan who met his son at a half-way house. When the young man came in, he said, “Father, I had a very special Providence as I rode here today.” “What was that, my son?” “My horse stumbled three times very badly, yet I was not thrown.” “And I have had an equally special Providence in riding here,” his father answered. “What was that?” “My horse never stumbled all the way, so I was not thrown.” You know that if we are in a railway accident and escape from any hurt, we say, “What a Providence!” Yes, but what a Providence it was when you were preserved from a railway accident by staying at home! Oftentimes we do not see the very thing that has the most of mercy in it. What evidences of Divine deliverance there are in the fact that you are here at this moment! A comparatively trifling incident might have resulted in your death. You may be, tomorrow morning, in doubt as to which of two ways you should take but there will be the Providence of God directing you which to choose—and your choice of that one may affect the rest of your life!  
If you are not just now being assailed by any temptation, it is because God is delivering you from it. Yet it may be that Satan is planning some fresh temptation with which to assail you. But, though he desires to have you that he may sift you as wheat, Christ is praying for you, that your faith fail not. We might have fallen into doctrina1 error had it not been for God’s restraining mercy. How apt thoughtful people are to be carried away by the particular novelty of the hour! It seems as if they could not resist the cogency of the argument by which the new teaching is supported, but we have been kept from yielding to it by having our hearts established in the faith, so that we have not believed every novel doctrine, but have judged it by the Word of God and so have been kept from wandering into devious ways.  
How graciously God is preserving many of us from the tongue of slander! It is a wonderful thing for any man to live much in public without being accused of some vile crime. And the woman who lives in the most retired position, the housewife who does nothing but look after her own children, will find somebody or other slandering her. You cannot always escape from the envenomed tongue of slander, be you what you will and where you will—and for God to keep the reputation of any Christian unstained year after year is a subject for the greatest thankfulness.  
We do not know where or what we might have been if God’s gracious protection had not been like a wall of fire around us, as it is even now, for the Lord does still deliver all those who put their trust in Him. I want you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to believe with unquestioning confidence that God is delivering you just now. You know that He has delivered you—be quite as sure that He is delivering you at this moment. “Oh,” says one, “I am shut up in the dungeon of despair.” Yes, but your Lord has a key that can open the door and let you out. “Yes, but I am in great need.” But He knows all about it and He has His basket in His hand full of good things with which He is going to supply all your needs. Oh,” says another, “but I am sinking in the flood.” But He is throwing the lifebelt to you. “Oh, but I am fainting!” But He is putting a bottle of sweet perfume to your nose to refresh your spirit. God is near you, to revive and cheer your fainting soul! Perhaps someone says, “I find faith concerning the past and concerning the ultimate future tolerably easy, but it is faith for the next hour or two I cannot so readily exercise.” At certain times it is found that a trial is peculiarly present, but one cannot always realize that God is “a very present help in trouble,” yet it is true. He *has* delivered and He *does* deliver.  
The third train of thought is this—*expectation looks out of the window upon the future—* “in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.” Yes, dear Friends, there may be many trials before you, but there is a mass of mercy kept in store to meet those trials! Troubles such as you have never yet known, as well as repetitions of those you have experienced will surely come upon you, but as your days are, so shall your strength be, for your Lord will continue to deliver you. As the eyes gradually fail and the limbs grow weak, and the infirmities of age creep over us, we are apt to be distressed, yet our Lord will not forsake us. When severe

ickness invades our mortal frame and our pains are multiplied and intensified, we wonder how we shall hold out to the end—and especially as we look forward to the time of death, not always viewing it in the true light, we say, “What shall we do in the swellings of Jordan? How shall we be able to bear the stern realities of our last hours?” Be of good comfort my Brother, my Sister! He who *has* delivered, and *does* deliver, *will yet* deliver!  
As surely as the trial comes, the way of escape shall be opened up for you by your Lord. Will you try to realize all this of which I have been speaking? He *has* delivered you, then give Him your gratitude. He*is* delivering you, then give Him your confidence. He *will* deliver you, then give Him a full and joyful expectation and begin, even now, to praise Him for mercies which are yet to come and for Grace which you have not tasted yet, but which you shall taste in His good time!  
**II.**Now, in the second place, THE TEXT SUPPLIES THREE LINES OF ARGUMENT, all running to the same point.  
The point to be proved is that the Lord will deliver His people. And I argue that *He will deliver us in the future because He has already begun to deliver us*. There is a chain of continuity here—He *has* delivered, He *does* deliver and He *will* deliver. He began to work for our deliverance long before we sought Him. The first movement was not from us to God, but from God to us! We were lying dead in trespasses and sins and He came and quickened us. He gave His Son to die for us many centuries before we were born. He provided the Gospel for us long before you and I had ever sinned. In all things He had the start and was beforehand with us. Yet He need not have done all this, except that it was by His own choice and free will that He acted. I rejoice in the free will of God which moved Him to deliver us! Surely, then, since the motive that impelled Him to save us must have been in Himself, alone, that motive is still there. If He had begun to deliver us because He saw some goodness in us, or because we first applied to Him, then He might leave us, but as the commencement was with Himself, spontaneously out of His own heart, depend upon it that as He began the work, He will carry it on!  
God has no more knowledge of any one of us than He had at the first. When He began with us, He knew what we would be. He foresaw all our sins and all our follies, all our ingratitude and all our backsliding. He did not enter blindfolded upon a task which, after second thoughts, He would have to relinquish, but even from eternity, He saw us just as we have turned out to be. Yet He began with us and, having begun with the deliberation of eternal love, let us be quite sure that He will prosecute His gracious purpose with the perseverance of eternal love! If there had been, at the first, some reason in us why God should begin to deliver us, then that reason being removed from us, God might cease to deliver us. But as the reason was not in us, but in *Himself*, since He can never change, the reason for our deliverance abides the same, and the argument is good and clear—God *has* delivered us, then He *will* deliver us!  
The next argument comes from the fact that *as He is now delivering us, therefore He will continue to do so*. Here is the continuity of His Grace. Now look, Beloved—He has, up to this hour, continued to deliver you and me who have trusted Him. How many times has He delivered me? Out of how many troubles have I been delivered? From how many sins have I been delivered? Well, then, if the Lord has kept on delivering me so long, I argue that if He had ever meant to stop, He would have stopped before now! And, therefore—  
***“His love in time past forbids me to think  
He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink.  
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”***When a man begins to build, we reckon that he will finish the building if he can. We know that our God can complete what He has commenced, so we conclude that He will do so. I feel that He has gone so far with me that He cannot give me up now—  
***“Can He have taught me to trust in His name, And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”***No, that can never be! And many of you must feel just as I do about this matter. Some of you are, as it were, sitting on the very doorstep of Heaven. You are over 80 years of age, so you cannot be here long. Can you not trust the Lord for the few months or years you have yet to live? He has been helping you, my aged Sister, ever since you were a girl, and He has delivered you out of all sorts of troubles—do you think that He will leave you now? And my dear venerable Brother, you knew the Lord when you were but a boy and He has never left you yet—will He forsake you now? No, blessed be His name, He will not! All those years of His favor go to confirm us in the conviction that He will keep on delivering us till He brings us safely Home.  
The Lord has not only delivered us so often, but He has also done it in such a wonderful way that He must go on working in a similar fashion! What marvelous wisdom has He sometimes displayed in delivering us from the consequences of our own folly! Often has He seemed to lavish His mercy upon us that He might help us in our time of need—and not once has He failed us. There is not one broken promise of His, nor one Covenant blessing that He has ever withheld from us. If any of you who have known Him the longest, have anything to say against your God, say it. But you have not. You have never had any reason for doubting Him, nor have you ever had any suspicion of His faithfulness raised in your mind by anything that He has done which might lead you to mistrust Him in the future. He *has* delivered, He *is* delivering and He *will still* deliver. There are two arguments drawn from the past and the present.  
The best argument, however, comes *from God Himself—*“in whom we trust.” He is always the same and everything is always present to His unchanging mind. What was the Nature of God when He first determined to deliver me? Was it love? Then it is now love. What was the motive which impelled the Son of God when He came from above and snatched me from the deep waters? It was love, surprising love and it is surprising love which still moves Him to deliver me! Did I sing about His faithfulness the other day? That faithfulness is the same today! Have I adored His wisdom? That wisdom is not exhausted!  
There is not only the same Nature in God as there always was, but there is also the same unchanging purpose. You and I shift and change and we are obliged to do so because we make rash promises and faulty plans. But God, who is infinitely wise, always keeps to His purpose. Now, if it was His original purpose to save us—and it must have been, or He would never have delivered us as He has done—that purpose still stands and shall stand forever! Though earth’s old columns bow. Though Heaven and earth shall pass away as the morning frost dissolves in the beams of the rising sun, yet the decree of the Immutable Jehovah shall never be changed. “For the Lord of Hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”  
**III.**Time fails me, so I can only very briefly show you that THE TEXT IS OPEN TO THREE INFERENCES.  
The first inference I draw from it is that *we shall always be in danger so long as we are here*. The Lord has delivered, does deliver and He will deliver, so we shall always need Divine deliverance while we are in this world. We must not expect to ever be out of gunshot of the enemy. You may depend upon it, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that you will always have tribulation as long as you are in the world. You will have trials in the flesh, you will have trials in the spirit, you will have trials from God and trials from Satan! And if, at any time, you are a long while without any trouble, keep a good lookout for it, for it is probably on the way! We should always suspect some danger near when we perceive too much delight. When God has given us a long stretch of smooth sailing, it well behooves us to steer our vessel cautiously and to be ready to furl our sails at any moment, for a cyclone may be upon us before we know where we are!  
We need not *ask* the Lord to send us trouble, but when it comes, let us have the Grace to accept it and to glorify God in it. While we are in this world, we shall always know that it is the world, so let us not make any mistake about the matter—the devil is the devil, the world is the world and the flesh is the flesh. None of these things have changed and the mercy is that God has not changed—He is still the same as He always was! If I found that the world was not the world, I might be afraid that God was not God, but that can never be the case. So, as trials are always arising, I may fairly suspect that they always will come while this time-state lasts. but I also fully believe that God will always be the same and that He will deliver all who trust in Him.  
The second inference from the text is that *we may constantly expect a display of God’s delivering Grace*. The past says, “He has delivered.” The present says, “He does deliver.” And the future says, “He will yet deliver.” Yesterday, God was very gracious to me, I need not tell you how. Today He has been very gracious to me. Tomorrow He will be very gracious to me and the same will be true the next day, and the next day, and the next day, until there shall be no more days and time shall be swallowed up in eternity! Between here and Heaven, every minute that the Christian lives will be a minute of Grace. From here to the Throne of the Highest, you will have to be continually supplied with new Grace from the Lord who sits on high.  
Dear Brother, you never live a truly holy, happy, blessed day except by Divine Grace! You never think a right thought, never do a right act—you never make any advance Heavenward except by Grace. I like to think that it is so, that every day I am a monument of mercy! That every day a fresh display of Sovereign Grace is made to me. That every day my Father feeds me, my Savior cleanses me, the Comforter sustains me! Every day new manifestations of the loving kindness of the Lord break forth upon my wondering soul and give me fresh visions of His *miraculous* love. I could not find another word to express what I wanted to say—that one seemed too leap into my mouth just then—His *miraculous* love! And so it is miracle-working love making the Christian’s life to be a series of miracles, at which angels shall gaze forever in astonished adoration of the amazing love of God to guilty men! So I reckon that we may go onward with great confidence, for, although every day will bring dangers, every day will also witness Divine deliverances!  
Thirdly, the last inference I draw from the text is that *our whole life should be filled with praise of God our Deliverer*. How does it run? He delivered us and now we deliver ourselves? No, no, no! He delivered us. He does deliver us—but what about the future? We must deliver ourselves? No, no, no! He has delivered! He does deliver and *He will still deliver*—the same Person, working in the beginning, in the center and at the close. It is all of God from first to last! There is not one deliverance which you have ever had which you can ascribe to anyone but the Lord, alone. Inside Heaven’s gate all the praise is given to the Triune Jehovah—“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.” And outside Heaven’s gate, let us sing the same song, to the same tune! Let it always be to the praise of Grace, Grace, GRACE. To the God of Grace, the Father of Grace, the Christ of Grace, the Holy Spirit and His Grace and to God be all the glory, forever and for ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALMS 16; 63.***

**Psalm 16:1.***Preserve me, O God: for in You I put my trust.* Ah, Brothers and Sisters! When we think of our daily dangers and when we remember the sinfulness of our nature, this petition may well be our frequent prayer! “Preserve me, O God.” And this may well be our plea, as well as the Psalmist’s, “for in You I put my trust.” We trust in the name of the Lord, for we can never expect to be preserved except by His protecting Grace.

**2, 3.***O my soul, you have said unto the Lord, You are my Lord: my goodness is nothing apart from You; as for the saints that are in the earth, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.*“My God, I would gladly prove my gratitude to You if I could, but what can I do for One so great as You are? You are infinitely above me. You need nothing from my hands. What, then, can I do to show my love to You? By my care for your people I may prove what I would do for You if I could. Are they hungry? I will feed them. Are they sick? I will visit them. If my goodness cannot reach the great Head of the Church, it shall at least wash the feet, for I do love You, O my God, and I want, in some practical way, to show that I love You!”

**4.***Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names on my lips.*He who sincerely loves the true God cannot have any regard for His rivals. He will have no communion with false gods in any shape or form.

**5.***The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup.*That is the Believer’s portion—his God. The Levites, as a tribe, had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, but God was their portion—and who shall dare to say that they had not the best of it? Now, child of God, if you could have your choice, what would you choose—goods or God? Earthly wealth, or the God who is the source of all good things?

**5.***You maintain my lot.* One of our great men has for his motto, “I will maintain it.” But the Psalmist’s is a much better one—“You maintain my lot.” It is better to have God for our Guardian than to have all possible human strength with which to defend ourselves.

**6.***The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage.* The Jewish rulers stretched the measuring or dividing lines over the plots of land that fell to the different members of the family. But here the man of God declares that since God was his portion, the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places! There is no choice of places, or times, or circumstances with the man who thoroughly loves his God. He can find God in loneliness and so enjoy the best company. If he has God in poverty, he has great riches. O happy man who has God to be his all!

**7.***I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel.*“He has talked with me, checked me, rebuked me, instructed me, encouraged me. ‘I will bless Jehovah, who has given me counsel.’” That does not, at first sight, look as if it were one of the choicest of blessings, yet the Psalmist mentions it immediately after he has declared that the lines have fallen on him in pleasant places—as if he felt that one of the choicest blessings of the Covenant was that God had been his Counselor.

**7.***My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.* “God makes my heart, my conscience, my inmost being to give me instruction. What a blessing that must have been to David! A man who has no inward monitor because he has stifled his conscience so that it no longer holds him by the ear, and speaks with him, is poor, indeed! But blessed is he who has his God and his conscience to counsel and instruct him.

**8.***I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*Brother, have you always acted on the straight? Have you so conducted your business that you need not be ashamed of God Himself to look at it? Then do not be afraid of anything that may happen to you, for you will come out all right at the last. There may be great trouble in store for you and you may be stripped of all that you possess—but you shall never be ashamed.

**9.***Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*Every good thing belongs to the man who belongs to God! He need not be afraid even of the grave, for he can adopt the language which is here Prophetically used for Christ, Himself. He is not afraid to die, for he can say—

**10.***For You will not leave my soul in Sheol.*The place of the departed, the intermediate state into which the soul passes at death.  
**10.***Neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.*In the fullest sense, this verse belongs to Christ, alone, but, still, what belongs to the Head is also the portion of the members of His mystical body.  
**11.***You will show me the path of life: in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.*And this is the portion of every Believer. “Here little, but hereafter much,” says Bunyan, but I will venture to alter it, and say, “Here much, but hereafter *more* shall be our inheritance from age to age.”  
**Psalm 63:1.***O God, You are my God; early will I seek You.*Because You are mine, therefore will I seek You.” A sense of possession makes us long for the enjoyment of all that is really ours.  
**1.***My soul thirsts for You my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* “Nothing but You can content me. Everything else, or everyone else falls short of my desire. There is no water that can slake such a thirst as mine unless I drink from You, You overflowing well.”  
**2.***To see Your power and Your Glory, so as I have seen You in the sanctuary.* Past enjoyment of our Lord’s Presence inspires us with earnest desire for fresh manifestations of His face. If we have ever seen God’s power and Glory when we have come into the courts of His house, we long to see them again, whether we are in the wilderness or in the sanctuary.  
**3.***Because Your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.*Is not that word “loving kindness” one of the noblest terms in our own or in any other language? The word, kin, is at the root of kind and kindred, so that loving kindness, or loving kinness, is such conduct as we may expect from those who are akin to us. God’s kindness to us, through Jesus Christ, His Son and our Savior, brings to us a loving kindness that is better than life, and for which our lips can never praise Him enough.  
**4.***Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in Your name.* “For very joy, I will lift them up, and clap them before You. Though, before, they hung down as though I were dispirited and could never work again, yet now, ‘I will lift up my hands in Your name.’”  
**5.***My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.* God’s flowers always bloom double. God’s blessings are like marrow and fatness—there is in them a double satisfaction of the most intense kind! “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.”  
**5.***And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.* The Psalmist speaks as if each of his lips had a separate joy and as though, together, they would express the double joy for the double satisfaction which his God had given to him.  
**6.***When I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches.* “Even then shall I have joy, for Your Presence makes even the darkness to be light.”  
**7.***Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.*“If I cannot get into the light of Your Countenance, the very shadow of Your wings shall make me glad. Only let me be near You—that is all I crave.”  
**7.***My soul follows hard after You.*“I am like a dog who loves to keep close to his master’s heels.”  
**8-11.***Your right hand upholds me. But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes, But the king shall rejoice in God; everyone that swears by Him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.* Stopped with a shovelful of earth, in many cases, for it seems as if some liars would never cease lying as long as they are alive.

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THE POWER OF PRAYER AND THE PLEASURE OF PRAISE  
NO. 507

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 3, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. For our rejoicing in this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly  
sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you.” 2 Corinthians 1:11,12.~~***

THE Apostle Paul had, by singular Providences, been delivered from imminent peril in Asia. During the great riot at Ephesus, when Demetrius and his fellow shrine-makers raised a great tumult against him, because they saw that their craft was in danger, Paul’s life was greatly in jeopardy. Consequently he writes, “We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.” The Apostle attributes to God, alone, his singular preservation. And if he referred also to the occasion when he was stoned and left for dead, there is much appropriateness in his blessing “God which raised the dead.”

The Apostle, moreover, argues from the fact that God had thus delivered him in the past, and was still his helper in the present, that He would be with him also in the future. Paul is a master at all arithmetic— his faith was always a ready-reckoner—we here find him computing by the Believer’s *Rule of Three*. He argues from the past to the present, and from the present to things yet to come. The verse preceding our text is a brilliant example of this arriving at a comfortable conclusion by the *Rule of Three—*“Who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”

Because our God is, “the same yesterday, today and forever,” His love in time past is an infallible assurance of His kindness today, and an equally certain pledge of His faithfulness on the morrow. Whatever our circumstances may be, however perplexed may be our pathway, and however dark our horizon, if we argue by the rule of, “He has, He does, He will,” our comfort can never be destroyed. Courage, then, O you afflicted seed of Israel. If you had a changeable God to deal with, your souls might be full of bitterness—but because He is, “the same yesterday, today and forever,” every repeated manifestation of His Grace should make it more easy for you to rest upon Him. Every renewed experience of His fidelity should confirm your confidence in His Grace. May the most blessed Spirit teach us to grow in holy confidence in our ever faithful Lord.

Although our Apostle thus acknowledged God’s hand, and God’s hand alone, in his deliverance, yet he was not so foolish as to deny or undervalue the second causes. On the contrary, having first praised the God of All Comfort, he now remembers with gratitude the earnest prayers of the many loving intercessors. Gratitude to God must never become an excuse for ingratitude to man. It is true that Jehovah shielded the Apostle of the

Gentiles, but He did it in answer to prayer. The chosen vessel was not broken by the rod of the wicked, for the outstretched hand of the God of Heaven was his defense—but that hand was outstretched because the people of Corinth, and the saints of God everywhere had prevailed at the Throne of Grace by their united supplications.

With gratitude those successful pleadings are mentioned in the text, “You also helping together by prayer for us,” and he desires the Brothers and Sisters now to unite their praises with his, “that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.” He adds that he has a claim upon their love since he was not as some who were unfaithful to their trust, but his conscience was clear that he had preached the Word simply and with sincerity.

While speaking upon these topics, may the anointing Spirit now descend to make them profitable to us. We shall, first, *acknowledge the power of united prayer.* Secondly,*excite you to united praise*. And then, in the third place, *urge our joyful claim upon you—a claim which is not ours alone, but belongs to all ministers of God who in sincerity labor for souls*.

**I.**First, then, dear Friends, it is my duty and my privilege this morning to ACKNOWLEDGE THE POWER OF UNITED PRAYER.  
It has pleased God to make prayer the abounding and rejoicing river through which most of our choice mercies flow to us. It is the golden key which unlocks the well-stored granaries of our heavenly Joseph. It is written upon each of the mercies of the Covenant, “For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” There are mercies which come unsought, for God is found of them that sought not for Him. But there are other favors which are only bestowed upon the men who ask, and therefore receive—who seek, and therefore find—who knock, and therefore gain an entrance.  
Why God has been pleased to command us to pray at all it is not difficult to discover, for prayer *glorifies God*, by putting man in the most humble posture of worship. The creature in prayer acknowledges his Creator with reverence and confesses Him to be the giver of every good and perfect gift. The eye is lifted up to behold the Glory of the Lord, while the knees are bent to the earth in the lowliness of acknowledged weakness. Though prayer is not the highest mode of adoration, or otherwise it would be continued by the saints in Heaven, yet it is the most humble, and so the most fitting, to set forth the Glory of the Perfect One as it is beheld by imperfect flesh and blood.  
From the “Our Father,” in which we claim relationship, right on to, “the kingdom and the power and the glory,” which we ascribe to the only true God, every sentence of prayer honors the Most High. The groans and tears of humble petitioners are as truly acceptable as the continual, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” of the Cherubim and Seraphim. For in their very essence all truthful confessions of personal fault are but a homage paid to the Infinite perfections of the Lord of Hosts. More honored is the Lord by our prayers than by the unceasing smoke of the holy incense of the altar which stood before the veil.  
Moreover, the act of prayer *teaches us our unworthiness*, which is no small blessing to such proud beings as we are. If God gave us favors without constraining us to pray for them, we should never know how poor we are. But a true prayer is an inventory of wants, a catalog of necessities, a suit in *forma pauperis*, an exposure of secret wounds, a revelation of hidden poverty. While it is an application to Divine wealth, it is a confession of human emptiness. I believe that the most healthy state of a Christian is to be always empty—and always depending upon the Lord for supplies. To be always poor in self and rich in Jesus—weak as water personally—but mighty through God to do great exploits. And therefore the*use* of prayer— because while it adores God, it lays the creature where he should be—in the very dust.  
Prayer is in itself, apart from the answer which it brings, a great benefit to the Christian. As the runner gains strength for the race by daily exercise, so for the great race of life we acquire energy by the hallowed labor of prayer. Prayer plumes the wings of God’s young eaglets that they may learn to mount above the clouds. Prayer girds the loins of God’s warriors and sends them forth to combat with their sinews braced and their muscles firm. An earnest pleader comes out of his closet, even as the sun rises from the chambers of the east, rejoicing like a strong man to run his race.  
Prayer is that uplifted hand of Moses which routs the Amalekites more than the sword of Joshua. It is the arrow shot from the chamber of the Prophet foreboding defeat to the Syrians. What if I say that prayer clothes the Believer with the attributes of Deity, girds human weakness with Divine strength, turns human folly into heavenly wisdom, and gives to troubled mortals the serenity of the immortal God? I know not what prayer cannot do! I thank You, great God, for the Mercy Seat, a choice gift of Your marvelous loving kindness. Help us to use it aright!  
As many mercies are conveyed from Heaven in the ship of prayer, so *there are many choice and special favors which can only be brought to us by the fleets of united prayer*. Many are the good things which God will give to His lonely Elijahs and Daniels, but if two of you agree as touching anything that you shall ask, there is no limit to God’s bountiful answers. Peter might never have been brought out of prison if it had not been that prayer was made without ceasing by *all* the Church for him. Pentecost might never have come if *all*the disciples had not been, “with one accord in one place,” waiting for the descent of the tongues of fire. God is pleased to give many mercies to one pleader, but at times He seems to say, “You shall all appear before Me and entreat My favor, for I will not see your face, unless even your younger Brothers and Sisters are with you.”  
Why is this, dear Friends? I take it that thus our gracious Lord sets forth His own esteem for the communion of saints. “I believe in the communion of saints” is one article of the great Christian creed, but how few there are who understand it. Oh, there is such a thing as real union among God’s people. We may be called by different names—

***“But all the servants of our King  
In Heaven and earth are one.”***

We cannot afford to lose the help and love of our Brothers and Sisters. Augustine says, “The poor are made for the rich and the rich are made for the poor.” I do not doubt but that strong saints are made for weak saints, and that the weak saints bring special benedictions upon the full grown. There is a fitness in the whole body—each joint owes something to every other—and the whole body is bound together and compacted by that which every joint supplies. There are certain glands in the human body which the anatomist hardly understands. He can say of the liver, for instance, that it yields a very valuable fluid of the utmost value in the bodily economy. But there are other secretions whose distinct value he cannot ascertain. Yet , doubtless, if that gland were removed, the whole body might suffer to a high degree.

And so, beloved Friends, there may be some Believers of whom we may say, “I do not know the use of them. I cannot tell what good that Christian does.” Yet were that insignificant, and apparently useless member removed, the whole body might be made to suffer, the whole frame might become sick, and the whole heart faint. This is probably the reason why many a weighty gift of Heaven’s love is only granted to combined petitioning—that we may perceive the use of the whole body and so may be compelled to recognize the real vital union which Divine Grace has made—and daily maintains among the people of God. Is it not a happy thought, dear Friends, that the very poorest and most obscure Church member can add something to the body’s strength?

We cannot all preach. We cannot all rule. We cannot all give gold and silver—but we can all contribute our prayers. There is no convert, though he is but two or three days old in Divine Grace, but can pray. There is no bedridden Sister in Jesus who cannot pray. There is no sick, aged, imbecile, obscure, illiterate, or penniless Believer who cannot add his supplications to the general stock. This is the Church’s riches. We put boxes at the door that we may receive your offerings to God’s cause—remember there is a spiritual chest within the Church into which we should all drop our loving intercessions, as into the treasury of the Lord. Even the widow *without* her two mites can give her offering to *this* treasury. See, then, dear Friends, what union and communion there are among the people of God, since there are certain mercies which are only bestowed while the saints unitedly pray.

How we ought to feel this bond of union! How we ought to pray for one another! How, as often as the Church meets together for supplication, should we all make it our bounded duty to be there! I would that some of you who are absent from the Prayer Meeting upon any little excuse would reflect how much you rob us all. The Prayer Meeting is an invaluable institution, ministering strength to all other meetings and agencies. Are there not many of you who might, by a little pinching of your time and pressing of your labors, come among us a little oftener? And what if you should lose a customer now and then, do you not think that this loss could be well made up to you by your gains on other days? Or if not so, would not the spiritual profit much more than counterbalance any little temporal loss? “Not forgetting the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.”

We are now prepared for a further observation. This *united prayer should especially be made for the ministers of God*. It is for them, peculiarly, that this public prayer is intended. Paul asks for it—“Brethren, pray for us.” And all God’s ministers to the latest time will ever confess that this is the secret source of their strength. The prayers of the people must be the might of the ministers. Shall I try to show you why the minister, more than any other man in the Church, needs the earnest prayers of the people? Is not *his position the most perilous?*Satan’s orders to the hosts of Hell are, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the ministers of God.” He knows if he can once smite through the heart one of these, there will be a general confusion. For if the champion is dead, then the people fly.

It is around the standard bearer that the fight is thickest. There the battle-axes ring upon the helmets. There the arrows are bent upon the armor, for the enemy knows that if he can cut down the standard, or cleave the skull of its bearer, he will strike a heavy blow and cause deep discouragement. Press around us, then, you men at arms! Knights of the red cross rally for our defense, for the fight grows hot! We beseech you, if you elect us to the office of the ministry, stand fast at our side in our hourly conflicts. I noticed on returning from Rotterdam, when we were crossing the bar at the mouth of the Maas, where by reason of a neap tide and a bad wind, the navigation was exceedingly dangerous, that orders were issued—“All hands on deck!”

So methinks the life of a minister is so perilous, that I may well cry, “All hands on deck”—every man to prayer! Let even the weakest saint become instant in supplication. The minister, standing in such a perilous position, has, moreover, *a solemn weight of responsibility resting on him*. Every man should be his brother’s keeper in a measure, but woe to the watchmen of God if they are not faithful, for at their hands shall the blood of souls be required. At their door shall God lay the ruin of men if they preach not the Gospel fully and faithfully.

There are times when this burden of the Lord weighs upon God’s ministers until they cry out in pain as if their hearts would burst with anguish. I marked the captain as we crossed that bar throwing the lead, himself, into the sea. And when one asked why he did not let the sailors do it, he said, “At this point, just now, I dare not trust any man but myself to heave the lead, for we have hardly six inches between our ship and the bottom.” And, indeed, we felt the vessel touch once or twice most unpleasantly. So there will come times with every preacher of the Gospel—if he is what he should be—when he will be in dread suspense for his hearers. He will not be able to discharge his duty by proxy, but must personally labor for men—not even trusting himself to preach—but calling upon his God for help since he is now overwhelmed with the burden of men’s souls.

Oh, do pray for us! If God gives us to you, and if you accept the gift most cheerfully, do not so despise both God and us as to leave us penniless and poverty-stricken because your prayers are withheld. Moreover, the preservation of the minister *is one of the most important objects to the Church*. You may lose a sailor from the ship, and that is very bad, both for him and for you. But if the pilot should fall over, or the captain should be smitten with sickness, or the helmsman be washed from the wheel, then what is the vessel to do? Therefore, though prayer is to be put up for every other person in the Church, yet for the minister is it to be offered first and foremost, because of the position which he occupies.

And then, *how much more is asked of him than of you?*If you are to keep a private table for individual instruction, he is, as it were, to keep a *public* table, a feast of good things for all comers. And how shall he do this unless his Master gives him rich provisions? You are to shine as a candle in a house—the minister has to be as a lighthouse—to be seen far across the deep. And how shall he shine the whole night long unless he is trimmed by his Master, and fresh oil is given him from Heaven? His influence is wider than yours—if it is for evil, he shall be a deadly upas, with spreading boughs poisoning all beneath his shadow. But if God makes him a star in His right hand, his ray of light shall cheer with its genial influence whole nations, and whole periods of time. If there is any truth in all this, I implore you, yield us generously and constantly the assistance of your prayers.

I find that in the original, the word for, “helping together,” implies very earnest WORK. Some people’s prayers have no work in them. But the only prayer which prevails with God is a real working-man’s prayer—where the petitioner, like a Samson, shakes the gates of Mercy, and labors to pull them up rather than be denied an entrance. We do not want *fingertip* prayers, which only touch the burden—we need *shoulder* prayers—which bear a load of earnestness, and are not to be denied their desire. We do not want those dainty runaway knocks at the door of mercy, which professors give when they show off at Prayer Meetings. We ask for the knocking of a man who means to have, and means to stop at Mercy’s gate till it opens and all his need shall be supplied.

The energetic, vehement violence of the man who is not to be denied, but intends to carry Heaven by storm until he wins his heart’s desire— this is the prayer which ministers covet of their people. Melancthon, it is said, derived great comfort from the information that certain poor weavers, women and children, had met together to pray for the Reformation. Yes, Melancthon—there was solid ground for comfort here. Depend on it, it was not Luther only, but the thousands of poor persons who sung psalms at the plow-tail, and the hundreds of serving men and women who offered supplications, that made the Reformation what it was.

We are told of Paulus Phagius, a celebrated Hebrew scholar, very useful in introducing the Reformation into this country, that one of his frequent requests of his younger scholars was that they would continue in prayer, so that God might be pleased to pour out a blessing in answer to them. Have I not said a hundred times that all the blessings that God has given us here, all the increase to our Church, has been due, under God, to your earnest, fervent supplications? There have been Heaven-moving seasons both in this house and at New Park Street. We have had times when we have felt we could die sooner than not be heard. When we carried our Church on our bosom as a mother carries her child. When we felt a yearning and a travailing in birth for the souls of men.

We may truly say, when we see our Church daily increasing, and the multitudes still hanging upon our lips to listen to the Word, “What has God worked?” Shall we now cease from our prayers? Shall we now say unto the Great High Priest, “It is enough”? Shall we now pluck the glowing coals from the altar and quench the burning incense? Shall we now refuse to bring the morning and evening lambs of prayer and praise to the sacrifice? O children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, will you turn your backs in the day of battle? The flood is divided before you. The Jordan is driven back! Will you refuse to march through the depths? God, even your God, goes up before you. The shout of a King is heard in the midst of your hosts!

Will you now be recreant and refuse to go up and possess the land? Will you now lose your first love? Shall “Ichabod” be written upon the forefront of this tabernacle? Shall it be said that God has forsaken you? Shall the day come in which the daughters of Philistia shall rejoice, and the sons of Syria shall triumph? If not, to your knees again, with all the force of prayer! If not, to your vehement supplications once more! If not, if you would not see good blighted and evil triumphant, clasp hands again—and in the name of Him who ever lives to intercede—once more be prevalent in prayer that the blessing may again descend! “You also helping together by prayer for us.”

**II.**We must now EXCITE YOU TO PRAISE. Praise should always follow answered prayer. The mist of earth’s gratitude should rise as the sun of Heaven’s love warms the ground. Has the Lord been gracious to you, and inclined His ear to the voice of your supplication? Then praise Him as long as you live. Deny not a song to Him who has answered your prayer, and given you the desire of your heart. To be silent over God’s mercies is to incur the guilt of shocking ingratitude, and ingratitude is one of the worst of crimes.

I trust, dear Friends, you will not act as basely as the nine lepers, who after they had been healed of their leprosy, returned not to give thanks unto the healing Lord. To forget to praise God is to refuse to benefit ourselves, for praise, like prayer, is exceedingly useful to the spiritual man. It is a high and healthful exercise. To dance, like David, before the Lord, is to quicken the blood in the veins, and make the pulse beat at a healthier rate. Praise gives to us a great feast, like that of Solomon, who gave to every man a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

Praise is the most heavenly of Christian duties. The angels pray not, but they cease not to praise both day and night. To bless God for mercies received is to benefit our fellow men—“the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” Others who have been in like circumstances shall take comfort if we can say, “Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together, this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” Tongue-tied Christians are a sad dishonor to the Church. We have some such—some whom the devil has gagged—and the loudest music they ever make is when they are champing the bit of their silence. I would, my Brothers and Sisters, that in all such cases the tongue of the dumb may sing.

To go a step further here. As praise is good and pleasant, blessing man and glorifying God, *united praise has a very special commendation*. United praise is like music in concert. The sound of one instrument is exceedingly sweet, but when hundreds of instruments, both wind and stringed, are all combined, then the orchestra sends forth a noble volume of harmony. The praise of one Christian is accepted before God like a grain of incense, but the praise of many is like a censor full of frankincense smoking up before the Lord. Combined praise is an anticipation of Heaven, for in that general assembly they all, together, with one heart and voice,

praise the Lord— ***“Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, But all their joys are one.”***

Public praise is very agreeable to the Christian himself. How many burdens has it removed? I am sure when I hear the shout of praise in this house it warms my heart. It is at times a little too slow for my taste, and I must urge you to quicken your pace, that the rolling waves of majestic praise may display their full force! Yet with all drawbacks, to my heart there is no music like yours. My Dutch friends praise the Lord so very

slowly that one might very well go to sleep, lulled by their lengthened strains. Even there, however, the many voices make a grand harmony of praise.

I love to hear God’s people sing when they really do sing, not when it is a *drawing*out somewhere between harmony and discord. O for a sacred song, a shout of lofty praise in which every man’s soul beats the time, and every man’s tongue sounds the tune—and each singer feels a high ambition to excel his fellow in gratitude and love! There is something exceedingly delightful in the union of true hearts in the worship of God—and when these hearts are expressed in *song*—how sweet the charming sounds. I think we ought to have a Praise Meeting once a week. We have a Prayer Meeting every Monday, and a Prayer Meeting every Saturday, and a Prayer Meeting every morning, but why do we not have a *Praise Meeting?* Surely seasons should be set apart for services made up of praise from beginning to end. Let us try the plan at once.

As I said about united prayer, that it should be offered specially for ministers, *so should united praise often take the same aspect.* The whole company should praise and bless God for the mercy rendered to the Church through its pastors. Hear how our Apostle puts it again—“That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.” Brethren, we ought to praise God for good ministers *that they live—*for when they die much of their work dies with them. It is astonishing how a reformation will press on while Luther and Calvin live, and how it will cease as soon as the reformers die.

The spirits of good men are immortal only in a sense. The Churches of God in this age are like the Israelites in the times of the Judges. When the judges died they went after graven images again. And it is so now. While God spares the man, the Church prospers, but when the man dies, the zeal which he blew to a flame smolders among the ashes in nine cases out of ten, if not in ninety-nine out of every hundred. The prosperity of a Church rests on the minister’s life. God so ordains it to humble us. There should be gratitude, then, for spared life.

But there should be great gratitude for *preserved character*, for oh, when a minister falls, what a disgrace it is! Why, when you read in the police reports the sad case of the Rev. Mr.\_\_\_\_\_, who chose to call himself a Baptist minister, everybody says, “What a shocking thing! What a bad set the Baptists must be.” Now, any fool in the world may call himself a Baptist minister. Our liberty is so complete that no law or order exists. Any man who can get a dozen to listen to him preach is a minister, at least to them. Therefore you cannot suppose but what there will be some hypocrites who will take the name in order to get some sort of reputation.

If the true minister is kept and made to hold fast his integrity, there should be constant gratitude to God on his behalf. If the minister is kept *well supplied with goodly matter*. If he is like a springing well. If God gives him to bring out of His treasury things both new and old to feed His people, there should be hearty thanks. And if he is kept *sound*, if he goes not aside to philosophy on the one hand, nor to a narrowness of doctrine on the other, there should be thanksgiving there. If God gives to the masses the will to hear him, and above all, if souls are converted and saints are edified, there should be never-ceasing honor and praise to God.

Ah, I am talking now about what you all know, and you just nod your heads to it, and think there is not much in it. But if you were made to live in Holland for a little time you would soon appreciate these remarks. While traveling there, I stayed in houses with godly men—men of God with whom I could hold sweet communion—who cannot attend what was once their place of worship. Why not? “Sir,” they say, “can I go to a place of worship when the most of the ministers deny every Word of Scripture? Not those of the Reformed Church only, but of every sect in Holland! How can I listen to the traitors who swear to the Calvinistic or Lutheran articles, and then go into the pulpit and deny the reality of the resurrection, or assert that the ascension of Jesus is a mere spiritual parable?”

I find that in the Netherlands they are fifty years in advance of us in infidelity. We shall soon catch up with them if gentlemen of a certain school I know of are suffered to multiply. The Dutch Divines have taken great strides in Neologism, till now the people love the Truth of God and there are multitudes that are willing to hear it. But these are compelled absolutely to refuse to go to Church at all, lest by any means they should give countenance to the heretical and false doctrines which are preached to them every Sunday.

Ah, if God were once to take away from England the ministers who preach the Gospel boldly and plainly, you would cry to God to give you the candlestick back again. We may indeed say of England—

***“With all your faults I love you still.”***  
We have a colonial bishop who avows his unbelief. We have a few men of all denominations who are quietly sliding from the Truth. But, thank God they are nothing as of yet. They are but as a drop in a bucket compared to the Churches of Christ, and those among us who are not quite as Calvinistic as we might wish. I thank God, there are many who never dispute the inspiration of Scripture, nor doubt the great Truth of justification by faith. We have still preserved among us men that are faithful to God, and preach the whole Truth as it is in Jesus.

Be thankful for your ministers, I say again, for if you were placed where some Believers are, you would cry out to your God—“Lord, send us back Your Prophets. Send us a famine of bread or a famine of water, but send us not a famine of the Word of God!”

I ask for myself this morning, as your minister, your thanksgivings to be mingled with mine in praising God for the help which He has vouchsafed to me in the very arduous work of the last fortnight. Praise be to God for the acceptance which He gave me in that country among all ranks of the people. I speak to His praise and not to mine, for this has been a vow with me, that if God will give me a harvest, I will not have an ear of corn of it, but He shall have it all. I found, in all the places where I went, great multitudes of people, crowds who could not understand the preacher, but who wanted to see his face, because God had blessed his translated sermons to their souls.

Multitudes gave me the grip of brotherly kindness and, with tears in their eyes, invoked, in the Dutch language, every blessing upon my head. I hoped to preach to some fifties and hundreds, and instead of that, there were so many that the great cathedrals were not too large. This surprised me, and made me glad—and caused me to rejoice in God—and I ask you to rejoice with me. I thank God for the acceptance which He gave me among all ranks of the people. While the poor crowded to shake hands,

till they almost pulled me in pieces, it pleased God to move the heart of the Queen of Holland to send for me, and for an hour and a quarter I was privileged to talk with her concerning the things which make for our peace.

I sought no interview with her. It was her own wish. And then I lifted up my soul to God that I might talk of nothing but Christ, and might preach to her of nothing but Jesus. And so it pleased the Master to help me. And I left that very amiable lady, not having shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. Gratified was I, indeed, to find myself received cordially by all denominations, so that on the Saturday at Amsterdam I preached in the Mennonite Church in the morning, and at the Old Dutch Reformed Church in the evening. The next Sunday morning in the English Presbyterian Church, and then again, in the evening, in the Dutch Free Church.

Sometimes I was allowed to preach in the great cathedrals, as in the Dom Kirk at Utrecht, and in Peter’s Kirk, at Leyden, not having the poor only, but the nobility and the gentry of the land, who, of course, could understand English better than most of the poor, who have had no opportunity of learning it. I felt, while going from town to town, the Master helping me continually to preach. I never knew such elasticity of spirit, such bounding of heart in my life before. And I come back, not wearied and tired, though preaching twice every day, but fuller of strength and vigor than when I first set out!

I give God the glory for the many souls I have heard of who have been converted through the reading of the printed sermons, and for the loving blessings of those who followed us to the water’s edge with many tears, saying to us—“Do your diligence to come again before winter,” and urging us once more to preach the Word in that land. There may be mingled with this some touch of egotism. The Lord knows whether it is so or not, but I am not conscious of it. I do praise and bless His name, that in a land where there is so much philosophy, He has helped me to preach His Truth so simply, that I never uttered a word as a mere doctrinalist, but I preached Christ and nothing but Christ. Rejoice with me, my dear Brothers and Sisters. I must have you rejoice in it, or if you will not, I must rejoice alone, but my loaf of praise is too great for me to eat it all.

**III.**And we come to a close. I have to urge THE JOYFUL CLAIMS which the Apostle gives in the twelfth verse, as a reason WHY THERE SHOULD BE PRAYER AND PRAISE. “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you.”

Ah, after all, a man’s comfort must come, next to the finished salvation of God, from the testimony of his own conscience. And to a minister, what a testimony it is that he has preached the Gospel in simplicity, to which there are two senses—preached it not with double-mindedness—saying one thing and meaning another. And he has preached it, not as oarsmen row—looking one way and pulling another—but preached it meaning what he said, having a single heart, desiring God’s Glory and the salvation of men.

And what a blessing to have preached it simply, that is to say, without hard words, without polished phrases, never studying elocutionary graces, never straining after oratorical embellishments. How accursed must be the life of a man who profanes the pulpit to the dignity of eloquence! How desperate will be his deathbed when he remembers that he made an exhibition of his powers of speech rather than of the solid things which make for the winning of souls! That conscience may well be easy that can speak of having dealt with God’s Truth in simplicity.

The Apostle says, also, that he had preached it with sincerity. That is, he had preached it meaning it, feeling it—preached it so that none could accuse him of being false. The Greek word has something in it of sunlight, and he is the true minister of God who preaches what he would wish to have hung up in the sunlight, or who has the sunlight shining right through him. I am afraid we are none of us like white glass—most of us are colored a little—but he is happy who seeks to get rid of the coloring matter as much as possible, so that the light of the Gospel may shine right straight, clear as it comes from the Sun of Righteousness, through him.

Paul had preached with simplicity and sincerity. And he adds, “Not with fleshly wisdom.” Oh, what stories have I heard of what fleshly wisdom will do! And I have learned a lesson during the last fortnight which I would that England would learn. There are three schools of theological error over yonder, and each one leaps over the back of its fellow. Some of them hold that all the facts of Scripture are only myths. Others of them say that there are some good things in the Bible, though there are a great many mistakes. And others go further still, and fling the whole Bible away altogether as to its Inspiration, though they still preach it, and still lean on it, saying that they do that merely for the edification of the vulgar— merely holding it up for the sake of the masses—though I ought to add merely to get their living as well.

Sad! Sad! Sad that the Church has gone to such a length as that—the Old Dutch Reformed Church—the very mirror of Calvinism, standing fast and firm in its creeds to all the doctrines we love, and yet gone astray to latitudinarian and licentious liberty. Oh, how earnestly should we decry fleshly wisdom! I am afraid, dear Friends, that sometimes some of you, when you hear a minister, like him to put it pretty well, and you find fault unless he shows some degree of talent. I wonder whether that is not a sin? I am half inclined to think it is.

I sometimes think whether we ought not to look less every day to talent, and more and more to the matter of the Gospel that is preached. Whether if a man is blessed with elocutionary power we may, perhaps, be more profited by him—whether that is not a weakness. Whether we had not better go back to the days of fishermen once again, and give men no sort of education whatever, but just send them to preach the Truth of God simply. This, rather than go the length they are now going, giving men, I know not what, of all sorts of learning that is of no earthly use to them, but which only helps them to pervert the simplicity of God. I love that word in my text—“Not with fleshly wisdom.”

And now I lay my claim, as my conscience bears me witness—I lay my claim to this boasting of our Apostle. I have preached God’s Gospel in simplicity. I do not know how I can preach it more simply, nor can I more honestly declare it. I have preached it sincerely—the Searcher of all

hearts knows that. And I have not preached it with fleshly wisdom, and that for one excellent reason—that I have not any—and have been compelled to keep to the simple testimony of the Lord. But if I have done anything, it has been done by the Grace of God.

If any success has been achieved, it has been Divine Grace that has done it all. “And more especially to you.” For though our word has gone forth to many lands, and our testimony belts the globe, yet, “more especially to you.” You have we warned. You have we entreated. You have we exhorted. With you have we pleaded. Over you have we wept. For you have we prayed. To some of you we have been a spiritual parent in Christ. To many of you as a nursing father. To many of you as a teacher and an edifier in the Gospel. And we hope to *all* of you a sincere *friend* in Christ Jesus. Therefore do I claim your prayers—*yours* more than any other people’s.

And though there will be not a few who will remember us in their supplications, I do conjure *you*, inasmuch as it has been, “especially to you,” let me especially have your prayers. Some will say that it is unkind even for me to suppose that you do not pray. Well, I do not so suppose it out of unkindness, but there may be some who forget—some who forget to plead. Oh, do pray for me still! The whole congregation is not saved yet. There are some that hear us that are not yet converted. Plead with God for their sakes. There are some hard hearts unbroken! Ask God to make the hammer strike. And while there are some still unmelted, pray God to make the Word like a fire!

This great London needs to be stirred from end to end. Pray for all your ministers, that God may make them mighty. The Church wants more still of the loud voice of God to wake it from its sleep. Ask God to bless all His sent servants. Plead with Him with Divine energy, that so His kingdom may come, and His will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

O that you all believed in Jesus! For until you do, you cannot pray nor praise! O that you all believed in Jesus! Remember, this is the only way of salvation. Trust Jesus, for he that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he believes not on the Son of God. Trust Jesus and you shall be saved. May Christ accept you now, for His own love’s sake. Amen.

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ALL THE PROMISES  
NO. 2657

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 14, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 31, 1882.~~***

***~~“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”  
2 Corinthians 1:20.~~***

As the result of a very simple incident, a sublime Truth of God may be proclaimed. It was so in the instance referred to in this chapter. These Corinthians had misrepresented the Apostle Paul and spoken ill of him. He might have ignored their unkindness and said nothing about it, but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was led to act otherwise and, while defending his own character for consistency, he also vindicated the consistency and truthfulness of God. We might never have had this precious verse if Paul had not been so ill-treated by these men of Corinth. They did him great wrong and caused him much sorrow of heart, for a man who was so sincere and upright could not but be sorely vexed by their unjust suspicions and misrepresentations. Yet you see how the evil was overruled by God for good and through their unsavory gossip and slander this sweet sentence was pressed out of Paul—“For all the promises of God in Christ are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us.

There are many things which, at first, we may regret, but for which we are afterwards exceedingly grateful. I have felt half inclined to thank the Pharisees and scribes for some of their cruel attacks upon our blessed Lord, Himself, for, in answering them, He has given us lessons which we now highly prize. Perhaps we might never have had those three wonderful parables of the lost sheep, the lost silver and the lost son, if those cavilers had not spoken evil of Him because all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him.

The fact was that Paul had intended to visit the Christians at Corinth, again, but he felt compelled to alter his decision and so he did not go to them, because he would only have gone in order to chastise or rebuke them, they had behaved so badly. In their folly and in their coolness towards the Apostle, they misconstrued his actions and they said, “We cannot rely upon his word and we do not know what he will do. He promised that he would come to us, but he has changed his mind.” The Apostle declares here that he did not use lightness, or fickleness, either in giving his conditional promise, or in retracting it. He was not accustomed to speak outside thinking what he was going to say. He was prompted by a worthy motive when he made the proposition to go to them—and an equally good motive swayed him when he resolved not to go. He tells them that his mind was not of the “yes and no” order, but when he said, “yes,” he meant it. His yes was yes, and if he said, “no,” he meant it—his no was no.

This remark led the Apostle to further say that the Gospel which he preached was not of the “yes and no” kind. It was something certain, settled, positive, fixed—it was not a variable gospel, nor a deceptive gospel. It was not a chameleon gospel which changed its color according to the light which fell upon it, but it was a clear and distinct Gospel, given in all sincerity by the truthful and truth-loving Savior who never used words in a double sense, but who said what He meant and meant what He said! It was by this process of reasoning that the Apostle was led to the statement contained in our text concerning Christ—“All the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us.” That is now to be the theme of our meditation.

**I.**The first thing I notice in the text is the destiny OF THE PROMISES. Notice the Apostle’s words—“For all the promises of God in Him are yes.”  
These promises were all made *according to the purpose of His own will.*We sometimes read, or hear, or speak of the promises written in God’s Word, but do not give them as much credit as if they were the promises of a friend, or of our father, or our brother! If we valued them more, we should believe them better. We have many proverbs to remind us what poor and frail things the promises of men are, but those of which Paul writes are “the promises of God.” Men often change their minds—even the Apostle did that and, therefore, he was wise to try to take the thoughts of those to whom he was writing off from the promises even of an Apostle, which were liable to change, and which might very properly not be carried out because of altered circumstances—and lead them away to the promises of God which are unfailing and unchangeable, and are always fulfilled to His Glory and to our profit. We know little what solemn things we are trifling with when we say that we cannot believe a certain promise. What? Has it come to this—that God’s own children cannot believe Him? Is it so, that we, who say that “we love Him because He first loved us,” yet add to that declaration, “but there are *some* of His promises which we cannot believe”? I am afraid that we talk far too flippantly about our unbelief and that we seek to shelter one another in it, instead of whipping ourselves out of it. To be unbelieving may be painful, but there is a more serious consideration than that, for it is sinful! It is heinous to the last degree when we feel—much more when we *express*— any incredulity with regard to “the promises of God.” Just turn that thought over in your minds for a minute or two and see whether it does not crimson your face with shame to think that you should have had any suspicion about the fulfillment of promises made by “God, who cannot lie.”  
Even in the case of a man, a promise is something which comes from him and yet, in a sense, still remains with him. He cannot speak of a promise and let it blow away with the wind. It is his promise after he has uttered it and those to whom it was given can bring it back to him and say, “That is your promise, will you not fulfill it?” If a man repudiates his own pledged word, he does, in fact, repudiate the fruit of himself, the outgoing of his own life! And every promise of God partakes of His Nature—there is something Divine in it, something which comes distinctly from God and which He will continue to acknowledge as His. Though it may have been spoken two, or three thousand years ago, or longer than that, yet it is still His promise and part and parcel of Himself. Well, then, if God will acknowledge it as His promise, shall I, to whom it is given in Infinite Mercy, doubt whether it is His promise or not? And shall I even venture to go further than that and, *knowing* it to be His promise, shall I begin to question how He can fulfill it, or whether He *will* fulfill it or not? God forbid! The dignity of the promise must not be insulted by our doubting it!  
Kindly observe the position of the promise which is a very singular one. *It is a kind of link between the Divine thought and the Divine act.* It is not at all a necessary link, so far as God is concerned, but it is often a most necessary and consoling link to us. There is the eternal purpose that has always been in God’s secret mind and His promise is the shadow which that purpose casts upon the revealed page. It is the Divine decree made manifest and it stands there—bright and sparkling, between the decree, which our eyes cannot and dare not look upon—and the blessed fulfillment which is to be our joy and delight forever! I confess that I cannot think of God’s eternal purposes outside the utmost awe and reverence for, to me, there is something very solemn and impressive about them. I know that some people speak as though they would trample them in the mire if they could, but whenever I hear a word against the promises, the Providences, the decrees and the purposes of God, I feel inclined to do as a Negro slave did, under certain circumstances, in the presence of his master.  
While waiting upon his master, who frequently took the name of God in vain and blasphemed it most terribly in his cursing, the black man bowed his head. His master asked him why he did so and he replied that it was because his soul was full of trembling at the very name of God and he wished to do Him reverence, even while He was being blasphemed and insulted. So, whenever I hear or read of anyone speaking or writing against the Divine decrees I at once feel anxious to bow my head and to prostrate myself in homage before that eternal mind which knows no new thought—for God knew all things from the beginning—and to adore that Infinite Wisdom which has planned everything from the flitting of a sparrow to the flight of the archangel! It is very wonderful to me to think of a promise in the Scriptures being virtually the manifestation of God’s everlasting purposes. I might compare the purpose to God Himself— invisible—and the promise to the Incarnate God, who was born at Bethlehem and who came to earth to be seen of men. Think yet again of the promise of God and you will see how a sense of its dignity grows upon you while you are meditating upon it.  
Consider, next, that *the Truth of God is irrevocably bound up with His promise.*If a man says, “Such a thing shall be done,” he ought to do it if it is in his power. We have no right to break promises that we have made. We feel that if we do, men will learn to distrust us and soon will care nothing at all for our promises. But, Beloved—and we speak with the utmost reverence concerning the Most High—His Character for truthfulness would be lost if His promises were not kept! And, while it would be an awful loss to us to miss what He has promised, it would be a far greater loss to Him to lose His truthfulness! We rejoice that, as a matter of fact, this is a thing which can *never* happen! All things except this are possible with God, but it is not possible for Him to be God and yet to fail in the fulfillment of His promises. The two ideas will not run together at all! If He is God, He must be true to His Truth, and He will be! So, when I read a promise in His Word, I read something which is as certain as a fact already accomplished, since, if it were not to come to pass, God’s Glory would suffer an eclipse—and His veracity would be impugned. But that can never be!  
Nor is the Truth of God the only attribute which would suffer if He failed to fulfill His promise, for *His immutability would also be put in jeopardy.* If He makes a promise, and yet does not fulfill it in due time, then He must have changed. The motives which led to the making of the promise have now no influence over Him and He has become something different from what He was when He made the promise. But God must be immutable! It cannot be possible for Him to change for the better, for He is infinitely good! And, certainly, He cannot change for the worse, for, if He did, then He would be something less than He might be—and so He would not be God at all! Change is impossible to Him! He can never change His will, and His promise, as one of the most solemn declarations of His will, must be fulfilled when He has once made it. Surely, no one of us would wish or dare to deny either the truthfulness or the unchangeableness of God!  
Further, *His power is bound up with His promise.* Shall it ever be said that God failed to keep His promise because He could not keep it, or because He miscalculated His resources, or His arm waxed short, or the great deeps of His eternal Godhead became dried up? No! That cannot be, for what He has promised He will always be able to perform.  
So, then, if we slight the promises of God, we slight also His Truth, His Immutability and His power.  
And we also seriously c*ompromise His mercy and His love. It was*love that moved Him to give the promise. He might have bestowed the blessing outside promising to do so and that would have been a gracious proof of His love. But, because the promise has a sweet, consoling power in it, He has been pleased to give it to us as a further proof of His love. And if He does not grant the blessing at once when He promises it, the delay is all for loving reasons. But, having given the promise, He must keep it because of His love. His love would be changed if it did not constrain Him to fulfill what it caused Him to promise. But that can never be and we must not—we dare not—cast such a slight upon the promise of God as to imagine, for a moment, that it can remain unfulfilled!  
So much, then, concerning the dignity of the promises.  
**II.**Still keeping closely to the text, I want you to notice, next, the range of the PROMISES, for Paul here speaks of “the promises of God.”  
There is a prospect for you—“All the promises.” There are very many of them and they are found in both the Old and the New Testaments. There was one given at the gates of the Garden of Eden, very near the commencement of human history. There is another right at the end of the Revelation. “Surely I come quickly.” The Bible is a Book of precious promises! All the way we have to travel, they seem to be like a series of stepping stones across the stream of time, and we may march from one promise to another and never wet our feet all the way from earth to Heaven if we do but know how to keep our eyes open and to find the right promise to step upon. “All the promises”—the Old Testament ones as well as those in the New Testament—are sure and steadfast! The conditional promises—if we believe, and if we repent—God will certainly fulfill. And the unconditional ones—the promises of the Everlasting Covenant in which He pledges Himself to give men repentance and to give them new hearts and right spirits—He will keep them, too!  
God will fulfill all temporal promises. Bread shall be given you and water shall be assured unto you if you are the Lord’s children. He will keep His promises about temporal affairs as well as those which concern everlasting joys and blessings. “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” You may speak of the promises in any way that you please—and then you may say that the Lord will keep them all! You may pick out the promise to the prisoner, the promise to the sinner, the promise to the backslider, the promise to the doubting one, the promise to the aged, the promise to the young, the promise to her that halts, the promise to the barren woman, the promise to the strong, the promise to those who have full assurance of faith, the promise to those who love the Lord, the promise to those who delight themselves in the Lord—and then you may confidently declare, concerning all these promises to all sorts and conditions of people—that the Lord will surely keep every one of them!  
“All the promises.” Why, here is a grand granary full! Who can sort them all out? Promises of pardon to the seeking sinner! Promises of justification to the believing child! Promises of sanctification to him who is struggling against sin! Promises of the supply of all kinds of spiritual food to the flock of Christ! Promises of guidance! Promises of preservation! Promises of holy education! Promises of peace and joy! Promises of hope! Promises of the sustenance of our love! Promises for death! Promises for judgment! Promises for glory! Promises that reach to all eternity! “All the promises.” What a range of vision this expression opens up! Go forth and lift up your eyes and gaze upon the stars. See whether you can number them all—do they not far exceed all your powers of mathematics? Yet, if you could count the stars, weigh them in scales and tabulate the measure of their light, you could not count the promises of God, or estimate their true value, or know how infinitely precious is the Divine Light which streams from them into a believing soul! If God does not fulfill a single promise to me for the next 50 years, I shall be perfectly satisfied to live on the promises, themselves, if my faith shall but be sustained by His Grace! I may fairly talk thus, for you would say, “I do not need a single penny to spend, as long as ever I live, if I can

but always have plenty of notes. I shall never care if I do not see a sovereign, again, so long as I can always have the promise of the Bank of England to pay me on demand all that I need!  
So let it be with the promises of God! Men’s promises are but breath, they would never feed us. But God’s promises can satisfy us, for they are the substance of the things hoped for! And faith, the evidence of things not seen, rejoices to see that which is invisible, to lay hold of that which it cannot touch, and to feed upon that which, as yet, it cannot taste. Faith works wonders! It enables a man to project himself right into eternity! He sits down and sighs, and sorrows, and then he says to himself, “This will never do. I will trust in the Lord.” And, in an instant, by faith, he walks the golden streets and sings the everlasting songs! He is not obliged to live in this narrow sphere of time and sense, for by faith he spreads his wings and like the lark, he ascends and sings. He soars far more rapidly than even the eagle and finds himself already enjoying the things which God has prepared for them that love Him! And so he is happy in the Lord.  
**III.**Now I must turn to my third point, which is in the very heart of the text—“For *all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen.”* These words teach us THE STABILITY OF THE PROMISES.  
The promises of God are very firm for, first, *they are settled on an everlasting basis,* for they are promises in Christ. As I look at the text, I can see two words leaping up out of it. And as I look at it again, I see the same two words leaping up again—*“in Him.” “All*promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen.” There is a great thought which I cannot fully open up to you, now—you must lie awake tonight and think it over and pray over it—*“All*the promises of God in Him.” What a great Christ you have, to have *“all* the promises of God” within Himself! The range of the promises seems to be infinite and yet Christ is great enough to be the circumference that shuts them all in! I rejoice in this great Truth of God, that “all the promises of God” are in Christ Jesus our Lord!  
And in Christ they are said to be, *“Yes.”*That is a Greek word, so this is a message to Gentiles. “And in Him Amen.” That is a *Hebrew* word and is, therefore, for the Jews. You may have noticed how whenever the Holy Spirit wishes to impress any Truth upon us with more than usual solemnity, He uses two languages, as in the case of, “Abba, Father.” In this way, all the saints of God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, may have their portion of meat in due season.  
“All the promises of God in Him are “Yes.” That is, they are certain. “And in Him Amen.” That is, they are accomplished. We may say after every promise of God, “Yes, so it is. Amen, so let it be.” There is but a slight variation in the meaning of the words, but it *is*enough to let us see that there is no tautology here, not even if the words are translated, “All the promises of God are Yes.” That is, true. “And they are Amen.” That is, they shall be accomplished in Christ Jesus.  
*The stability of the promises in Christ is established beyond all hazard.*First, because Christ is God’s Witness. If anyone asks, “Did God make this promise?” Christ comes forward and says, “Yes, I heard Him say it.” Christ is “the faithful and true Witness.” He bears witness of God and for God to the sons of men. And He sets His seal to every Divine promise and certifies it with His, “Yes and Amen.”  
Next, the promises are sure in Christ because He is God’s Representative. He is always doing the Father’s will, even as He has done it in the past. When He came to earth and died upon the Cross, He accomplished the work of redemption upon which God’s heart was set and He is still doing the Father’s will. Whatever Jesus has said, God has said, for He speaks the Words of God. The Father sent Him into the world as His Representative and He spoke not merely His own Words, but the Words of the Father who sent Him.  
Then, next, Jesus, is the Surety of the Covenant. The promise was first made to Adam. If Adam keeps the command of God and does not touch the forbidden fruit, he and those whom he represents shall have all manner of good things. But Adam transgressed the Law of the Lord so that Covenant was made void. The Second Covenant is on this wise. If Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, will do this and that, then all whom He represents shall have the blessings guaranteed in the Covenant. The Lord Jesus has done all that He agreed to do—He has kept the Law and so has honored it—and He has also died and borne the sentence of the Law. He has thus offered both an active and a passive obedience to the Law of God and now all the promises of God must be kept to Christ, for they are, “Yes and Amen” in Him. Take those great promises in the 53rd of Isaiah—“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” These are promises, first to the Head, and then to us, the members of His mystical body—first to the Second Adam and then to all who, by a living faith, are included in His federal Headship. So the promises are, “Yes and Amen” in Him.  
And as long as Jesus Christ lives, they are also, “Yes and Amen” in this sense—that He is seeing to their being carried out. He is interceding before the Throne of God for us that the promises of God may meet our distresses. O Brothers and Sisters, all the promises must be true in Christ because God spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all! And, having given Him, will He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? If God had meant to run back from any promise, He would surely have run back from the promise to give His only-begotten Son! But, having fulfilled *that*, what promise is there that He will ever break? Moreover, in the gift of Christ He has virtually and really given us all things, for if Christ is yours, all things are yours! All things are in Christ, so, having Him, you possess all! There is no desire of your spirit, or need of your nature that shall remain unsatisfied when once you have Christ as yours. You have Heaven, earth and all things that are or ever shall be, encompassed in that blessed One whose very name is, “the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.” O Beloved, rejoice with all your heart that every promise of God is sure in Christ Jesus to all His true seed!  
**IV.**Now let us consider the last words of the text. “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, *to the glory of God through us.”*This impression teaches us THE RESULT OF THE PROMISES.  
So, then, dear Friends, the promises of God are His Glory. There is no pretended god that has ever been supposed to make promises like those of our God. Turn to the Koran and see what Mohammed has promised. Ah, me! What a beggarly array of promises does he set before his followers! Turn to Brahma and Buddha and read all the so-called sacred books written by their priests, and see what their gods are said to have promised. You can put the essence of it all into an eggshell and not even see it! But our God has promised more than Heaven and earth can hold! He has promised to give Himself to His people! He is the great Promiser—the mighty Promiser. I set the promises of God in comparison and contrast with all the promises that were ever made in connection with all false systems of religion under Heaven and unhesitatingly declare that there are none that can compare for an instant with the promises of the Most High!  
It was greatly to God’s Glory to make those promises all sure, for they all depended at first upon the condition that Christ should obey the Father’s will. And He has done it and oh, what a glory it is to God that, “He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!” The gift of the Redeemer, the life of the Redeemer, the death of the Redeemer, the intercession of the Redeemer, the making the promises sure—all this is greatly to the Glory of God.  
And now it is to the Glory of God to keep every promise that He has made. There is not one which, if it were broken, would redound to His praise or increase His honor. No, and there is not one but, when it is kept, reflects fresh honor upon Him and brings still further renown to His ever-blessed name!  
If I had time, I would enlarge upon all these points, but as it is already past our usual hour for closing the service, I must end my discourse with a brief reference to the last words in our text. “To the glory of God by us.” While I was thinking earnestly over my text, I fancied that the two little words, “by us,” seemed to spoil that grand word, “glory,” and that greater word, “God.” “To the glory of God*”—*“by us.” What a contrast! It is even more marked than in that old story of the organ-blower who would persist in saying, “*We*did it,” when all that *he* did was just pump the air into the organ. Must we be mentioned at all? Is it not a pity to bring us in?  
But, as I turned the subject over in my mind, I thought, “Oh, no, no— it is quite right to bring us in here!” Now look. God wants to have the glory of being merciful. Yes, but He cannot have that glory unless there is a sinner somewhere to whom He can show mercy. A sinner is an essential part of the whole business! Suppose that the king who made the great supper had said to his servants, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in”—and that they had come back to him and said, “There is not a single creature under the hedges or in the highways! There is not even a solitary beggar anywhere about the streets or lanes of the city!” Then he could not have had the feast, whatever dainties he might have prepared, if he had not anybody to eat them. It would have been a mournful business to have the oxen and fatlings killed and heaped upon the tables, yet nobody to sit down to partake of them. Even the king, if he is to have honor, must be dependent for once on the beggars in the highways and hedges! Is not this amazing? God wants to show His power in pardoning my sin, but He cannot do it if I have no sin to be pardoned! And if I do not come to Him to be pardoned and do not ask for His mercy, then it lies like dead capital never spent! The Lord delights to help the weak—it is His joy to do it. But suppose that there is no weak person anywhere—what is to happen then?  
Ah, but I think I hear the weak souls crying out, “By us! By us! ‘To the glory of God by us.’ He delights to help the poor and needy and He cannot do so if there are not some poor and needy ones for Him to help. So, when we seek His aid, it is ‘to the glory of God by us.’” And the Lord delights to make His strength perfect in our weakness. I think I hear Paul crying out and He is the man who wrote these words, “by us”—“God is glorified by my weakness.” And I hear many of you who are trying to serve your Lord and Master, saying, “Ah, then, that is why such weak ones as we feel ourselves to be used, ‘to the glory of God by us.’”  
Come along, then, all you who need God’s mercy. You have laid hold of one of His promises and feel that you need and must have all that it includes. With utmost reverence would I say that God Himself cannot be glorified by His promises without you! If He intends to feed the hungry, then the hungry are essential to the accomplishment of His purpose! If He would clothe the naked, then there must be naked ones for Him to clothe! Is there not a mine of comfort here for you who have been almost outside hope? I trust that some of you poor lost ones will say in your hearts, if you do not utter it with your voices, “Are we really essential to God’s Glory? Does God need our poverty, our sinfulness and our nothingness in order that He may, through them, display the greatness of His Grace? Then we will certainly come to Him just as we are.” Do so, I pray you. Come! Come!! Come!!! May the Holy Spirit, by His Omnipotent Grace draw you now, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 1; 2:1.***

**2 Corinthians 1:1.***Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.* Paul is very jealous of his Apostleship. There were some in Corinth who denied it and, therefore, he takes care, at the very commencement of this Epistle—as he does in beginning most of his letters—to write concerning himself, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” But with what humility of mind does he associate Timothy with himself! Frequently he puts Timothy, his own convert, one so young and so much beneath him in position and attainments, on a level with himself! And if we also can help our younger brethren, how willingly should we put ourselves side by side with them!

**2.***Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord*

*Jesus Christ.* What a wonderful source of Grace and peace! “God our Father.” How can He give other than Grace and peace to His own children? “And from the Lord Jesus Christ,” our redeeming Savior, who has given Himself for us, and who has engraved our names on the palms of His hands—is there not an abundant supply of Grace and peace to be found in the very music of His name?

**3.***Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.* Let me read those titles again. “The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of mercies. The God of all comfort.” Do not the second and third titles derive much of their significance from the first one? It is because God is “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” that He becomes “the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.”

**4.***Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*Experience teaches the first rank of God’s servants— and their experience of sorrow and consolation is often the means of enabling them to be the means of blessing to others. Almost everything that the minister of the Gospel enjoys or endures will be found to be sent to him for the elect’s sake, that he may know how to teach them the lessons he has, himself, learned.

**5.***For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.*Are we not willing to endure the greater suffering that we may enjoy the greater consolation?

**6.***And whether we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* We receive both suffering and consolation for the sake of others and we are bound to give out, again, all that we receive. It is the essence of the true Christian life, first to be dependent upon God for everything, and then to give forth to all around us that which God has poured into our spirit. The heart would soon die if it pumped in the blood and never pumped it out again—but it is by that perpetual process of giving out what it has received that it continues in life! And the highest form of Christian life is the reception of all that comes to us out of the fullness of Christ and then the free giving out of what He has bestowed.

**7-10.***And*our *hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.*No doubt Paul did preach all the better and with the greater confidence in God because he preached, like Richard Baxter, “as a dying man to dying men.” His life was frequently in danger and on this occasion it was so in a very remarkable degree. So, when he was again able to testify for his Master, he realized that he had no time to waste and, therefore, he wrote and spoke with the utmost earnestness. He felt himself in jeopardy every hour and, therefore, he fell back upon his God and trusted alone in Him. Anything that works to this end for us, also, is an undisguised blessing.

**11.***You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*Much prayer leads to much thanksgiving. It should be a great cause for joy when numbers of Christians unite in praying for any Christian minister, for they will also unite in praising God on his behalf when that which they asked for him is granted!

**12.***For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshy wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you-ward.*There had been whispers among these Corinthians that Paul had concealed a double meaning in some of his writings, and also that he had made a promise which he never intended to keep. So now he calls upon them to bear witness that he never was a man to act according to policy, but he was a straightforward, honest, plain-dealing man, full of godly sincerity and unselfishness. He had abundantly proved all this to the Corinthians, for, lest they should have any occasion for speaking against him, he would not take at their hands the support to which he was entitled—but he labored at his trade of tent-making that they might not have anything to say concerning him except that he was disinterested in all his endeavors to serve them. Paul evidently felt their unkindness very much, but his conscience assured him that their accusations were unjust.

**13, 14.***For we write none other things unto you than what you read or acknowledge; and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end; as also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.* See how Paul restrains himself in writing to these people? He had good cause to be offended, for they had touched him in a point about which he was very jealous, namely, his integrity. But here he speaks with great moderation of spirit—and herein lay his strength. Every Christian, when he has to defend himself against false accusations, should use soft words and hard arguments.

**15, 16.***And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit; and to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.* He had planned to see them in his going and also in his returning, but he could not carry out the idea which was in his mind. The wisest of men often find their plans impracticable—and even an Inspired man is not always inspired! God guides him when guidance is absolutely necessary, but, at other times, He leaves him to arrange according to his own judgment—and to find out that his judgment is not Infallible. “I had a mind,” he says, “to come and see you twice.”

**17.***When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?* “Did I make up my mind hastily and then did I change it all of a sudden without good reason? Had I failed to think before I decided and, therefore, did I find it necessary to revoke my promise?”

**17, 18.***Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yes, yes, and no, no? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yes and no.*He binds up his own ministry with himself, and he says, “You charge me with being fickle, but you know better! You are well aware that I am not one who says one thing, today, and another thing tomorrow. You know that I have been open and aboveboard in all my dealings with you, and that I have never stooped to policy and craftiness, but have spoken that which I believed, whatever might come of it.”

**19.***For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not Yes, and No, but in Him was Yes.* He declares that he preached the Truth of God straightforwardly and consistently, and that he did not say one thing, one day, and another thing a few days later.

**20.***For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*Christ is no quicksand, slipping and sliding away, and so ruining those who cling to Him. He is the Rock of Ages and He stands fast forever. His Gospel is one and the same at all times. You see that as Paul grows warm, he advances in his argument. If the Corinthians suspected his honesty in making a promise, the next thing they would do would be to suspect the Gospel—and after that they would suspect Christ, Himself, who is the Truth!

**21-23.***Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, is God, who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*“If I had come, I would have been obliged to rebuke you and reprove you. I would have had to be like an armed man going to battle, or an officer of the law carrying out the sentence pronounced upon a criminal, but I could not bear to do that, so I felt it would be better and wiser to stay away and, therefore, I did not visit you as I had proposed.”

**24.***Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith you stand.*  
**Chapter 2. Verse 1.***But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness.* And they ought to have had enough confidence in him to know that he had a very good and sufficient reason for not fulfilling his conditional promise.  
Let us, dear Friends, who, are one in Christ, trust each other, for, if suspicion is once bred among the people of God, it will mean farewell to all fellowship.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #26 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE TWO EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL  
NO. 26

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 27, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL STRAND.~~***

***~~“For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death. And to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”  
2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.~~***

THESE are the words of Paul, speaking on the behalf of himself and his Brothers, the Apostles. They are true concerning all those who by the Spirit are chosen, qualified and thrust into the vineyard to preach God’s Gospel. I have often admired the 14th verse of this Chapter, especially when I have remembered from whose lips the words fell, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ and makes manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.” Picture Paul, the aged, the man who had been beaten five times with “forty stripes save one,” who had been dragged forth for dead, the man of great sufferings who had passed through whole seas of persecution—only think of him saying, at the close of his ministerial career, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ”! To triumph when shipwrecked, to triumph when scourged, to triumph in the stocks, to triumph under the stones, to triumph amidst the hiss of the world! To triumph when he was driven from the city and shook off the dust from his feet—to triumph at all times in Christ Jesus! Now, if some ministers of modern times should talk thus, we would think little of it for they enjoy the world’s applause. They can always go to their place in ease and peace. They have an admiring people and no open foes—against them not a dog does move his tongue—everything is safe and pleasant. For them to say, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph” is a very little thing. But for one like Paul—so trampled on, so tried, so distressed, to say it—then, we say, out spoke a hero—here is a man who had true faith in God and in the Divinity of his mission!

And, my Brothers, how sweet is that consolation which Paul applied to his own heart amid all his troubles. “Notwithstanding all,” he says, “God makes known the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.” Ah, with this thought, a minister may lay his head upon his pillow—“God makes manifest the savor of His knowledge.” With this he may shut his eyes when his career is over and with this he may open them in Heaven— “God has made known by me the savor of His knowledge in every place.” Then follow the words of my text, of which I shall speak, dividing it into three particulars. Our first remark shall be that *although the Gospel is* “*a sweet savor*”*in every place, yet it produces different effects in different persons—*“to one it is the savor of death unto death. And to the other the savor of life unto life.” Our second observation shall be, that *ministers of the Gospel are not responsible for their success*, for it is said, “We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish.” And thirdly, *the Gospel minister’s place is by no means a light one*—his duty is very weighty. The Apostle, himself, said, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

**I.**Our first remark is that THE GOSPEL PRODUCES DIFFERENT EFFECTS. It must seem a strange thing, but it is strangely true that there is scarcely ever a good thing in the world of which some little evil is not the consequence. Let the sun shine in brilliance—it shall moisten the wax, it shall harden clay. Let it pour down floods of light on the tropics— it will cause vegetation to be extremely luxuriant, the richest and choicest fruits shall ripen and the fairest of all flowers shall bloom—but who does not know that there the worst of reptiles and the most venomous snakes are also brought forth? So it is with the Gospel. Although it is the very sun of righteousness to the world, although it is God’s best gift, although nothing can be in the least comparable to the vast amount of benefit which it bestows upon the human race, yet even of that we must confess that sometimes it is the “savor of death unto death.” But then we are not to blame the Gospel for this. It is not the fault of God’s Truth. It is the fault of those who do not receive it. It is the “savor of life unto life” to everyone that listens to its sound with a heart that is open to its reception. It is only “death unto death” to the man who hates the Truth, despises it, scoffs at it and tries to oppose its progress. It is of that character we must speak first.

**1.**The Gospel is to *some* men “a savor of death unto death.” Now, this depends very much upon what the Gospel is because there are some things called, “Gospel,” that are “a savor of death unto death” to everybody that hears them. John Berridge says he preached morality till there was not a moral man left in the village. And there is no way of injuring morality like legal preaching. The preaching of good works and the exhorting of men to holiness—as the means of salvation—is very much admired in theory—but when brought into practice, it is found not only ineffectual, but more than that—it becomes even “a savor of death unto death.” So it has been found and I think even the great Chalmers, himself, confessed that for years and years before he knew the Lord, he preached nothing but morality and precepts. But he never found a drunkard reclaimed by strewing on him merely the evils of drunkenness. Nor did he find a swearer stop his swearing because he told him the heinousness of the sin. It was not until he began to preach the love of Jesus in His great heart of mercy—it was not until he preached the Gospel as it was in Christ—in some of its clearness, fullness, power and the Doctrine that, “by Grace you are saved, through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,” that he ever met with success! But when he did preach salvation by faith, by shoals the drunkards came from their cups and swearers refrained their lips from evil speaking! By God’s Grace thieves became honest men and unrighteous and ungodly persons bowed to the scepter of Jesus. But you must confess, as I said before, that though the Gospel does in the main produce the best effect upon almost all who hear it either by restraining them from sin, or compelling them to Christ—it is a great fact and a solemn one, upon which I hardly know how to speak this morning—that to some men the preaching of Christ’s Gospel is “death unto death,” and produces evil instead of good.

**(1.)**And the first sense is this. *Many men are hardened in their sins by hearing the Gospel*. Oh, ‘tis terribly and solemnly true that of all sinners, some sanctuary sinners are the worst! Those who can dive deepest into sin and have the most quiet consciences and hardest hearts are some who are to be found in God’s own House! I know that a faithful ministry will often prick them and the stern denunciations of a Boanerges will frequently make them shake. I am aware that the Word of God will sometimes make their blood curdle within them. But I know (for I have seen the men) that there are many who turn the Grace of God into licentiousness and make even God’s Truth a stalking-horse for the devil and abuse God’s Grace to palate their sin. Such men have I found among those who hear the Doctrines of Grace in their fullness. They will say, “I am elect, therefore I may swear. I am one of those who were chosen of God before the foundation of the world and, therefore, I may live as I like.” I have seen the man who stood upon the table of a public house and grasping the glass in his hand, said, “Mates! I can say more than any of you. I am one of those who are redeemed with Jesus’ precious blood”—and then he drank his tumbler of ale and danced again before them and sang vile and blasphemous songs. Now, that is a man to whom the Gospel is “a savor of death unto death.” He hears the Truth, but he perverts it. He takes what is intended by God for his good and what does he do? He commits suicide with it! That knife which was given him to open the secrets of the Gospel he drives into his own heart. That which is the purest of all Truth and the highest of all morality he turns into the panderer of his vice and makes it a scaffold to aid in building up his wickedness and sin. Are there any of you here like that man—who love to hear *the Gospel*, as you call it—and yet live impurely? Are there any here who can sit down and say you are the children of God and still behave like liege servants of the devil? Be it known unto you that you are liars and hypocrites, for the Truth is not in you at all! “If any man is born of God, he cannot sin.” God’s elect will not be allowed to fall into continual sin. They will never “turn the Grace of God into licentiousness.” But it will be their endeavor, as much as in them lies, to keep near to Jesus. Rest assured of this—“By their fruits you shall know them.” “A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit; neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.” Such men, however, are continually turning the Gospel into evil. They sin with a high hand, from the very fact that they have heard what they consider excuses for their vice. There is nothing under Heaven, I conceive, more liable to lead men astray than a perverted Gospel. A Truth perverted is generally worse than a Doctrine which all know to be false. As fire, one of the most useful of the elements, can also cause the fiercest of conflagrations, so the Gospel, the best thing we have, can be turned to the vilest account. This is one sense in which it is “a savor of death unto death.”

**(2.)**But another. It is a fact that *the Gospel of Jesus Christ will increase some men’s damnation at the last great day*. Again, I startle myself when I have said it. For it seems too horrible a thought for us to venture to utter—that the Gospel of Christ will make Hell hotter to some men than it otherwise would have been. Men would all have sunk to Hell had it not been for the Gospel. The Grace of God reclaims “a multitude that no man can number.” It secures a countless army who shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” But, at the same time, it causes those who reject it, their damnation to be even more dreadful. And let me tell you why.

First, *because men sin against greater light*. And the light we have is an excellent measure of our guilt. What a Hottentot might do without a crime would be the greatest sin to me because I am taught better. And what some even in London might do with impunity—set down, as it might be, as a sin by God, but not so exceedingly sinful—would be to me the very height of transgression because I have from my youth up been tutored to piety. The Gospel comes upon men like the light from Heaven. What a wanderer must he be who strays in the light! If he who is blind falls into the ditch, we can pity him, but if a man, with the light on his eyeballs dashes himself from the precipice and loses his own soul, is not pity out of the question?—

***“How they deserve the deepest Hell,  
That slight the joys above!  
What chains of vengeance must they feel, Who laugh at Sovereign Love!”***

It will increase your condemnation, I tell you all, unless you find Jesus Christ to be your Savior. To have had the light and not to walk by it shall be *the* condemnation, the very essence of it. This shall be the virus of the guilt—that the “light came into the world and the darkness comprehended it not.” For “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.”

Again—it must increase your condemnation if you *oppose the Gospel*. If God devises a scheme of mercy and man rises up against it, how great must his sin be? Who shall tell the great guilt incurred by such men as Pilate, Herod and the Jews? Oh, who shall picture out, or even faintly sketch, the doom of those who cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” And who shall tell what place in Hell shall be hot enough for the man who slanders God’s minister, who speaks against His people, who hates His Truth, who would, if he could, utterly cut off the godly from the land? Ah, God help the infidel! God help the blasphemer! God save his soul—for of all men least would I choose to be that man! Do you think, Sirs, that God will not take account of what men have said? One man has cursed Christ. He has called Him a charlatan. Another has declared, (knowing that he spoke a lie), that the Gospel was otherwise. A third has proclaimed his licentious maxims and then has pointed to God’s Word and said, “There are worse things there!” A fourth has abused God’s ministers and held up their imperfections to ridicule. Do you think God shall forget all this at the Last Day? When His enemies come before Him, shall He take them by the hand and say, “The other day you did call My servant a dog and spit on him and for this I will give you Heaven”? Rather, if the sin has not been cancelled by the blood of Christ, will He not say, “Depart, cursed one, into the Hell which you did scoff at! Leave that Heaven which you did despise. And learn that though you said there was no God, this right arm shall teach you eternally the lesson that there is one! For he who discovers it not by My works of benevolence shall learn it by My deeds of vengeance—therefore depart, again, I say!”? It *shall*increase men’s Hell that they have opposed God’s Truth. Now, is not this a very solemn view of the Gospel, that it is, indeed, to many, “a savor of death unto death”?

**(3.)**Yet, once more. I believe *the Gospel makes some men in this world more miserable than they would be*. The drunkard could drink and could revel in his intoxication with greater joy if he did not hear it said, “All drunkards shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.” How jovially the Sabbath-breaker would riot through his Sabbaths if the Bible did not say, “Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy”! And how happily could the libertine and licentious man drive on in his mad career if he were not told, “The wages of sin is death and after death the judgment”! But the Truth puts the bitter in his cup. The warnings of God freeze the current of his soul. The Gospel is like the skeleton at the Egyptian feast. Though by day he laughed at it, by night he will quiver as the aspen leaf and when the shades of evening gather around him, he will shake at a whisper. At the thought of a future state, his joy is spoiled and immortality, instead of being a benefit to him, is in its very contemplation the misery of his existence! The sweet wooing of mercy are to him no more harmonious than peals of thunder because he knows he despises them. Yes, I have known some who have been in such misery under the Gospel because they would not give up their sins, that they have been ready to take their own lives. Oh, terrible thought! The Gospel is “a savor of death unto death.” Unto how many here is it so? Who are now hearing God’s Word to be damned by it? Who shall retire to be hardened by the sound of the Truth? Why, every man who does not believe it—for unto those that receive it, it is “a savor of life unto life”—but to unbelievers it is a curse and “a savor of death unto death.”

**2.**But, blessed be God, the Gospel has a second power. Besides being “death unto death,” it is “a savor of life unto life.” Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, some of us could speak, if we were allowed this morning, of the Gospel as being “a savor of life” to us. We can look back to that hour when we were “dead in trespasses and sins.” In vain all Sinai’s thunders, in vain the rousing of the watchmen. We slept on in the death-sleep of our transgressions. An angel could not have awakened us. But we look back with joy to that hour when first we stepped within the walls of a sanctuary and savingly heard the voice of mercy. With some of you it is but a few weeks. I know where you are and who you are. But a few weeks or months ago you, too, were far from God. But now you are brought to love Him. Can you look back, my Brothers and Sisters, to that very moment when the Gospel was “a savor of life” to you—when you did cast away your sins, renounce the lusts and turning to God’s Word, by His Grace, received it with full purpose of heart? Ah, that hour—of all hours the sweetest! Nothing can be compared with it! I knew a person who for 40 or 50 years had been completely deaf. Sitting one morning at her cottage door as some vehicle was passing she thought she heard melodious music. It was not music, it was but the sound of the vehicle. Her ears had suddenly opened and that rough sound seemed to her like the music of Heaven because it was the first she had heard for so many years! Even so, the first time our ears were opened to hear the words of love—the assurance of our pardon—we never heard the Word so well as we did then! It never seemed so sweet. And perhaps, even now, we look back and say—

***“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!  
How sweet their memory still!”***  
When first it was “a savor of life” unto our souls!

Then, Beloved, if it ever has been “a savor of life,” it will *always* be “a savor of life,” because it says it is not a savor of life unto death, but “a savor of life unto life.” Now I must aim another blow at my antagonists the Arminians. I cannot help it. They will have it that sometimes the Gospel is a savor of life unto death. They tell us that a man may receive spiritual life and yet may die eternally. That is to say, a man may be forgiven and yet be punished afterwards. He may be justified from all sin and yet after that, his transgressions can be laid on his shoulders again. They say a man may be born of God and yet die. A man may be loved of God and yet God may hate him tomorrow. Oh, I cannot bear to speak of such Doctrines of lies! Let those believe them that will. As for me, I so deeply believe in the Immutable Love of Jesus, that I suppose that if one Believer were to be in Hell, Christ, Himself, would not long stay in Heaven, but would soon cry, “To the rescue! To the rescue!” Oh, if Jesus Christ were in Glory with one of the gems missing in His crown and Satan had that gem in Hell, Satan would say, “Aha, Prince of Light and Glory, I have one of Your jewels!” And he would hold it up and then he would say, “Aha, You did die for this man, but You had not strength enough to save him. You did love him once—where is Your love? It is not worth having, for You did hate him afterwards!” And how would Satan chuckle over that heir of Heaven and hold him up and say, “This man was redeemed. Jesus Christ purchased him with His blood”—and plunging him in the waves of Hell, he would say, “There, purchased one! See how I can rob the Son of God!” And then again he would say, “This man was forgiven! Behold the justice of God! He is to be punished after he is forgiven. Christ suffered for this man’s sins and yet,” says Satan with a malignant joy, “I have him afterwards, for God exacted the punishment twice!”

Shall that ever be said? Ah, no. It is “a savor of life unto *life*,” and not of life unto death. Away with your vile gospel, Arminian! Preach it where you please. But my Master said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life.” You give to your sheep temporary life and they lose it. But my Master says, “I give unto My sheep ETERNAL life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hands.” I generally wax warm when I get to this subject because I think few Doctrines more vital than that of the Perseverance of the Saints. If ever one child of God did perish, or if I knew it were possible that one could, I should conclude at once that I must and I suppose each of you would do the same. And then where is the joy and happiness of the Gospel? Again I tell you the Arminian gospel is the shell without the kernel. It is the husk without the fruit and those who love it may have it. We will not quarrel with them. Let them go and preach it. Let them go and tell poor sinners that if they believe in Jesus they will be damned after all—that Jesus Christ will forgive them and yet the Father send them to Hell. Go and preach your gospel, Arminian and who will listen to it? And if they do listen, is it worth their hearing? I say no. For if I am to stand after conversion on the same footing as I did before conversion, then it is of no use for me to have been converted at all. But whom He loves He loves to the end—

***“Once in Christ, in Christ forever—***

***Nothing from His love can sever.”***  
It is “a savor of life unto life.” And not only “life unto life” in this world, but of “life unto life” eternal! Everyone who has this life shall receive the next life. For “the Lord will give Grace and Glory and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

I am obliged to leave this point. But if my Master will but take it up and make His word a savor of “life unto life” this morning, I shall rejoice in what I have said.

**II.**Our second remark was that THE MINISTER IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS SUCCESS. He *is*responsible for what he preaches. He is accountable for his life and actions. But he is not responsible for other people. If I do but preach God’s Word, if there never were a soul saved, the King would say, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” If I do but tell my message—if none should listen to it—He would say, “you have fought the good fight—receive your crown.” You hear the words of the text—“We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, as well in them that perish, as in them that are saved.” This will appear more clear, if I just tell you what a Gospel minister is called in the Bible. Sometimes he is called an *ambassador*. Now, for what is an ambassador responsible? He goes to a country as a diplomatic agent. He carries terms of peace to the conference—he uses all his talents for his master. He tries to show that the war is inimical to the prosperity of the different countries. He endeavors to bring about peace—but the other kings haughtily refuse it. When he comes home, does his master say, “Why did you not make peace?” “Why, my Lord,” he would say, “I told them the terms. But they said nothing.” “Well, then,” he will say, “you have done your duty. I am not to condemn you if the war continues.” Again—the minister of the Gospel is called a *fisherman*. Now a fisherman is not responsible for the quantity of fish he catches, but for the *way he fishes*. That is a mercy for some ministers, I am sure, for they have neither caught fish, nor even attracted any around their nets. They have been spending all their life fishing with most elegant silk lines and gold and silver hooks. They always use nicely polished phrases. But the fish will not bite for all that. Whereas we of a rougher order have put the hook into the jaws of hundreds. However, if we cast the Gospel net in the right place, even if we catch none, the Master will find no fault with us. He will say, “Fisherman! Did you labor? Did you throw the net into the sea in the time of storms?” “Yes, my Lord, I did.” “What have you caught?” “Only one or two.” “Well, I could have sent you a shoal, if it so pleased Me. It is not *your* fault. I give in My Sovereignty where I please, or withhold when I choose. But as for you, you have well labored, therefore there is your reward.” Sometimes the minister is called a *sower*. Now, no farmer expects a sower to be responsible for the harvest. All he is responsible for is—does he sow the seed? And does he sow the right seed? If he scatters it on good soil, then he is happy. But if it falls by the wayside and the fowls of the air devour it, who shall blame the sower? Could he help it? No, he did his duty. He scattered the seed broadcast and there he left it. Who is to blame? Certainly not the sower. So, Beloved, if a minister comes to Heaven with but one sheaf on his shoulder, his Master will say, “O reaper! Once a sower! Where did you gather your sheaf?” “My Lord, I sowed upon the rock and it would not grow, only one seed on a chance Sunday morning was blown a little awry by the wind and it fell on a prepared heart. And this is my one sheaf.” “Hallelujah!” the angelic choirs resound, “one sheaf from a rock is more honor to God than a thousand sheaves from a good soil— therefore let him take his seat as near the Throne as yon man, who, stooping beneath his many sheaves, comes from some fertile land, bringing his sheaves with him.” I believe that if there are degrees in Glory, they will not be in proportion to success, but in proportion to the earnestness of our endeavors. If we mean right and if with all our heart we strive to do the right thing, as ministers—if we never see any effect—still shall we receive the crown. But how much more happy is the man who shall have it in Heaven said to him, “He shines forever, because he was wise and won many souls unto righteousness”?

It is always my greatest joy to believe that if I should enter Heaven, I shall in future days see Heaven’s gates open and in shall fly a cherub, who, looking me in the face, will smilingly pass along to God’s Throne and there bow down before Him. And when he has paid his homage and his adoration, he may fly to me and though, unknown, shall clasp my hand. And if there were tears in Heaven, surely I should weep and he would say, “Brother, from your lips I heard the Word. Your voice first admonished me of my sin. Here I am and you the instrument of my salvation.” And as the gates open one after another, still will they come in, souls ransomed, souls ransomed. And for each one of these a star—for each one of these another gem in the diadem of Glory—for each one of them another honor and another note in the song of praise. Blessed be that man who shall die in the Lord and his works shall follow him. For thus says the Spirit. What will become of some good Christians now in Exeter Hall if crowns in Heaven are measured in value by the souls that are saved? Some of you will have a crown in Heaven without a single star in it. I read a little while ago a piece upon the starless crown in Heaven— a man in Heaven with a crown without a star! Not one saved by him! He will sit in Heaven as happy as he can be, for Sovereign Mercy saved him. But oh, to be in Heaven without a single star! Mother! What do you say to be in Heaven without one of your children to deck your brow with a star? Minister! What would you say to be a polished preacher and yet have no star? Writer! Will it well become you to have written even as gloriously as Milton, if you should be found in Heaven without a star? I am afraid we pay too little regard to this. Men will sit down and write huge folios and tomes that they may have them put in libraries forever and have their names handed down by fame! But how few are looking to win stars forever in Heaven! Toil on, child of God, toil on! For if you wish to serve God, your bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days. If you send in the feet of the ox or the donkey, you shall reap a glorious harvest in that day when He comes to gather in His elect. The minister is not responsible for his success.

**III.**But yet, in the last place, TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IS HIGH AND SOLEMN WORK. The ministry has been very often degraded into a trade. In these days, men are taken and made into ministers who would have made good captains at sea, who could have waited well at the counter, but who were never intended for the pulpit. They are selected by man, they are crammed with literature, they are educated up to a certain point, they are turned out ready dressed. And persons call them ministers. I wish them all God-speed, everyone of them, for as good Joseph Irons used to say, “God be with many of them if it is only to make them hold their tongues.” Man-made ministers are of no use in this world and the sooner we get rid of them, the better! Their way is this—they prepare their manuscripts very carefully, then read it on the Sunday most sweetly in *sotto voce* and so the people go away pleased. But that is not God’s way of preaching! If so, I am sufficient to preach forever, I can buy manuscript sermons for a shilling, that is to say, provided they have been preached fifty times before. But if I use them for the first time, the price is a guinea, or more! But that is not the way. Preaching God’s Word is not what some seem to think, mere child’s play—a mere business or trade to be taken up by anyone. A man ought to feel first that he has a solemn *call* to it. Next, he ought to know that he really possesses the Spirit of God and that when he speaks, there is an influence upon him that enables him to speak as God would have him. Otherwise he has no business in the pulpit. He has no right to be there, even if the living is his own property. He has not been called to preach God’s Truth and unto him God says, “What have you to do, to declare My statutes?”

But you say “What is there difficult about preaching God’s Gospel?” Well it must be somewhat hard, for Paul said, “Who is sufficient for these things?” And first I will tell you, it is difficult because it is so hard as not to be warped by your own prejudices in preaching the Word. You need to say a stern thing and your heart says, “Master! In so doing you will condemn yourself.” Then the temptation is not to say it. Another trial is, you are afraid of displeasing the rich in your congregations. Your think, “If I say such-and-such a thing, So-and-So will be offended—such an one does not approve of that Doctrine. I had better leave it out.” Or perhaps you will happen to win the applause of the multitude and you must not say anything that will displease them, for if they cry, “Hosanna,” today, they will cry, “Crucify, crucify,” tomorrow. All these things work on a minister’s heart. He is a man like yourselves. And he feels it. Then comes again the sharp knife of criticism and the arrows of those who hate him and hate his Lord. And he cannot help feeling it sometimes. He may put on his armor and cry, “I care not for your malice,” but there were seasons when the archers sorely grieved even Joseph.

Then he stands in another danger, lest he should come out and defend himself. For he is a great fool whoever tries to do it. He who leaves his detractors alone and, like the eagle, cares not for the chattering of the sparrows, or like the lion will not turn aside to rend the snarling jackal— he is the man—and he shall be honored. But the danger is we want to set ourselves right. And oh, who is sufficient to steer clear from these rocks of danger? “Who is sufficient,” my Brothers, “for these things?”—to stand up and to proclaim Sabbath after Sabbath and weekday after weekday, “the unsearchable riches of Christ”?

Having said this much, I may draw the inference—to close up—which is—if the Gospel is “a savor of life unto life,” and if the minister’s work is solemn work, how well it becomes all lovers of the Truth to plead for all those who preach it, that they may be “sufficient for these things.” To lose my Prayer-Book, as I have often told you, is the worst thing that can happen to me. To have no one to pray for me would place me in a dreadful condition! “Perhaps,” says a good poet, “the day when the world shall perish will be the day it is unwhitened by a prayer.” And perhaps the day when a minister turns aside from the Truth of God, will be the day when his people fail to pray for him—when there was not a single voice supplicating Grace on his behalf. I am sure it must be so with me. Give me the numerous hosts of men and women whom it has been my pride and glory to see in my place before I came to this hall—give me those praying people who on the Monday evening met in such a multitude to pray to God for a blessing—and we will overcome Hell, itself, in spite of all that may oppose us! All our perils are nothing, so long as we have prayer. Increase my congregation. Give me the polite and the noble—give me influence and understanding—and I should fail to do anything without a praying Church! My Beloved! Shall I ever lose your prayers? Will you ever cease your supplications? Our toils are nearly ended in this great place and happy shall we be to return to our much-loved sanctuary. Will you then ever cease to pray? I fear you have not uttered so many prayers this morning as you should have done. I fear there has not been so much earnest devotion as might have been poured forth. For my own part, I have not felt the wondrous power I sometimes experience. I will not lay it at your doors. But never let it be said, “Those people, once so fervent, have become cold!” Let not Laodiceanism get into Southwark. Let us leave it here in the West End, if it is to be anywhere. Let us not carry it with us. Let us “strive together for the faith once delivered unto the saints”—and knowing in what a sad position the standard bearer stands, I beseech you rally round him. For it will be ill with the army—

***“If the standard bearer falls, as fall full well he may.***

***For never saw I promise yet, of such a deadly fray.”***Stand up my Friends! Grasp the banner yourselves and maintain it erect until the day shall come, when standing on the last conquered castle of Hell’s domains, we shall raise the shout, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” Till that time, fight on!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #9 New Park Street Pulpit 1

SPIRITUAL LIBERTY  
NO. 9

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 18, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL STRAND.~~***

***~~“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”  
2 Corinthians 3:17.~~***

LIBERTY is the birthright of every man. He may be born a pauper. He may be a foundling. His parentage may be altogether unknown. But liberty is his inalienable birthright. Black may be his skin. He may live uneducated and untaught. He may be poor as poverty, itself. He may never have a foot of land to call his own. He may scarcely have a particle of clothing, save a few rags to cover him—but, poor as he is, nature has fashioned him for freedom—he has a right to be free and if he has not liberty, it is his birthright and he ought not to be content until he wins it!

Liberty is the heirloom of all the sons and daughters of Adam. But where do you find liberty unaccompanied by religion? True it is that all men have a right to liberty, but it is equally true that you do not meet it in any country except where you find the Spirit of the Lord. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Thank God this is a free country! This is a land where I can breathe the air and say it is untainted by the groan of a single slave. My lungs receive it and I know there has never been mingled with its vapors the tear of a single slave woman shed over her child which has been sold from her. This land is the home of liberty. But why is it so? I take it, it is not so much because of our institutions as because the Spirit of the Lord is here—the spirit of true and hearty religion! There was a time, remember, when England was no more free than any other country, when men could not speak their sentiments freely, when kings were despots, when Parliaments were but a name. Who won our liberties for us? Who has loosed our chains? Under the hand of God, I say the men of religion—men like the great and glorious Cromwell, who would have liberty of conscience, or die—men who, if they could not reach kings’ hearts because they were unsearchable in cunning, would strike kings low, rather than they would be slaves. We owe our liberty to men of religion—to men of the stern Puritan school—men who scorned to play the coward and yield their principles at the command of man. And if we are ever to maintain our liberty (as God grant we may) it shall be kept in England by religious liberty—by religion! This Bible is the Magna Charta of old Britain! Its Truths, its Doctrines have snapped our fetters and they never can be riveted on again, while men, with God’s Spirit in their hearts, go forth to speak its Truths. In no other land, save where the Bible is unclasped—in no other realm, save where the Gospel is preached—can you find liberty! Roam through other countries and you speak with bated breath. You are afraid. You feel you are under an iron hand. The sword is above you. You are not free. Why? Because you are under the tyranny engendered by a false religion—you have not free Protestantism there and it is not till Protestantism comes, that there can be freedom! It is where the Spirit of the Lord is that there is liberty and nowhere else. Men talk about being free—they describe model governments, Platonic republics, or Owenite paradises, but they are dreamy theorists. For there can be no freedom in the world, save, “where the Spirit of the Lord is.”

I have commenced with this idea because I think worldly men ought to be told that if religion does not save them, yet it has done much for them—that the influence of religion has won them their liberties.

But the liberty of the text is no such freedom as this—it is an infinitely greater and better one! Great as civil or religious liberty may be, the liberty of my text transcendently exceeds. There is a liberty, dear Friends, which Christian men and women, alone, enjoy. For even in Great Britain there are men who taste not the sweet air of liberty. There are some who are afraid to speak as men, who have to cringe and fawn, bow and stoop. They have no will of their own, no principles, no voice, no courage and who cannot stand erect in conscious independence! He is the free man, whom the Truth makes free. He who has Divine Grace in his heart is free, he cares for no one. He has right upon his side. He has God within him—the indwelling Spirit of the Holy Spirit. He is a prince of the blood royal of Heaven. He is a noble, having the true patent of nobility. He is one of God’s elect, distinguished, chosen children. He is not the man to bend, or meanly cringe. No! Sooner would he walk the burning furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—sooner would he be cast into the lion’s den with Daniel, than yield a point in principle. He is a free man. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” in its fullest, highest and widest sense!

God give you, Friends, that “Spirit of the Lord,” for without it, even in a free country, you may still be bondsmen. And where there are no serfs in body, you may be slaves in soul. The text speaks of Spiritual liberty— and now I address the children of God. Spiritual liberty, Brothers and Sisters, you and I enjoy if we have “the Spirit of the Lord” within us. What does this imply? It implies that there was a time when we had *not* that Spiritual liberty—when we were slaves. But a little while ago all of us who now are free in Christ Jesus, were slaves of the devil—we were led captives at his will. We talked of free will, but free will is a slave. We boasted that we could do what we pleased. But oh, what a slavish and dreamy liberty we had! It was a fancied freedom. We were slaves to our lusts and passions—slaves to sin. But now we are freed from sin. We are delivered from our tyrant. A stronger than he has cast out the strong man armed and we are free!

Let us now examine, a little more closely, in what our liberty consists. **I.**And first, my Friends, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from the *Bondage of Sin*. Ah, I know I shall speak feelingly to some of you when I talk about the bondage of sin. You know what that misery means. Of all bondage and slavery in this world, there is none more horrible than the bondage of sin. Tell me of Israel in Egypt preparing their tale of bricks unsupplied with straw. Tell me of the Negro beneath the

lash of his cruel taskmaster and I confess it is a bondage fearful to be borne. But there is one far worse—the bondage of a convicted sinner when he is brought to feel the burden of his guilt! The bondage of a man when once his sins are baying him, like hounds about a weary stag! The bondage of a man when the burden of sin is on his shoulder—a burden too heavy for his soul to bear—a burden which will sink him forever in the depths of everlasting torment, unless he escapes from it. I think I see such a person. He has never a smile upon his face—dark clouds have gathered on his brow—solemn and serious he stands. His very words are sighs. His songs are groans. His smiles are tears. And when he seems most happy, hot drops of grief roll in burning showers, scalding furrows on his cheek. Ask him*what he is* and he tells you he is “a wretch undone.” Ask him *how he is* and he confesses that he is “misery incarnate.” Ask him what he*shall be* and he says, “I shall be lost in flames forever and there is no hope.” Behold him alone in his retirement—when he lays his head on his pillow, up he starts again—at night he dreams of torment and by day he almost feels that of which he dreamed. Such is the poor convicted sinner under bondage! Such have I been in my days and such have you been, Friends. I speak to those who understand it.

You have passed through that gloomy Slough of Despond. You have gone through that dark Valley of Penitence—you have been made to drink the bitter cup of repentance—and I know you will say, “Amen” when I declare that of all bondage this is the most painful—the bondage of the Law, the bondage of corruption. “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from it?” But the Christian is free! He can smile, now, though he wept before. He can rejoice now, whereas he lamented. “There is,” he says, “no sin upon my conscience, now, there is no crime upon my breast. I need not walk through the earth fearful of every shadow and afraid of every man I meet, for sin is washed away—my spirit is no more guilty!” It is pure, it is holy. There no longer rests the frown of God upon me! My Father smiles—I see His eyes—they are glancing love—I hear His voice—it is full of sweetness. I am forgiven, I am forgiven, I am forgiven! All hail, you breaker of fetters! Glorious Jesus! Ah, that moment when first the bondage passed away! I think I recollect it now. I saw Jesus on His Cross before me. I thought on Him and as I mused upon His death and sufferings, I thought I saw Him cast a look on me. And when He gazed on me, I looked at Him and said—

***“Jesus, lover of my soul,***

***Let me to Your bosom fly.”***  
He said “Come,” and I flew to Him and clasped Him and when He let me go, again, I wondered where my burden was. It was gone! There, in the sepulcher it lay and I felt light as air! Like a winged sylph, I could fly over mountains of trouble and despair. And oh, what liberty and joy I had! I could leap with ecstasy for I had much forgiven and now I was freed from sin. Beloved, this is the first liberty of the children of God. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from the bondage of sin!

**2.***Liberty from the penalty of sin*. What is it? Eternal death—torment forever—that is the sad penalty of sin. It is no sweet thing to fear that if I died, now, I might be in Hell. It is no pleasant thought for me to stand here and believe that if I dropped down I must sink into the arms of Satan and have him for my tormentor. Why, Sirs, it is a thought that would plague me! It is a thought that would be the bitterest curse of my existence. I would rather be dead and rotting in the tomb rather than walk the earth with the thought that I might suffer such a penalty as this. There are some of you here who know right well that if you die, Hell is your portion. You don’t attempt to deny it. You believe the Bible and there you read your doom, “He that believes not shall be damned.” You cannot put yourselves among Believers. You are still without Christ. Have any of you been brought into such a condition that you believe yourself so full of sin that God could not be just if He did not punish you? Have you not felt that you have so rebelled against God by secret crimes, yes, I say, by *secret* crimes and by open transgression, that if He did not punish you, He would cease to be God and lay aside His scepter? And then you have trembled, groaned and cried out under the fear of the penalty of sin. You thought when you dreamed, that you saw that burning lake whose waves are fire and whose billows are ever blazing brimstone! And each day you walked the earth it was with fear and dread lest the next step should let you into the pit of Hell which is without a bottom! But Christian, Christian, you are free from the penalty of sin! Do you know it? Can you recognize the fact? You are free at this moment from the penalty of sin! Not only are you forgiven, but you never can be punished on account of your sins however great and enormous they may have been—

***“The moment a sinner believes, And trusts in his crucified God— His pardon at once he receives***

***Salvation in full through His blood,”***  
and he never can be punished on account of sin! Talk of the punishment of a Believer! There is not such a thing. The afflictions of this mortal life are not punishments for sin to Christians—they are fatherly chastisements and not the punishments of a Judge. For me there is no Hell. Let it smoke and burn—if I am a Believer I shall never have my portion there. For me there are no eternal racks, no torments—for if I am justified—I cannot be condemned!

Jesus has suffered the punishment in my place and God would be unjust if He were to punish me again—Christ has suffered once and satisfied justice forever! When conscience tells me I am a sinner, I tell conscience I stand in Christ’s place and Christ stands in mine. True, I am a sinner, but Christ died for sinners. True, I deserve punishment, but if my Ransom died, will God ask for the debt twice? Impossible! He has cancelled it. There never was and never shall be one Believer in Hell. We are free from punishment and we never need quake on account of it. However horrible it may be—if it is eternal, as we know it is—it is nothing to us, for we never can suffer it. Heaven shall open its pearly portals to admit us. And Hell’s iron gates are barred forever against every Believer. Glorious liberty of the children of God!

**3.**But there is one fact more startling than both of these things and I dare say some of you will object to it. Nevertheless it is God’s Truth and if you don’t like it, you must leave it! There is *liberty from the guilt of sin.* This is the wonder of wonders. The Christian is positively not guilty any longer the moment he believes. Now, if Her Majesty in her goodness spares a murderer by giving him a free pardon, that man cannot be punished—but still he will be a guilty man. She may give him a thousand pardons and the Law cannot touch him, but still he will be guilty. The crime will always be on his head and he will be branded as a murderer as long as he lives! The Christian is not only delivered from the bondage and from the punishment, but he is positively absolved from the guilt! Now this is something at which you will stand amazed. You say, “What? Is a Christian no more a sinner in God’s sight?” I answer, he is a sinner as considered in himself. But in the Person of Christ, he is no more a sinner than the angel Gabriel. For snowy as angelic wings and spotless as cherubic robes, an angel cannot be more pure than the poor bloodwashed sinner when he is made whiter than snow! Do you understand how it is that the very guilt of the sinner is taken away? Here I stand, today, a guilty and condemned traitor—Christ comes for my salvation—He bid me leave my cell, “I will stand where you are. I will be your Substitute. I will be the Sinner. All your guilt is to be imputed to Me. I will die for it, I will suffer for it. I will have your sins.” Then stripping Himself of His robes, He says, “There, put them on. You shall be considered as if you were Christ. You shall be the Righteous One. I will take *your*place, you take *Mine*.” Then He casts around me a glorious robe of perfect righteousness. And when I behold it, I exclaim, “Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed, with my elder Brother’s garments.” Jesus Christ’s crown is on my head. His spotless robes are round my loins and His golden sandals are the shoes of my feet. And now is there any sin? The sin is on Christ— the righteousness is on me! Ask for the sinner, Justice! Let the voice of Justice cry, “Bring forth the sinner!” The sinner is brought. Who does the executioner lead forth? It is the Incarnate Son of God! True, He did not commit the sin. He was without fault. But it is imputed to Him—He stands in the sinner’s place.

Now Justice cries, “Bring forth the righteous, the perfectly righteous.” Whom do I see? Lo, the Church is brought, each Believer is brought. Justice says, “Are these perfectly righteous?” “Yes they are. What Christ did is theirs, what they did is laid on Christ. His righteousness is theirs— their sins are His.” I appeal to you, you ungodly. This seems strange and startling, does it not? You have set it down to hyper-Calvinism and you laugh at it. Set it down for what you please, Sirs! God has set it up as His Truth—He has made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. And now, if I am a true Believer, I stand here freed from every sin. There is not a crime against me in the Book of God, it is blotted out forever. It is cancelled. And not only can I never be punished, but I have nothing to be punished for! Christ has atoned for my sins and I have received His righteousness, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

**4.**Furthermore, the Christian, while delivered from the guilt and punishment of sin, is likewise delivered from *the dominion of it*. Every living man, before he is converted, is a slave to lust. Profane men glory in free living and free thinking. They call *this* free living—a full glass, a Bacchanalian revel, shouting wantonness, chambering. Free living, Sir? Let the slave hold up his fetters and jingle them in my ears and say, “This is music and I am free.” The man is a poor maniac. Let the man chained in his cell, the madman of Bethlem, tell me he is a king and grin a horrible smile. I say, “Ah, poor wretch, I know why he thinks he is a king. He is demented and is mad.” So it is with the worldling who says he is free. Free, Sir? You are a slave! You think you are happy. But at night, when you lay yourself upon your bed, how many times have you tossed from side to side sleepless and ill at ease? And when you awake, have you not said, “Ah, that yesterday—that yesterday!” And though you plunged into another day of sin, that “yesterday,” like a Hell-dog, barked at you and followed at your heels. You know it, Sir—sin is a bondage and a slavery! And have you ever tried to get rid of that slavery? “Yes,” you say, “I have.” But I will tell you what has been the end of it. When you have tried, you have bound your fetters firmer than ever. You have riveted your chains. A sinner without Grace attempting to reform himself is like Sisyphus rolling the stone up hill, which always comes down with greater force. A man without Grace attempting to save himself, is engaged in as hopeless a task as the daughters of Danaus, when they attempted to fill a vast vessel with bottomless buckets. He has a bow without a string, a sword without a blade, a gun without powder! He needs strength. I grant you, he may produce a hollow reformation. He may dig around the volcano and sow flowers around its crater. But when it once begins to stir again, it shall move the earth away and the hot lava shall roll over all the fair flowers which he had planted—and devastate both his works and his righteousness!

A sinner without Divine Grace is a slave—he cannot deliver himself from his sins! But not so the Christian! Is he a slave to his sin? Is a trueborn heir of God a slave? Oh, no! He does not sin because he is born of God. He does not live in uncleanness because he is an heir of immortality. You beggars of the earth may stoop to deeds of wrong, but princes of Heaven’s blood must follow acts of right. You poor worldlings, mean and pitiful wretches in God’s sight—you may live in dishonesty and unrighteousness, but the heir of Heaven cannot. He loves his Lord. He is free from the power of sin. His work is righteousness and his end his everlasting life. We are free from the dominion of sin!

**5.**Once more—“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” in all holy acts of love—*liberty from a slavish fear of law*. Many people are honest because they are afraid of the policeman. Many are sober because they are afraid of the eye of the public. Many persons are seemingly religious because of their neighbors. There is much virtue which is like the juice of the grape—it has to be squeezed before you get it. It is not like the generous drop of the honeycomb, distilling willingly and freely. I am bold to say that if a man is destitute of the Grace of God, his works are only works of slavery, he feels forced to do them.

I know before I came into the liberty of the children of God, if I went to God’s House, I went because I thought I must do it. If I prayed, it was because I feared some misfortune would happen in the day if I did not. If I ever thanked God for a mercy, it was because I thought I should not get another if I were not thankful. If I performed a righteous deed it was with the hope that very likely God would reward me at last and I should be winning some crown in Heaven. A poor slave, a mere Gibeonite, hewing wood and drawing water. If I could have left off doing it, I would have loved to do so. If I could have had my will, there would have been no Chapel attendance for me, no religion for me—I would have lived in the world and followed the ways of Satan if I could have done as I pleased. As for righteousness, it was slavery. Sin would have been my liberty.

But now, Christian, what is your liberty? What makes you come to the House of God today?—  
***“Love made your willing feet  
In swift obedience move.”***

What makes you bend your knees in prayer? It is because you like to talk with your Father who sees in secret. What is it that opens your purses and makes you give liberally? It is because you love the poor children of God and you feel so much being given to you that it is a privilege to give something back to Christ. What is it that burdens you to live honestly, righteously and soberly? Is it the fear of the jail? No. You might pull the jail down. You might annihilate the convict settlements. You might hurl all chains into the sea. And we should be just as holy as we are now. Some people say, “Then, Sir, you mean to say that Christians may live as they like?” I wish they could, Sir. If I could live as I liked, I would, always live holily. If a Christian could live as he liked, he would always live as he ought. It is a slavery to him to sin—righteousness is his delight! Oh, if I could but live as I like, I would desire to live as I ought! If I could but live as I would I would live as God commands me. The greatest happiness of a Christian is to be holy! It is no slavery to him. Put him where you will, he will not sin. Expose him to any temptation, if it were not for that evil heart still remaining, you would never find him sinning. Holiness is his pleasure—sin is his slavery. Ah, you poor bondsmen who come to Church or Chapel because you must! Ah, you poor slavish moralists that are honest because of the fetters and sober because of the prison. Ah, you poor slaves!

We are not so. We are not under the Law, but under Grace. Call us Antinomians if you will. We will even glory in the scandalous title! We are freed from the Law, but we are freed from it that we may obey it more than we ever did! The true-born child of God serves his Master more than he ever did! As old Erskine says—

***“Slight now His loving presence if they can— No, no, His conquering kindness leads the van! When everlasting love exerts the sway,  
They judge themselves most kindly bound to obey— Bound by redeeming love in stricter sense, Than ever Adam was in innocence.”***

**6.**But to conclude, “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” from *the fear of death*. O Death! How many a sweet cup have you made bitter. O Death! How many a revel have you broken up. O Death! How many a gluttonous banquet have you spoiled. O Death! How many a sinful pleasure have you turned into pain. Take, my Friends, the telescope this morning and look through the vista of a few years and what do you see? Grim Death in the distance grasping his scythe. He is coming, coming, coming. And what is behind him? Ah, that depends upon your character. If you are the sons of God, there is the palm branch. If you are not, you know what follows Death—Hell follows him! O Death! Your specter has haunted many a house where sin otherwise would have rioted. O Death! Your chilly hand has touched many a heart that was big with lust and made it start, frightened from its crime! Oh, how many men are slaves to the fear of Death? Half the people in the world are afraid to die. There are some madmen who can march up to the cannon’s mouth. There are some fools who rush with bloody hands before their Maker’s tribunal. But most men fear to die. Who is the man that does not fear to die? I will tell you. The man that is a Believer—fear to die? Thank God, I do not! The cholera may come again next summer—I pray God it may not, but if it does, it matters not to me—I will toil and visit the sick by night and by day, until I drop—and if it takes me, sudden death is sudden Glory!

And so—with the weakest saint in this hall—the prospect of dissolution does not make you tremble. Sometimes you fear, but more often you rejoice. You sit down calmly and think of dying. What is death? It is a low porch through which you stoop to enter Heaven. What is life? It is a narrow screen that separates us from Glory and death kindly removes it. I recollect a saying of a good old woman, who said, “Afraid to die, Sir? I have dipped my foot in Jordan every morning before breakfast for the last fifty years and do you think I am afraid to die now?” Die? Beloved, we die hundreds of times! We “die daily,” we die every morning, we die each night when we sleep. By faith we die and so dying will be old work when we come to it! We shall say, “Ah, Death! You and I have been old acquaintances. I have had you in my bedroom every night. I have talked with you each day. I have had the skull upon my dressing table and I have oftentimes thought of you. Death! You are come at last, but you are a welcome guest—you are an angel of light and the best friend I have had.” Why dread death since there is no fear of God’s leaving you when you come to die? Here I must tell you that anecdote of the good Welch lady, who, when she lay a-dying, was visited by her minister. He said to her, “Sister are you sinking?” She answered him not a word, but looked at him with an incredulous eye. He repeated the question, “Sister, are you sinking?” She looked at him, again, as if she could not believe that he would ask such a question! At last, rising a little in the bed, she said, “*Sinking*?*Sinking*?*Did you ever know a sinner sink through a rock*?*If I had been standing on the sand, I might sink—but thank God I am on the Rock of Ages—and there is no sinking there*.” How glorious to die! Oh, angels, come! Oh, cohorts of the Lord of Hosts, stretch, stretch your broad wings and lift us up from earth. O, winged seraphs, bear us far above the reach of these inferior things. But till you come, I’ll sing—

***“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing— But gladly put off these garments of clay! To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing, Since Jesus to Glory, though death leads the way.”***

And now, dear Friends, I have shown you as briefly as I can the negative side of this liberty. I have tried to tell you, as well as I could put it in a few words, what we are *freed from*. But there are two sides to such questions as this. There are some glorious things that we are *free to*. Not only are we freed from sin in every sense from the Law and from the fear of death—but we are free to do something. I shall not occupy many moments, but shall just run over a few things we are free to, for, my Brother and Sister Christians, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” And that liberty gives us certain rights and privileges.

In the first place, we are free to *Heaven’s charter*. There is Heaven’s charter—the Magna Charta—the Bible. And, my Brothers and Sisters, you are free to it. There is a choice passage here—“When you pass through the river I will be with you and the floods shall not overflow you.” You are free to that! Here is another—“Mountains may depart and hills may be removed, but My loving kindness shall not depart”—you are free to that! Here is another—“Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.” You are free to that! “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Here is a chapter touching election—you are free to that if you are elect. Here is another, speaking of the non-condemnation of the righteous and their justification—you are free to that. You are free to all that is in the Bible! Here is a never-failing treasure filled with boundless stores of Divine Grace. It is the bank of Heaven—you may draw from it as much as you please without let or hindrance. Bring nothing with you except faith! Bring as much faith as you can get and you are welcome to all that is in the Bible. There is not a promise—not a Word in it—that is not yours. In the depths of tribulation let it comfort you. Mid waves of distress let it cheer you. When sorrows surround you, let it be your helper. This is your Father’s love token—let it never be shut up and covered with dust. You are free to it—use, then, your freedom!

Next, recollect that you are free to the Throne of Grace. It is the privilege of Englishmen that they can always send a petition to Parliament. And it is the privilege of a Believer that he can always send a petition to the Throne of God. I am free to God’s Throne. If I want to talk to God tomorrow morning, I can. If tonight I wish to have conversation with my Master, I can go to Him. I have a right to go to His Throne. It matters not how much I may have sinned—I go and ask for pardon. It signifies nothing how poor I am—I go and plead His promise that He will provide all things necessary. I have a right to go to His Throne at all times—in midnight’s dark hour, or in noontide’s heat. Wherever I am, if Fate commands me to the utmost verge of the wide earth, I have still constant admission to His Throne! Use that right, Beloved—use that right! There is not one of you that lives up to his privilege. Many a gentleman will live beyond his income, spending more than he has coming in. But there is not a Christian that does that—I mean that lives up to his *spiritual* income. Oh, no, you have an infinite income—an income of promises—an income of Grace. And no Christian ever lived up to his income. Some people say, “If I had more money I would have a larger house, horses, carriage and so on.” Very well and good. But I wish the Christian would do the same. I wish they would set up a larger house and do greater things for God—look more happy and take those tears away from their eyes—

***“Religion never was designed***

***To make our pleasures less.”***  
With such stores in the bank and so much in hand that God gives you, you have no right to be poor! Up! Rejoice! Rejoice! The Christian ought to live up to his income—not below it.

Then, if you have the “Spirit of the Lord,” dear Friends, you have a right to enter into the City. There are many of the freemen of the city of London here, I dare say and that is a great privilege, very likely. I am not a freeman of London, but I am a freeman of a better City—

***“Savior, if of Zion’s city,  
I, by Grace, a member am,  
Let the world revile or pity,  
I will glory in Your name.”***

You have a right to the freedom of Zion’s city and you do not exercise it. I want to have a word with some of you. You are very good Christian people, but you have never joined the Church yet. You know it is quite right, that he that believes should be baptized. But I suppose you are afraid of being drowned, for you never come. Then the Lord’s Table is spread once every month and it is free to all God’s children, but you never approach it. Why is that? It is your banquet. I do not think if I were an alderman I should omit the city banquet! And being a Christian, I cannot omit the Christian banquet. It is the banquet of the saints—

***“Never did angels taste above  
Redeeming Grace and dying love.”***  
Some of you never come to the Lord’s Table. You neglect His ordinances. He says, “This do in remembrance of Me.” You have obtained the freedom of the City, but you won’t take it up. You have a right to enter in through the gates into the City, but you stand outside. Come in Brothers and Sisters! I will give you my hand. Don’t remain outside the Church any longer, for you have a right to come in!

Then, to conclude, you have the freedom of Jerusalem, the mother of us all. That is the best gift. We are free to *Heaven.* When a Christian dies, he knows the *open sesame* that can open the gates of Heaven! He knows the password that can make the gates fly wide open. He has the white stone whereby he shall be known as a ransomed one and that shall pass him at the barrier. He has the passport that shall let him into the dominions of Jehovah! He has liberty to enter into Heaven. I think I see you, you unconverted, in the land of shades, wandering up and down to find your portion. You come to the porch of Heaven. It is great and lofty. The gate has written over it, “The righteous only are admitted here.” As you stand, you look for the porter. A tall archangel appears from above the gate and you say, “Angel, let me in.” “Where is your robe?” You search and you have none. You have only some few rags of your own spinning, but no wedding garment. “Let me in,” you say, “for the Fiends are after me to drag me to yonder pit of Hell. Oh, let me in.” But with a quiet glance the angel lifts up his finger and says, “Read up there.” And you read, “None but the righteous enter here.” Then you tremble, your knees knock together, your hands shake. Were your bones of brass they might melt and were your ribs of iron they might be dissolved. Ah, there you stand, shivering, quaking, trembling. But not long, for a Voice which frightens you from your feet and lays you prostrate, cries, “Depart you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

O dear Hearers, shall that be *your* portion? My Friends, as I love you— I do this morning and hope I always will—shall this be your lot? Will you not have freedom to enter into the City? Will you not seek that Spirit which gives liberty? Ah, I know you will not have it if left to yourselves. Some of you, perhaps, never will. O God, grant that that number may be but few, but may the number of the saved be great, indeed!

***“Turn, then my soul unto Your rest  
The ransom of your great High Priest,  
Has set the captive free!  
Trust to His efficacious blood  
Nor fear your banishment from God,  
Since Jesus died for thee.”***

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2160 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NOT SUFFICIENT AND YET SUFFICIENT  
NO. 2160

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also has made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”  
2 Corinthians 3:5, 6.~~***

***~~Read also the Revised Version of the same text, for it will be often used in this discourse—~~***

***~~“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter,  
but of the Spirit: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Corinthians 3:5, 6.~~***

PAUL had given some account of what God had done by him and had described the work in these words—“You are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” Before he had worked out that charming figure, he had asked the question in the 16th verse of the second chapter—“Who is sufficient for these things?” I seem to hear that question repeated as he finishes the description. The more wonderful the work, the more intense the inquiry—“Who is sufficient for these things?”

Who can turn hearts of stone into flesh? Who can write without ink? Who can write on the heart? Who can so write that what is written shall be eternal? “Who is sufficient for these things?” The more we study the work of Grace worked by God through his ministers, the more are we forced to ask, “Who is sufficient for these things?” To raise the dead, to turn a stone to flesh—who is sufficient for these? To give eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf. To subdue the proud will and enlighten the darkened heart. To deliver men from the fascinations of sin and Satan. To bring them out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. To turn rebels into sons of God—who is sufficient for all these things? Yet nothing less than this will bring salvation! Here we have a chain of miracles—an Alpine range of wonders piled upon each other—yet no one marvel can be dispensed with and we are to be the ministers by whom such miracles are worked! “Who is sufficient for these things?”

Having asked the question, Paul now gives an answer to it in the words of my text. All these wonders have been worked—men have had their minds written upon by the finger of God and the stony heart has become a tablet of flesh—and all this has been done by the agency of men! Ministers have been, in God’s hands, the means of working stupendous wonders of Grace, yes, of turning the world upside down and of saving men from going down into the Pit! Since these things have

been done, there must have been some kind of sufficiency, or adaptation in the means by which they were done. From where did it come? Was it natural to the men, or did they acquire it by education, or by practice, or by imitation? The Apostle goes on to answer the question by telling us what that sufficiency was *not* and what it was. He replies to his own inquiry—“Who is sufficient for these things?”

**I.**By your leave we shall first of all regard the text as AN ANSWER TO THE MINISTER’S QUESTION, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The answer is given first in the negative and secondly, in the positive. “Who is sufficient for these things?” *The negative reply*is—“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.” In this instance *the best of preachers denies selfsufficiency*. Remember who it is that is writing. It is Paul, called to be an Apostle, to whom the Lord Jesus had *personally* appeared—a man of singular zeal and activity—and of remarkable ability in the things of God.

He was not a whit behind the chief of the Apostles, an expounder of the Truth of God, a founder of Churches, a father of myriads of souls! Yet he says, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.” He was, when he wrote this Epistle, no beginner in holy oratory, but a well-exercised Evangelist. He had been deeply taught of God. He had preached the Word fully and had gained an experience unrivalled. Beginning with a wonderful conversion, going on through sufferings, persecutions, journeys and labors, he had become a man of great weight and influence. Although long dead, his word would be law to us at this moment. And yet he confesses, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.”

Here was a man, too, who had been inspired by the Holy Spirit—a man to write Epistles to Churches—a man who spoke with Divine authority and would not allow that authority to be questioned, for he felt that he was truly sent of God. And yet you see him bowing humbly down before the Throne of heavenly Grace and admitting his own impotence in these words—“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.” I cannot leave this point, for here we have a most successful soul-winner making his lowly acknowledgment. How many were already in Heaven, converted under the ministry of the Apostle Paul?! How many on earth were on the road to Glory, led there by his teaching? How many had he inspired with the courage of martyrs, with the holiness of saints? He was a mine of spiritual wealth to the Churches. I know no man who did more for the propagation of the faith than the indefatigable Paul! And yet he cries, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.”

Brethren, if Paul is not sufficient of himself, what are you and I? Where are you, you lay preachers and Sunday school teachers, and workers for God in different ways? Do you indulge the dream of selfsufficiency? Be ashamed of your folly in the presence of a great man who knew what he said and who spoke under the direction of the Spirit of God who wrote deliberately, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.” And this negative is strengthened by the fact that*he did not feel sufficient in a very necessary point—*“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves *to think anything* as of ourselves.” I believe that our old translation is as good as good can be and that it sets forth the meaning of the Greek better than any other—“We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves.”

I do not intend to insist upon this meaning as the only one, for I will bring in the Revised Version directly. Still, our version is to be defended and in any case its meaning must be retained. What? Was not the Apostle able to do his own thinking? Must he receive thinking-Grace—help to think aright? In these days we are rather overdone with “great thinkers.” Wherever you go you hear of “advanced thinking,” “modern thought” and so forth. It is true that ten bushels of the stuff are not worth half a farthing in the estimate of those who hunger for spiritual food—but chaff takes up much room—and as the wind blows it about it excites great attention. A fourth part of a cab of doves’ dung, worth nothing in ordinary times, fetched a long price during the famine in Samaria. And today, when there is a famine of true theological learning, a great fuss is made concerning the crude speculations of vainglorious “thinkers.”

I do not believe the Apostle ever tried to think upon religious matters otherwise than as the Spirit of God taught him. He was content to abide within the circle of Inspiration. I pray that we may never travel beyond our orbit and quit the Divine circuit of Revelation. I find enough in my Bible to think about without going beyond that sphere. If we should ever exhaust Holy Scripture, we might then try to think something “as of ourselves.” But as we shall never do that, we may be satisfied to tarry in Revelation as in a land which flows with milk and honey. Let us not aim at being original thinkers, but at being witnesses and heralds of what God says to men.

Our Lord Jesus strove not to be an original thinker, for he said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” The Holy Spirit does not speak as an original thinker, for the Lord Jesus said, “He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” As we have reminded you before, the original thinker of the Bible is one of whom it is said, “When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own.” We are not wishful to emulate him in such originality! We are not sufficient to think anything as from ourselves! Yet, thinking is the preacher’s domain. He has to think of the fitness of a subject for his discourse, but he will not find his right subject by mere thinking—he must wait upon his Master for guidance. When he has found his subject he must work it out in his own mind and yet he is so insufficient in and of himself that he will not work it out aright unless he cries to the Holy Spirit to aid his thought and open to him the Scriptures.

When the time has come for him to tell out what he has thought, he has to think over his subject aloud and speak with the mouth that which he has molded in his mind—and in this he is greatly dependent upon the help of God. In pouring from one bottle into another how much is spilt! How often does it happen that as the neck of a bottle may be too small to receive what is abundantly poured out, so the mind to be filled may not be sufficiently receptive! To think aloud, which means to speak instructively, is no easy thing—and so to speak that men are *saved* by our speaking is quite beyond us! In this matter “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves.” This impotence even in thought puts the preacher into a very low condition. In that position let him be content to remain! Let him look to the Lord for his thinking and speaking—and then he will do well!

*In the whole matter we are of ourselves insufficient* . The Revised Version puts it—“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves.” Now this declaration has a further and wider sweep than the former for, as I understand it, it includes all that I have said about thinking and with it every other matter which is involved in our holy service. “We are not sufficient to account anything as from ourselves”—we have not enough sufficiency to be able to reckon any *part* of our ability as coming from ourselves! Does a man wish to reach the human mind with heavenly Truth? He must do it by the sufficiency of God! Does he wish to get at peculiar cases? He must be instructed by the Spirit of God! Does he desire to awake the careless? Let him look to the quickening Spirit! Does he wish to comfort the disconsolate and cheer the despairing? He is not sufficient of himself for this—let him call upon the Comforter, even the Spirit of God!

As to that deep mystery of our holy faith which is called regeneration, or the new birth, the preacher may not *dare* to think that he can perform this! Into that secret chamber where men are born from above none can intrude. He that works the new birth is God alone. In the new creation, as in the old, He takes counsel with none. Of this, especially, all must say, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves.” *Thus all must be of God*. Our thought of Divine doctrine; our preparation for the delivery of that thought; the choice of words for utterance—the very tone and especially the spirit, the feeling, the faith with which the preacher delivers his message—all these are essential things and in none of them is the preacher sufficient of himself. You see, then, what the great Doctor of Grace, the grand teacher of the New Covenant, thought of human sufficiency! If he felt that for the least as well as for the greatest thing in our ministry we must look to God, surely our experience confirms his statement! Let us take the lowest place and in humble consciousness of inability, let us look to the Strong for strength—but never be so foolish as to rely upon ourselves.

We will now joyfully consider how the question is answered *positively*. There is an answer to the question, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The answer is, “All who trust in the Lord are made sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.” This is explained to us in the first sentence, *“Our sufficiency is from God*.” In God there is all the wisdom, all the thought, all the love, all the power, all the conquering energy which a minister can require! And to work upon the hearts of men there lies in the Omnipotent Grace of God a fullness of might so that the stony heart shall be transformed and on its fleshy tablet shall be written the will of the Lord! That our sufficiency should be of God is infinitely better than if it were of ourselves, for then our sufficiency cannot be questioned, cannot be suspended, cannot be exhausted!

If you had to bear your own charges, you might soon be bankrupt. But now you are like a child that travels with his father and his father pays for everything. He has no care about cost. He is not called upon to exercise a pinching economy. He draws upon an inexhaustible purse for all he needs and leads a princely life—for his father pays for all. Our sufficiency is of God—let us practically enjoy this Truth of God. We are poor, leaking vessels and the only way for us to keep full is to put our pitcher under the perpetual flow of boundless Grace. Then, despite its leakage, the cup will always be full to the brim! “Our sufficiency is of God.” “I do not feel able,” cries one, “to win a soul. I feel it is a work too hard for me.” Continue to feel that Truth of God, but at the same time let faith balance the feeling by reminding you that “Our sufficiency is of God.” Brother, if God sent you He will go with you! And if God gives you a message to deliver, He will prepare the ears and the hearts for that message. Blessed words are these for every minister of Christ and for all of you who in any way are working for His dear name! “Our sufficiency is of God.”

In very deed *we are made sufficient,* for the Apostle says, “Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.” The Lord makes His servants sufficient for the work required of them. If we had to change the heart, we should not be sufficient—if we had to write upon the heart by the power of the Spirit, we should not be sufficient, for the Spirit of God is not at our command. But if we occupy only this position—that we bear witness to God’s New Covenant promises—then His Grace makes us sufficient! There is a little valve in an engine which if it is touched will set its whole machinery in motion. That engine may be turning a number of wheels and we should not be able to do the work of all this machinery—and yet, in another sense, we are quite capable of doing all the work—for by turning a certain handle the engine puts forth its power, the wheels move and the work is done. A little child with a trembling finger can set loose tremendous forces and so accomplish enormous results.

Beloved, we are made much of by God, but we of ourselves are *nothing*. I said to myself, as I came here this morning—What is my part in the matter? Set in a valley of dry bones, I ask myself, “can these dry bones live?” If I had to make them live, “Who is sufficient for these things?” But my work is not to make the dry bones live! The breath from the four winds will do that! My work is not even to put the bones together, bone to its bone. I could not refashion the scattered anatomies. What have I to do, then? I have but to prophesy and say, “Thus says the Lord.” Now, for this, Divine Grace has given me a sufficiency. It is not, “Thus I say.” Not “Thus I think.” But, “O you dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord.” For that proclamation I have received ability from the Holy Spirit and I do not fear to exercise it! We are made sufficient to be ministers of the New Covenant.

Hear a lesson. Dear Christian lady, you have been lamenting, “Alas, I am not sufficient for my class.” You are sufficient if this is what the Lord has called you to do. To pray for those girls—to tell them the way of salvation and with loving heart to weep them to the Savior—the Lord can make you sufficient for this. Yonder dear Friend says, “I have been preaching in a village and the people are so dull that I cannot move them. I am not sufficient for the task.” Go and confess that fact to your Lord and then begin again with the sufficiency of God—and you will mark a change come over the spirit of the scene! I pray you, do not despair! The painful discovery of your own insufficiency ought to be the

means of leading you to the Lord and so of girding you with new strength!

The Apostle evidently means that *through Grace we are adapted to the wor*k—“He has made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.” We are not ministers of the Old Covenant of command and threats—if we were so, we might exceedingly fear and quake. We are sent to be ministers of the Spirit of that Covenant which says, “A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” We are ministers of a Covenant of pure Grace in which God, and not man, is the worker! We are, by the Truth spoken in love, to convey to men’s hearts the Holy Spirit. We are ministers, not of the letter of the Law, which kills—but of the Spirit, that gives life.

“Oh!” says one, “that is hard work.” It seems to me, on the contrary, to be the easiest of work when Divine power works in us! Shall I tell you what is needed to make a man sufficient for it? He must be able to bear personal witness to the Truth of God. Were you ever filled with life by the Spirit of the New Covenant—the Covenant of gracious promise? Then you can tell poor sinners where life is to be had. Were you slain by the Law and are you made alive by the Spirit of God? Then you will preach of the Law of God tremblingly and you will speak of life in Jesus Christ with living certainty! Do you know in your own soul what it is to be quickened by the Holy Spirit? If not, hands off the ark of God! But if Divine power has come upon you and you have been made to live the life of faith in Christ Jesus, then you have one point of ability to be a minister.

Beyond this, a living, loving heart is a great necessity. Have tender sympathy with those who have not so learned Christ and feel an intense desire that they may obtain eternal life. Bring your spiritual life into contact with their spiritual death and as one candle lights another, so may the Lord convey life into other hearts by your testimony! If our part were other than it is we might despair—but if we are called upon to be witnesses for God and sympathizers with God, then this ability is to be had—yes, we trust the Lord has already “made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.”

Dear Friends, there must be in us great longing of heart to be of service to our fellow men. He that can come into his pulpit and preach, saying to himself, “I do not care whether souls are saved or not,” will win no hearts for Jesus. But, oh, if God the Holy Spirit makes you tender towards never-dying souls and eager to snatch them from the eternal burnings, then you have that kind of ability which will fit you for the Master’s use! You see those wires which pass along our roads—they are nothing but dead metal. Are they sufficient of themselves to spy out what is happening in the capital of France and to report it here? No, not of themselves.

Yet that unconscious wire is quite sufficient to accomplish the transmission of news from Paris. Information is obtained and the wires flash the message under the sea to our door! The wire is quite sufficient, though not sufficient of itself. The Lord uses us as His telegraph wires to communicate between Himself and fallen men. And we, by His almighty power, are made to convey to them the Truth with power. It flashes from our heart and tongue to the ears and heart of the man whom the Lord intends to bless. The words which we speak are not ours, but the words of our Lord who said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” May many of my hearers know this in their own cases!

**II.**I have worked out my first point and we have viewed our text as the answer to the minister’s question. Secondly, we must view the text as A DIRECTION TO THE HEARER’S THOUGHTS. These thoughts must again be both negative and positive. The first negative counsel I suggest to you is this—*trust not your own sufficiency*. If we who preach to you and if those who were far greater than we are felt bound to say, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves,” how little must *your* sufficiency be!

It is very wonderful how fully in Scripture the inability of man is set out. Here we see our inability to *think* aright—“We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves.” In another passage we find that a good will is of the Lord. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” To will aright is more than to think aright—but we never make so distinct an advance as to will that which is good until we are made willing. When we get as far as that, we pull up all of a sudden and make a dead halt, finding, with the Apostle, “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not”—then are we driven to God for power to turn our willing into acting.

In this going to God we are brought to a stand-still again, for we read and feel that, “We know not what we should pray for as we ought.” What can we do, if even in prayer we fail? Suppose we are taught to pray and, helped by the Spirit of God, we begin to work—yet we cannot keep on working without fresh Grace—for David, when he had worked up the people to a very high degree of consecration, thought it necessary to pray that the Lord would “keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Your people.” Our Savior prayed, “Father, keep them,” for we soon go back to the old deadness and lethargy unless He that first made us alive *keeps* us alive.

Are any of you carelessly saying to yourselves, “I can be saved just whenever I like. I shall put off thought upon religious matters for I can believe and pray and live rightly at my own option. My salvation lies in my own power and the keys of Heaven swing at my belt. I can delay as long as I please and then at last cry, ‘Lord have mercy upon me!’ and go straight away from the sewers to Heaven.” You will find the Truth of God to be quite another thing. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” I shall pray God that this wicked self-sufficiency of yours may be driven out and that you may learn the meaning of Jonah’s words, “Salvation is of the Lord.” I think this is a plain teaching of our text.

The next lesson I suggest to you is, *seek not another ministry*. It may be right, as far as I am concerned, that you should choose another *preacher—* but do not so on the ground that we are not sufficient—for He “made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.” Some run about from one preacher to another hoping to find a peculiar something in

one which they have not found in another—but in all true preachers the sufficiency is one—for “our sufficiency is of God.” Try the spirits and hear only the man who preaches the Truth of God, but look for nothing in the *man*. Anxiously wish to find eternal life and if you are so seeking, our preaching is sufficient to bring it to you, for it has already brought it to thousands. In this house of prayer so many have found eternal life in Christ Jesus that we seek no letters of commendation as to our sufficiency in God. He has used us and can use us again—and you, by earnestly hearing the Gospel, if you are willing and obedient—shall eat the good of the land. But if you do not bow your necks to the scepter of Divine Grace, it shall not be through *our* deficiency that you are lost, but through your own rejection of the Savior!

The next negative lesson that the hearer should learn is, *rely not on your own thoughts*. Here the Apostle says, “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves.” Do not, I pray you, therefore, indulge the *thinking* faculty at the expense of *believing*. Some are always trying to dive deep into things and they go so far down into mysterious subjects and debated doctrines that they stir up the mud at the bottom and cannot see anything themselves—neither can we see what they are doing. What do you think? A man is perishing. A life belt is thrown to him and he will not touch it till he knows in what shop the belt was made and whether the workpeople are paid good wages. Poor soul! He will die because his mind is so enquiring and his senses have gone wool-gathering at an unseasonable time.

Jesus Christ is the Savior for sinners. Believe in Him and you shall live—be washed in His blood and you shall be whiter than snow. Continually raising critical questions and prying into the infinite nothingness will surely land you on the dark shores of despair and death. Happy are they who believe, take the Word of God and rest thereon. “Still,” says one, “surely you would have us think?” Yes, think as much as ever you can, but I am not authorized to preach to you, “He that *thinks* and is baptized shall be saved.” I am commanded to tell you, “He that *believes* and is baptized shall be saved.” “But is there not such a thing as honest doubt?” cries one. I suppose there may be, but all that doubt which is now so popular and ostentatiously labels itself, “honest doubt,” I am a little suspicious of.

If I were walking over lonely fields at night and should meet a man and he took the trouble to assure me over and over again that he was an honest man, I should not feel much reassured. If a man were cutting a pane of glass out of my window, in the middle of the night, and when challenged answered that he was an honest man, I think I should let my dog loose and leave *him* to decide the question. When a sect everlastingly prefaces all it has to say by claiming to be honest, I am rather inclined to suspect that it needs to give assurance. The Chinese trader who put up over his shop, “*No cheat here*,” turned out to be the biggest rogue in the street. If you are honest, you will confess that you have sinned and then you will come to Jesus for that remission of sins which comes through His sacrifice. Look to Jesus and live! He has borne away the sin of all Believers. He suffered in the sinner’s place and whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Oh, if you believe in Him, that act of believing shall do more for you than seven ages of thinking could accomplish so long as you refuse to accept the Savior whom God Himself has provided!

Once more, as a negative direction to the hearer, *let none of us be content with the letter*. Let no man rest in the hearing of the Law and the trying to keep the Commandments, for by the works of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight. What is meant by the letter here is evidently the Law, if you note the context. The Law condemns and so is the ministration of death—the Gospel brings the promise of the Spirit and so is life. Be not satisfied with merely knowing the letter of even the New Testament. Be not content with knowing the Doctrines of Grace and being called orthodox. Seek to feel the power of Gospel Truth. There is a dead orthodoxy as well as a dead heterodoxy. You must have the Spirit as well as the letter, or else the letter will be a savor of death to you. Power must be present as well as form, or else “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,” you shall be no nearer Heaven than if you had not even the form.

Now, gather direction positively. First, *look beyond us who are preachers—yes, look to the Spirit of God*. In the meetings of the Society of Friends they sometimes sit still and nobody speaks. It would do us good to have an occasional silence, if so the people would learn to look clean away from human agency to the power of God. I think we may continue speaking and yet if you are wise you will put no reliance upon us or our speaking apart from the Lord our God. Think not that you have done a good deed in merely coming to hear us talk. O Friends, there must be more than words in the Gospel ministry or all will be in vain! There must be a secret heavenly power in our testimony or it is no better than dead. Our Gospel is not a sword that glitters, but an edge that cuts, wounds, and kills! Do you know the power of the Word? If not, I pray God you may know it, for without the Spirit of the Lord you are nothing and have nothing. If you hear the preacher and his thoughts, but have never felt the Holy Spirit revealing to you Truth in the love of it, and in the power of it, you are in an evil case.

Further, *look beyond thought by faith*. Think, as we have already said, but still labor most after believing. To believe is to follow the way of salvation. Evermore it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” “He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already.” O my Hearer, your chief business is to*believe* on the Son of God! To speak plainly, you have to believe in Christ or to be damned! Whatever your own thoughts may be, you must accept God’s thoughts and yield your understanding, yours affections and your will—and accept God’s terms of Grace which are that you are nothing, and that Christ is everything. Oh, I pray you, dear Hearers, if you do not, by our ministry, get help in the matter of *faith*, do not think that you have been helped at all! All mere thinking out of problems and working out of propositions will leave you where you were. It is believing that brings eternal life into the soul and the more believing there is, the more does that life abound.

Next, *look beyond the outward command even of the New Testament*. I need not exhort you to look beyond the commands of the Old Testament—you have done so—but even with the New Testament you must not rest in the outward form of it. To believe that *faith* will save you, will not save you—you must *exercise* faith itself. To recognize that the Believer should be baptized will not save you, but you must yourself believe and be baptized. Neither will the Baptism save you unless you are buried with Christ in it. You must come and take Christ and be washed from your sins in His precious blood or you will die in your sins. To believe that the Holy Spirit can new-create you will not new-create you— you must in very deed be made a new creature in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit! Get beyond the mere shells of doctrine and taste the heavenly kernel which is the true food of the soul.

My dear Hearers, I am terribly afraid lest I should be ministering to your comfort while you are out of Christ. I come not here to be a fiddler at your feast of sin. I would not set the tune for you to dance by. My music is of another sort—it is a certain sound which calls you to do battle for your lives against your sins. I pray you, put no reliance upon the externals of religion, but seek the inward and spiritual Grace of which they are meant to be the channels. Repent! Believe! Lay hold on Christ and quit your hold of sin! Let not this exhortation be mere words to you. May the Spirit of power go with the command that you may repent and believe the Gospel and so may be saved! I beseech those of you who are regular hearers of the Gospel to get beyond even the best of hearing. I will not say, “If you do not mean to lay hold on Christ do not come to hear, and thus increase your condemnation,” for you might take me at my word and then I should be sorry for your absence.

I should like you to remain within gunshot of the Gospel, for you may yet feel its power. But there are persons coming here regularly and sitting in their pews, who are, I fear, deceiving their own souls by the very fact of their coming here. They think because they have heard a sermon that they must be the better for it. Alas, they may be all the worse for their hearing, for it may have flattered them in their self-righteousness and made them more secure in their pride! Is it not foolish for any man to say, “I must be a good fellow for I hear nothing unsound. I keep to the old Gospel and I am a constant attendant on the means of Grace”? If you do not get the Grace of the means, the means of Grace will be of no use to you! May God the Holy Spirit help you to get away from the mere letter to the real soul and Spirit of the whole business! May you feel, believe and actually yield your heart to Christ!

I have known some who were brought up to hear the Truth of God from their childhood and almost as a matter of course they joined the Church in their youth and stood well as to moral character for years. But after a while they grew indifferent to Divine things and gradually wandered away into sheer worldliness, almost blaming others for allowing them to make a profession. In their case the Holy Spirit never wrote upon the tablets of flesh but I scratched a letter or two on the unchanged stone. The work was never done by the Holy Spirit, but by parental influence and pastoral persuasion—and so in due season it all vanished. I pray God to save you from the religion which is born of excitement and revivalism and shows itself in spasms. Come to close work with God by confessing your sin and laying hold on Christ Crucified with a real, living faith! May the Truth of God be written on your hearts by the Spirit. God grant it!

**III.**I finish, now, by A LESSON TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. To you people of God, in your endeavor to spread the Gospel, I say, first, whispering it in your ear, *trust no man who is self-sufficient*. Oh, yes, he can do it! It is easy for him to preach fine sermons. Bless you! He can do it at any time and anywhere. He can convince and convert souls in any quantity. Did you read in the paper, “Glorious meeting! Eighteen souls out for salvation”? He was speaking that evening. *He*can fetch them. Certain other preachers doubt him, but that is all jealousy. He can do it—that he can.

Let such a man go where pride is at home. Our lowly Lord will not have him. Christ’s men are more apt at weeping than at bragging—they feel their inability rather than their ability. The man who does everything *for* the Lord is the man who cannot do anything *without* the Lord. The man that knows he is nobody, God will make somebody—but he that is strong and mighty, king and lord, master in the realm of thought, who can make his own theology and so forth—he shall wander on till he loses himself among the dark mountains to his sure destruction! Do not be in a hurry to put self-confidence into a leading position—he will be better in the rear rank—if in the army at all.

Next, *doubt not the sufficiency of the Gospel in any case*. Since our sufficiency is of God, you may take the Gospel down that dark, horrible slum where there are none but thieves and harlots—and it will do its work. Since our sufficiency is of God, with God all things are possible. You have a horrible neighbor who seldom speaks without an oath—he is as wicked a man as ever lived and therefore you never give him a sermon, or speak to him about Christ, for you fear that your Gospel is not suitable for him. He is just the very man that God may bless! Go and try the unlikely one! Behold how the Pharisees and scribes enter not into the kingdom but the publicans and harlots, conscious of their guilt, welcome the Savior! Despair of nobody. If there is a spot on earth where the Missionary Society has no chance, to that place it ought first to send! Difficulties should be invitations and impossibilities should be attractions. For “our sufficiency is of God.” Is it not so?

The next lesson is *value the New Covenant*. See how Paul puts it— “We are sufficient ministers of a new covenant.” In some congregations people never hear the word, “covenant” and yet he that understands the two Covenants has the key of theology! The Covenants are the diamond hinges on which the golden doors of Grace are made to turn. Dear Christian people, I pray you, value Covenant blessings. Value the New Covenant of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—the Covenant, not of *works*, but of *Grace* which runs after this fashion—“I will, and they shall”—the Covenant which secures the salvation of the chosen by guaranteeing all that is needed for eternal life. Prize the New Covenant and often speak of it!

Next, *let life be seen in all we do*. If our ministry is not of the letter, but of the Spirit, and of the Spirit that gives life, our hearers ought to have an abundance of life! Many professors seem to have life only in a

part of them. Some have life in the jaw and can talk religion, but none in the hands, for they cannot act it. Some have life in the head, but they have none in the heart. Some I know have never much life in their hands, especially that hand which goes into their pocket, for it goes in dead and comes out empty. Perhaps there would be some life in it if you made them an offer of a guinea—then they might stretch out their hand to *receive* it. We need to be filled with life to the fullest! Give me a Christian man all alive! Every bit and particle of us should respond to the Gospel. Let but the Gospel whisper and we should be awake to hear it!

When joy is the note, let us be glad. When faith is the note, let us believe up to the hilt. And when love is spoken of, may coals of juniper burn in our hearts. I hope many of that sort are here—yet there are some who are dead and cold. If they give you a shake of the hand you feel as though a dead fish were touching you—they are as cold as icebergs. Warm-hearted fellowship is a sweet sign of life. And lastly, *glorify God, you members of the Church, in all that is done*. If the will of God is written on any heart, praise God for it. When any are converted, they should let the minister know—the instrument will have a rich reward in knowing that a soul is brought to Christ! But above all, there should be joy in the Church and praise to God over every soul that is saved.

And shall there not be some souls saved this morning? O my Hearer, I pray God it may be *your* soul! Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Then you are born of God! Do you believe in your heart that God has raised Christ from the dead? Then you shall be saved! Will you yield yourself up to Jesus that He should be your Savior and your Lord? Do you lie at the feet of the All-Merciful One, confess your sin and plead the blood of Christ? Go your way—your sins, which are many, are forgiven you—and let God have the glory of it forever and ever.

Brothers and Sisters if God has blessed you, *pray for us*. We are not sufficient of ourselves even to *think* anything from ourselves. Therefore pray the Lord to be our sufficiency. Brethren, when God has blessed us, praise with us, for if the Lord has done it all, He must have all the glory forever and ever. Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 3.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—906, 407, 455.**

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WHY THE GOSPEL IS HIDDEN  
NO. 3288

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1912.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY, 11, 1866.~~***

***~~“But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost.” 2 Corinthians 4:3.~~***

In this verse and the following one we have a very brief yet very full description of what every minister of the Gospel ought to preach. In the first place, he is to preach*the Gospel*—not metaphysics, not politics, not mere morality, not simply doctrines as such. He is to preach the Gospel, which signifies good news, something new and something good—so good that nothing else can equal it—the glad tidings of mercy for the guilty, the blessed tidings of God coming down to man that man may go up to God, the welcome tidings of atonement made for human guilt! It is also new as well as good—it comes as a strange novelty to the attentive ear. Mythology never dreamed it, human wit could never have invented it, even angelic intellect could not have devised a scheme**—**

***“So just to God, so safe for man.”***  
The business of the Christian minister is to preach this Good News, to publish to the sinners the glad tidings that there is a Savior, to point the guilty to Christ and to be constantly saying to each individual sinner, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” I care not what may be the learning or eloquence of the minister, though he may speak with the tongue of men and angles, if he does not preach Christ and bid sinners trust in Him, he has mistaken his mission and missed the grand objective for which he was sent!

This Gospel is called in the text “ *our Gospel.”* By this expression I understand that the minister must accept it for himself before he can hold it out to others. I am myself to look to Jesus as my own personal Savior—and then I am to cry to others, “Look unto Him, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” I must be able to say—

***“I came to Jesus, and I drank***

***Of that life-giving stream”—***  
and then, but not till then, I am to cry, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters.” What a miserable wretch must he be who preaches to others a Gospel in which he has, himself, no share! He spreads the table and invites others to come to the feast, while he, himself, is starving! He is like a plague-stricken physician who knows the remedy for the disease and sees others cured by it, yet dies with the remedy in his hand. Ah me, of all the portions, that must be most dreadful in the world to come, as well as most uncomfortable in this present life! Surely it must be the portion of the man who preaches to others what he has never experienced in his own soul. Paul might well call it “our Gospel,” for it had saved him, the chief of sinners, and made him a beloved Apostle of Jesus Christ. He might well call it “our Gospel” for he had held it fast in time of persecution and amid all the perils to which he had been exposed—and he was, at last, to give his life as a sacrifice for it! And it must be “our Gospel,” too, “to have and to hold,” or else we cannot preach it with any power!

In the verse following our text, something more is said about the Gospel—it is there called “*the glorious Gospel.”* There was something in it that aroused and inflamed the Apostle ’s noblest thoughts. Paul was no boaster. “God forbid that I should glory,” he said—but there was one exception—“save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He did not stand up as a mere apologist for the Gospel, or say, “I can defend it against all comers and maintain that it is reasonable,” but he gloried in it as the best and highest Truth of God—as wiser than all the Stoic’s wisdom and more full of joy than all the Epicurean’s pleasure! He gloried in that Gospel which brings full and free forgiveness to the penitent! That Gospel which takes the meanest and basest of mankind and makes them princes in the court of the King of kings! That Gospel which comes to men in poverty, in slavery, in the degradation of superstition, idolatry and crime—and lifts them up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, sets their feet upon the Rock of Ages, cleanses them, clothes them, puts a new song into their mouth, preserves them from falling and, at last, brings them where they shall see the face of God and dwell forever in His Presence! It is, indeed, a glorious Gospel which can do all this! Yet, alas, the most of men are like the rooster on the dunghill who, when he found a pearl, said that he would sooner have found a grain of barley—they think more of their corn and their wine, their feasts and their mirth, than they do of the inexpressibly glorious things of the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh, that they were wise enough to perceive the glories of this glorious Gospel!

Paul further calls it “ *the glorious Gospel of Christ.”* And well he might, for it is all about Christ from beginning to end! Give me a true preacher of the glorious Gospel of Christ and I will gladly listen to him. I would like him to be an educated minister if that is possible, for there is no need for my ears to be tortured by mistakes in grammar, but I do not care so much about that as about the other matter! I would sooner hear Christ’s Gospel preached ungrammatically than I would hear the best philosophy set forth in the most orderly sentences, but with the Gospel of Christ left out. When the table is spread for dinner, it is well to have a clean tablecloth, china, glass and cutlery of all the right sort and in their proper places—but if there is no food on the dishes, all those other things are a mere mockery to the hungry ones who are waiting to be fed! Sooner, by far, would I go to a bare table and eat from a wooden bowl something that would appease my appetite, than I would go to a well-spread table on which there was nothing to eat! Yes, it is Christ, Christ, Christ whom we have to preach! And if we leave Him out, we leave out the very soul of the Gospel! Christless sermons make merriment for Hell. Christless preachers, Christless Sunday school teachers, Christless class leaders, Christless tract distributors—what are all these doing? They are simply setting the mill to grind without putting any grist into the hopper—all their labor is in vain! If you leave Jesus Christ out, you are simply beating the air, or going to war without any weapon with which you can smite the foe!

Dear Friend, if you are unconverted, let me pause here for a few moments to remind you that this is not a Gospel of self, nor a Gospel of works, nor a Gospel of baptism, nor a Gospel of priests, nor a Gospel of ministers, but it is “the glorious Gospel of Christ!” Forget the men who preach it if you will, but, oh, forget not the bleeding, dying Savior to whom they bid you look. Your hope must be in Him and in Him, alone! To Him would we affectionately point you and we pray the Holy Spirit to shut your eyes to everything but Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sin—

***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!  
There is life at this moment for thee!  
Then look, Sinner—look unto Him and be saved— Unto Him who was nailed to the tree!  
It is not the tears of repentance or prayers,  
But the blood that atones for the soul—  
On Him, then, who shed it, believing at once  
Your weight of iniquities roll!  
We are healed by His stripes—would you add to the Word? And He is our righteousness made—  
The best robe of Heaven He bids you put on,  
Oh, could you be better arrayed?  
Then doubt not your welcome, since God has declared There remains no more to be done!  
That once in the end of the world He appeared And completed the work He begun.”***

With this rather long introduction, I now come to the three points upon which I am going to briefly speak, but very solemnly, for I think they concern many of you who are here, tonight. So, firstly, I ask, *why is this Gospel hidden from some people?*Secondly, *what is the state of those from whom it is hidden?*And, thirdly, *what is to be feared concerning them in the future?*

**I.**First, then, WHY IS THIS GOSPEL HIDDEN FROM SOME PEOPLE? It is evident that there are some persons in the world who do not understand the Gospel—and I will venture to say that the Gospel is never understood until it is received. You might have thought that men could

very readily understand anything as simple as, “Believe, and live,” yet those of us who have been converted must confess that we did not understand the Gospel until we received it. I am sure that I never fully comprehended the plan of salvation until I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when I did believe, the whole matter seemed so simple that I wondered why I had not understood it before! You notice that the Apostle decreed that it was not his fault that the Gospel was hidden from some people. And although we would not put ourselves on a level with any Apostle, we are as clear upon this point of plain speaking as any Apostle who ever lived! If “our Gospel” is hidden from any of our hearers, it is not because of the fine language that we use! We fear that there *are some* who, in preaching the Gospel, indulge in such eloquent oratory that their Gospel is hidden from their hearers—but this is not a sin which can be laid at our door. We use what Whitefield called, “market language.” We use a great many more Saxon words than Latin words. If we had to find out the Gospel through the types and symbols of the Law, we might have a difficulty in understanding it, but the Gospel we have to preach is simply this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Trust in Him as suffering as a Substitute in your place and you shall be saved.” Can anything be more simple than that? We try to use the plainest similitudes so as to bring the Truth of God within the comprehension of the weakest of our hearers. We make it a matter of conscience, as in the sight of God, to speak to men very simply so that each one, after he has heard the message, is compelled to admit that it has been delivered to him very plainly. How is it, then, that you do not understand it?

Certainly, *it is not because we hide the Gospel in a long roll of ceremonies*. We have never said to you, “You must be christened in your infancy, you must have sponsors to promise all sorts of things in your name and then, as you grow up, you must be confirmed and must take the responsibility upon yourselves.” Oh, no! We have never talked like that! We point you to the Divinely-Inspired Bible and tell you that all you need to know is plainly recorded there. We point you to the Eternal Word who became Incarnate and we say, with all the emphasis of which we are capable—

***“None but Jesus***

***Can do helpless sinners good!”***  
We bid you not to trust in forms and ceremonies, but to look alone to Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, so that it cannot be for lack of plainness that the Gospel is not understood!

And again, *it cannot be because of any obscurity in the Gospel, itself*. I will venture to say that there is no proposition in the world more simple than the one which the Gospel sets before us. The formula, “Twice two are four,” is so simple that a child’s mind can understand it. And the degree of intellect which can comprehend is sufficient—so far a intellect is concerned—to comprehend Paul’s declaration, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Or John’s, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” To trust Jesus Christ, as far as it is an intellectual act, is a matter that does not require the slightest education—there is no need to sit down and calculate. Here is Jesus Christ standing in the sinner’s place. God punished the sinner’s guilt upon Christ instead of upon the sinner— all that the sinner is bidden to do is to trust Christ to save him—and, as soon as he does that, he is saved! What could be simpler than that? I grant you that as the Gospel is sometimes preached, there is obscurity in it, but there is no obscurity in the Gospel, itself! Well then, if it so, and it is, why is it that the Gospel is hidden from some people? And the answer is that “the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not.” Let us see how this is.

First of all, *the Gospel is hidden from some men because they have never felt sin to be an evil*. “Why,” they say, “do you talk to us about the punishment of sin? Why do you tell us that God punished His own Son in the place of sinners? We believe in the universal fatherhood of God, so we have no need of any Doctrine of Substitution.” So*you* think that it is a small thing to offend the Most High God, but *He* thinks it is a very great thing! You consider that sin is a mere trifle, scarcely worth thinking about, but God regards it as exceedingly sinful—an evil and an accursed thing which He will, by no means, pardon except in them who trust His Son, the Divinely appointed Substitute and Savior. If you realized what sin is, you would soon understand the Gospel! If the Holy Spirit shall teach you that sin is the most deadly and most damnable thing of which you can conceive, you will at once understand the Glory of the Gospel that shows how you can be completely delivered from its curse, penalty and power through the mercy of God in giving His only-begotten Son to die in your place! You love sin—that is the fact of the matter—and you suppose that one is no more offensive to God than it is to yourself. Fool that you are, you are fascinated by the serpent that has filled your veins with the venom which shall burn in you forever and ever unless you shall look by faith to Him who was lifted up upon the Cross even as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness that all who looked upon it might live! May God give you Grace to see sin as it really is in His sight, for then will you realize your need of a Savior and you will give heed to the Gospel which bids you believe in Him that you may be saved!

Another reason why men do not understand the Gospel is that *they do not understand themselves*. Some of you who are here tonight think that you can save yourselves. I know what your thoughts are—they are to this effect—that if you do your best, if you say your prayers, if you attend church or chapel, if you give some to the poor, then you will go to Heaven. You have not yet learned that all you do is tainted with the leprosy of sin and, therefore, cannot be acceptable to God! Your best works are bad since you do them with the motive that you may be saved by them— selfishness, therefore, is at the bottom of them all! You are not serving God by your good works! You are all the while trying to serve yourselves. If you knew yourselves better, you would know that all your works are nothing but sin until the Holy Spirit brings you to know your *need* of Christ—and then to *know* Christ as the very Savior you need! If I am not in need, I have no need of the gifts of charity. And if you do not know how needy you are *spiritually,* you will never apply to Christ for aid. But once let the real needs of your soul stare you in the face—that you realize that you are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” then the simple Gospel message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” will be so welcome to your soul that it will almost leap out of your body to lay hold of it!

Yet another reason why men do not understand the Gospel is *because their will is not subdued*. “We want to know,” they say, “why the requirements of the Gospel are so strict.” Oh, Sirs, that is not the language for you to use to your God! The message to you is, “Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” That hectoring spirit which says, “Why is this the only way of salvation? Why is this precept enjoined? Who is the Lord that we should serve Him?”—that spirit has been the eternal ruin of many! There is no likelihood that you will ever understand the Gospel while you are of this humor. Come down, Man, come down—there is no blessing for you while you set yourself up high! May the Lord make you know the corruptions and abominations which dwell in your heart that, in the Presence of the thrice-holy God, you may demean yourself after another and a humbler fashion! But while that wicked will of yours says, “I will not do what God requires,” there is no hope whatever that you will be able to understand the Gospel!

There are some who cannot understand the Gospel *because it interferes with their worldly interests*. If you take a sovereign out of your pocket and cover the word, “God,” in your Bible with it, of course you cannot see the word! There are a great many men who never seem to see anything beyond pounds, shillings and pence—they never look above their ledgers—they never rise to anything that is Godlike and Divine. They have no more spirituality than so many pigs at a trough! They say they cannot understand the Gospel, but how can they when their understanding has been eaten through and through with the canker of their gold? There are many here to whom I am a stranger, but I should like to put this question to any of you who do not understand the Gospel—Is there not in your hearts a desire *not to* understand it? Is it not a sorrowful fact that many of you do not comprehend Gospel preachers because you do not want to trouble yourselves by comprehending them or have an uneasy consciousness that Gospel Truth and your pleasures will not agree? You are like men who are on the way to bankruptcy, but who dare not examine their books to see how they stand! Yet did you ever know a man retrieve his position by refusing to look his difficulties in the face? Is it not the most sensible plan to know the worst of your case and to know it at once? I have known some who did not want to understand the Gospel because they were engaged in a business which would not bear examination. There are others who are hindered by their besetting sins. If the Lord Jesus Christ would grant pardons and yet allow men to keep their sins, what a host of disciples of that sort He might have! But He says that though sin is as dear to us as our right arm, it is to be cut off— and though it is as precious as our right eye, it is to be plucked out! Yet many will not agree to these conditions and, therefore, the Gospel is hidden from them.

**II.**Now I must try very briefly to answer the second question, WHAT IS THE STATE OF THOSE FROM WHOM THE GOSPEL IS HIDDEN?  
Paul says that *they are lost*—“If our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost.” But, Paul, are you not very uncharitable in saying that men are lost? Preachers nowadays tell them that they will all get to Heaven at last. Ah, Beloved, the Apostles knew nothing of this modern, maudlin “charity!” They said, as their Master said before them, “He that believes not shall be damned.” Our Lord Jesus Christ knew that there was no alternative between believing and being lost. But in what sense are they from whom the Gospel is hidden, lost?  
Well, first, *they are lost to the church*. You may be a subscriber to the funds of the church, you may attend the service of the church, you may even be an ardent admirer of the preacher and find a certain measure of interest in listening to his discourses. But if the Gospel is still hidden from you, if you do not understand it and believe on the Christ of whom it speaks—you are lost to the church of which many around you are members—and if you remain as you are, you will be lost to the one great Church of the first-born and will never form a part of the general assembly of the redeemed around the Throne of God above!  
It is a dreadful thing for anyone to be lost. I do not know if there is a more dreadful word in the English language than that word, “lost.” Do you remember, my Friend, when you came home from work one night and your wife met you with the sad news that your little Mary was lost, how you hurried from one police station to another? And your poor distracted wife went tearing up and down one street after another seeking for tidings of your lost child! It was her misfortune to be lost in *that* sense, but I hope you may never have a child lost in a sense in which it shall be her *crime* when the mother, night after night, searches the cold streets for any trace of her poor lost daughter! Ah, Sinner, *you are lost to God in that sense*. You have turned away from Him who made you. You have despised the love that He has lavished upon you. You have forgotten all the care that He has taken of you. I am quite sure that you are not happy while you are thus lost—how can you be happy? You are not at rest. Your soul is like a ship drifting in a storm with neither a rudder to guide her, nor an anchor to hold her and unless the Lord shall mercifully interpose to save you, you will be lost forever!  
What a mercy it is, Sinner, that you are not yet “lost” in the full meaning of that term, as you soon will be if you do not repent of your sin and turn unto the Lord! But even now it is a terrible thing to be lost in any sense—and if you are not saved, you are lost—you must be either the one or the other, you cannot be partly saved and partly lost! I will ask every one of you again tonight to do what I asked my congregation once before to do. You are either lost or saved, so will you definitely decide which word applies to your case and write it down and sign your name to it? I remember that on the previous occasion when I made this request, there was one Brother, who, after sincere heart searching, felt that he was lost, so he wrote down that word and signed his name below it. When he had done so and looked at the word, “Lost,” written with his own hand, and with his signature appended to it—and felt that it might be brought forward as evidence against him at the Last Great Day, it broke the heart that had never been broken before and brought him as a true penitent to the Savior's feet, so that before that night passed away he could write himself down as, “Saved,” just as truthfully as he had before acknowledged that he was lost! I pray that this Brother’s experience may be repeated in many of you here. Do not hesitate to look thoroughly into your own case. If you are saved, it is not difficult for you to know that you are. And if you are not saved, it is well that you should know it at once! If you think you are saved when you are not, your ruin will be all the more terrible because you had not the courage to find out the truth! If there is any doubt about the matter, let it be cleared up at once. Go to Jesus Christ this very moment! Confess your sin to Him and trust to His precious blood to wash it all away! And then you will be no longer lost, but shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!  
**III.**Now, in a few closing sentences, let me answer the third question, WHAT IS TO BE FEARED CONCERNING THOSE FROM WHOM THE GOSPEL IS HIDDEN?  
It is to be feared that in addition to their natural blindness, a second film has been cast over their eyes by “the god of this world.” That is a very remarkable expression, “the god of this world.” Does this world, then, really worship the devil? There are devil-worshippers in certain faroff lands—and we hold up our hands in horror and say, “What shockingly bad people!” Yet there are also many devil-worshippers in this land! The lover of pleasure**—**what is he better than a devil-worshipper? It is the devil in his best suit of clothes whom some people worship, but it is still the devil! Worship the devil with the golden hoofs, but it is the same devil all the while! If I were to be lost, it would make little difference to me whether I was lost in a gold mine, or in a coal mine. If I were to break my neck on a slab of gold, it would be no better for me than breaking it upon a slab of stone! So, if you are lost, you will find little comfort in the thought that you are lost in a more respectable way than others are!  
When “the god of this world” comes to a man who is already blind by nature, he seeks to “make assurance doubly sure” by bandaging his eyes so securely that the Light of the Gospel shall be still more completely hidden from him! If such a man attends a place of worship, the devil persuades him that he is not a sinner, so that he need not take to him the preacher’s warnings and exhortations. Another says, “I don’t intend to trouble about any of these things—my one aim is to get on in the world.” Yes, just so, “the god of this world” has blinded his eyes! So effectually does Satan blind the man that he cannot see his own depravity! O Soul, what shall it profit you if you shall gain the whole world, and yet be lost forever? What if you shall die upon a bed of down and wake up among the lost in Hell? May God give all of us the Grace to look upon the two worlds in their proper light! If the next world is only a trifle, trifle with it! If this world is everything, make everything of it! As you possess an immortal spirit, think well where that spirit is to spend eternity. As all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God, you are a sinner and you need salvation, so do, I entreat you, trust in Him who alone can save the guilty, “for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” but the name of Jesus—and He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. I said just now that I do entreat you to trust in Him, and so I do, yet this is not half so much my business as it is yours. The preacher of the Gospel ought to be in earnest, but when he has faithfully delivered his message, the responsibility is transferred to his hearers. As the Lord lives, I will take no responsibility of yours upon myself—to our own Master you and I must stand or fall! But, as your fellow man. As one who devoutly desires that you should not be lost, I do beseech you to seek Divine Grace from God to get rid of the scales from your eyes so that you may see sin, salvation and everything else as they are in His sight—and may look to Jesus and find eternal life in Him!  
Some of you young men are perhaps going to Oxford or Cambridge. Well, study hard, be senior wranglers if you can, but with all the knowledge that you may acquire, do get a clear understanding of eternal things and seek the wisdom that comes from above. When you wear the degrees which earthly knowledge will procure for you, may you also wear the higher degree which God shall confer upon you as the children of the Kingdom, children of God by faith in Christ Jesus! Sit at the feet of divines and philosophers if you will, but also sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him, for so shall you have honor and glory that shall last forever! Seek after the honor which comes from God—which can only be found by believing in Jesus and seeking to please Him in all things!  
My time has gone and your time for repentance and faith is almost gone. May the realities of eternity be deeply impressed upon us all—and may we be prepared—when death shall summon us to stand before God, to prove that the Gospel was not hidden from us, so that we may not be among “those who are lost.” May God save us, by His Grace, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 4; 5:1-9.***

**2 Corinthians 4:1-2.***Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*Paul’s description of his own ministry and also that of Timothy should be true of every servant of Jesus Christ! There must be no dishonesty, or craftiness, or deceit about the minister of the Word of God—and it is by the manifestation of the Truth of God that he must commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God! He may not win every man’s approval, yet even those who differ from him must perceive his loyalty to his Lord.

**3, 4.***But if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God,*

*should shine unto them.*[See Sermons #1663, Volume 28—THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL and #2304, Volume 39—BLINDED BY SATAN—Read/download the entire sermons, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The light of the Gospel is so glorious and bright that it is only hidden from those who have been blinded by Satan, “the god of this world.” The only hope for them is to believe in Jesus who can give sight to the spiritually blind as easily as He gave sight to the physically blind when He was here in the flesh.

**5.***For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.* “Christ Jesus the Lord” is to be the great theme of our preaching! And when it is so, we naturally take our right position with regard to our hearers, as Paul and Timothy did—“and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

**6, 7.***For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*God might have put the priceless treasure of the Gospel into the golden vessel of cherubim and seraphim—and He might have sent angels who would never suffer, who would never err, who would never sin—to preach the Word. But instead of doing so, He has chosen to send the Gospel to men by commonplace beings like themselves. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” and this redounds much to God’s Glory and, dear Friends, the great objective of the sending of the Gospel into the world is the Glory of God! He would manifest His mercy to men that His mercy might be glorified and, therefore, He has committed the Gospel not to the trust of perfect men, but to the trust of poor, shallow, earthen vessels like ourselves!

**8, 9.***We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*The Apostle is here speaking for himself and all the members of the Apostolic college and, also, for all the early saints. They appear to have been very much troubled and sometimes to have been very much perplexed. I meet with certain brethren, now and then, who have no troubles—they are so supremely wise that they are never perplexed and so eminently holy that they do not appear to belong to the ordinary democracy of Christianity—but are altogether supernatural beings! Well, I do not belong to their clique and it does not seem to me that Paul and the Apostles and the early Christians did. Those great pioneers of the Church of Christ were men who were troubled on every side—perplexed, persecuted, cast down—in fact, they were men of like passions with ourselves!

**10, 11.***Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.* So you see, Brothers and Sisters, to have an anticipation of death upon one is no hindrance to one’s work, but a great help to it—to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus is a great help towards the manifestation of the life of Christ! When we begin to reckon that we shall live long, we are very apt to live loosely. But to live as though tomorrow might be the Judgment Day, or as though today the King might come in His Glory— that is the style of living which is the best of all! “A short life and a holy one”—lengthened as God may please, but reckoned by us as short even at the longest—may that be the Christian’s motto. As the worldling says, “A short life and a merry one.” But we say, “A short life if God so wills it, but a holy one whether it is long or short.”

**12.***So then death* works*in us, but life in you.*These Apostolic men lived as if they were on the borders of the grave—lived expecting to die a cruel death—and in this way spiritual life was brought to the Corinthians and others who witnessed their holy lives and heroic deaths.

**13-16.***We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up, also, by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the Glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*As the flesh goes down, so, by God’s Grace, the spirit goes up! You know that there are heavy weights that keep men down to the earth, but he who understands mechanics knows that by the use of wheels and pulleys those same heavy weights may be made to lift a man—and God often makes the weights and burdens associated with bodily decay lift up the inward spirit.

**17, 18.***For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,* works*for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

**2 Corinthians 5:1, 2.***For we know that if our earthly house of the tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan.*In this poor body it is our lot often to groan, but the groan is a hopeful one, for it is a birthpang and it will bring joy in due time—“For in this we groan.”

**2-6.***Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven: if it is that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that has* worked*us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident.* That is a blessed experience, “always confident.” There are some Christians who are *never* confident and some who are afraid of being confident. I know some who, if they see this holy confidence in other Christians, begin to tremble for their eternal safety. Never mind about them, Brothers and Sisters—if God gives you a holy confidence in Him, hold fast to it and do not let it go, whatever anyone may say!

**6-9.***Knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, (for we walk by faith, not by sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be ac*

*cepted of Him.* [See Sermon #1303, Volume 22—THE BELIEVER IN THE BODY AND OUT OF THE BODY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

That is our main business—whether we live or whether we die is of no consequence at all! But to be accepted of Christ—so to live is to be wellpleasing to God. Be this our heavenly ambition and may the Holy Spirit graciously enable us to attain to it!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1663 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL  
NO. 1663

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 4, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”  
2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.~~***

I THINK in this case the Revised New Testament gives a better translation than does the Authorized Version and I will, therefore, read it, “But even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them.” Paul had been speaking of Moses with the veil over his face and we lose the track of his thought if we use the word, “hid,” instead of, “veiled.” Our Gospel wears no veil, but exhibits all the Glory of its countenance to the sons of men. Oh that they may be able to steadfastly behold it and see in it their own salvation and the Glory of the Lord!

Observe at the outset the confidence with which Paul speaks. It is abundantly evident that he has no doubt whatever that the Gospel which he proclaims is assuredly true. No, that it is so manifestly true that if those who have heard it do not accept it, it must be because the god of this world has blinded their minds! The accent of conviction makes every word emphatic. He believes and is sure! And he is convinced that those who do not believe must be under the thralldom of the devil. This is not the ordinary style in which the Gospel is preached nowadays! We hear men courteously *apologize* for stating anything as absolute, for they are fearful of being thought narrow-minded and bigoted! We hear them *prove* what is clear as noonday and back up with arguments what God, Himself, has said—as if the sun needed candles to exhibit it, or as if God’s Word needed the support of human reasoning!

The Apostle did not take the defensive ground at all! He carried the war across the border and assailed the unbelievers. He came forth fresh from God with a Revelation and his every word seemed to challenge men with— “This is God’s Word. Believe it, for if you do not, you will incur sin and prove that you are lost and are under the influence of the devil.” When the Gospel was preached in that royal style, it prevailed mightily and annihilated opposition! Cavilers came, of course. “What will this babbler say?” was a common question, but the heralds of the Cross made short work of all cavilers, for they simply went on declaring the glorious Gospel! Their one word was, “This is from God! If you believe it, you shall be saved. If you reject it you shall be damned.”

They made no bones about it, but spoke like men who believed in their message and judged that it left unbelievers without excuse. They never altered their doctrine or softened the penalty of refusing it. Like fire among stubble, the Gospel consumed all before it when it was preached as God’s Revelation. It does not spread, today, with equal rapidity because many of its teachers have adopted what they fancy are wiser methods—they have become less certain and more indifferent and, therefore, they reason and argue where they should proclaim and assert! Some preachers rake up all the nonsense that any scientific or unscientific man likes to bring forward and spend half their time in trying to answer it! What can be the use of untying the knots which are tied by skeptics? They only tie more! It is not for my servant to dispute my message, but to *deliver* it correctly, as mine, and there leave it.

If we get back, again, to the old platform, and speak as from God, we shall not speak in vain, for He will surely honor His own Word. The preacher should either speak in God’s name or hold his tongue. My Brother, if the Lord has not sent you with a message, go to bed, or to school, or mind your farm—for what does it matter what you have to say on your own? If Heaven has given you a message, speak it out as he ought to speak who is called to be the mouth for God! If we are to make up our Gospel as we go along, out of our own heads, and compound our own theology as chemists make up mixtures of drugs, we have an endless task before us and failure stares us in the face! Alas for the weakness of human wit and the fallacy of mortal reasoning!

But if we have to deliver what God declares, we have a simple task and one which must lead to grand results, for the Lord has said, “My Word shall not return unto Me void.” Where did the Apostle learn to speak thus positively? He tells us in the first verse of the chapter, “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.” He had, himself, been once a persecutor and he had been convinced of his error by the appearance of the Lord Jesus to him. This was a great deed of mercy. He now knew that his sins were forgiven. He felt in his own heart that he was a regenerated man, changed, cleansed, newly created and this was, to him, overwhelming evidence that the Gospel was from God. To himself, at any rate, the Gospel was a Truth of God past argument, needing no other demonstration than its marvelous effect upon himself!

Having received mercy for himself, he judged that other men were in need of mercy even as he was, and that the same Gospel which had brought light and comfort to his own soul would bring salvation to them, also. This braced him to his work. By this consciousness he was made to speak as one having authority. There was no hesitancy about him, for he spoke what he felt. Ah, Friends, we not only deliver a message which we believe to be from God, but we tell out that which we have tested and tried within our own souls! An unconverted preacher must be in a sorry plight, for he lacks evidence of the Truth of God which he proclaims. A man who is not familiar with the effect of the Gospel upon his own heart must endure much disquietude when he stands up to preach upon it. What does he really know about it if he has never felt its power?

But if he has been converted by its means, then he is confident and is not to be moved by the questions and quibbles of those who oppose him. His inner consciousness strengthens him in the delivery of his message. We must also feel the influence of the Word of God that we may speak what we know and testify what we have seen. Having received mercy we cannot but speak of that mercy positively as of a thing which we have tested and handled—and knowing that it is God who has given us the mercy, we cannot but speak with anxious desire that others may partake of Divine Grace.

We now come to consider our text. Our first observation shall be the Gospel is, in itself, a glorious light, for in the fourth verse Paul speaks of the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ. Secondly, this Gospel is, in itself, plain and simple. Thirdly, if we preach it as we ought to preach it, we keep it plain and do not muddle it up by worldly wisdom. And fourthly, it being in itself a great light and in itself, clear, therefore the preaching being clear, if men do not see it, it is because they are lost—it is a fatal sign when men are unable to perceive the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus Christ.

**I.**First, then, THE GOSPEL IS IN ITSELF A GLORIOUS LIGHT. In countless places it is so described in the New Testament. This is the light which has come into the world. “The darkness is past, and the true light now shines.” Observe that this light reveals the Glory of Christ. This is the new translation and it is a valuable one— “The light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ.” You know the Hebrews had a different mode of expression from the Greek and if we are to read the Greek as though Paul Hebraized it, then we read it according to the version we have here— “the glorious Gospel of Christ.” But if we read the Greek as Greek, then it runs, “the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ.” The renderings are equally true, but the second one has a fullness and freshness of sense about it worthy of special note.

The Gospel reveals the Glory of Christ. It tells us that He is the eternal Son of the Father, by whom all things were made, for whom all things were created and by whom they continue to exist. This might not have been good news to us if it had stood alone, though it ought always to be good for the creature to be informed of his Creator. But the Gospel further reveals to us that this ever-blessed Son of the Highest came down to earth in infinite pity, espoused our nature, was born at Bethlehem and became as truly Man as He was assuredly God. This was the first note of the Gospel and there was so much delight in it that it set all the angels in Heaven singing—and the shepherds who kept watch over their flocks by night heard the chorales of the first Christmas rung out from the midnight sky—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

It could not but mean peace to man that God should become Man! It could not but mean mercy to the guilty that the Heir of Glory should be born into their race! It must be good news to us that the offended One should take upon Himself the nature of the offender! So the first pure Gospel music rang out that made glad the ear of mankind! The Lord God Omnipotent became Immanuel—God With Us! “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and His name shall be called Wonderful.” This is the beginning of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ—He gained a greater Glory by laying aside His Divine Glory!

Furthermore, the Gospel tells us that this same mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace dwelt here among men, preaching and teaching, and working miracles of matchless mercy, everywhere proving Himself to be man’s brother, sympathetic and tender and gentle, receiving to Himself even the lowest of the people and bowing Himself to the least of the race. It is written, “Then drew near unto Him the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” And again He took little children into His arms and blessed them, and said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” There was a Gospel about all that He did and a Glory which men who are pure in heart both see and admire!

His life was good news—it was a new and a glad thing that God should dwell among men and be found in fashion as a Man. The God that hates sin and whose wrath burns against iniquity, tabernacled among sinners and saw and felt their evil ways and prayed for them, “Father, forgive them.” His Glory lay in His being so patient, gentle and self-sacrificing, and yet so just and true. Well did John say, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the OnlyBegotten of the Father), full of Grace and truth.” But the Gospel’s biggest bell, which rings out with clearest note, is that this Son of God, in due time, gave Himself for our sins, making an offering of His whole Human Nature as a propitiation for the guilt of men! Herein is an excessive Glory of love!

What a sight it was to see Him in the garden oppressed with our load of guilt till the bloody sweat was forced from Him! To see Him bearing that stupendous weight up to the Cross and there hanging in agonies of death, bearing the desertion of His Father and all the thick clouds of darkness that came of it—dying—the “Just for the unjust to bring us to God”! It was the Glory of Christ that He was there bereft of all Glory! Never can a more glorious thing be said of Him than that He, for our sakes, was obedient to *death*, even the death of the Cross! And this is the Gospel we preach, the Gospel of Substitution, that Jesus stood in the sinner’s place and bore in the sinner’s stead what was due to the Law of God on account of man’s transgression.

Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord reigns from the Cross— ***“Fling out the banner! Let it float  
Skyward and seaward, high and wide!  
Our Glory only in the Cross,  
Our only hope, the Crucified.”***

No more gladsome news could come to man than that the Incarnate God had borne man’s s sins and died in man’s place! Yet there is another note, for He that died and was buried is *risen* from the dead and has borne our nature up into Glory—and there He wears it at the Father’s right hand. His loving heart is still occupied with the same Divine errand that brought Him down below—He is, by His intercession, saving sinners whom He purchased with His blood! He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them!

This is the Gospel of the Glory of Christ! It is our Lord’s Glory that He mediates between man and God, pleading for the unjust ones, using as His all-prevailing argument the blood which He has shed. But I must not leave out the fact that He who now in Glory pleads for sinners will speedily come, again, to gather all His own unto Himself, to shed abroad on them the fullness of His own Glory and to take them up to be with Him where He is. There is wondrous light in the Gospel, both for the future and the present! It sets forth to us the Glory of Christ, the Glory of love, the Glory of mercy, the Glory of a blood which can wash the blackest, white! The Glory of a plea which can make the poorest prayer, acceptable! The Glory of a living and triumphant Savior, who, having put His hands to the work, will not fail nor be discouraged till all the purposes of infinite love shall be achieved by Him. This is “the Gospel of the Glory of Christ” and the light of it is exceedingly clear and bright!

We are now called to a second Truth of God—the Gospel is a light which reveals God, Himself, for, according to our text, the Lord Jesus is the image of God. Did not Jesus say, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father”? For, first, our Lord Jesus is the image of God in this sense, that He is essentially One with God. He is “the brightness of the Father’s Glory and the express image of His Person.” He is “very God of very God,” as the creed has it, and I know not how better to express the idea. Our Lord Himself said, “I and My Father are One.” But the text means more than that. Christ is the image of God in this sense, that He shows us what God is. If you know the Character of Jesus, you know the Character of God.

God Himself is invisible and is not seen of mortal eyes; neither can He be comprehended of finite mind. He cannot, indeed, be truly known at all except by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But all that *can* be known of God is fairly written in capital letters in the Person of Jesus. What higher conception of God can you have? Even those who have denied our Lord’s Deity have yet been subdued into admiration by His matchless Character. Read His life through and see if you could improve it. Can you suggest anything that should be left out, or anything that could be added? He is God and in Him we see God as far as it is possible for us to discern that matchless Father of our spirits! Thus the Gospel is full of light, revealing, first, the Mediator and then the Lord God, Himself.

Now, dear Friends, this Gospel of the Glory of Christ is really light to us, that is to say, it brings with it all that the metaphor of light sets forth. First of all it brings illumination. It is a lighting up of the soul “to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” It is light to the understanding to be able to see that the Only-Begotten has revealed the Father. Man feels after God as if, by chance, he may find Him and the heathen stumbles upon this and that in his blind groping. Perhaps the world was nearest the truth when it called Him, “the unknown God.” When the wisdom of this world once began to define and to describe the Deity—then it proved its own folly. “The world by wisdom knew not God,” but in the Person of the Lord Jesus we have the true icon, the image and representation of the Godhead.

It cannot be said of true Christians, “You worship you know not what,” for we know what we worship! Each one of us can affirm, “I know whom I have believed.” We have no question about who is our God, or what He is. There is a knowledge given by the Gospel to men which creates daylight in the understanding. But it is light in another sense, namely, that of comfort. Let a man see God in Jesus Christ and he cannot be unhappy. Is it sin that burdened him? Let him see Jesus Christ bearing sin in His own body on the Cross and let him believe in this same Sin-Bearer—and that burden is gone! Let him be fretting under the cares and trials of life and let him get a view, by faith, of Jesus—an infinitely greater Sufferer— sympathizing with him in his sorrow and surely the sting of his grief is removed!

Is he afraid to die? Let him hear Jesus say, “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” and he shall be taught to *long* for death rather than to dread it! Is he troubled about the things to come? Does the awful future hover darkly before him? Let him only hear Jesus say, “I am He that lives and was dead, and am alive forevermore, amen, and hold the keys of Hell and death,” and he will no longer be afraid of the separate world of spirits of which Christ has the key nor will he tremble at the burning of the world and the ruin of creation—for he has a hold upon One who has said— “Because I live, you shall live, also.” Never did such another light ever shine upon the sons of men! Neither for instruction nor for comfort can this eternal Truth of God be rivaled!

It were not in the power of an archangel to tell you the joy which this “Gospel of the Glory of Christ” has given to the sons and daughters of affliction! Wherever it comes, it liberates the captive mind and removes the pains of remorse. At the very sight of it, tearful eyes are brightened till they flash with delight! Oh, the joy unspeakable of having Christ to be our Savior and the glorious God to be our Father! He is rich to all the intents of bliss who knows this. This is light and all else is darkness!

We now advance a step, and observe that— **II.**THIS GOSPEL IS, IN ITSELF, MOST PLAIN AND CLEAR. The Gospel contains nothing which can perplex anybody unless he wishes to be perplexed. There is nothing in the Gospel which a man may not apprehend if he desires to apprehend it. It is all plain to the man who yields his understanding to his God. Whenever I get a book which puzzles me, very much, to make out its meaning, I wish I could send it back to the author and tell him to write it over, again, because I am sure he is not very clear about his own meaning—or else he could easily make me know what he meant. A man has never fairly mastered a subject until he is able to communicate his thoughts on that subject so that persons of ordinary intelligence can tell what he means.

Now, the Lord has, in His own mind, a clearly-defined way of salvation for men and He has expressed Himself without ambiguity. Certain divines like to preach an incomprehensible Gospel, for it gives them the air of wisdom in the judgment of the foolish. Certain hearers prefer sermons which they cannot understand. To them the difficult and intricate are as marrow and fatness. I heard of one who said he liked a bit of gristle in the sermons, or a bone to try his teeth upon. We could easily gratify such friends, but we see no authority in Scripture for gratifying this longing. I carefully endeavor to take the stones out of the fruit before preparing the dish. When we are eating, it is by no means a good thing to swallow the bones, for our digestion might not master them and we might be injured by their presence within.

Souls want *spiritual* nutriment, not problems and riddles. So, when a man preaches the Gospel so that you cannot make heads or tails of it, you need not fret, for what he has to say is not worth your trouble in listening to it! If it is the Lord’s own Gospel, you who are doers of the Lord’s will can understand it. And if you cannot, it is not the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, but a gospel of human inventing! The true Gospel is simplicity itself. Listen! That God should come among men and espouse our Nature is so far a great mystery that we do not know how it could be! Blessed be God, we do not *need* to know how it was done—we only know that it *was* done and that fact is enough for us. We understand that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we rejoice therein. Observe the doctrine of the Atonement—this, also, as a fact is plain enough! How it became right for Christ to suffer in our place and for His sufferings to be an expiation for our sins may be a very deep question, but the fact is clearly revealed.

I do not think Substitution to be a bewildering mystery, but some do. What if it is? The secret reason of it is nothing to us! If God has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for our sins, our most reasonable course is to accept Him. We need not quarrel with Grace because we cannot understand everything about it. It is wiser to eat that which is set before us than to die of hunger because we do not know all the secrets of cooking! I am not asked to understand *how* God justifies us in Christ, but I am asked to*believe* that He does! The fact is plain enough and the fact is the objective of *faith*. That Jesus should suffer in my place is a simple matter of the Truth of God and in it there is no darkness at all. That precious doctrine that we are justified by faith—that all the merit of Christ’s glorious work comes to us simply by our *believing*—is there any difficulty about that? I know that men may argue till they are blue in the face, but the doctrine is plain as a pikestaff!

At times persons enquire, “What is believing?” Well, it is *trusting*, depending, leaning upon, relying upon—that is all. Is there anything hard about that? Do you want to put on your spectacles to see through it? Will it require a week to work your way into the idea? No, the fact that God was made flesh and dwelt among us, and that being found in fashion as a Man, He became obedient to death for our sakes and that He now bids us simply trust Him and we shall live, is as simple as any Truth within the sphere of knowledge! Some people would like a gospel of puzzlement—they prefer a little confusion of the intellect—they love to wander in a luminous haze in which nothing is clearly defined. They feel that they are getting on when they are leaving others behind and rising into sublime absurdity!

Now, suppose the Gospel consisted in terrible mysteries, bristling with matters hard to be understood? Suppose it required 18 volumes to be read through before you could see it? Suppose it needed mathematical precision and classical elegance before you could see it—millions would never get to Heaven, for they have never read through a single volume and, therefore, they are not likely to digest a library! Some men are so busy and some have their brains so constituted that they never will be deep students—and if the Gospel required of them deep thought and long research—they might give themselves up for lost. If men needed to be philosophers in order to be Christians, the majority of men would be out of the pale of hope! If the masses of the people must read hard before they can catch the idea of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, they will never catch the idea—they must inevitably perish.

And would you, learned men, like them to perish? I fear that some of you have less concern about that than about your own credit for talent and thought! For the sake of getting a profound little gospel all to yourselves, you would dig a moat around the Cross of Christ to keep the vulgar crowd from intruding! That is *not* the Gospel, nor the spirit of the Lord Jesus! Take care lest you miss the Truth of God yourselves! I fear that while you are fumbling for the latch of Heaven’s gate, the people whom you despise will get inside the door and be singing, “Glory, hallelujah, we have found the Savior.” The Lord permits the disputer of this world to stumble, while those who receive the Kingdom of God as little children, find out the great secret and rejoice in it!

Suppose the Gospel had been such a difficult thing to explain and such a very hard matter to understand—what would become of the many who are now rejoicing in Christ and yet have, by birth and constitution, the most shallow capacities? It is wonderful how one but little raised above an idiot can yet grasp the Gospel! What a blessing that it is so! I have heard of a poor boy whom his teachers had been instructing for years and, one day, they said to him, “Well, Jack, have you a soul?” “No, I’ve got no soul.” They feared that they had lost their labor, but their minds were changed when he added, “I had a soul, once, and I lost it. And Jesus Christ came and found it and so I let Him keep it.” That was better Gospel than we get from many a learned divine! He had the whole thing at his fingertips! Christ had found his soul and was keeping it for him—even He who will not fail to keep that which we have committed to His charge.

We clap our hands for joy because the Gospel reveals the plain man’s pathway to Heaven and makes the most illiterate wise unto salvation! The shepherd on Salisbury Plain can understand the Gospel as well as the Bishop in Salisbury Cathedral! And the dairyman’s daughter can feel its power as fully as a Princess! Suppose the Gospel were hard to be understood, what should we do at our deathbed? We are sent to see persons who have neglected attendance upon the means of Grace and are dying in ignorance. It is our sorrowful task to explain the path of life to them when they are entering upon the dark descent of death.

While the lamp continues to burn, we have hope and, therefore, we proceed to state the way by which a sinner may return to God. Is it not well to have it packed away in a small compass and expressed in common words? We tell them that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. What could we do if the Gospel were not, thus, plain? Must I have a handcart and wheel it about with me, so as to carry to each dying man half-a-dozen folios in Latin? Nothing of the kind! Right well do Cowper’s often-quoted lines set forth the plainness of the Gospel and rebuke those who reject it on that account—

***“Oh how unlike the complex work of man, Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan! No meretricious graces to beguile,  
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile—  
From ostentation as from weakness free,  
It stands like the sky-blue arch we see,  
Majestic in its own simplicity!  
Inscribed above the portal from afar  
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,  
Legible only by the light they give,  
Stand the soul-quickening words—  
Believe and Live!  
Too many, shocked at what should charm them must, Despise the plain direction and are lost.  
Heaven on such terms? (They cry with proud disdain)— Incredible! Impossible and vain!—  
Rebel because ‘tis easy to obey,  
And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.”***

**III.**Thirdly, IN THE TRUE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, THIS SIMPLICITY IS PRESERVED. Paul expressly said— “Having this hope in us, we use great plainness of speech.” And again, “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” The Apostle Paul was a deep thinker, a man of profound insight and subtle mind. The bent of his mind was such that he would have made a metaphysician of supreme rank, or a mystic of the deepest darkness—but he went against his natural inclinations and devoted all his energies to the unveiling of the Gospel! It was a sublime selfdenial for him to put on one side all his logic among the other things which he counted loss for Christ—for he says, “I determined not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

He “determined.” He was resolute and had made up his mind to it, or he would not have accomplished it. He was the man who wrote some things hard to be understood, which Peter mentions, but when he came to the Gospel, he would have nothing but simplicity! He was tender among them as a nurse with her child and made himself an instructor of babes, dealing out the Word of God with such plainness as children would require! The true man of God will not veil the Gospel beneath performances and ceremonies! Mark those who do this and avoid them! We see “His Reverence” walking with clasped hands to the right and to the left, repeating Latin sentences unknown by the people! He turns and bobs, and turns again! We see his face for a moment and then his back. I suppose it is all meant for edification—but I, poor creature—cannot find the least instruction in it, nor, as far as I can discover, do the people who are looking on!

What do these little boys in pretty gowns, making such a smoke, mean? And what are these flowers and images on the altar? What a splendid cross is that which adorns the priest’s back! It seems to be made of roses. The folks look on and some are wondering where he buys his lace, while others are speculating as to the quantity of wax which will be consumed in those candles every hour—and there is the end of it—Christ is veiled behind the millinery, if He is there at all! I know numbers who would disdain to do that and yet they hide their Lord under finery of *language*. It is a grand thing to mount aloft upon the wings of eloquence and display the Glory of speech till you ascend, in a splendid peroration, as many another exhibition closes with fireworks. But this is not becoming to preachers of the Lord Jesus!

I always tell our young men that one of their commandments should be, “You shall not ramble on.” To attempt anything grand in language when we are preaching salvation is to leave our proper work! Our one business is to tell out the Gospel *plainly*. We deal in bread, not in flowers! Let tawdry ornaments be left to the stage or to the bar, where men amuse themselves or dispute for gain—or let these poor gewgaws be reserved for the Senate where men will defend or denounce according as it suits their party. It is not ours to make the worse appear the better, or to hide the Truth of God under floods of words. As for us, we are to hide ourselves behind the Cross and make men know that Jesus Christ came to save the lost—and that if they believe in Him they shall be saved at once and forever! If we do not make them know this, we have missed our mark, however grandly we have performed. What? Shall we become acrobats with words, or jugglers displaying wonders? Then God is insulted, His Gospel is degraded and souls are left to perish!

I venture to put in a word for myself and then leave this point. I can say with the Apostle, “I have used great plainness of speech” and, therefore, if the Gospel which I have preached is hidden, I have not produced the veil. I have used vulgar words when I thought that they would be better understood and I have told all sorts of simple stories when I thought I could make the Gospel known. I have never used a hard word where I could help it. My one desire has been by manifesting the Truth of God to touch your consciences and win your hearts. If you see not the light, it is not because I have hidden it from you.

**IV.**With this we close. IF THE GOSPEL IS VEILED TO OUR HEARERS, IT IS A FATAL SIGN. “If our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” The god of this world has blinded their unbelieving eyes lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should dawn upon them. Not to believe, understand, appreciate and accept the Gospel is a sign of perishing. I want to put this very plainly to any here who say that they have not received the Gospel because they cannot understand it and they see nothing remarkable in it. If you have heard it plainly preached, it is so plain in itself that if it is hid from your eyes it is because you are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity!

You who receive the Gospel are saved! Faith is the saving token. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God—if you have accepted Him as your Savior whom God sets forth as such—then you are saved. But if you say, “No, I cannot see it,” then your eyes are blinded and you are lost! The sun is bright enough, but those who have no sight are not enlightened. Do you say, “I cannot receive the Gospel. I need something more difficult”? By sinful pride your judgment is perverted and your heart is hardened! While you are still among the unbelieving, you are still among the perishing—and the god of this world blindfolds you! O Spirit of God, convince men of this sin—that they believe not on Jesus Christ. This work is out of Your servant’s power, but, oh, You perform it! Oh that our text, like a sharp knife, may cut deep and reach the conscience! May this Truth of God pierce between the joints and marrow and discern the thoughts and intents of your hearts!

According to the text, he that believes not on Jesus Christ is a lost man. God has lost you—you are not His servant. The Church has lost you—you are not working for the Truth. The world has lost you, really— you yield no lasting service to it. You have lost yourself to right, to joy, to Heaven. You are lost, lost, lost, like the prodigal son when he was away from his father’s house. You are lost like the sheep that went astray from the fold. It is not only that you *will be* lost, but that you *are* lost, for, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” Press those two words upon your conscience— “Condemned already”—lost even now! You are perishing! That is to say, you are gradually passing into that condition in which you must abide forever as one that has perished before God and become utterly useless and dead.

It is an appalling truth that this is proved by the fact that you do not understand the Gospel, or, if you understand it, you do not appreciate it— you do not see beauty or Glory in it, or, if you do, in a measure appreciate it, and see some Glory in it, yet it has never stirred your affection or drawn your heart towards its great Subject. In a word, you have not come to trust in Jesus! He is the only One that you can trust to salvation and yet you reject Him! It must be the simplest thing in all world to trust in Christ and yet you will not do that simple thing! Trust in Him should be attended to at once and ought not to be delayed—and yet you have delayed for years! If faith brings salvation, why not have salvation? Why abide, still, in unbelief—in unbelief of the most glorious Truth that God, Himself, ever revealed to men—in unbelief of that which you dare not deny? Oh, what a condition to be in—willfully in darkness, shutting your eyes to the Light of God! You are certainly lost!

The Apostle explains how a man gets into that condition. He says that Satan, the god of this world, has blinded his mind. What a thought it is that Satan should set up to be God! Christ is the image of God. Satan is the imitator of God—he mimics God and holds an usurped power over men’s minds and thoughts. To maintain his power, he takes great care that his dupes should not see the light of the Gospel. The veils he uses are such as men’s selfish hearts approve, for he speaks thus—“If you were to become a Christian, you would never get on in the world.” He claps a sovereign on each eye and then you cannot see, though the sun shines at midday! Pride binds a silken band across the eyes and thus, again, the Light of God is excluded. Satan whispers, “If you become a Christian, you will be laughed at!” And he hoodwinks his victim with fear of ridicule. He has many a crafty device by which he perverts the human judgment till they cannot see that which is self-evident—and will not believe that which is unquestionable!

He makes the gain of Heaven to seem inconsiderable when weighed with the little loss which religion may involve. He hides from the soul the bliss of forgiven sin, of adoption into God’s family and the certainty of eternal Glory by throwing dust into the eyes, so that the mind cannot look at things truthfully. What shall I say, in closing, but this—are you lost, any of you? Upon the showing of the text all of you *are* to whom the Gospel is hidden! Well, but thank God you may yet be found—lost today, but you need not be lost tomorrow! Lost while sitting in these pews—but you may be found before you leave the Tabernacle! The Good Shepherd has come to find His lost sheep. Have you any desire after Him? Have you any wish to return to Him? Then look to Him with a trustful glance!

You are not lost if so you look, nor shall you ever be! He that believes in Jesus is saved and saved *eternally*. Are any of you blinded? You must be so if the Gospel is hid from you, so that you cannot see its brightness. Ah, but you need not*remain* in the dark! There is One here, today, who opens blind eyes! Cry to Him as did the two blind men, “You, Son of David, have mercy on me! You, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The Messiah came on purpose to give sight to the blind—it was a part of His commission when He came forth from the Father’s Glory. He will give sight to you! Oh seek it! Is the god of this world your master? He must be if you do not see the Glory of the Gospel! But he need not be your god any longer! I pray the Holy Spirit to help you to dethrone this intruder. Why should you adore *him*? What good has he ever done for you? What is there about his character that makes him worthy to be your god?

Break off his yoke! Burst the fetters which now hold you his slave. The true God has come in the flesh to set you free and to destroy all the works of the devil! Whatever keeps you from beholding the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ can be removed. I am sent to say, in my Master’s name, “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned: he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Trust the Savior, trust the Incarnate God! Trust Him now and trust Him at once—and though a moment ago you were black as Hell’s midnight, you shall be clean and bright as Heaven’s eternal noon!

In one instant sins that have taken you 50 years to accumulate shall disappear! The transgressions of all your days shall be plunged beneath the sea and shall be found no more! Only be willing and obedient—and yield yourselves up to the Incarnate God who always lives to take care of those who put their trust in Him! May the Lord bless you, dear Friends, forevermore. Amen and amen.

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THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST  
NO. 2077

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MARCH 31, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.”  
2 Corinthians 4:4~~***

SHINING in the center of the verse, like a pearl in its setting, you find these words. Literally and accurately translated, they run thus—“The light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” This is the form given to my text in the Revised Version and I shall follow it because, word for word, it follows the original.

Paul was a man of one idea. The Gospel of Christ had saturated his soul as the dew saturated Gideon’s fleece. He could think of nothing else and speak of nothing else but the glory of Christ Crucified. Important events in politics transpired in the Apostle’s day but I cannot remember an allusion to them. Great social problems were to be solved, but his one and only solution was the preaching of that great Savior who is to cleanse the Augean stables of the world. For Paul there was but one thing worth living for and that one thing was worth dying for. He did not count even his life dear unto him that he might win Christ and be found in Him.

Therefore his spirits rose or sank according to the prosperity or decline of the kingdom of Christ. When he writes an Epistle his mood varies according to the spiritual condition of the people to whom he writes. If their faith grows exceedingly and if from them sounds forth the Word of God, then he is jubilant in his tone. But if they are declining in Divine Grace Divine Grace, if there are divisions among them, if false doctrine is ravaging them like a wolf in the sheepfold—then he is solemn in spirit and he writes with a heavy hand. In this case Paul laments the condition of those who could not see what was so plain to himself—namely, the Gospel of the glory of Christ.

He saw most clearly the glory of his Lord and that precious Gospel which is built up thereon and he marveled that others could not see it also. Considering their case with care he sorrowfully perceived that they must first have shut their eyes by willful unbelief. Therefore he felt Satan had exercised his evil power and had utterly blinded them. The blaze of the Gospel is so bright, that even with their eyes averted, some measure of light must have entered their minds—unless some especial evil power had operated to hold them in darkness. The devil himself, Paul perceived, must have blinded them, but even Satan found it a great task to shut out the glorious light. To accomplish it he had to amass all his power as “the god of this world.”

It required a great amount of cunning to close the perceptive faculties of men against the clear and forcible light of the Truth of the Gospel. The light of the glorious Gospel, like that of the morning dawn, would have been seen even by dim eyes had not the infernal prince blindfolded the thoughts of men and made their minds as dark as his own. The light of the Gospel is intense, and by a faithful ministry it is flashed in the very faces of men. Therefore, in fear of losing his subjects, the Prince of Darkness hastens to blind their eyes. Jesus comes to give sight, but Satan comes to destroy it. They each know the value of those eyes by which men look and live. The battle rages at the mental Eye Gate. The conflict between the two champions is raised upon the question—shall men behold the light—or shall they abide in darkness?

I wonder whether there are any here at this time who have long been willing unbelievers and have at last come to be quite unable to perceive any glory in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. When they hear it faithfully preached they flippantly criticize the style of the speaker. But the matter of which he speaks appears to them to be of small consequence. They pass by the Cross itself and the sorrow of the Lord is nothing to them. These may be very intelligent men and women in other matters and yet have no perception of the spiritual Truth of God. They can perceive a thousand beauties in nature but none in Divine Grace. They have drunk of the Castilian fountain but have never sipped of “the waters of Shiloh that go softly.”

They can discuss at large upon the sublime and beautiful. But they see neither beauty nor sublimity in Him who is all that is lovely and all that is heavenly. I pray that while I am speaking of the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ that light may penetrate their minds. May God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness speak again the almighty fiat, saying, “Let there be light.” And there shall be light. May the miracle of the old creation be repeated in the new creation to the praise of the glory of Divine Grace.

First, this morning I shall ask you to think upon Paul’s words and consider his name for the Gospel—it is “the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” Secondly, let us consider the light which streams from that Gospel of the glory of Christ. When we have thought of these two things, let us consider what to do with this light, this marvelous light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.

**I.**At the outset LET US CONSIDER PAUL’S NAME FOR THE GOSPEL— “the Gospel of the glory of Christ.”  
It is very evident that the Apostle felt that the Gospel was solely and altogether of Christ. The Anointed was, in his view, the one subject of the glad tidings from beginning to end. When He was born the angels proclaimed good tidings of great joy to the sons of men. And after His death His human messengers went forth to all nations with messages of love. His death is the birth of our hope—His resurrection is the rising of our buried joy. His session at the right hand of God is the prophecy of our eternal bliss. Christ is the Author of the Gospel, the Subject of the Gospel and the end of the Gospel. His hand is seen in every letter of that wonderful Epistle of Divine love called the New Testament, or New Covenant.  
He Himself is glad tidings to us in every point and the Gospel is from Him in every sense. That is not Gospel which does not relate to Jesus. If there is no mark of blood upon it, the roll of tidings may be rejected as a forgery. As Christ is the Subject, so is He the Object of the Gospel—His Glory is promoted by the Gospel. It is the Gospel of His Glory among the sons of men in all ages and it will be so throughout eternity. The Gospel, and the sinners saved by it, will glorify the Son of God forever.  
To Paul the Gospel was always a glorious Gospel. He never had dim views of its excellence. He never spoke of it as though it stood in doubtful competition with Judaism, or heathenism, or the philosophies of the Stoics and the Epicureans. These things were but dross to him in comparison with the “much fine gold” of the Gospel. He spoke of it in glowing terms— he felt it to be a great privilege and responsibility to be put in trust with it and to be allowed to preach it. It was the joy of his heart to live upon it himself and it was his one aim to proclaim it to others. “The glorious Gospel of the blessed God” was his one absorbing science and he determined to know nothing else.  
O you that are beginning to think lightly of the old Gospel and dream that it is becoming powerless—may the Spirit that rested upon the Apostle rest upon you till you, also, shall perceive the glory of the method of Divine Grace and shall speak of it fervently as “the glorious Gospel of Christ”!  
Returning to the literal translation, we remark that the Apostle saw that the excellence of the Gospel lay in the glory of Christ. I shall try to show you this. The glorious Savior is the Substance of the glorious Gospel. In speaking of this theme I can only repeat what you know already, and in that repetition I shall not strive after elaborate expressions but tell the story simply, after the manner of the Apostle who says, “Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.” The glory of Christ would be insulted by attempts to set it forth with finery of words. Let it be seen in its own light.  
The glory of the Gospel, then, lies very much in the glory of our Lord’s Person. He who is the Savior of men is God—“God over all, blessed forever.” Is it not written, “When He brings in the first begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him”? With the angels of God we worship Jesus Christ as God. Our Redeemer is also man— man like ourselves with this exception—that in Him there is no taint of natural depravity and no act of sin has ever stained His Character. Behold the glory of Him who is God and Man mysteriously united in one Person! He is unique—He is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the Brother born for adversity.  
This is the Gospel—that the Son of God, Himself, gloriously undertook the salvation of men and therefore was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory. If we had here a vast hospital full of sick people it would be the best of news for those languishing there. If I could tell them that a great Physician had devoted Himself to their healing—the more I extolled the Physician who had come to visit them—the more would there be good news for them. If I could say to them, “The Physician who is coming to succor you is possessed of infallible wisdom and unerring skill and in Him are united loving tenderness and infinite power”—how they would smile upon their beds!  
Why, the very news would half restore them! Should it not be much more so with desponding and despairing souls when they hear that He who has come to save is none other than the glorious Christ of God? The mysteriously majestic Person of Christ is the mainstay of the Gospel. He who is able to save is no angel and no mere man—He is “Emmanuel, God with us.” Infinite are His resources, boundless is His Grace. O, you guilty ones who lie upon beds of remorse, ready to die of grief, here is a Savior such as you need. When you think of what you are and despair—think also of what He is—and take heart.  
If I made you doubt the Deity of the Savior I should cut away the foundation of your only hope. But while you see Him to be God, you remember that nothing is too hard for Him. If I caused you to doubt His proper Manhood I should also rob you of comfort, since you would not recognize in Him the tender sympathy which grows out of kinship. Beloved, the Lord Jesus stands before you commissioned by the eternal God with the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him without measure. And thus, being in Nature and Person the first and the best, His message of salvation is to you most full and sure and His Glory is *Gospel* to you.  
The glory of Christ lies not only in His Person but in His love. Remember this, and see the Gospel which lies in it. From all eternity the Son of God has loved His people—even from of old, “His delights were with the sons of men.” Long before He came on earth He so loved the men whom His Father gave Him that He determined to be one with them and for their redemption to pay the dreadful price of life for life. He saw the whole company of His chosen in the glass of His foreknowledge and loved them with an everlasting love. The love which glowed in the heart of our Redeemer “in the beginning”—that same love will never know an end!  
Here, to us, is His Glory. He loved us so that Heaven could not hold Him. He loved us so that He descended to redeem us. And having come among us amid our sin and shame, He loves us still. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Love, you have reached your utmost glory in the heart of the Divine Savior! And the glory of this love which is without beginning, boundary, change, or close, is the very lifeblood of the Gospel. The love of Jesus is the glad tidings of great joy. Our great Physician loves the sick and delights to heal them. He comes into the wards among the palsied and the plague-stricken with an intense longing to bless them. Jesus is the sinner’s Friend. How rapturously does my soul sing of Him as “Jesus, lover of my soul”! A gracious Gospel lies in the glory of the love of Christ!  
This being so, Beloved, we next see the glory of His incarnation. To us it was the glory of Christ that He was born at Bethlehem and dwelt at Nazareth. It looks like dishonor that He should be the carpenter’s son. But throughout all ages this shall be the glory of the Mediator—that He deigned to be partaker of our flesh and blood. There is glory in His poverty and shame—glory in His having nowhere to lay His head. Glory in His weariness and hunger. Surpassing glory springs from Gethsemane and the bloody sweat, from Calvary and the death of the Cross. All Heaven could not yield Him such renown as that which comes from the spitting and the scourging, the nailing and the piercing.  
A glory of Divine Grace and tenderness surrounds the incarnate God. And this, to those convicted of sin, is the Gospel. When we see God in human flesh we expect reconciliation. When we see that He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses we hope for pardon and healing. Born of a virgin, our Lord has come among us and has lived on earth a life of service and of suffering—there must be hope for us. He came not into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. I pray you can see the glory of His life of doing good, of working miracles of mercy, of tender care for the fallen. Then ask yourselves whether there is not in His life among men good news for all sad hearts.  
Did God Himself cover His Glory with a veil of our inferior clay? Then He means well to men. Humanity thus honored by union with the Godhead is not utterly abhorred. In the Word made flesh we see the Glory of God, and noting how love predominates, how condescending pity reigns, we see in this a Gospel of Divine Grace for all believing men.  
The glory of Christ is further seen in His atoning sacrifice. But you stop me and say, “That was His humiliation and His shame.” Yes, it is true, and therefore it is His Glory. Is not the Christ to every loving heart most of all glorious in the death of the Cross? What garment does so well become our Beloved as the vesture dipped in His own blood? He is altogether lovely. Let Him be arrayed as He may. But when our believing hearts behold Him covered with bloody sweat we gaze upon Him with adoring amazement and rapturous love. His flowing crimson bedecks Him with a robe more glorious than the imperial purple. We fall at His feet with sevenfold reverence when we behold the marks of His passion.  
Is He not most of all illustrious as our dying Substitute? Beloved, here lies the marrow of the Gospel. Jesus Christ suffered in our place. “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” That glory of His Cross which we again declare to be greater glory than any other, is Gospel to us. On His Cross He bore the whole weight of Divine justice in our place. The iron rod of Jehovah which would have broken us into pieces like potters’ vessels fell on Him. He “became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross,” and in that act He slew death and overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil—  
***“His Cross a sure foundation laid  
For glory and renown,  
When through the regions of the dead  
He passed to reach the crown.”***

Beloved, the glory of His sacrificial death by which He blotted out our sin and magnified the Law is the Gospel of our salvation.

We will now travel a little further to His resurrection—wherein His Glory is more palpable to us. He could not be held by the bonds of death. He was dead—His holy body could die but it could not see corruption. Having slept a little while within the chamber of the tomb, He arose and came forth to light and liberty—the living Christ glorified by His resurrection. Who shall tell the glory of the risen Lord?—

***“Rising, He brought our Heaven to light,***

***And took possession of the joy.”***  
Rising, He sealed our justification. Rising, He rifled the sepulcher and released the captives of death. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.”

Let us rejoice that He is not dead, but ever lives to make intercession for us. This is the Gospel to us—because He lives we shall live also. “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Oh the glory of our risen Lord! Consider it deeply, meditate upon it earnestly. And as you do so, hear the clear sound of glad tidings of great joy. For our greatest consolation we do not look to this precept or to that promise so much as to Jesus Himself. It is He who has by His rising from the dead given us the surest pledge and guarantee of our deliverance from the prison of guilt, the dungeon of despair and the sepulcher of death.

Once more—lift up your eyes a little higher and note the glory of our Lord’s enthronement and of His second coming. He sits at the right hand of God. He that once was hung upon the tree of shame now sits on the Throne of universal dominion. Instead of the nail, behold the scepter of all worlds in His most blessed hand. All things are put under His feet. Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, is now crowned with glory and honor and this is the Gospel to us. For it is plain that He has conquered all our enemies and has all power in Heaven and in earth on our behalf. His acceptance with God is the acceptance of all whom He loves. And He loves all who trust Him.

His sitting in glory is a pledge that the whole of the redeemed by blood shall sit there in due time. His second coming, for which we daily look, is our most Divine hope. Perhaps before we fall asleep the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. And then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then will our weary days be ended—the strife of tongues, the struggle against sin, the stratagems of error—all will be finished and truth and holiness shall reign supreme!

O my Brethren—if I could but break loose from the impediments of mouth and tongue and speak my heart without these cumbrous organs— then would I make you rejoice in the glory of my Divine Master upon His Throne today and in His glorious appearing at the appointed hour. If we could see Him as John did in Patmos we might swoon at His feet. But it would be with the rapture of hope and not with the chill of despair. Mark this—the less you make of Christ, the less Gospel you have to trust in. If you get rid of Christ from your creed you have at the same time destroyed all its good news.

The more Gospel we would preach, the more of Christ we must proclaim. If you lift up Christ, you lift up the Gospel. If you dream of preaching the Gospel without exalting Christ in it you will give the people husks instead of true bread. In proportion as the Lord Jesus is set up on a glorious high throne He becomes salvation to the sons of men. A little Christ means a little Gospel. But the true Gospel is the Gospel of the glory of Christ.

**II.**Secondly, LET US CONSIDER THE LIGHT OF THIS GOSPEL. Our Apostle speaks of “the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.”  
That light is, first of all, unveiled. Whatever light there was in the Law— and there was much—it was latent light. The veil on the face of Moses was typical of the way in which the ceremonies of the Law were hidden from the sight of men. We forget that a great majority of those things we read in the Law were never seen by the Israelites as a people. Do not suppose that any Israelite ever looked within the veil—none but the high priest ever entered there. Even the Holy Place outside the veil was reserved for the priests. The most of the sacrificial *types* were as much matters of faith to the Israelites as the *meaning* is a matter of faith to us.  
They did not even see the patterns of the heavenly things—they had to be told of them. And in the hearing they had to exercise faith as we also do. But, my Brethren, our Gospel is not of the veil which hides, but of the lamp which shines. We use no reserve among you. I solemnly declare before God that I believe nothing which I do not preach among you openly and I give no sense to the words which I use but that which is natural to them. “For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity but as from God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”  
We have heard of preachers who believe very differently from what they openly say. The deed of trust requires some little consonance with evangelical doctrine, but they loathe it in their souls and tell their Brethren so in private. But as for us, “we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully.” We dare preach everything that we believe and preach it as plainly as possible. The more you know us through and through, the more glad we shall be. Our Gospel is one which may be advertised everywhere—we have nothing to conceal.  
I have heard that William Gadsby of Manchester, traveling on a coach one day, asked two heretical Divines to tell him how a sinner is justified in the sight of God. “No,” said they, “you won’t catch us in that fashion. Whatever answer we gave you would be repeated all over Manchester within a week.” “Oh,” said he, “then I will tell you. A sinner is justified in the sight of God by faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Go and tell that all over Manchester and all over England as quickly as you like. For I believe nothing that I am ashamed of.”  
Light rejoices to proclaim itself. The Gospel is a light and lights are not meant to be hidden under bushels or beds. If they are buried in that way, they will burn their way to resurrection and the bushels and the beds will be consumed and make all the greater light. The Gospel of the blessed God is intended to be conspicuous as the lighthouse on the rock which is seen afar. It is so illuminating that everyone in the house may see by it. The Gospel which is not known is of no value—the true Gospel is as much intended to be understood as light is meant to be seen.  
This light, in the next place, is all its own. You cannot illuminate the Gospel—it is itself an illumination. Would I not be an idiot if I were to say to my deacon behind me, “Dear Friend, kindly get me a candle—I want to show these people the sun. I do not see the sun just now but I will lead them into the street and by the help of this candle we will search the sky till we find it”? I think I hear you say, “Our pastor is out of his mind.” Such conduct might well justify the suspicion. It is not by human light that we can show the Gospel of God. Not by rhetoric and reasoning do men perceive the light of the Gospel. There is a self-manifesting and a selfevidencing power in the Gospel. It runs on its own feet and needs no crutches.  
If men would read their Bibles they would, as a rule, believe their Bibles. But they will not read them. If men would hear the Gospel attentively, they would, as a general rule, believe the Gospel. But they will not give it the attention it deserves. It needs no effort to see a bright light. If men would only open their eyes to the light of the Gospel they would see it. If they would only think upon the glory of the Gospel of Christ, its light would find its way into their souls. Where the Gospel shines in all its brilliance, men have to put up their shutters to keep out its light. But they do even worse—they call in the devil to gouge out their eyes that they may not be forced to see.  
In itself the Gospel has such a wonderful power of making itself felt, that if men did not resist its influence it would reveal Divine things to them. I wish I could induce unbelievers here to read the story of the crucifixion every morning and to keep on reading it and studying it. For I am persuaded that the light which streams from the Cross would, by the blessing of God, open their eyes and enter their souls savingly. For, mark you—the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ is Divine light.  
Paul tells us this when he says, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The Gospel is either Divine or it is a lie—it has a supernatural power about it or else it is an impostor. The true power of the Gospel of Christ lies not in its natural reasonableness, in its adaptation to human need, in its moral beauty, but in the attendant power of the Spirit of God. God is in the Gospel and therefore it is mighty.  
We may preach to you for a thousand years altogether and never a soul of you would receive Christ unless the same Spirit that spoke light into the primeval dark should say, “Let there be light.” Salvation is a *supernatural* process. God Himself must come upon the scene before the eyes of a man born blind will see. How this Truth exalts God and lowers man! Yes. And the lower we are brought, the better. When we get to feel our utter helplessness, then will our extremity prove to be the opportunity of the Grace of God. O heavenly light, shine now into the soul of all who hear or read this sermon!  
This light is a revealing light. Whenever the light of the glory of Christ comes streaming into the heart it reveals the hidden things of darkness. When the glory of Christ is seen, then we see our own shame and sinfulness. Did it need God Himself to redeem us? Then we must have been in dire bondage. Did it need the incarnate God should die? Then sin must be exceeding sinful! That is a deep pit which needs that God should come from Heaven to lift us out of it. We never see the impotence and depravity of human nature as well as in the light of the glory of Christ.  
When He is seen as undertaking this tremendous work and as putting His almighty shoulder to it, then we clearly perceive what help man needed and how great was his fall. What a revelation it is when the light shines into the secret chambers of imagery and the idol gods are made manifest in all their hideousness! May God send this light to many, that their ruin, their doom, their remedy, and their way of obtaining it may be plainly perceived.  
The light of the Gospel also enlivens. No other light will give life to the dead. You may make the strongest light in the world flash frequently upon a corpse but there will be neither breath nor pulse. But the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ brings life with it. “The life was the light of men.” “Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light.” Darkness is death, but the light of God is life. Let but this Sun of Righteousness arise and He not only brings healing but life. Shine, glorious Lord—let Your glory shine forth! And as it pours its brilliance into the minds of men their dead hearts shall beat with the life of hope and holiness and they will see the Lord!  
This light is photographic—you get that in the neighborhood of the text—in the last verse of the third chapter. See the Revised Version—“But we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.” The light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ imprints Christ’s image upon the character of Believers. We see Him, and seeing His love we learn to love. Seeing His life we learn to live. Seeing His full atonement, we hate evil—seeing His resurrection, we rise to newness of life. By the power of the Spirit working from day to day we are quietly transformed from our old likeness and conformed to the likeness of Christ till our deformity is lost in a blessed comeliness of conformity to Him.  
If we saw Him more clearly and more constantly we should grow into His likeness more rapidly. No sanctification is worth having but that which comes of communion with the holy Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit. You may read the biographies of good men and you may copy them in all simplicity. But in the end you may become a caricature of perfection and not the very image itself. The perfect character of Jesus is yet the most easy to imitate. It is safe to copy Jesus. For in Him is no excess or defect. And strange to say, that character which is in some aspects inimitable is in others the most imitable of all.  
I have often been depressed in view of the high character of certain saints whom I honor because I have felt that I could never be like they are under any circumstances. I know one who is full of faith and goodness. But he is always solemn and constantly absorbed “in high meditations.” I never could grow exactly like he is, for there are certain mirthful elements in my constitution. And if they were taken away I should not be the same man. When I look at my Lord I see much in Him that is supernatural but nothing that is unnatural. We see in Him humanity in perfection. But the perfection never conceals the humanity. He is so holy as to be a perfect model—so human as to be a model available for poor creatures such as we are. Beloved, the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ is photographic.  
Yet further—it creates peace and joy. This light brings delight. I cannot imagine a man unhappy who clearly perceives the light of the glory of Christ. Is Christ glorious? Then it does not much matter what becomes of me. Have you ever heard of the dying and wounded soldiers in Napoleon’s wars who still clung to their emperor with an idolatrous love in the hour of death? Lifting himself upon his elbow, the soldier of the Old Guard gave one more cheer for the great captain. If the dying warrior saw Napoleon riding over the field he would with his last gasp cry, “Vive l’Empereur!” and then expire.  
We read of one that when the surgeons were trying to extract a bullet from his chest said, “Go a little deeper and you will find the Emperor.” He had him on his heart. Infinitely more commendable is the loyalty of the Believer to the Lord Christ. Though we die in a ditch, what does it matter so long as “God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father”?  
It makes the sick saint well to think of the triumphs of his Lord. Have you ever, when you have been sitting here heavy in heart, been borne aloft on wings of delight when we have been singing—  
***“Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all”?***  
Surely there is a Gospel in the glory of Christ to our sad hearts. That Gospel lifts us out of the dumps of doubt and fear into the clear blue sky of heavenly fellowship. God grant that we may feel this uplifting more and more! Thus have I tried to describe the qualities of this light. But you must see it for yourselves.  
**III.**And now I close by saying, LET US CONSIDER WHAT WE SHALL DO WITH THIS LIGHT.  
Do with it? Look towards it. Let us first indulge ourselves with a long and steady gaze upon it. No man can look long at the sun for it would blind him. But you may look at Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, as long as you please and your eyes will grow stronger the longer you gaze on His perfections. I beseech you, Beloved in the Lord, to get alone and give yourself to meditate upon the glory of the once-despised Jesus. Track Him from the cradle to the Cross, from the Cross to the crown. I cannot suggest to you any subject more instructive, more comforting, more ennobling than this. Look at this light—or it is a pleasant thing to behold—this sun.  
Have you ever heard how the Laplanders climb the hills when the sun is at last about to appear after the weary winter months? How they rejoice in the first beams of the rising sun! So let us rise to lofty meditation and look to our Lord and Master till we perceive His mediatorial glory and are blessed thereby. Have you no time? Give up your newspaper for a week that you may sanctify the time to the noble end of considering the glory of your Lord. If you will, I will warrant that you shall get a thousand times more out of such thought than from skimming the daily journal. Look unto Jesus and the light within will grow like the glory of Heaven.  
If you say that a man cannot always stand looking at the sun, I admit it, and change my advice to you. See all things by this light. How differently things look in sunlight to what they do by gaslight or candlelight! Let us regard all things by their appearance in the light of the glory of Christ. Then if you hear a sermon which does not glorify Christ it will be a lost discourse to you. Do not endure to see your Lord set in a low place. Hear no more of that talk which makes little of His blood and of His Substitution. You read a book—a very clever book—but instead of honoring Christ it glorifies human nature and you have soon had enough of it. Only that which is a good Gospel glorifies Christ—in this light you see things truly.  
Many of the wise men of the period ought to be treated as Diogenes treated Alexander. The conqueror of the world said to the man in the tub, “What can I do for you?” He thought he could do everything for the poor philosopher. Diogenes only replied, “Get out of the sunlight.” These wise people cannot do us a greater favor than to remove their learned selves from standing between us and the sunlight of the ever-blessed Gospel of the glory of Christ. These Alexanders may go on ruling the Christian world, and the infidel world, but they have not conquered us. Our faith and joy lie*outside* the world—in yonder Sun of Righteousness whose light is the rejoicing of our eyes!  
Beloved, when asked what we should do with this light, I answer again—value it. Esteem the glorious Gospel of Christ more than all besides. See at what rate the devil reckons it! He takes the trouble himself, to come up from the bottomless pit to blind men’s eyes for fear they should see it. When he perceives the blaze of the Gospel of the Glory of God, he says to himself, “Ah, they will be seeing the Truth of God and so they will escape from me. I must go myself and blind them.” So the “god of this age,” as he esteems himself, comes to unbelievers and blindfolds them in one way or another. He thrusts the hot iron of fatal unbelief upon men’s inward eyes and seals them in blackest night lest they should see “the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” Since, then, the devil thinks so much of this light, let us spread it with all diligence. If Satan hates it, let us love it. If this is the great gun which he dreads—let us wheel it to the front and keep up a constant cannonade from it.  
The Gospel is our Mons Meg, the biggest gun in the castle. But it is not out of date—it will carry a ball far enough to reach the heart of the sinner who is furthest from God. Satan trembles when he hears the roar of the Gospel gun. Let it never be silent.  
Let us also hold it out with the greatest confidence. This light must win in the long run. If you came to this building in the middle of the night somebody might say to you, “How can we get the darkness out of this building?” It would be a hopeless task. How could it be done? You cannot pump out the darkness. But if you fill the house with light the darkness will vanish of itself. Preach Christ and away goes the god of this world. Exalt Christ and down goes the devil. Beloved, let us persuade men to let this light shine around them. They cannot see it because of unbelief. But if it shines around them, it may bring them eyes. God the Holy Spirit blessing it, light will beget sight. Induce your friends to hear the Gospel and read the Word of God and who can tell but they will be saved?  
And, lastly, let all who try to preach and teach keep Christ always in the front. The Gospel must have Christ as its center and its circumference. In fact, as its All in All. The Gospel is not the Gospel without Christ. The Gospel will have no dominant idea in it but Christ. It is a noble steed but it will bear no rider but He whose vesture is dipped in blood. I have read of the famous horse Bucephalus, that when he was brought out with his royal trappings upon him he would not allow one even of the highest nobles of the court to mount him. He would carry no one but Alexander, the king.  
The Gospel is glorious in its going when it bears Jesus in the saddle. But if you preach *yourself* or human philosophy the Gospel will fling you over its head. Let us sing with the blessed virgin, “My soul does magnify the Lord and my spirit does rejoice in God my Savior.” This is a Gospel sonnet—this is a song which our Well-Beloved deserves of us. O you preachers and teachers, lift up Christ! He is as the serpent on the pole and all who look to Him shall live forever.  
Look to Him all you that are dying of serpent bites—for looking you shall LIVE. God bless these words in which I have desired to glorify my Lord! Amen.

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BLINDED BY SATAN  
NO. 2304

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, APRIL 16, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not.” 2 Corinthians 4:4.~~***

THE practice of blinding men is a horrible process, too horrible for us to say another word about it, but there is also a *spiritual* blindness which comes upon some men. These are, to begin with, unbelievers. The god of this world does not blind Believers—but he blinds the minds of them which believe not. It is, therefore, a very dangerous thing not to believe on the Son of God. The penalty of unbelief is death and condemnation—and that penalty begins to fall on men when, in consequence of their unbelief, their foolish heart is darkened, their intellect loses the power to perceive spiritual objects—and the god of this world blinds their mental vision. Ah, my Hearers, how anxious Satan is to secure your destruction, since, rather than that you should see the saving Light of God, he takes the trouble to blind your eyes! God grant that no man here may die under this dreadful deprivation of Light which is caused by Satanic influence upon the minds of men who have not believed in Jesus!

Remember that this blindness to spiritual things is quite consistent with much sharpness as to natural things. A man may be a very keen politician. He may be a first-rate man of business. He may be an eminent scientist, a profound thinker and, yet, he may be blinded as to spiritual Truths of God. How often is it true, “You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes”! As an old writer says, “Poor, ignorant men often find the door to Heaven and enter in, while the learned are looking for the latch.” Yes, a man may have clear eyes for worldly things. He may be very keen as to his insight into the problems of life and, yet, the god of this world may have blinded his eyes!

What is more remarkable, still, a man may have much Scriptural knowledge. He may understand, in the letter, the things of the Kingdom of God. He may be very orthodox in his beliefs and may be able to give an answer to those who ask him what he believes, and why he believes—but, still, he may have no *spiritual* perception of the reality of these things. A person may know something of botany from books and he may even understand the Linnaean system of classifying plants, but he may never, after all, have seen the primrose by the river’s brim, nor have gathered a single flower out of the garden. He is a poor botanist, is he not? He who has studied natural history in his own chamber, but has never seen a living animal, knows very little about the subject, after all! We have many round about us who can talk of Heaven and Hell, and sin and salvation, and Christ and the Holy Spirit who, nevertheless, have never had one true perception of the meaning of any of these words. They see, but perceive not. They hear, but do not understand—they are unbelievers and the god of this world has blinded their minds.

Now, I am going to say, tonight, first, that *this blindness is very common*. Secondly, that it *is worked by the Evil One upon men in different ways.* And, thirdly, I shall speak upon *the kind of treatment that this blindness requires*.

**I.**First, then, THIS BLINDNESS IS VERY COMMON.  
It is manifested in some by *occupation with this world*. Here is a man who has lived in this world for a good many years and, all that while he has been thinking, working, proposing, projecting, but what about? Why, about this world! He has generally been concerned with a trinity of questions—“What shall I eat? What shall I drink? With what shall I be clothed?” This man believes that he is to live forever in another world, that this present life is only like the porch of a house—that the state to come is the house, itself. All these years, 30, 40, 50, 60, seventy—may I say 80 years?—this man has never thought about the eternal world, but only about the temporary world! He has never thought about where he is to dwell forever, but has spent all his power and strength upon the passage to it. This is so unreasonable that I am sure he must be blind! I cannot account for his folly anyway else. Surely, the soul is more important than the body! We think more of the body than we do of the garment it wears, but the body, after all, is only the *garment of the soul*! The true ego, the I, myself, is my soul! Am I never to think of that, but only to be thinking of my earthly house, my food, my garments, my daily work? That is the kind of thing that a brute would think of—oxen and asses think of what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and where they shall lie down—if they think at all! And is this all of which you and I think? Surely, that occupation of the mind upon what must be of secondary consideration is a proof that the god of this world has blinded the mind!  
I will give you another example, from a different quarter, and that is, *the extreme easiness of conscience* which we see in many men and women. They can commit a great sin, wash their hands and then have done with it, as if the very washing of the hands or the wiping of the mouth was quite enough to put away all thought of the wrong. Many will sit here, tonight, who have, through a long life, committed a hundred sins of which they would be ashamed to be reminded, and yet they are not ashamed of them! They would only be ashamed to be found out—they are not ashamed of the sin, itself. A man truly awakened by the Spirit of God feels the remembrance of his sin to sting him as with scorpions! He cannot bear it. But the great mass of people do a thousand wrong things and yet they are not troubled, but feel quite at their ease.  
Some of you are probably within a very short time of death and judgment, and yet you can make sport of sin! How often does it happen that people come to the place of worship and go their way, having rejected solemn appeals—and they will never hear any more! They have had their last warning. Oh, if they could but know that, during the week, they will fall down dead, or be laid aside by sickness, never to leave the bed, again! Yet they trifle, on the brink of fate, on the very verge of everlasting woe! If you saw a man going straight on to the very brink of some dreadful precipice, and you saw him about to take another step, you would say, “That man is blind. I am sure that he is, or else he would not act like that.” People do not go into terrible danger with their eyes open—yet there are many of our fellow men, perhaps many of ourselves, going right on, carelessly and heedlessly—to the very brink of the awful abyss without a thought of danger! They must be blind! This horrible peace of conscience, this quenching of the Spirit whenever conscience stirs itself, this playing and trifling with death and judgment prove that they are blind!  
To give you another example, there are many who have *presumptuous hopes about the future.* At any rate, they do not trouble themselves. I do not know why they are so easy, but there are different forms of presumption which enable them to look into the future without fear. One says, “Well, you see, I was christened when I was a child, and I was confirmed as a youth.” Another says, “I have always attended the Meeting House. I am never absent from any of the services. I have subscribed my guinea to the hospital. I am kind to everybody. I think that most people would give me a good name.” Their dependence is on that sort of thing and they have never looked at what is really lacking. They will not stay to hear that Word of God, “You must be born again.” They will not listen to Christ when He says, “He that believes not shall be damned”—whatever his profession or moral character may be! No, but they go on dancing to destruction with a light and merry heart. Surely these people are blinded by Satan!  
Then see another sort of people, and note *their readiness to sin*. They yield to the tempter, they yield at the first request! There is no need for Satan to importune them to evil. They seem always ready for it, especially if they think that they can escape from trouble by doing wrong. Why, are there not many persons who would tell a lie to save a sixpence? Ah, to save a *penny*? The shop was open this morning—the profit made did not amount to two pence—but, still, the Sabbath was broken for that paltry sum! How many are selling their souls, not to gain the whole world, no, not to gain a four penny piece! They think so little of their souls and their eternal destiny, that, for the sake of a drop of beer, for the sake of an evening’s amusement, for the sake of pleasing a foolish companion they will fling their souls away as if they were only pebble stones not worth the keeping!  
Ah, Sirs, such people must be blind! People who have had their eyes opened spiritually have been known to die sooner than do the least thing that was wrong. Remember the man who was told that if he would give one farthing to be spent on incense to the heathen gods, his life should be spared? But the man knew the Lord and, therefore, he would sooner die than give a single mite towards the worship of idols! Men of God have cheerfully laid down their lives to defend even a slight point of God’s eternal Truth. But these men who think nothing of such holy heroism and are willing to lose their souls for a paltry pleasure, why, they must be blind!  
I need not stay to say more except this one thing. This blindness shows itself in *trifling with eternal things*. There is a person here who, not long ago, was very greatly awakened, even resolved to seek the Savior then and there. But when in the Enquiry Room he put off the final decision. There was no reason why he should put it off except the reluctance of his mind to accept Christ. That was not the first time that he had procrastinated and postponed. And yet he is still putting off his reception of Christ. He is not sure that he will live to get home, tonight. He is not certain that, should he fall asleep, tonight, on his bed, he will wake up in this world in the morning! Yet he leaves his soul in jeopardy, as if it were a matter of very small concern.  
A person came here, not long ago, who had taken off a diamond ring when he washed his hands. And all the while he was sitting here, he kept wondering what would become of that ring, whether, when they emptied the water out of the basin, it would be thrown away. He was so anxious about his ring that he hurried home as quickly as ever he could after the service. He did not wait a week to see about it, yet there are men, here, who have waited weeks, months, years, ah, *many years*, procrastinating and procrastinating! They would not leave their worldly business like that, but they leave the eternal business of salvation or damnation as though it were but as a sere leaf that might be blown whichever way the wind might please! Such people must be blind! I am sure they must be blind. Oh, that they were wise enough to cry, in the language of Charles Wesley’s hymn— ***“O God, my inmost soul convert,  
And deeply on my thoughtful heart  
Eternal things impress!  
Give me to feel their solemn weight,  
And trembling on the brink of fate,  
Wake me to righteousness!”***  
I could heap up many proofs that this blindness is very common, but I have not the time to do so, for we must pass on to consider the next point.  
**II.**Secondly, I want to prove to you, very earnestly and very pointedly, that THIS BLINDNESS IS WORKED BY THE EVIL ONE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.  
In some, it comes by *utter worldliness*. There are some people who say, “We cannot attend to that matter, we have enough to do to earn our living.” Others say, “Well, thank God, we have not to earn our living by the sweat of our brow, but really, we have plenty of other things to think of besides turning our attention to that Methodistic stuff.” One says, “I—, I— ,” yes, you may speak it out if you like—you think that God and Heaven and eternal things are trifles unworthy of your thoughts! Your house, your horse, your wife, your money—these, of course, are not trifles—these must come first. The world, the world, the world—this is in your heart and occupies it all. Said the captain of a whaler, one day, to a man of God, who spoke to him about his soul, “Mr. Bertram, it is of no use for you to speak to me about my soul, or ask me to come to the service, tonight. You see, I am out here after whales, and all the while that I was sitting, and you were talking, I should be thinking about whales. And when you gave out a hymn, I should just be thinking of whether there was a whale anywhere about. If I were to pray, I should be praying about whales. I have whales in my heart, Sir, and there is no room for anything else.” It is so with many, many people. They have their business, they have set up a loom, they have an invention, they have all the materials of a building inside their hearts—and there is no room for God. Their hearts are blinded by utter worldliness.  
Some, again, are blinded by the devil in a very desperate way, *by love of some favorite sin*. I do not hesitate to say it is a general fact that when men kick against true religion and when they get offended by being spoken to about it, if you could track them home, you would find in their conduct some very good reason for their opposition. I recollect that in preaching, on one occasion, I happened to allude to the pleasure it gave me to see the gleaners picking up the wheat in the harvest time, as Ruth did, and I said, “I verily believe that there are some farmers who would rake their fields with a small tooth comb, if they could, to get every grain of the wheat up.” I noticed a respectable-looking gentleman, in the front of the gallery, get up and go out. Somebody at the door said, “Why are you going out, Mr.\_\_\_?” He replied, “I won’t stop to listen to such a fellow as that. I always rake my fields three times.”  
Yes, you see, it was the truth that made him angry. It is usually so. There is a reason for men being angry with the Gospel and turning away from it, when it strikes at some of their favorite sins. Such and such a man says that he does not believe in Jesus Christ. It is not likely that he should! I will not tell you why, but his wife knows. There is another man who keeps a shop. He says that he does not need to be converted. No, if he were, he could not keep that shop! Or if he did, be would have to alter the line of business in which he is engaged. Ah, the god of this world blinds men’s eyes with sin! I cannot go into all the particulars, but if there is any man here who has a pet sin that he cherishes, do not let him wonder that he cannot see the beauties of Christ, or the glories of salvation! And let him not think that we would do anything to win his approbation while he remains in love with that sin! It is with us very much as it was with Martin Luther when he said, “I could be proud to think how badly some people speak of me! For them to speak badly of me is the highest honor that such as they are can confer upon me.” When you who are living in unchastity and dishonesty speak badly of Christ and of Christians, you only speak after your own manner—and we cannot wish you to alter your tone till God has changed your heart!  
Many are blinded as to the things of God by *following a party*. “Well,” you say, “I could not begin to study these matters of religion, because I am linked in with such a set. I know how they would treat me. They would

laugh at me, first, and they would give me the cold shoulder, next. No, really, my dear Sir, if you know how I am connected, you would not expect me to ever give any consideration to these doctrines that are preached, whether they are true or not.” It is a pity, it is a solemn pity, that a man should ruin his soul to keep in with his party! I rejoiced to read of the praise that was passed in the House of Commons, the other night, upon John Bright who deserved much more than was said, especially upon this one point, that, whenever his conscience came in conflict with his party, he followed his conscience and let his party go where it might. Public approbation and applause were nothing to him so long as he could keep clear in the sight of God by doing what he believed to be right. Now, when he dies, every party has a word of honor for him. There is nothing lost, after all, by sticking to what you believe to be right—and if it is so in*politics*, how much more should it be so in the matter of religion!  
Cut your sinful connections, quit your evil companions! It were better to do that than to go with them, applauded and approved, and find yourself wrong at the last. Oh, that men had but a grain of grit in them, so that they would never make the things of God, Heaven and eternal realities to hang upon the breath of men’s nostrils, or the smiles or frowns of their fellow men! But I am afraid that a great many will never come to know Christ because they will continue to follow their party, or the prejudice of their early education still clings to them.  
A fourth way in which Satan blinds a great many, and he does it very commonly, is *by raising objections to the Truth of God*. There is nothing in this world to which you cannot object. I venture to say that there is no fact, however palpable to all the senses, but what you can, if you like, find reasons for not believing it to be a fact. If somebody were to assert that I am not here and that I am not speaking, I have no doubt that, with proper pay, a lawyer could be found to prove it—and what a lawyer could do, a great many, who are not learned in the law—could do as well. To answer objections is an endless task—it is like trying to empty a flowing fountain with bottomless buckets. Men do not object to the *religion* of Jesus Christ really and truly. It is not this to which they object, but they invent objections, they go abroad searching after objections that they may then have an excuse for rejecting *Christ*. In this way many prove that they are blind—they have a difficulty they cannot get over, and do not mean to get over, either—and so they see not Christ.  
With others, blindness is worked *by wrong inferences*. It is astonishing how many eyes are blinded by wrong inferences drawn from the Truth of God. We have known one say, “Well, the mercy of God is very great—it is universal—therefore I am sure that God will not cast us into Hell.” This is a wicked lie derived from a great Truth! Another says, “I read that God has an elect people.” That is most surely true, but not the inference that is drawn from it—“Therefore, if I am to be saved, I shall be saved. And if I am to be lost, I shall be lost, so that I need not trouble my head about the subject.” That is another false inference deduced from a great Truth of God. When a man means to commit suicide, any rope will do, and when a sinner is resolved to perish, he can always find an argument, fetched even from the Truth of God, itself, as the means of his own destruction! I am not going to answer any of these lies, but only to say that, by these false inferences, many a man has been blinded to his own eternal ruin.  
Then there is another way of being blinded, and a very common one, too. That is, *by general conceit of knowledge*. I know a man stone blind of it. When I met him last, he looked at me, condescended to ask how I was and he as much as intimated that he was occasionally prepared for a little conversation with an inferior person and, therefore, he did not mind speaking about religion with me, he, himself, being a very superior person, indeed, knowing everything and, if possible, a few things besides! This man called himself an agnostic—and when a man says that he is an agnostic, he is an ignoramus—that is, a person who knows nothing. Yet, such a man usually talks as if he knew everything and the appendix at the end of that. He mentions Calvinism and he says in a tone of contempt, that his grandmother was a Calvinist! He says that he remembers the Evangelical School, but that they have nearly died out now. You have not talked long with him before you discover that the Lord Jesus Christ and he could never get on together because the Savior has said, “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,” and this man will never become a little child, not he!  
If you need the *opposite* of a little child, there you have the gentleman— and he wishes you, “Good afternoon,” when you begin to quote Scripture. He is not at all the person to receive any instruction of that sort. The “superior” person will always be lost, take my word for it! The more superior he is, the more sure he is to be lost—I mean not that he is *really*superior, but that he *thinks* himself so—superior to all teaching. He is not prepared to be a learner. He is ready to set up as a *teacher* and a *master* of anything you like. He is not the kind of man to enter the gates of Heaven—he carries his head too high for that. He is a man of broad thought and, of course, he goes the broad way. Narrow-minded people go in the narrow way—but then it leads unto life eternal and, therefore, I commend it unto you—  
***“Broad is the road that leads to death,  
And thousands walk together there.  
But wisdom shows a narrower path,  
With here and there a traveler.”***  
We have another set of people who are blinded *by some special conceit of false grace*. Here is a man who has attended to many duties. Some, of course, he does not care about, but he compounds for duties he does not like by attending to others that are to his taste. He does not pray, but then he sings in the choir! Communion with God—he does not know anything about *that*—but he takes the sacrament! He has never repented of sin, but then he has found fault with other people for *their* sins, and he regards that almost as good! He does not help the poor and needy, but then he has a capital plan for lowering the poor rates! He is always doing some good thing or other, of a sort, but not of the sort that Scripture proscribes. As to believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, by a living faith *trusting* Him, that is beyond his range. As to seeking a new heart and a right spirit—and being converted and turned from darkness to Light—he does not know anything about *that*, either, but there has been, after all, a very great improvement in him. He has given up some very questionable practices and, on the whole, he has done a good deal which ought to be spoken of with considerable commendation. This is the kind of gentleman who is blinded by the god of this world!  
But it is idle for me to talk about people being blinded except to those who can see, for the blindest man is the man who says that he is not blind, who will not have it that he does not see everything aright, even though he has never had his eyes opened by the Lord! He says that he could always see—it is an insult to suppose that he is blind. He is like the Pharisees who said to Jesus, “Are we blind, also?” to whom Jesus answered, “If you were blind, you should have no sin but now you say, We see, therefore your sin remains.” This is sinning against the Light of God! This is sinning with a vengeance! May God preserve all of us from such a sin!  
**III.**Now I come to the most practical point, that is, THE KIND OF TREATMENT THAT THIS BLINDNESS REQUIRES. I pray God to bless to you what I have to say upon this matter.  
I should say, first, dear Friends, *beware lest this blindness be sent as a punishment*. Although our blind friends have our loving sympathy and God blesses them, yet it must be a great calamity to be without their eyesight. Now, blindness of *heart* is not only a sin, but it is the *punishment of sin,* and it comes to many as the result of violating conscience, resisting the Holy Spirit, trifling with solemn things and being desperately set on mischief. Oh, you who have a tender conscience, mind that you do not lose it! You who have the power to sit and hear a sermon and to feel it, do not trifle with that holy sensitiveness. Once lost, so that you can read the Book of books and hear the most earnest talk, and yet feel nothing, you have lost one of the greatest privileges that you ever had. May God help the man who is going on towards this fatal blindness—and stop him before he gets any further!  
I would say, also, to you who are in any way blind, *beware lest that blindness becomes the herald of your doom*. Before Haman was hanged, the first thing that the servants did was to cover his face. And when a man is about to be lost forever, the first thing that the devil does is to blind his eyes so that he cannot see. Now the poor blind Samson will make sport for the Philistines! Now they hope that they can kill him whenever they please. Beware of a blinded conscience—it is the prelude of eternal destruction! God save you from it!  
Next, *if you have even a little Light, value it greatly*. If any one of us should be gradually losing his eyesight, I know that he would greatly prize the little sight that he had. How often have I spoken to a friend who has said, “This eye is quite gone, Sir, there is just a little light left in this one, and the doctor says that I must wear a shade and be very careful, or I may lose that.” Oh, take care of the little Light of God you have! If you can feel a little, be very tender of that feeling. If you can see a little of the beauty of Christ, be very jealous over that sight. Have I not often said that he who has starlight, if he thanks God for starlight, and uses it, will get moonlight, and he who has moonlight, and thanks God for it, and uses it, will get sunlight—and he who has the sunlight shall yet come to that Light which is as of seven days in the glorious Presence of God? Take care, then, of any Light that you have.  
And then, the next thing is, if you are at all conscious of your blindness, but do not see the full evil of sin, do not see the glory of Christ, and do not perceive the way of salvation, *confess your blindness*. Go home, tonight, and, in your chamber, alone, acknowledge that you do not see what you ought to see, and do not feel what you ought to feel. Show your sightless eyeballs to the Savior who gives sight to the blind. Do not cloak your sin, confess it. “He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.” Say with David, “I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.” So shall you also be able to say with him, “and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”  
When you have confessed your blindness, do one more thing, *trust to the Lord Jesus to open your blind eyes*. Put yourself consciously into the Presence of the Divine Savior and say to Him, “I believe that You are able to work this miracle of mercy. I believe that You can make me see Your Truth and feel Your Truth. I believe that You can make me see Yourself, and trust You. Here are my eyes, Lord, I would receive my sight! I believe that You can give it! Give it to me now!” Ah, perhaps while I speak these words, the flash of the Divine Light is coming into some dark heart! Salvation does not take hours—*it is in one single instant that we pass from death unto life*! The moment that we believe in Jesus, we are saved! The moment that we look to Him hanging on the Cross, our iniquity is pardoned! God grant us that blessed look of faith tonight, each one, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.  
It may help some to look to Christ if we sing a verse of that well-known hymn—  
***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee!  
Then look, Sinner—look unto Him, and be saved— Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”***

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON. *ISAIAH 6; MATTHEW 13:10-17; LUKE 18:35-43.***

**Isaiah 6:1-4.***In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*Isaiah was awestricken by this vision of the Glory of the Lord. It was a sight such as few eyes have ever seen. Isaiah was never actually in the Holy Place, for he was no priest and, therefore, he could not stand there. It was in vision that he saw all this Glory and it was a vision that must have remained upon his memory through the rest of his life. The holiness and the Glory of God struck him at once.

**5.***Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.* There was, indeed, enough to make him say, “Woe is me!” A sinful preacher, an imperfect preacher, among a sinful and imperfect people, he felt as if the society in which be moved was the reverse of the society in which God dwells. Pure seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts,” but as for us, our very talk is unholy—“a people of unclean lips.”

**6, 7.***Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.*The live coal from off the altar does not represent the holy flame which burns in the Prophet’s heart, but it represents purgation, cleansing, participation in the sacrifice, and the putting away of sin. With a blister on his lips, Isaiah stood silent before God.

**8.***Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?*Here we have the Divine Trinity in Unity. “Whom shall I send?” There is Unity. “Who will go for Us?” There is the Trinity. God is seeking a messenger to deliver His message to men.

**8.***Then said I—*Stammering it out with the blistered lip—  
**8.***Here am I; send me.*Isaiah did not know the errand; perhaps, if he had known it, he would not have been quite so ready to go. Who can tell? But God’s servants are ready for anything, ready for everything, when once the living coal has touched their lips. I thank God that I was never called to such a work as Isaiah had to undertake.  
**9, 10.***And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear you indeed, but understand not; and see you indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*That was no Gospel ministry! It was a ministry of *condemnation*. The house of Israel had rejected the Prophets and had rejected God and, in the fullness of time would reject God’s own dear Son! When Isaiah in vision looked forward to all this, he was not sent to soften, but to harden—his word was to be a savor of death unto death, and not of life unto life.  
**11, 12.***Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities are wasted without inhabitants and the houses without man, and the land is utterly desolate, and the LORD has removed men far away, and there is a great forsaking in the midst of the land.* This was a heavy task for the Prophet—he had no tidings of God’s relenting, no tokens of Divine Mercy.  
**13.***But yet.—*You never get this deep bass note of Divine Justice without having a, “but yet,” to accompany it!  
**13.***In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*When the oak sheds all its leaves, it is not dead—there is living sap that will again cause the tree to be verdant. Though the nation was to be brought very low, there was still to be left a remnant according to the Election of Grace. Sin never reaches such a point in God’s people but what Divine Grace triumphs! Still, where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. This is a terrible chapter! It shows the Sovereignty of God in a lurid light and reveals how, when sin comes to a certain point, the Lord gives men up and leaves them to the blindness of their heart, so that even the means of Grace, the prophetic message, becomes a means of condemnation to them.  
Now we are going to read in one of the many places in the New Testament in which this passage is quoted.  
**Matthew 13:10-12.***And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why do You speak unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has.*You can understand this Truth of God if you go into certain museums. I will suppose that you know nothing whatever of comparative anatomy and you go into the Museum of Comparative Anatomy at Paris. If you understand a little of the science, you will learn a great deal more—“for whoever has, to him shall be given.” If you do not know anything about the subject, you will say, “Well, this is the most uninteresting exhibition I ever saw,” and you will come out with the feeling that you do not know anything. What you did know will have vanished in the sight of all that mass of bones arranged in those extraordinary shapes. You will only feel your own lack of knowledge in that department—you will show your ignorance, and nothing else. So it is in the things of God. If you understand the fundamental principles of true godliness, you will soon understand more. But if you do not comprehend as much as that, even the reading of the Scriptures will be but slightly instructive to you.  
**13-15.***Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*Now the Savior turned to His disciples and spoke especially to them.  
**16.***But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*It is no use having eyes that do not see, or ears that do not hear, and yet I fear that there are many eyes of that kind, and many ears of that sort, in this congregation to-night.  
**17.***For verily I say unto you, That many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.*

Now let us read one other passage to show how the Lord heals the blind and makes them see.  
**Luke 18:35, 36.***And it came to pass, that as He was come near, unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.* If he could not see, he could hear and he could speak. Use all the ability that you have and God will give you more!  
**37-39.***And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passes by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, You son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace.*They told him that he was spoiling the Preacher’s sermon. They had lost his last sentence. They could not catch the Savior’s meaning, so they cried out to the blind man, “Hold your tongue, Sir.”  
**39, 40.***But he cried so much the more, You son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood.* I can see Him stop. He had been walking on, before, and talking as He went, but prayer can cause the Savior to be spellbound. Here Jesus stood.  
**40, 41.***And commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What will you that I shall do unto you?* Our Lord likes us to know what it is that we need. He would have us feel our need, that we may have a distinct perception of the blessing when it comes and know just what it is.  
**41.***And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.* He needed nothing else, but oh, how badly he needed that gift!  
**42.***And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight.* Notice the echo. The blind man said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.” Jesus said, “Receive your sight.” With a little turn in the expression, Christ’s answer is the echo of our prayer!  
**42.***Your faith has saved you.*No, surely it was *Christ* who saved him. Yes, but Christ delights to put His crown on Faith’s head, for Faith always puts the crown back on Christ’s head—“Your faith has saved you.”  
**43.***And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him.* What should we do when our eyes are opened by Christ but follow him? The moment that we can see Him, we should begin to follow Him!  
**43.***Glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*May we have cause to praise the Lord, tonight, for many blind eyes opened!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1493 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST  
NO. 1493

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light  
of the knowledge of the Glory of God~~***

***~~in the face of Jesus Christ.”  
2 Corinthians 4:6.~~***

THE Apostle is explaining the reason for his preaching Christ with so much earnestness—he had received Divine light and he felt bound to spread it. One great motive power of a true ministry is trusteeship. The Lord has put us in trust with the Gospel; He has filled us with a treasure with which we are to enrich the world. The text explains in full what it is with which the Lord has entrusted us—He has bestowed upon us the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and it is ours to reflect the light, to impart the knowledge, to manifest the Glory, to point to the Savior’s face and to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Having such a work before us, we faint not, but press onward with our whole heart.

**I.**With no other preface than this we shall ask your attention this morning, first, TO THE SUBJECT OF THAT KNOWLEDGE in which Paul delighted so much. What was this knowledge which, to his mind, was the chief of all and the most worthy to be spread? It was the knowledge *of God—t*ruly a most necessary and proper knowledge for all God’s creatures! For a man not to know his Maker and Ruler is deplorable ignorance, indeed! The proper study of mankind is God. Paul not only knew that there is a God, for he had known that before his conversion—none could have more surely believed in the Godhead than did Paul as a Jew.

Nor does he merely intend that he had learned somewhat of the Character of God, for that, also, he had known from the Old Testament Scriptures before he was met with on the way to Damascus. Now he had come to know God in a closer, clearer and surer way, for he had *seen* Him, Incarnate, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle had also received the knowledge of “*the Glory of God*.” Never had the God of Abraham appeared so glorious as now! God in Christ Jesus had won the adoring wonder of the Apostle’s instructed mind. He had known Jehovah’s Glory as the One and only God. He had seen that Glory in creation, declared by the heavens and displayed upon the earth. He had beheld that Glory in the Law which blazed from Sinai and shed its insufferable light upon the face of Moses.

But now, beyond all else, he had come to perceive *the Glory of God in the face, or Person, of Jesus Christ* and*this* had won his soul! This special knowledge had been communicated to him at his conversion when Jesus spoke to him out of Heaven. In this knowledge he had made great advances by experience and by new Revelations—but he had not yet learned it to the fullest, for he was still seeking to know it *perfectly* by the teaching of the Divine Spirit and we find him saying, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”

Paul knew not merely God, but God in Christ Jesus! Not merely “the Glory of God,” but “the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The knowledge dealt with God, but it was Christward knowledge! He pined not for a Christless Theism, but for God in Christ! This, Beloved, is the one thing which you and I should aim to know. There are parts of the Divine Glory which will never be seen by us in this life, speculate as we may. Mysticism would desire to pry into the unknowable—you and I may leave dreamers and their dreams—and follow the clear light which shines from the face of Jesus. What of God it is necessary and beneficial for us to know, He has revealed in Christ! And whatever is not there, we may rest assured it is unfit and unnecessary for us to know.

Truly the Revelation is by no means scant, for there is vastly more revealed in the Person of Christ than we shall be likely to learn in this mortal life—and even eternity will not be too long for the discovery of all the Glory of God which shines forth in the Person of the Word made flesh. Those who would supplement Christianity had better first add to the brilliance of the sun or the fullness of the sea! As for us, we are more than satisfied with the Revelation of God in the Person of our Lord Jesus and we are persuaded of the truth of His Words, “he that has seen Me has seen the Father.” Hope not, my Brothers and Sisters, that the preacher can grapple with such a subject! I am overcome by it!

In my meditations I have felt lost in its lengths and breadths. My joy is great in my theme and yet I am conscious of a pressure upon brain and heart, for I am as a little child wandering among the mountains, or as a lone spirit which has lost its way among the stars. I stumble among sublimities. I sink with amazement. I can only point with my finger to that which I see, but cannot describe it. May the Holy Spirit, Himself, take of the things of Christ and show them to you! We will, for a minute or two, consider this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ *historically*.

In every incident of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord’s Anointed, there is much of God to be seen. What volumes upon volumes might be written to show God as revealed in every act of Christ from His birth to His death! I see Him as a Baby at Bethlehem lying in a manger and there I perceive a choice Glory in the mind of God, for He evidently despises the pomp and glory of the world which little minds esteem so highly. He might have been born in marble halls and wrapped in imperial purple, but He scorns these things and, in the manger among the oxen, we see a Glory which is independent of the trifles of luxury and parade.

The Glory of God in the Person of Jesus asks no aid from the splendor of courts and palaces. Yet even as a Baby, He reigns and rules! Mark how the shepherds hasten to salute the new-born King, while the magi from the far-off East bring gold, frankincense and myrrh and bow at His feet. When the Lord condescends to show Himself in little things, He is still right royal and commands the homage of mankind. He is as majestic in the minute as in the magnificent; as royal in the Baby at Bethlehem as in later days in the Man who rode through Jerusalem with hosannas! See the holy Child Jesus in the Temple when He is but 12 years old, sitting in the midst of the doctors, astonishing them with His questions! What wisdom there was in that Child!

Do you not see there an exhibition of the Truth of God that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men”? Even when God reserves His wisdom and gives forth utterances fit for a child, He baffles the wisdom of age and thought. Watch that youth in the carpenter’s shop. See Him planing and sawing, cutting and squaring, working according to His parent’s commands, till he is 30 years of age. What do we learn here when we see the Incarnate God tarrying at the workman’s bench? See we not how God can wait? Is not this a masterly display of the leisure of the Eternal? The Infinite is never driven out of His restful pace of conscious strength.

Had it been you and I, we would have hastened to begin our lifework long before! We could not have refrained from preaching and teaching for so long a period! But God can wait and, in Christ, we see how prudence tempered zeal and made Him share in that eternal leisure which arises out of confidence that His end is sure. The Godhead was concealed at Bethlehem and Nazareth from the eyes of carnal men, but it is revealed to those who have spiritual sight with which to behold the Lord. Even in those early days of our Lord, while He was yet preparing for His great mission, we behold the Glory of God in His youthful face and we adore.

As for His public ministry, how clearly the Godhead is there! Behold Him, Brothers and Sisters, while He feeds 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes and you cannot fail to perceive therein the Glory of God in the commissariat of the universe, for the Lord God opens His hands and supplies the need of every living thing! See Him cast out devils and you learn of the Divine power over evil! Hear Him raise the dead and you must reverence the Divine prerogative to kill and to make alive! See Him cure the sick and you think you hear Jehovah say, “I wound, I heal.” Hear how He speaks and Infallibly reveals the Truth of God and you will perceive the God of knowledge to whom the wise-hearted owe their instruction!

Set over against each other are these two sentences—“Behold, God exalts by His power; who teaches like He?” and “Never man spoke like this Man.” It is always the Lord’s way to make His Truth known to those of humble and truthful hearts and so did Jesus teach the sincere and lowly among men. Observe how Jesus dwelt among men, wearing the common smock-frock of the peasant, entering their cottages and sharing their poverty! Mark how He even washed His disciples’ feet! Herein we see the condescension of God who must stoop to view the skies and bow to see what angels do—and yet He does not disdain to visit the sons of men!

In wondrous Grace He thinks of us and has pity upon our low estate. See, too, the Christ of God, my Brothers and Sisters, bearing every day with the taunts of the ungodly—enduring “such contradiction of sinners against Himself”—and you have a fair picture of the infinite patience and the marvelous longsuffering of God! And this is no small part of His Glory. Note well how Jesus loved His own which were in the world, yes, loved them to the end! And with what tenderness and gentleness He bore with

them, as a nurse with her child, for here you see the tenderness and gentleness of God and the love of the great Father towards His erring children.

You read of Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them and what is this but the Lord God, merciful and gracious, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin? You see Jesus living as a physician among those diseased by sin, with the one aim of healing their sicknesses—and here you see the pardoning mercy of our God, His delight in salvation and the joy which He has in mercy. Beloved, I cannot go through the whole life of Jesus Christ—it is impossible, for time would fail us—but if you will, yourselves, select any single incident in which Jesus appears, whether in the chamber of sickness or at the grave, whether in weakness or in power, you shall, in each case, behold the Glory of God!

Throughout His ministry, which was mainly a period of humiliation, there gleams forth in the Character, acts and Person of Jesus, the Glory of the everlasting Father. His acts compel us not only to admire but to adore! He is not merely a Man whom God favors, He is God Himself! What shall I say of His death? Oh never did the love of God reveal itself so clearly as when He laid down His life for His sheep, nor did the justice of God ever flame forth so conspicuously as when He would suffer in Himself the curse for sin rather than sin should go unpunished and the Law should be dishonored! Every attribute of God was focused at the Cross and he that has eyes to look through his tears and see the wounds of Jesus shall behold more of God there than a whole eternity of Providence or an infinity of creation shall ever be able to reveal to Him. Well might the trembling centurion, as he watched the Cross, exclaim, “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

Do I need to remind you, too, of the Glory of God in the Person of Christ Jesus in His Resurrection, when He spoiled principalities and powers, led Death captive and rifled the tomb? That is, indeed, a godlike speech, “I am He that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore and have the keys of Hell and of death.” His power, His immortality, His eternal majesty all shone forth as He left the shades of death!

I will not linger over His Ascension when He returned to His own again. Then His Godhead was conspicuous, for He again put on the Glory which He had with the Father before the world was. There, amid the acclamations of angels and redeemed spirits, the Glory of the conquering Lord was seen. By His descent He had destroyed the powers of darkness and then He ascended that He might fill all things as only God can do. I would only hint at His session at the right hand of God, for there you know how—

***“Adoring saints around Him stand,  
And thrones and powers before Him fall.  
The God shines gracious through the Man, And sheds sweet glories on them all.”***

In Heaven they never conceive of Jesus apart from the Divine Glory which perpetually surrounds Him. No one in Heaven doubts His Deity, for all fall prostrate before Him, or now and then all seize their harps and wake their strings to the praise of God and the Lamb!

The Glory of God will most abundantly be seen in the second advent of our Lord. Whatever of splendor we may expect at the advent, whatever of Glory shall surround that reign of a thousand years, or the end when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father—in every transaction which prophecy leads us to expect—God in Christ Jesus will be conspicuous and angelic eyes shall look on with adoring admiration as they see the eternal Father glorious in the Person of His Son!

These are great themes—we do but mention them and leave them to your quiet thought. It is enough to point to a table if men have appetites for food. But now I will ask you to think of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in the same line of thought, only putting it in another fashion. Treat it *by way of* observation. When you look upon the material universe you can see, if your eyes are opened, somewhat of the Glory of God. The reverent mind perceives enough to constrain the heart to worship and yet, after awhile, it pines for more.

I have often heard the earth spoken of as the mirror of God’s image. But when I was traveling among the Alps and saw many of the grandest phenomena of creation such as glaciers, avalanches and tempests, I was so impressed with the narrowness of visible things in comparison with God that I wrote such lines as these—

***“The mirror of the creatures lacks space  
To bear the image of the Infinite.  
‘Tis true the Lord has fairly writ His name, And set His seal upon creation’s brow,  
But as the skillful potter much excels  
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel, E’en so, but in proportion greater far,  
Jehovah’s self transcends His noblest works. Earth’s ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap, If freighted with the load of Deity.  
Space is too narrow for the Eternal’s rest, And time too short a footstool for His Throne.”***

If your mind has ever entered into communion with God, you will become conscious of the dwarfing of all visible things in His Presence. Even when your thought sweeps round the stars and circumnavigates space, you feel that Heaven, even the Heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him. Everything conceivable falls short of the inconceivable Glory of God!

When you come, however, to gaze upon the face of Christ Jesus, how different is the feeling! Now you have a mirror equal to the reflection of the eternal Face, for, “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” His name is “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God.” He is the Image of God, “the brightness of His Glory and the express Image of His Person.” If your conception of Christ is truthful, it will coincide with the true idea of God and you will exclaim, “This is the true God and eternal life.” Like Thomas, you will salute the wounded Savior with the cry, “My Lord and my God.”

Truly, “God was manifest in the flesh”—not a part of Him, but God in *perfection*. In the visible creation we see God’s works, but in Christ Jesus we have God Himself, Emmanuel, “God with us.” The Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is most sweetly conspicuous because you are conscious that not only are God’s attributes there, but God Himself is there! In the Person of Jesus we see the Glory of God in *the veiling of His splendor*. The Lord is not eager to display Himself—“Verily You are a God that hides Yourself,” said the Prophet of old. The world seems to be created rather to hide God than to manifest Him, at least it is certain that even in the grandest displays of His power we may say with Job, “There was the hiding of His power.”

Though His light is brightness itself, yet it is only the robe which conceals Him. “Who covers Yourself with light as with a garment.” If thus God’s Glory is seen in the field of creation as a light veiled and shaded to suit the human eye, we certainly see the same in the face of Jesus Christ. Where everything is mild and gentle—full of Grace as well as Truth. How softly breaks the Divine Glory through the human life of Jesus—a babe in Grace may gaze upon this brightness without fear! When Moses’ face shone, the people could not look at him, but when Jesus came from His transfiguration the people ran to Him and saluted Him! Everything is attractive in God in Christ Jesus! In Him we see God to the fullest, but the Deity so mildly beams through the medium of human flesh that mortal man may draw near and look and live.

This Glory in the face of Jesus Christ is assuredly the Glory of God, even though veiled, for thus in every other instance does God, in measure, shine forth. In Providence and in Nature such a thing as an unveiled God is not to be seen and the revelation of God in Christ is after the same Divine manner. In our Lord Jesus we see the Glory of God *in the wondrous blending of the attributes*. Behold His mercy, for He dies for sinners! But see His justice, for He sits as Judge of the quick and the dead. Observe His Immutability, for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! And see His power, for His voice shakes not only earth but also Heaven. See how infinite is His love, for He espouses His chosen, but how terrible His wrath, for He consumes His adversaries. All the attributes of Deity are in Him—power that can lull the tempest—and tenderness that can embrace little children. The Character of Christ is a wonderful combination of all perfection’s making up one perfection and so we see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, for this *is* God’s Glory, that in Him nothing is excessive and nothing is deficient. He is all that is good and great—in Him is light and no darkness at all.

Say, is it not so seen in Jesus our Lord? When I think of God I am led to see His Glory *in the outgoing of His great heart,* for He is altogether unselfish and unsparingly communicative. We may conceive a period when the Eternal dwelt alone and had not begun to create. He must have been inconceivably blessed, but He was not content to be enwrapped within Himself and to enjoy perfect bliss alone. He began to create and probably formed innumerable beings long before this world came into existence— and He did this that He might multiply beings capable of happiness. He delighted to indulge His heart by deeds of beneficence, manifesting the inherent goodness of His Nature. In whatever God is doing, He is consulting the happiness of His creatures, being in Himself independent of all, He loves to bless others.

He is living—we speak with awe in His Presence—He is living, even He, not unto Himself, but living in the lives of others, rejoicing in the joy of His creatures! This is His Glory and is it not to be seen most evidently in Christ Jesus, who “saved others, Himself He could not save”? Do you not see the great unselfish Glory of God in Christ Jesus? When did He ever live unto Himself? What single act of His had a selfish purpose? What word ever sought His own honor? In what deed did He consult His own aggrandizement? Neither in life nor in death did Christ live within Himself—He lived for His people and died for them! See the Glory of God in this!

There are two things I have noticed in the Glory of God whenever my soul has been saturated with it and these I have seen in Jesus. I have sat upon a lofty hill and looked abroad upon the landscape and seen hill, dale, woods, fields and I have felt as if God had gone forth and spread His Presence over all. I have felt *the outflow of Deity*. There was not a pleasant tree, nor a silvery stream, nor a cornfield ripening for the harvest, nor mountain shaggy with pines, nor heath purple with heather but seemed aglow with God! Even as the sun pours himself over all things, so does God—and in the hum of an insect, as well as in the crash of a thunderbolt, we hear a voice saying—“God is here.” God has gone forth out of Himself into the creation and filled all things! Is not this the feeling of the heart in the Presence of Christ?

When we come near Him, He is the all-pervading Spirit. In any of the scenes in which Jesus appears, He is Omnipresent. Who but He is at Bethlehem, or at Nazareth, or at Jerusalem? Who but He is in the world? Is not He to us the everybody, the one only Person of His age? I cannot think of Caesar or Rome, or all the myriads that dwell on the face of the earth as being anything more than small figures in the background of the picture when Jesus is before me! He is to my mind most clearly the fullness, filling all in all—all the accessories of any scene in which He appears are submerged in the flood of Glory which flows from His all-subduing Presence. Truly the outgoing Glory of God was in Christ.

But you must have had another thought when you have felt the Glory of God in Nature—you must have felt *the indrawing of all things towards God*. You have felt created things rising unto God as steps to His Throne. As you have gazed with rapture on the landscape, every tree and hill has seemed to drift towards God, to tend towards Him, to return, in fact, to Him from whom it came! Is it not just so in the life of Christ? He seems to be drawing all things to Himself, gathering together all things in one in His own personality. Some of these things will not move, but yet His attraction has fallen on them, while others fly with alacrity to Him, according to His Word, “I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.”

Thus those observations of the Glory of God, which have been suggested to us by Nature are also abundantly verified in Christ and we are sure that the Glory is the same. I cannot express my own thoughts to you so clearly and vividly as I would, but this I know, if you ever get a vision of the Glory of God in Nature and if you then turn your thoughts toward the Lord’s Christ, you will see that the same God is in Him as in the visible universe and that the same Glory shines in Him, only more clearly. There is one God and that one God is gloriously manifested in Christ Jesus. “No man has seen God at any time; the Only-Begotten Son, which is in the

bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

Let us now treat this thought of the Glory of God in the Person of Christ by way of experience. Have you ever heard Christ’s doctrine in your soul? If so, you have felt it to be Divine, for your heart has perceived its moral and spiritual glory and you have concluded that God is in it for sure. Has your heart heard the voice of Christ speaking peace and pardon through the blood? If so, you have known Him to be Lord of all! Did you ever see the fullness of His Atonement? Then you have felt that God, Himself, was there reconciling the world unto Himself.

You have understood the union of the two titles, “God, our Savior.” Beloved, you have often felt your Lord’s Presence and you have been admitted into intimate communion with Him. Then I know that a profound awe has crept over you which has made you fall at His feet and in the lowliest reverence of your spirit you have acknowledged Him to be Lord and God. But when He has bent over you in love and said, “Fear not.” When He has opened His heart to you and shown you how dear you are to Him, then the rapture you have felt has been so Divine that you have, beyond all question, known Him to be God!

There are times when the elevating influence of the Presence of Christ has put His Godhead beyond the possibility of question—when we have felt that all the Truths of God we ever heard before had no effect upon us compared with the Truth that is in Him—that all the spirits in the world were ineffectual to stir us till His Spirit came into contact with our spirit! In this manner His Omnipotent, all-subduing, elevating love has proved Him to be none other than “very God of very God.” Thus have we spoken of the supremely precious object of Christian knowledge.

**II.**Secondly, let us say a few words in noticing THE NATURE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. How, and in what respects do we know the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Briefly, first. We know it *by faith*. Upon the testimony of the Infallible Word we believe and are sure that God is in Christ Jesus. The Lord has spoken and said, “This is My beloved Son, hear you Him.” We accept as a settled fact the Godhead of the Lord Jesus and our soul never permits a question upon it. We know that the Son of God has come. We know that He has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true and that we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Knowing our Lord’s divinity by faith, we next have used our perceptive faculty and, *by consideration and meditation we perceive*that His life furnishes abundant evidence that He was God, for God’s Glory shines in that life. The more carefully we pay attention to the details given us by the four Evangelists, the more is our understanding persuaded that no mere man stands before us. If, my Brothers and Sisters, your spiritual nature was set at the task to try and describe how God would act if He were here, what God would be if He became Incarnate and dwelt among men—I am sure you would not have been able to imagine the life of Christ. But if someone had brought to you the description given by the Evangelists, you would have said, “My task is done! This is, indeed, a noble conception of God manifest in the flesh.”

I do not say that the wise men of this world would suppose God to have thus behaved, for their suppositions are sure to be the reverse of the simple, unaffected, open-hearted conduct of Jesus! But this I do say, that the pure in heart will at once see that the acts of Christ are like the doings of God! He has done exactly what a pure intelligence might suppose God would have done! The more we have studied the more we have seen the Glory of God in Christ. And now we have come further than this, for we feel an inward consciousness that the Deity is in Christ Jesus. It is not merely that we have believed it and that we somewhat perceive it by observation, but we have come into contact with Christ and have known, therefore, that He is God.

We love Him and we also love God. And we perceive that these two are One and the more we love truth and holiness, and love, which are great traits in the Character of God, the more we see of these in Christ Jesus. It is by the *heart* that we know God and Christ—and as our affections are purified, we become sensible of God’s Presence in Christ. Oftentimes when our soul is in rapt fellowship with Jesus, we laugh to scorn the very thought that our Beloved can be less than Divine! Moreover, there is one other thing that has happened to us while we have been looking at our Lord. Blessed be His name, we begin to grow like He! Our beholding Him has purified the eyes which has gazed on His purity. His brightness has helped our eyesight so that we see much already and shall yet see more.

The light of the sun blinds us, but the light of Jesus Christ strengthens the eyes. We expect that as we grow in Grace we shall behold more and more of God’s Glory—but we shall see it best in the Well-Beloved, even in Christ Jesus our Lord! What a sight of God we shall enjoy in Heaven! We are heading that way and, as we get nearer and nearer, our sight and vision of the Glory of God in Christ is every day increased! We know it, then! We know it! We believe it! We are conscious of it! We are affected by it! We are transformed by it! And thus at this day we have “the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

**III.**Thirdly, let us gratefully review THE MEANS OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. How have we come at it? That brings us to read the text again— “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Why did not *everybody* see the Glory of God in Jesus Christ when He was here? It was conspicuous enough. Answer—it matters not how brightly the sun shines among *blind men*.

Now, the human heart is blind—it refuses to see God in Creation except after a dim fashion—and it utterly refuses to discern God in Christ. Therefore He is the despised and rejected of men. Moreover, there is a god of this world, the Prince of Darkness, and since he hates the Light he deepens and confirms the natural darkness of the human mind, lest the Light should reach the heart. He blinds men’s minds with error and falsehood and foul imaginations, blocking up the windows of the soul either with unclean desires, or with dense ignorance. We, at one time, did not perceive the Glory of God in Christ because we were blind, by nature, and were darkened by the Evil One. As only the pure in heart can see God, we, being impure in heart, could not see God in Christ.  
What, then, has happened to us? To eternal Grace be endless praise!

God Himself has shined into our hearts—that same God who said, “Light be,” and light was, has shined into our hearts! You know creation’s story, how all things lay in black darkness? God might have gone on to make a world in darkness if he had pleased, but if he had done so, it would have been to us as though it had never been, for we could not have perceived it. Therefore He early said, “Let there be light.” Now, God’s Glory in the face of Jesus Christ might have been all there and we should never have discerned it—and as far as we are concerned it would have been as though it had never been if the Lord had not entered into us and the thick darkness and said, “Let there be light.”

Then burst in the everlasting morning, the light shined in the darkness and the darkness fled before it. Do you recollect the incoming of that illumination? If you do, then I know the first sight you saw by the new light was the Glory of God in Jesus Christ! In fact, that light had come on purpose that you might see it—and at this present moment that is the main delight of your soul, the choice subject of your thoughts! In the light of God you have seen the light of the Glory of God, as it is written, “In Your light we shall see light.” One thing I want to say to comfort all who believe. Beloved, do you see the glory of God in Christ Jesus? Then let that sight be an evidence to you of your salvation.

When our Lord asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Now note the reply of the Lord Jesus to that confession— “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven.” If you can delight in God in Christ Jesus, then remember, “no man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit,” and you have said it! And this morning you are saying it! And, therefore, the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” You believe this and, therefore, you are born of the Father. “Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: but he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” You love God and you are His—the Spirit of God has opened your eyes and you are saved. While I have been preaching, this morning, a number of my hearers have been saying, “We care nothing about Jesus Christ. His name is a most respectable one in our religion. We call ourselves Christians, but as to seeing the Glory of God in Him when He was a Baby and when He was despised and rejected of men, we know nothing of it. No doubt He is exalted now in Heaven and we worship Him, though we hardly know why. But we see no special Glory in Him.”

Others of you have been saying, “Yes, God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself and He has reconciled me to Himself. I never loved God till I saw Him in Christ. I could never have any familiarity with God till I saw His familiarity with me in the Person of His Son. I never understood how I could be God’s son till I understood how God’s Son became a Man. I never saw how I could be a partaker of the Divine Nature till I saw how His Son became a partaker of the *human* nature and took me up unto Himself that He might take me up unto His Father.”

Oh, Beloved, do you delight in Jesus Christ? Is He all your salvation and all your desire? Do you adore Him? Do you consecrate yourself to His honor? Do you wish to live for Him and to die for Him? Then be sure that you belong to Him, for it is the mark of the children of God that they love God in Christ Jesus!

**IV.**So I finish by mentioning, in the fourth place, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS KNOWLEDGE. There have been considerable debates among the interpreters as to the precise meaning of this text and some of them think it means that Paul is giving a reason why he preached the Gospel. This makes the verse run thus—“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, that we might give out, again, the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” God gave light to the Apostles that they might show forth the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ to the nations.

I do not know whether this is the exact run of the text, but I know it is true. Never is a gleam of light given to any man to hide away—and to spiritual men the great object of their lives, after they have received light— is to reflect that light in all its purity. You must not hoard up the light within yourself—it will not be light to you if you do. Only think of a person when his room is full of sunlight saying to his servant, “Quick, now! Close the shutters and let us keep this precious light to ourselves.” Your room will be in the dark, my Friend! So, when a child of God gets the light from Christ’s face, he must not say, “I shall keep this to myself,” for that very desire would shut it out. No, let the light shine through you! Let it shine everywhere!

You have the light that you may reflect it. An object which absorbs light is dark and we call it black. But hang up a reflector in its place when the sun is shining and it will not appear black—it will be so bright that you will hardly be able to look at it! An object is, itself, bright in proportion as it sends back the light which it receives. So you shall find, as a Christian, that if you absorb light into yourself, you will be black, but if you scatter it abroad you shall be brilliant—you shall be changed into the very image of the light which you have received—you shall become a second sun!

I noticed last Sabbath evening, when I came into this pulpit, that, at the angle of the building before me, on the left hand the sun seemed to be setting. And I saw the brightness of his round face and yet I knew it to be the wrong quarter of the heavens for the sun to be setting there. Perhaps you will observe that there is a peculiar window on the other side of the street and it was reflecting the sun so well that I thought it was the sun himself and I could hardly bear the light! It was not the sun, it was only a window, and yet the radiance was dazzling. And so a man of God, when he receives the light of Christ, can become so perfect a reflector that to common eyes, at any rate, he is brightness itself! He has become transformed from glory to glory as by the image of the Lord!

Brothers and Sisters, if you have learned the Truth of God, manifest it and make it plain to others! Proclaim *the Gospel*, not your own thoughts, for it is *Christ* that you are to make manifest! Teach not your own judgments, conclusions and opinions, but the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Let Jesus manifest Himself in His own light. Do not cast a

light on Him, or attempt to show the sun with a candle. Do not aim at converting men to your views, but let the light shine for itself and work its own way. Do not color it by being like a painted window to it, but let the clear white light shine through you that others may behold your Lord.

Scatter your light in all unselfishness. Wish to shine, not that others may say, “How bright he is,” but that they, getting the light, may rejoice in the Source from which it came to you and to them. Be willing to make every sacrifice to spread this light which you have received! Consecrate your entire being to the making known among the sons of men the Glory of Christ. Oh, I wish we had swift messengers to run the world over to tell the story that God has come down among us! I wish we had fluent tongues to tell in every language the story that, coming down among us, God was arrayed in flesh like our own and that He took our sins and carried our sorrows.

Oh, that we had trumpet tongues to make the message peal through Heaven and earth that God has come among men, and cries, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”! Oh for a voice of thunder to speak it, or a lightning pen to write it across the heavens—that God has reconciled the world unto Himself by the death of His Son, not imputing their trespasses unto them—and that whoever believes in Christ Jesus has everlasting life! I cannot command thunder or lightning, but here are your tongues, go and tell it this afternoon! Here is my tongue and I have tried to tell it, and may it be silent in the dust of death before it ceases to declare that one blessed message—that God in Christ Jesus receives the sons of men in boundless love!

Tell it, Brothers, with broken accents, if you cannot speak it more powerfully. Whisper it, Sisters, gently whisper, if to none other, yet to your little children and make the name of, “Emmanuel, God with us,” to be sweet in your infant’s ears. You are growing in strength and talent, young man— come, consecrate yourself to this. And you, gray-beard, before you lie down on your last bed to breathe out your spirit, tell the love of Jesus to your sons that they may tell it to *their* sons and hand it down to coming generations, that mankind may never forget that the “Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” God bless you. Amen.

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“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”  
NO. 3244

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 1911.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1870.~~***

***~~“Our light affliction.”  
2 Corinthians 4:17.~~***

PERHAPS someone here thoughtlessly says, “Well, whoever calls affliction, ‘light,’ must have been a person who knew very little about what affliction really is! If he had suffered as I have done, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’ He must have been in robust health and known nothing of sickness and pain.” “Just so,” says another, “and if he had been as poor as I am and had to work as hard as I do to maintain a sickly wife, and a large family, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’ I expect the gentleman who used that expression lived very much at his ease and had all that his heart could wish.” “Yes,” says another, “and if he had stood by an open grave and had to lament the loss of loved ones, as I have done. And if he had known what it was to be desolate and forsaken, as I have known it, he would not have written about ‘our light affliction.’”

Now, if you talk like that, you are, all of you, mistaken, for the man who wrote these words was probably afflicted more than any of us have ever been! The list of his afflictions that he gives us is perfectly appalling—“in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” Is there anyone here who could truthfully make out such a catalog of personal afflictions as the Apostle Paul endured?

“Well then,” says one, “he must have been so hardened that he took no notice of it, like the Red Indian who will endure terrible torture without a groan, or like the Stoic philosopher who conceals his inward feelings beneath an unmoved countenance.” No, you are also mistaken. If you read Paul’s letters to his private friends and to the Churches, you will see that they bear abundant evidences that he was a man of great tenderness of spirit and of intense emotion—one who could suffer and who did suffer most acutely. His education and training had fitted him for a life among the most learned and refined of his countrymen, yet he had to support himself by laboring as a tent-maker and to journey here and there in peril and privation. And though he endured all this in absolute submission to the will of God, yet there was nothing stoical about his resignation!

“Well then,” says another, “he must have been one of those careless, lighthearted people who never trouble about anything that happens and whose motto is, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” Oh, no! The Apostle Paul was not at all that kind of man! He was the most thoughtful, logical, careful, considerate man of whom I have ever read. He knew what it was to be joyful, yet there was never any sign of levity about him. He had a grandly buoyant spirit which lifted him above waves of sorrow in which most men would have sunk, yet he was never frivolous! He wrote of “our light affliction” even when he was heavily afflicted and while he acutely felt that affliction! The sailor forgets the storm when he is again safely on shore, and we are all apt to think less of our sickness when we have been restored from it—but Paul was in the midst of affliction when he called it “light.” He felt the weight of it, and was fully conscious of the pressure of it upon his spirit, but the elastic spring of faith within his skull was so vigorously in action that he was enabled at that very time to call it, “our light affliction.”

We must not forget that Paul had afflictions which were peculiarly his own. There are afflictions which Christians have because they are Christians and which those who are not Christians do not have. And Paul, as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, had sufferings which were peculiarly his because he was an Apostle. Because he was specially called to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. Because he was chosen to carry the Gospel to many nations. Because he was called to stand even before the cruel Emperor Nero—for that very reason—he who was peculiarly gifted and especially chosen above all others to do most arduous and onerous work was also called to endure unusual trial. He had spelt out the word, “AFFLICTION” as perhaps no other mere man had done—he had seen it written in capital letters across his whole life—so he could speak, not as a novice, but as one who had graduated in the school of affliction, and yet he wrote concerning “our light affliction.” Before I have finished my discourse, I hope that most, if not all here will agree with the Apostle and say, “We also call our affliction light.”

**I.**I am going to speak, first, especially TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS. And to them I would say—Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *our affliction is light compared with the objectives we have in view.*

Much of the affliction that the Apostle Paul had to endure came upon him because he was seeking the conversion of the heathen and the ingathering of the elect into the Kingdom of Christ. If this is the objective you also have in view, my dear Friend, and you are made to suffer through your sedulous and faithful pursuit of it, I think you may truly call anything you have to endure a light affliction. If you have ever seen a mother sit up night after night with her sick child, you must have sometimes wondered that her eyes did not close in slumber. You were amazed that she did not permit someone else to share her task, but she seemed to think nothing of the cost to herself if she might only be the means of saving her little one’s life. True love made her labor light. And he who truly loves the souls of sinners will willingly bear any affliction for their sakes if he may but bring them to the Savior! Yes, and he will also patiently endure affliction from them as he remembers how, in his own willfulness and waywardness, he caused his Savior to suffer on his behalf. If a man could know that all through his life he would have to wear a threadbare garment and exist upon very scanty fare—if he were sure that throughout his life he would meet with but little kindness from Christians, and with nothing but persecution from worldlings—and if, at the close of his career, he could only expect to be devoured by dogs or his body to be cast to the carrion crows, yet might he think all this to be but a light affliction if he might but win *one soul* from the unquenchable flame! Such trials as these are, happily, not necessary—but if they were, we might count them as nothing in comparison with the bliss of bringing up from the depths of sin the precious pearls that are forever to adorn the crown of the Redeemer!

Still speaking to Christian workers, I have next to say that *our affliction is light compared with our great motive.*  
What should be the great motive of all who seek to spread the Gospel and to win sinners for Christ? Surely there is no motive comparable to that of seeking to bring Glory to God by gathering into the Kingdom of Christ those for whom He shed His precious blood! Always keep in memory, Beloved, what Jesus has done for us. He left His radiant Throne in Glory and condescended to take upon Himself our nature, and also our sin—  
***“Bearing, that we might never bear,  
His Father’s righteous ire.”***  
Saved by His almighty Grace, cleansed by His ever-precious blood, living because we have been made partners of His life, how can we help loving Him who has made us what we are? When that sacred passion burns vehemently within our hearts, we feel that any affliction that we have to endure in order to glorify Christ is too light to be even worth mentioning! O you devoted lovers of the Savior, have you not known hours when you have envied the martyrs and wished that you, too, might be allowed to wear the ruby crown? When you have read about how they had to lie for years in cold, damp dungeons, and then at last were dragged forth to die at the block, the stake, or the scaffold, have you not felt that your lives were poor and mean compared with theirs and that you would gladly sacrifice all the comfort you now enjoy if you might be permitted to die for Christ as they did? I hope that many of you could truthfully say to your dear Lord and Savior—  
***“Would not my ardent spirit vie  
With angels round the Throne,  
To execute Your sacred will,  
And make Your Glory known?  
Would not my heart pour forth its blood  
In honor of Your name,  
And challenge the old hand of death  
To dampen the immortal flame?”***  
It was such a spirit as this that must have possessed the Apostle Paul when he wrote concerning “our light affliction.”Let us, also, as workers for Christ, reckon as light affliction anything we have to endure by which we may glorify Him who bore such a terrible weight of suffering and sorrow for us!  
**II.**Now, secondly, I am going to speak TO THOSE WHO COMPLAIN OF THE WEIGHT OF THEIR AFFLICTION.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, let me remind you that *your affliction is light compared with that of many others*. Think of the horrors of a battlefield and of the armies of the poor wounded men who have to lie there so long untended. Living in peace in our happy island home, it is difficult for us to realize the misery and wretchedness that are being endured in Paris even while I am preaching to you. [It will be seen, from the date at the head of the Sermon, that it was preached during the Franco-Prussian War.] Some of you complain of shortness of breath, but you have not to suffer the pangs of hunger as so many of the inhabitants of the French capital are at this moment suffering. There are some who are vulnerable as soon as any little ache or pain seizes them, yet their affliction is very light compared with that of many who never know what it is to be well and strong. Even if we are called to suffer pain, let us thank God that we have not been deprived of our reason. If we could go through the wards of Bethlehem Hospital, not far from us, and see the many forms of madness represented, I think each one of us would be moved to say, “My God, I thank You that, however poor or sick I am, You have preserved me from such mental affliction as many have to bear.” How thankful we all ought to be that we are not in prison! Does it seem improbable that such good people as we are could ever be numbered among the law-breakers of the land? You know how Hazael said to Elisha, “Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” Yet he did all that the Prophet foretold—and but for the restraining Grace of God, you and I, dear Friends, might have been suffering the agony and remorse that many are tonight enduring in the prisons of this and other lands! I need not go on multiplying instances of those who are suffering in various ways in mind or body or estate, but I think I have said enough to convince you that our affliction, whatever form it may assume, is light compared with that of many others.  
Next, *our affliction is light compared with our deserts*. We can truly say with the Psalmist. “He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” If the Lord had not dealt with us in mercy and in His Grace, we might have been at this moment beyond the reach of hope, like that rich man who in vain begged, “Father Abraham” to send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool his parched tongue! Yes, ungodly one, you might have been in Hell tonight—in that outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth! Let the goodness of God in preserving you alive until now lead you to repent of your sin and to trust in the Savior! Thank God you are still out of the Pit—the iron gate has not yet been opened to admit you—and then been closed upon you forever! Yet remember that you are, as it were, standing upon a narrow neck of land between two unbounded seas and that the waves are every moment washing away the sand from beneath your feet! Rest no longer upon such an unsafe footing, lest it should give way altogether and you should sink down into the fathomless abyss! As for any affliction that you ever can have to endure on earth, it is not merely light, it is absolutely unworthy of mention in comparison with the eternal woe that is the portion of the lost! Be thankful that, up to the present moment, this has not been your portion—and lest it should be—flee at once for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel!  
Then next, *our affliction is very light compared with that of our Lord.*Do you, dear Friend, murmur at the bitterness of the draft in the cup which is put into your hand? But what heart can conceive of the bitterness of that cup of which Jesus drank? Yet He said, “The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” Is the disciple to be above his Master, and the servant above his Lord? Did Christ have to swim through stormy seas and—  
***“Must you be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease?”***  
I think there is no consolation for an afflicted child of God so rich as that which arises from the contemplation of the sufferings of Jesus. The remembrance of the agony and bloody sweat of Gethsemane has often dried up the sweat of terror upon the anguished brow of the Believer. The stripes of Jesus have often brought healing to his wounded followers. The thirst, the desertion and the death on Golgotha—all the incidents of our Savior’s suffering and the terrible climax of it all—have been most helpful in comforting the sorrows of stricken saints! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, your sufferings are not worth a moment’s thought when compared with the immeasurable agonies of Jesus, your Redeemer! My soul would prostrate herself at His dear pierced feet, and say, “I have never seen any other affliction like Your affliction. I have beheld and seen, but I have never seen any sorrow like Your sorrow. You are, indeed, the incomparable Monarch of Misery, the unapproachable King of the whole realm of grief! Of old, You were the ‘Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ and no man has ever been able to rob You of Your peculiar title.” I think that such reflections as these will help us to realize that however heavy our affliction appears to be to us, it is very light compared with that of our dear Lord and Master—  
***“Sons of God, in tribulation,  
Let your eyes the Savior view,  
He’s the Rock of our salvation,  
He was tried and tempted, too—  
All to succor  
Every tempted, burdened son.”***  
And further, Beloved, *our affliction is very light compared with the blessing which we enjoy.*Many of us have had our sins forgiven for Christ’s sake—and the blessing of full and free forgiveness must far outweigh any affliction that we ever have to endure! When we were lying in the gloomy dungeon of conviction and had not a single ray of hope to lighten the darkness, we thought that even though we had to be kept in prison all our days and to be fed only upon bread and water, we could be quite joyous if we could but be assured that God’s righteous anger was turned away from us and that our sins and iniquities He would remember against us no more forever! Well, that is just what many of us have experienced—our transgressions have been forgiven and our sin has been covered by the great atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! Then let us rejoice and be glad all our days! But this is not all the blessing that we have received, for we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ and adopted into the family of God! Now we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. We even now share in all the privileges of the children of God and there are still greater favors and honors reserved for us in the future, as the Apostle John says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” We already have a foretaste of the bliss that is laid up in store for us, for—  
***“The men of Grace have found  
Glory begun below!  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope do grow!”***  
So it is quite true that in comparison with our blessings and privileges, our affliction is, indeed, light.  
And, dear Friends, we specially realize that *our affliction is light as we prove the power of the Lord’s sustaining Grace*. Some of you have never personally proved its power, but many of you know by practical experience what I mean. There are times when through acute physical pain or great mental anguish, the soul is at first utterly prostrate. But at last it falls back in sheer helplessness upon the bosom of Jesus, gives up struggling and resigns itself absolutely to His will. And then—I speak what I know and testify what I have felt—there comes into the soul a great calm, a quiet joy so deep and so pure as never is experienced at any other time! I have sometimes looked back upon nights of pain—pain so excruciating that it has forced the tears from my eyes—and I have almost asked to have such suffering repeated if I might but have a repetition of the seraphic bliss that I have often enjoyed under such circumstances! I made a mistake when I said, “seraphic” bliss, for seraphs have not the capacity for suffering that we have and, therefore, they can never experience that deep, intense, indescribable bliss that is our portion when, by Grace, we are enabled to glorify God even in the furnace of affliction!—  
***“Let me but hear my Savior say,  
‘Strength shall be equal to your day!’  
Then I rejoice in deep distress,  
Leaning on all-sufficient Grace.  
I can do all things, or can bear  
All sufferings, if my Lord is there—  
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,  
While His left hand my head sustains.”***  
We may well say that no affliction weighs more than a gnat resting upon an elephant when the Lord’s upholding Grace is sweetly manifested to our soul in times of perplexity, anxiety and pain. It is just then that Jesus often so graciously reveals Himself to us that we even come to love the cross that brings Him specially near to us. I can understand that strange speech of Rutherford, as some have regarded it when he said that he sometimes feared lest he should make his cross into an idol by loving affliction too much because of the blessed results that flowed from it! The bark of the tree of affliction may be bitter as gall, but if you get to the pith of it, you will find that it is as sweet as honey!  
Once more, affliction—*sanctified affliction—becomes very light when we see to what it leads.* Sin is our great curse and anything that can help to deliver us from the dominion of sin is a blessing to us. It seems that in the constitution of our nature and in the Divine discipline under which we are being trained, our growth in Grace is greatly assisted by affliction and trial. There are certain propensities to evil that can only be removed in the furnace—as the dross is burnt away from the pure metal—and surely, Brothers and Sisters, you who know the exceeding sinfulness of sin would not think any affliction too severe that should humble your pride, or subdue your passions, or slay your sloth, or overcome any other sin that so easily besets you! You will not merely acquiesce in the Lord’s dealings with you, but you will devoutly thank Him for using the sharp knife of affliction to separate you from your sin! A wise patient will gratefully thank the surgeon who cuts his flesh and makes it bleed—and who will not allow it to heal up too quickly. And when God, by His gracious Spirit’s operation, uses the stern surgery of trial to eradicate the propensity to sin, we do well to kiss the hand that holds the knife and to say with cheerfulness as well as with resignation, “The will of the Lord be done.”—  
***“It needs our hearts be weaned from earth. It needs that we be driven  
By loss of every earthly stay,  
To seek our joys in Heaven.”***  
Now, lastly, *our affliction is light compared with the Glory which is so soon to be revealed to us and in us.*Some of us are much nearer to our heavenly Home than we have ever imaged. Possibly we are reckoning upon another 20 or even 40 years service, yet the shallows of our life’s day are already lengthening although we are unaware that it is so. Perhaps we are anticipating long periods of fighting without and fears within, but those anticipations will never be realized, for the day of our final victory is close at hand and there doubts and fears shall never again be able to assail our spirits. In this House, tonight, there may be some who are sitting on the very banks of the Jordan—and just across the river lies the land that flows with milk and honey—the land which is reserved as the inheritance of the true children of God! Their eyes are so dimmed with tears that they cannot see—  
***“Canaan’s fair and happy land,  
Where their possessions lie.”***  
They even imagine that they are captives by the waters of Babylon and they hang their harps upon the willows, for they fear there are many years of banishment still before them. Yet the King’s messenger is already on the way with the summons to bid them to appear before Him very soon! Even if the call does not come to some of us at once—if the Master has need of us in this world a little longer—how soon our mortal life must end! What is our life? “It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” “As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” But does the brevity of life cause us any anxiety? Oh, no! “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”! And when once we reach that blest abode of all the saints and look back upon our earthly experiences, we shall feel that any affliction we had to endure was light, indeed, compared with the unutterable bliss that shall then be our eternal portion! We are pilgrims bound to Zion’s city and we necessarily have certain privations and difficulties—but when our journey is at an end— ***“One hour with our God  
Will make up for it all.”***  
If we have not this good hope through Divine Grace, we may well say that our affliction is *not* light. I cannot imagine how any of you, my Hearers, can go on living without a Savior —you poor people, you hardworking people, you sickly, consumptive people—how can you live without a Savior? I wonder how those who are rich and who have an abundance of earthly comforts can live on, year after year, without any hope (except a false one) of comfort and blessing in the life that is to come? But as for you who have so few earthly comforts, you whose life is one long struggle for bare existence, you who scarcely know what it is to have a day without pain, *how can you live without a Savior*? Remember that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to some.” So, “seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” May the Lord give you the Grace to come to Him this very moment! And to Him shall be all the Glory forever, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 4.***

**Verse 1.** *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not—*We are sometimes ready to faint, but we cast our fainting spirits into the arms of God and our strength is again renewed. At times the very importance of an errand first weighs down the spirit of the messenger, yet afterwards it seems to impel him to more than ordinary exertion. So is it here—having been Divinely entrusted with this ministry and being ready to faint under the tremendous responsibility that it involves, we are yet awakened to action by the very pressure which seems to deprive us of the power to act! And, therefore, “we faint not”—

**2.***But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*Far be it from the teacher of the Truth of God to ever use words in an unnatural sense, or to dissemble or equivocate, saying to the ear what he means not in the sense in which the hearer understands it. Far be it from us to mix with the Word of God anything of our own as vintners mix various kinds of wine, for such is the import of the word that the Apostle here uses. Let none of us ever handle the Word of God deceitfully. There is no deceit in it—it is all pure unmixed Truth of God. An honest mind is needed for the understanding of it, and then a truthful tongue for the telling of it to others. If we preach undiluted, unadulterated Truths of God, we must not expect that the natural heart of man will commend our honesty. We are to commend ourselves to every man’s conscience, not by cutting and trimming the Word so as to make it palatable to our hearers—leaving one Truth out to please this man, and dwelling too long upon another Truth so as to please some other hearer—but by bringing out the whole teaching of the Scripture in clear truthfulness that shall command the approval of the conscience even of those who may not accept the Truth that we proclaim!

**3.***But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost.* [See Sermon #1663,  
Volume 28—THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It is not hidden under the flowers of our oratory, not hidden under the darkness of our speech, not hidden through the fog of our philosophies—if it is hidden at all, it is hidden “to them that are lost.” If they had any spiritual perception or apprehension at all. If they were not utterly lost to everything that is spiritual, they would be able to receive the Gospel that we are bid to preach and which, therefore, becomes “our Gospel.”

**4, 5.***In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them*

*which believe not,* [See Sermon #2304, Volume 39—BLINDED BY SATAN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]*lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ,*[See Sermon #2077, Volume 35—THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]*who is the*

*Image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves—* What a miserable topic we would have if we preached ourselves! But we do not set up ourselves as “priests” having authority to administer “sacraments” to a lower order of beings who do not possess priestly sanctity! We do not claim to belong to a ministerial caste—we regard ourselves as simply equally with the rest of the Christian brotherhood and, therefore, “we preach not ourselves”—

**5, 6.***But Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts—*We cannot, therefore, darken the Gospel, or cover it up, “for God has shined in our hearts”—

**6, 7.***To give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels—*The most earnest and faithful minister of the Gospel must always remember that humbling Truth of God. He has this precious treasure of the Gospel entrusted to his charge. He knows he has it and he means to keep it safely, but still, he is nothing but an earthen vessel, easily broken, soon marred—a poor depository for such priceless Truths of God! Yet God has a good reason for putting this treasure into earthen vessels—

**7.***That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*If angels had been commissioned to preach the Gospel, we might have attributed some of its power to their superior intelligence. And if only those had been called to preach the Gospel were men of great intellect and of profound learning, we might have considered that the talent of man was the essential qualification for a preacher! But when God selects—as He often does, no, as He *always* does—earthen vessels and some that seem more manifestly earthen than others, then the excellency of the power is unquestionably seen to be of God and not of us! In Paul’s case, the earthiness of the vessel appeared in the trouble which he had to bear.

**8.***We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed—*He is not so far gone as that. He sees the stormy billows raging around outside the ship everywhere, and the ship is tossed here and there upon the waves, yet she does not leak, there is no water in the hold and the waves will not sink the ship as long as she can keep them outside—and trouble will not distress us as long as we can obey our Lord’s injunction, “Let not your heart be troubled.” “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed”—

**8.***We are perplexed, but not in despair—*We scarcely know what to do, but, by His Grace we have not given way to despair. We are perplexed, but hope has not gone from us. *Dum spiro spero*, was the old Latin proverb—“While I live, I hope.” But the Christian proverb is a still better one, *Dum expiro spero*—“Even while I die I still have hope,” for “the righteous has hope in his death.”

**9.***Persecuted, but not forsaken.*For there is One who, when we are persecuted, is persecuted with us and persecuted in us, who has promised that we shall not be left desolate! He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”—

***“Should persecution rage and flame,  
Still trust in your Redeemer’s name!  
In fiery trials you shall see  
That, ‘as your day, your strength shall be.’”***

**9.***Cast down, but not destroyed—*Even if the adversary is able to cast us down, he is not able to destroy us, for “underneath are the everlasting arms.” “Cast down, but not destroyed”—

**10.***Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*Thus did these Apostolic saints in a very high sense die daily, and so must we, when called to suffer for the Truth’s sake, bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

**11, 12.***For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you.*The disinterestedness of Christian affection is here seen in that Paul was willing even to be delivered unto death if only the Church in Corinth and other Christians might receive more of the Divine Life. This is the motive that actuated our blessed Lord, Himself. He saved others, but in order to do so, He could not save Himself—and he who would be a blessing to others must expect that just in proportion to the good that he is able to impart to them, must be the cost to himself.

**13-16** . *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and, therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sake, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the Glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perishes—*As, in the case of most of the Apostles—it did absolutely and literally perish by martyrdom.

**16.***Yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*As our body, through pain and disease, is constantly sinking towards the grave, here is our continual consolation—that our inner man is renewed day by day!

**17.** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*This is one of the most remarkable verses in all Scripture! The contrast here drawn is perfect and the language is in the highest degree pertinent to the subject. When the Apostle speaks of affliction, he contrasts it with glory! The affliction he calls a lightness of affliction, but the glory he calls a weight of glory—and while he describes the affliction as momentary, he rightly says that the glory is eternal. And then, as though he would make the contract still more vivid, he says that this momentary, light affliction, “works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” He can scarcely find words big enough to express the contrast between what Believers now have to endure and what they shall forever enjoy!

**18.***While we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1380 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

VANITIES AND VERITIES  
NO. 1380

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”  
2 Corinthians 4:18.~~***

THE Apostle Paul was by no means a stoic. He had not conquered all human feeling and rendered himself a stone man. On the contrary, he was exceedingly sensitive. You can see abundant evidence, not only in the Acts of the Apostles, but also in the tone of all his Epistles, that he has a very tender spirit. He feels acutely any unkindness. If a friend forsakes him, he mourns it. Or if friends help him, there is genuine emotion in his gratitude. He is sensitive, too, to poverty, sensitive to shame—sensitive to all those griefs which he has to bear for Christ’s sake. He *feels* them—you can see that he does. He is not an invulnerable man in armor—he is a man of flesh and blood whom the arrows pierce and pain.

Yet how bravely he sticks to his work! He faces every danger and never dreams of flinching. Never for a single moment does he seem to take into consideration what he may have, personally, to suffer for the testimony of Christ and the triumph of the Gospel. He remembers the pangs when they are past! He looks on the scars when they are healed and he sometimes gives a long list of the perils and privations he has had to endure, thus showing that he was keenly sensitive, but he never tries to shelter himself from any sort of suffering if it is necessary to accomplish his lifework. Thus he pressed steadily on through evil report and good report, through honor and through dishonor, enjoying the love of the Churches at one time and at another time smarting under a cruel suspicion of his Apostleship even among his own converts!

He is now the hero of unbounded popularity, when the people crowd to do him honor, and at another time the victim of public hatred and frenzied riot when he is dragged out of the city to be stoned to death! “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me,” he could well say. He seemed as if God had thrown him forth from His hands even as He hurls a thunderbolt, and he stopped not until he reached the end towards which the power of God was hurling him! He cried, “The love of Christ constrains us.” He reckoned himself, therefore, dead to all but Christ. Well may we be curious to know what supported so noble a man under his trials and developed such a hero under such a succession of oppositions.

What kept him so calm? What made him so self-possessed and intrepid? How was it that when cast down he was not destroyed—that when troubled he was not distressed? What sustained him? He gives us the key to this fortitude by telling us that he counted his afflictions light because they were, in his estimation, but for a moment, and they were

working out for him a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory. He was calm and happy midst rage and tumult, violent prejudice, adverse and even disastrous circumstances, because, in the language of the text, he looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen, reckoning that the things which are seen are not worth looking at, they are so transient—while the things unseen are of priceless worth because they are eternal!

That is our subject at this time. First, things not to be looked at. And, second, things to be looked at. The text wears the shape of a double paradox. Things that can be seen are, naturally, the things to be looked at. What should a man look at but what he can see? And yet the Apostle tells us not to look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen! How can things invisible be looked at? That again is a paradox. How can you look at what you cannot see? This is only one paradox of the Christian life which is *all* paradox—and the riddle lies rather in the words than in the sense. We shall soon discover that there is no contradiction or incongruity, no difficulty whatever.

**I.**First, then, let us LOOK AT WHAT CAN BE SEEN and ask what we are to understand by this declaration—“We look not at the things which are seen.” The word for, “look,” is used, I think, six times in the New Testament and is translated in four or five different ways. I do not intend to keep to those translations, but to work them into the explanation of what is meant by not looking at the things which are seen. It means, first, lightly esteeming both present joy and present sorrow, as if they were not worth looking at. The present is so soon to be over that Paul does not care to look at it. There is so little of it and it lasts such a brief time that he does not even care to give it a glance—he looks not at it.

Here he is persecuted, despised, forsaken. “It will not last long,” he says. “It is but a pin’s prick. It will soon be over and I shall be with the goodly fellowship above and behold my Master’s face.” He will not look at it. He ignores it! Thus it behooves us to do if surrounded with trials, troubles, present sorrows—we should not think so much of them as to fix our attention or rivet our gaze on them. Rather, let us treat them with indifference and say, “It is really a very small matter whether I am in wealth or in poverty, in health or in sickness—whether I am enjoying comforts or whether I am robbed of them. The present will so soon be gone that I do not care to look at it. I am like a man who stays at an inn for a night while he is on a journey.”

Is the room uncomfortable? When the morning breaks, it is of no use making a complaint and so he merely chronicles the fact and hastens on. He says to himself, “Never mind, I am up and away at once. It is of no use fretting about trifles.” If a person is going a long distance in a railway carriage, he may be a little particular as to where he shall sit to see the country and as to which way he likes to ride. But if it is only a short stage between, say, the Borough Road and the Elephant and Castle—he does not think about it. He does not care in whose company he may be, it is only for a few minutes. He is hardly in before he is out again. It is a matter not worth thinking about.

That is how the Apostle regarded it. He reckoned that his present joys and present sorrows were so soon to be over that they were, to him, a matter of indifference, not even worth casting his eyes to see what they were. “Does Jesus bid me go to Rome?” asks the Apostle. “Then I do not look to see whether I shall be housed in Nero’s palace or caged in Nero’s dungeon. It is for so short a while that if I can serve my Master better in the dungeon than I can in the palace, so let it be. My casual lot shall be my well-contented choice. It shall be a matter, if not of cool indifference, yet still of calm serenity, for it will soon be over and gone into history. A whole eternity lies beyond and, therefore, a short temporal delay dwindles into an insignificant trifle.” What a blessed philosophy this is which teaches us to not even look at passing, transient troubles, but to fix our gaze on eternal triumphs!

He meant more than that, however. He meant that he had learned not to regard the things of the present as if they were at all real. He did not look upon them as substantial or enduring. Like as clouds when they float overhead assume different shapes but change their form while we are gazing at them, so events, as they seemed to be transpiring, were to him no more than apparitions. When a man looks on a dissolving view, knowing that it is going to dissolve, he does not regard it as being other than an illusion. It is a shadow cast upon a sheet—there is nothing substantial in it. It may please his eyes, but he will say, “The subject upon the sheet is not the real thing. The view before me is not the scene, itself, and if I turn my eyes away from it, it will have melted away into nothingness in a little while. So for all its charms or its terrors I will not fret myself.”

You know how Paul explains his own words in another passage when he says, “Brethren, the time is short: it remains that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passes away.” That is so with the earthly joy of the best of men! He should say to himself, “This is a dying joy. This will pass away. I look at it as a shadow.” Is a child born into your house? Read across its brow the word, “Mortal,” and when it dies you will not be disappointed or be so sad as if you dreamed that you were a parent of an immortal! Such a thought must be a dream, since your little one may be taken from you as well as the child of another.

When you have riches, do you say to yourself, “This is a solid treasure. This is golden gain”? Ah, then it will be your god and if you lose it, the loss will eat like a canker into your spirit. But if you say, “These are fleeting things. They may take to themselves wings and fly away. I will not consider money to be treasure, but only look upon it as a shadow and hold it as such—as a thing not to be reckoned with substances—because it is seen and temporal.” That is the way to do with every one of our joys. Do not look upon them as though they were substantial, for they are not.

They are a part of this life-dream, this empty show—they are nothing more at their very best. Oh, how often do they prove to us, painfully, that they are unsubstantial!

Look in the same way upon your circumstances. Say, “Well, I am in poverty, but this is not *real* poverty, because it is not *lasting* poverty. In a short time I shall be among the angels and walk the streets of gold and be as beautifully clad as any prince among them! Therefore will I not fret and worry, since my poverty will soon be over.” Anything of loss or suffering that you are called upon to endure, always look upon it in the light of time and see what a fleeting thing it is. And bear it bravely like a man—no, like a *Christian*—because you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance! These transient things are not worthy to be considered. Look upon them as if they were just nothing at all. So the Apostle did.

Again, I find the word sometimes translated, “mark.” “Brethren,” says the Apostle, “mark them that are unruly.” The word is the same as that which is here rendered, “look.” Dear Friends, we are not to mark the things which are seen as if they were worth notice! You know that little children, if you give them a new toy, or a new frock, clap their hands and otherwise express their delight. That is because they are children. Be not children in knowledge, but as men—and as to the things of this life, look on them as toys. Do not act towards them as children do, but as men! “Oh,” says the young man, “I have taken my degree at the university today.” How he exults! What high importance he attaches to it! He wishes to get a newspaper to see if it is recorded there. It is to him an event as great as anything in history!

We, perhaps, are rather amused at his excitement, for we do not consider anything of this sort much worthy of marking down. Another man finds that he has made some considerable gain and he, too, reckons it as a red letter day the day in which he seized these accessions to his fortune. If you are doing so, you are making sorrow for yourself, for as surely as joy becomes too sweet, sorrow will become too bitter. If I care nothing whatever for man’s approbation, I reckon little of man’s disapprobation—one gets to be brave in that way!

It is not good to be much elated or much depressed by the joys and sorrows of life. If you are overjoyed, if you mark down certain matters as the very essence of happiness and begin to exult and revel in the things which are seen, then, mark you, when the untoward things come to you and blight your hopes, you will find that you have rendered yourself too sensitive and you will feel the smart far more keenly than you would have done if you had exercised wisdom enough to forbear reveling in the sweets.

Look at the wasps and flies in summer. They will see placed for them, by your kindness, sweet liquid in which to catch them—sugar or honey is employed to hold their wings. The wise fly sips a little and away! The unwise insect enjoys the sweet and wades in farther and farther till he clogs his wings and he it is who will suffer when you come to destroy your prey! It is a blessed thing to be able to*sip* of this world and no more—for to plunge into it is death. Avoid the sweets of this world when they begin to tempt you. Say of them, as Solomon did of wine—“Look not upon it when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup, when it moves itself aright—for who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contention, who has babbling, who has wounds without cause, who has redness of eyes?”

Surely the men who make this world to be their highest joy find, at the last, it bites like a serpent and stings as an adder. They indulge their passions to the destruction of their souls! Do not, therefore, mark carnal joy as to be desired. But are we never to have anything special to mark? Oh yes! Carefully mark down the eternal things. Did the Lord appear to you? Mark that down. Did you win a soul to Christ? Mark that down. Did you have sweet answers to prayer? Mark that down. Those are things of special note, as I am quite sure Paul thought. Though he would not say much about the discomforts of the dungeon of the Praetorian, he marked down its consolations. When Onesimus came to hear him, he made a note of it. It did not matter to him whether he was surrounded with stones or surrounded with applause! Whether he lodged in a palace or slept in a prison was to him no more than the incident of the hour—he made no account of such trivialities. He never marked those things down—the *eternal* was what he marked, not the transient.

Another meaning is, take heed. You must put all the translations together to get the meaning. In the Gospel according to Luke this word is translated, “Take heed.” The Apostle meant, no doubt, that he did not take heed of the things which were seen. He did not exercise care, thought and anxiety about them—his care, thought and anxiety were about the things which are not seen. “After all these things,” says Christ, “do the Gentiles seek.” So they do. They are always seeking after the world—from early morning till late at night it is the world they are after! Well, let the Gentiles follow their pursuits, but the child of God should not, for our Lord says unto us, “Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, or with what you shall be clothed.”

He bids us cast our care upon Him and cease from all anxiety! “Seek you,” He says, “first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” So the Apostle Paul tells us not to care, not to worry or trouble ourselves about things which are seen, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse—never suffering them to eat like a corrosive acid into our spirit. We are to spend *all* our heed upon our walk with God, our obedience to His commands, our fulfilling His will, our spreading His Kingdom, our getting ready for the coming of Christ, our being prepared for Judgment, our being prepared to dwell eternally with God at His right hand! About *these* we ought to take heed.

This is our business, but, alas, our thoughts naturally drift the other way. These temporals are more apt to absorb us. There are some who not only apologize for themselves, but justify their worldly-mindedness. Fitly, therefore, does the Lord Jesus Christ, by the mouth of His Apostle, direct our thoughts away from groveling themes and bids us take heed of the eternal and let the secular sit lightly on our minds. Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, uses the word in the sense of considering, “considering yourself lest you, also, are tempted.” We shall dive still more deeply into the meaning if we understand how, in certain conditions, the present, the

transient, the things most palpable to the senses are properly left out of all consideration and not taken into the reckoning.

For instance, if the Apostle knew that he should glorify God by preaching the Gospel, what would it matter to him if friend or foe should say to him, “Paul, you will risk your life by attempting to do so”? Live or die, he would be bold to preach! He never took their warnings into consideration. And if they had said, “If you state such-and-such a Truth of God, or administer such-and-such a reproof in a certain Church, you will be sure to lose their respect. You will lose face among them.” Again, he would have smiled. It would have had no more influence upon him than it would have upon a merchant should you say to him, “If you go into such a district you will have to encounter clouds of dust.” He would reply, “Why, if I can net a thousand pounds, what do I care about dust or no dust?”

If it is my objective to ascend a mountain, am I to be deterred by a few cobwebs across my path? What are tiny obstacles to a strong man? So Paul did not consider the things which are seen to be worth a thought, though there are puny folk who value nothing else! The cost to him seemed so little that he would let it go into the scale or not, as men pleased. “I reckon that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.” Are you not sometimes placed in this position? You know you ought to do right, but you fear that if you do, you will lose your situation.

Well, now, if God’s cause is uppermost in your estimation you will not consider your loss as the first matter. You will rather say, “I can lose *anything* sooner than lose peace of mind and miss pleasing God.” Or there is some duty which you know you ought to perform and you are told, “Well, if you do that, you will lose your old uncle’s love. He will strike you out of his will. You must think about it.” What is the use of thinking about it? It is only an earthly, transient thing! What are these transient things, be they what they may, compared with the eternal weight of Glory? O Brothers and Sisters, if men lived in the light of eternity and judged their position accordingly, how differently would they act! But instead of so doing we begin weighing those trifles which we may have to endure for Christ’s sake and making much of them.

This is playing the traitor to Christ and forsaking Him when we ought to be most firm. Shame upon us if we thus treat our Lord! Eternal contempt awaits such cowards! From this time forth may we never look upon the things which are seen as substantial, but put them down as vanity and let the things which are *not seen* rise before us in all their supremacy of value! Perhaps you may get a still clearer perception of the meaning of the text if I tell you its full interpretation. By, “not looking at the things which are seen,” we may understand *not making them our scope*. That is the nearest English word I can find to interpret the Greek. Let not these visible objects be the *scope* of your life, for, alas, there are many whose whole scope of life is that they may prosper in this world. The next world may go as it wills—their scope ends here. To win the esteem of God seems a trifle to them. That they may live at ease, enjoy the comforts and, if possible, the luxuries of this life, is their sole aim and object. As for the eternal things of Heaven they seem dim and unsubstantial.

Now, it must not be so with us. We should say, “The things *eternal* I pursue. I am no more a citizen of this world, but a pilgrim bound for the Celestial City. When I passed through Vanity Fair, they asked me to buy this and that and I said, ‘I buy the Truth.’ I must go through the Enchanted Ground, but I will not sleep there, for that is not my rest. Whatever I see which is enchanting to others shall have no power over me, for the scope of my soul’s desire and lifework is eternity.” Would God we all had *invisible joys* for our objective! To sum up the whole, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, look not at the things which are seen. Do not look upon your comforts as if they were enduring. Do not dote upon them. Do not think of them as if you had them otherwise than on loan, or as if you had any right to them.

Be thankful to God for them, but, because they will so soon pass away, do not set much store by them. Build not your nest on any of these trees, for they are all marked for the axe and before long they will all come down. Say not of any mortal man, or woman, or dear child, or worldly possession, or knowledge, or pursuit, or honor, “This is much to me.” Let it be *little* to you. Put the *gifts* of God far down in the scale compared with Himself! Try, when you have your comforts, to find God in them and, when you *lose* your comforts, just change the words and try to find all in God, for, remember, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.” You have not to live on the creature comforts—you are commanded to live on the living Word of the living God—and you will never be fully happy until you do this.

A man who goes to a town and chooses a house that is dilapidated—the foundations gone and the beams decayed—may say, “This is a very comfortable house,” but you would not think so highly of its charms. “No,” you would be ready to say, “I cannot be comfortable in it. The rich hangings and costly furniture do not hide the serious defects. It may come down at any time about the heads of the sleepers. This is not a house for me.” You know this is the case in daily life and common experience. Well, it is just the same with regard to the things eternal. Say, therefore, to yourself, “I must repose my soul upon that which is true, real, wellfounded and imperishable. Earthly things are too transient to afford me any solace or security. I dare not set my soul upon them. I cannot drink water out of these broken cisterns. I must go to the Fountain from where all satisfying, trustworthy supplies flow.”

You must do the same with regard to your sorrows. Although it looks rather hard, yet it is the wiser way to take them cheerfully rather than to exaggerate their weight by murmuring of them. If a man has Grace to live above his joys, that same Grace will enable him to live above his sorrows. As I said just now, when earthly joys enchant you too much, then, should earthly sorrows overtake you, they will make you sorely despondent. Your wisdom is to live above them both—above the glee of prosperity and the gloom of adversity. Dear Brother, what ails you? Have you lost a child?

Lost? Why, you will be where that dear one is within so incredibly short a time that you need not worry and fret! Coming down from such a domestic grief as that, to a commercial anxiety—you have had a sad loss in the City, have you? Some of your comforts will be curtailed.

But if you get nearer to the heart of your Lord and love Him better and walk in the light of His Countenance more than you did, you will never know you had a loss! You will be so much richer in the fine gold of His comfort that you will scarcely miss the silver of this poor world. And so, too, if you lose credit, or are discountenanced by old friends, or are deprived of anything which men are apt to make great account of here below—if you do but remember that it was only a bubble and it has burst—you will not be broken-hearted. Say, “It never was more than a bubble and I ought to have known that it would soon be gone. The comfort I had was never anything but a temporary loan and I ought to have remembered that it was borrowed.” If you get into that mindset, you will live above the cares of this life! May God help you to do so.

**II.**Now, for a few minutes let us address ourselves to the second point—LOOKING AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN. How can we do that? Well, first, realize them by *faith*. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and in the judgment and in life everlasting according to the teaching of the Word of God. Try to look at these things to look at them as present facts. Some will never do so. They will tell you that they could not see them if they tried. But that is just what we, who have been taught of God to look at the things which are not seen, can palpably discern. Oh, to look beyond death to “the Home over there,” beyond the swelling flood where souls that were loved of God from before the foundation of the world are safe with Jesus! I invite you to do so, especially if you have some dear ones there.

Do you see them? Do you hear their music? Do you behold their joys? Are you going to be troubled about them any longer, after having realized their certain happiness? By-and-by there comes the Resurrection—the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. The very body over which you wept because it was to be given to the worms shall rise in matchless beauty in the likeness of its Lord! Will you not wipe your eyes dry, now, and submit to the Divine will, for surely the hope of the blessed Resurrection makes amends for the loss by death?

Then there is to come the Judgment and you and I will be there. A soldier, some time ago, was in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where, according to tradition, the feet of the Messiah will rest on the Day of Judgment. He sat on a stone and said, “And shall we all be present? I will sit here in that day.” And there, absorbed with the thought, he looked up to the sky and so distinctly did he realize the majestic vision of the Day of Judgment, that he fell to the ground in amazement, oblivious of everything that was transpiring around him! Ah, if all of us were living in the light of the Day of the Lord, what trifles these ebbs and flows—these ups and downs of passing circumstances would seem! How lightly we would bear sorrow and how little we would think of earthly fortunes and misfortunes if we could actually forecast the tremendous day when, with angels for witnesses, and Christ for our Judge, we shall have to stand and be judged according to the things done in the body!

Realize Heaven, Brothers and Sisters—the Heaven of the perfected manhood after the Resurrection—the Heaven where we shall see the Beloved’s face and day and night extol Him forever! Oh, what is it to be poor? What is it to be sick? What would it be to go through a thousand deaths if we may but at last behold His Glory, world without end? And think of Hell, you that forget God and revel in vanities! As your trembling spirit best may, think what it must be to be driven from His Presence—to hear Him say, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell.” Ah, gilded world, how you lose your luster when once I see the lurid glare of Tophet! O painted harlot, how I see your haggard ugliness when I hear the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth of those who chose the broad road and let the Lord, the Savior go! How I despise you!

As the vision opens before the eyes of faith, what zeal it kindles in my breast! Would to God I could induce some careless person here who, nevertheless, does believe the Scriptures, to sit down, if it were but for a half-hour and try, believingly, to picture these things to his mind’s eye! This sacred volume is full of pictures—pictures of things that shall shortly come to pass. Oh that you had the discernment to see them! Not as weird fancies, but as veritable facts! The true sayings of God! The real thing is what you do not see to be real! The fiction is that which you account a solid fact! We are going down, each one of us, to the grave, but God lives forever and ever! As for that body of yours in which you are sitting in this house—it is not a substance which shall abide—it is a shadow which shall dissolve, dissolving into dust and exhaling into water.

Yet there lives within you what you cannot see—the real and true self— and that true self of yours will pass into another state! And through it into yet another which shall be everlasting! And, oh, may God grant that your lot may not be everlasting sorrow, but endless joy! In either case the things which are not seen are eternal. Gird up your loins and look at them like a man who will have, before long, to dispel the illusions of sense and confront the verities of eternity, whether he wants to or not! The Christian learns to look on these things with the eye of delight. Is it not to you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, a delight to see God? I should not like to go to any place where I could not see my God. Yet He is not seen!

Is it not a wonderful thing to look forward to the Heaven that is above— to the City of the blessed? When the Lord indulges our faith with a view of that eternal joy—and some of us have known what it is—it has been too much for our weak capacity. We can laugh in our sleep when we dream of Heaven! And we can sit down in the midst of pain and sorrow and feel as if we could not feel more joy than we possess because our souls have looked on the pinnacles of our Father’s palace and seen the gleaming radiance of the 12 bejeweled foundations of the Eternal City where there is a house and a crown and a harp for every Believer among us! The poor girl who goes home from this joyous place of worship to her own little cheerless room would feel miserable, indeed, if she looked at the shady side of her condition. But she says, “My Lord is in this room,” and the

place glows as if it were made of slabs of gold!

She settles down and begins to think of the Heaven that is hers and she sees herself to be a King’s daughter, a true Princess, for she possesses in Glory a crown that no head can wear but hers, and there is a mansion provided for her which none can live in but herself! Happy, therefore, she well may be! O beloved Friends, learn to look at these things with intense delight, because they are ours in belief, now, and are soon to be ours in possession! On the other hand, if you are not converted, I would urge you to look upon the eternal future—for it is all eternal—with an intense *dread*, for without Christ what is there for you among the things which are not seen and are eternal, but that which will make you wring your hands for poignant grief and gnash your teeth for bitter self-reproach if you are resolved to live and to die as you now are?

You see not yet the future state of woe, but like all the unseen things, it is eternal. There can be no termination to the misery of an immortal soul when once banished from God. I see no “larger hope” revealed in Scripture. Let my philosophical Brothers conjecture what they will, where God speaks not, I am silent. But I *do* see the dread forebodings of a death that never dies and a fire that is never quenched! I would have every man who will not have Christ, or who dilly-dallies with salvation and runs risks with his soul, to look at what he risks! Face your future, O you who choose your own destruction! That was a solemn morning’s work for Abraham when he went to the place where he was known to meet with God. As he looked toward Sodom he saw the smoke of it going up as the smoke of a furnace. O Christians, you do well, sometimes, to look that way! Such a contemplation is not pleasant to flesh and blood. No, but it will do you good and make you feel fervent emotions of *gratitude* for your own redemption and intense desires for the salvation of others.

But come here, Sinner! Come here! I must have you here! Look, do you see it? Do you see it—the smoke of the flame which burns forever and ever? That flame is for *your* burning if you repent not! Do you see it as it reddens the heavens? That fire burns for *you* if you believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ! Will you not look? If you will not, you will have to *feel* it! You can not mitigate those woes by refusing to believe in their existence. It is the silly trick of the ostrich, so they say, when the hunter pursues it, to burrow its head in the sand and fancy itself safe—and this is what you are doing with more than equal folly! I would gladly bring you back to reason. Look at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal!

I met with a remark the other day which struck me forcibly—If a man had no worse pain than a toothache, if he knew that it would last forever, he would desire to die that he might escape from it. When we have to endure any acute pain for a little while, we begin to cry out for relief and find it hard to be quiet. But were any pang to last *eternally*, the horror of such an expectation would even, now, be overwhelming! By the dread thought of eternity I implore you see to it that your salvation is secured at once! Escape for your life, my Friends, and look not behind you, for unless you escape in time, your fate will be sealed forever and ever! Those things which are not seen are eternal and Hell is one of them! Unless you escape, now, by faith in Jesus Christ, you will never escape!

There is no reprieve nor respite in the world to come—pardon, therefore, should be sought at once. By looking into the things which are not seen, Paul doubtless meant that he looked to them with *hope*. To his view, the harvest was ripe and he was eager to reap it. I invite all Believers to be looking with ardent hope for the things that are eternal. Long for the bright appearing of the Lord! Long for your translation into the city of Glory! Expect it! Watch for it! It is on the way. You may be much nearer than you think. You may be in Heaven before next year—indeed, you may be there before tomorrow morning!

Light is fading from the earth. Dear Friend, look towards Heaven. Look towards eternal things! Make it a point to look unto your future home. Should there be any young man here who is not 21 and he knows that when he comes of age he is to be squire of a village, own a park and enjoy a rich heritage—I will be bound to say he has often forestalled the time because he is sure of his title. If any one of you had a legacy left him of a large estate, he would be off this week to have a look at it. One likes to look at one’s own—Christian, be sure to survey your own possession in the skies! Read much the Book of God which tells you of your future inheritance. Say to yourself, “This is all mine. Why should I not begin to enjoy it? Did not the Israelites fetch bunches of the grapes of Eshcol before they entered Canaan? And why should not I?” I hope you will full often enjoy foretastes of bliss till you can sing with John Berridge—

***“Too long, alas, I vainly sought  
For happiness below!  
But earthly comforts, dearly bought,  
No solid good bestow.  
At length, through Jesus’ Grace, I found  
The good and promised land  
Where milk and honey much abound  
And grapes in clusters stand.  
My soul has tasted of the grapes,  
And now it longs to go  
Where my dear Lord His vineyard keeps,  
And all the clusters grow.  
Upon the true and living Vine  
My famished soul would feast,  
And banquet on the fruit Divine,  
An everlasting guest.”***

What a sanctifying influence such anticipations would have upon you! “Everyone that has this hope in him purifies himself.” Pursue eternal things with concentrated mind. You must look right on to the end of the race for the prize. The runner does not cast a glance to the right or to the left, or to the flowers which adorn the pathway, but he keeps his eyes on the prize and that helps him run. He stretches every nerve to reach the end and win the prize! Brothers and Sisters, make eternal things the *scope* of your life at all times! This I have told you is the literal sense of the original Greek. Make them that for which you plot and plan—that for which you think and consider—that for which you live and act! Throw

your whole being into eternal things!  
“Are we, therefore, to neglect business?” you may ask. God forbid! Serve  
God in business! To leave business, or to do business as if it were not a  
part of your religion would be a departure from your Master’s will and not  
a fulfillment of it! Sanctify your most common actions to the glory of God.  
“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”  
Have an eye always to eternity! Keep your thoughts upon that. Eat and  
drink as for eternity, remembering that what you eat and drink perishes  
and he that eats will perish, too. It is “earth to earth” whenever we eat—  
therefore let us not make gods of our bellies. When you enjoy any earthly  
thing, do it as in the light of eternity and say, “I am plucking a flower that  
must fade. This is not a diamond that will remain with me, always  
glistening. It is only a bright daisy. It looks very pretty at the moment, but  
it will soon fade. The children gather it, but soon let it fall and so do I! At your peril, put not your soul into that which is sensual. See that you  
pursue, with all your might, things spiritual! As for things transient,  
commit them to God’s Providence. Do your best to honor God in the use of  
this world’s currency, but make it not your wealth. Look at Jonah sitting  
under his gourd which screened him from the scorching sun with its  
broad leaves. Think of Jonah as he said to himself, “How happy I am  
under this arbor. How cool it makes me.” He was content and comfortable,  
but God prepared a worm! The worm destroyed the wretched gourd!  
Though it seemed so beautiful before, it soon became only fit to be pulled  
down and cast upon the dunghill. It may soon be the same with your  
earthly comforts. If you make your gourd your god, it will do you no good.  
Gourds are well enough, but they are not good when you put them in the  
place of eternal comforts.  
I finish with this. Treat the things present as if they were not and live  
like an heir of Heaven’s invisible but substantial joys. Higher and better  
things are in store for you! God bless you by His blessed Spirit with  
blessed foretastes of the blessed hereafter. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 4.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—783, 656, 657.**  
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THE TENT DISSOLVED AND THE MANSION ENTERED  
NO. 1719

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 6, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”  
2 Corinthians 5:1.~~***

PAUL ranks among the bravest of the brave. We note, also, with admiration, how the hero of so many dangers and conflicts, who could glow and burn with fervor, was yet among the calmest and quietest of spirits. He had learned to live beyond those present circumstances which worry and disturb. He had stolen a march upon the shadows of time and entered into possession of the realities of eternity! He looked not on the things which are seen, but he set his whole regard on the things which are not seen—and by this means he entered into a deep and joyful peace which made him strong, resolute, steadfast, immovable. I would to God that we had all acquired Paul’s art of being “always confident”—his habit of having the inward man renewed day by day!

The most of us are far too like the insect of the summer hour which sports away its life of moments among the flowers and lo, all is over! Are we not too apt to live in the immediate present which is revealed by the senses? The ox projects no thought upward or beyond—to stand in the cool brook or lie down in the fat pasture is its all in all—even thus is it with the mass of men, their souls are tethered to their bodies, imprisoned within the circumstances of the day! If we could be completely delivered from the thralldom of things seen and felt, and could feel the full influence of the invisible and the eternal, how much of Heaven we might enjoy before the celestial shores are reached!

Paul’s life was rough and stormy, yet who might not desire it? Had there been no life to come, he would have been, of all men, the most miserable, for he was one of the poorest, most persecuted, most despised, most slandered, most wearied and most suffering of mortals! And yet, if I had to put my finger upon happy lives, I should not hesitate to select among the foremost, the life of the Apostle Paul, for whom to live was Christ! It is also to be especially noted, as to his happiness, that he had a reason for it. My text begins with the word, “For.” Paul is always argumentative—the leaning of his mind is in that direction. Therefore, if he is cast down, he has a reason for it and if he is calm, he can show just cause for his peace.

Some religionists are deliriously happy, but they cannot tell you why. They can sing and shout, and dance, but they can give no reason for their excitement. They see an enthusiastic crowd and they catch the infection— their religion is purely emotional! I am not going to condemn it, yet I will show you a more excellent way. The joy which is not created by substantial causes is mere froth and foam and soon vanishes away. Unless you can tell why you are happy, you will not long be happy. If you have no principle at the back of your passion, your passion will burn down to a black ash and you will look in vain for a living spark. Some professors have not enough emotion—their hearts are too small. Though I cannot say that their heads are too large, there are others whose hearts are their main force, who are soon on fire, blazing away like shavings and brushwood when first the flame lights upon them. But their brains are an uncertain quantity, never sufficient to manage the furnace of their emotions.

It was not so with Paul—he was a well-balanced man. If able to defy the present and rejoice in prospect of the future, he had a solid reason for doing so. I like a man who is fervent and enthusiastic and yet in his fervor is as reasonable as if he were some cool logician. Let the heart be like a fiery, high-mettled steed, but take care that it is curbed and managed by discretion. An instructed Christian man is rational even in his ecstasies—ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him—and that hope seems to rise above all reason. He is glad, most glad of the glad, but he knows the why of his gladness. And so he can bear the cruel tests to which the world exposes spiritual joy. The true Believer’s peace can answer the quibbles of time or devils. It can justify itself in its opposition to all appearances. This is a house built upon a foundation, a tree which has a firmly settled root, a star fixed in its sphere—and thus it is infinitely superior to the house upon the sand, the tree plucked up, the fleeting vapor of mere emotion.

May God, the Holy Spirit instruct us so that we may know the Truth of God out of which solid happiness is sure to grow! I see in the text before us, first of all, a catastrophe which Paul saw to be very possible—“If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.” Secondly, the provision which he surely knew to be made should that catastrophe occur—“We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” And thirdly, I shall dwell for a minute or two upon the value of this knowledge to Paul and to the rest of us in our present trying condition.

**I.**First, then, consider THE CATASTROPHE WHICH PAUL SAW TO BE VERY POSSIBLE—“If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.” He did not fear that he, himself, would be dissolved! He had not the slightest fear about that. The catastrophe which he looked forward to is known among us by the name of “death,” but he calls it the dissolving of the earthly house of his tabernacle—the taking down of his tent-house body. He does not say, “If I were to be destroyed,” or, “If I were to be annihilated.” He knows no supposition of that character. He feels assured that he, himself, is perfectly safe.

There is latent within the text an element of deep quiet as to his real self. “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God.” The “we” is all unharmed and unmoved. If our house were dissolved we should *not* be undone. If we were to lose this earthly tent we have “a building of God, eternal in the heavens.” The real man, the essential self, is out of harm’s way and all that he talks about is the falling to pieces of a certain tabernacle, or tent, in which, for the present, he is lodging! Many people are in a great fright about the future, yet here is Paul viewing the worst thing that could happen to him with such complacency that he likens it to nothing worse than the pulling down of a tent in which he were making ready to reside in for a little season. He was afraid of nothing beyond that—and if that happened he had expectations which reconciled him to the event—and even helped him to anticipate it with joy!

Paul was not absolutely sure that his body would be dissolved. He hoped that he might be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord—and then he would be changed and be forever with the Lord, without passing through death. Still, he was willing to leave this in the Lord’s hands. And when he saw it to be possible that he should be numbered among the blessed dead who die in the Lord, he did not shrink from the prospect, but bravely found a metaphor which set forth the little fear which he entertained concerning it. The Apostle perceived that the body in which he lived was frail in itself. Paul was accustomed to make tents. I do not suppose he ever manufactured any very large or sumptuous ones—probably he did not have enough capital for that—but he was a tent worker and mender.

The use of tents was common enough among the Roman people in Paul’s day. The gentry delighted in bright pavilions which they could set up at pleasure—and the common folk found pleasure in spending a part of their time under canvas. While he was sitting writing this letter, it is most likely that Paul had a tent or two to repair lying near, and this suggested to him the language of the verse before us. When a tent is newly placed, it is but a frail structure, very far removed from the permanence of a house—in that respect it is exactly like this feeble corporeal frame of ours which is crushed before the moth! Paul felt that his body would not need any great force to overthrow it—it was like the tent which the Midianite saw in his dream—it only needed to be struck by a barley cake, and lo, it was down!

A house of solid masonry may need a crowbar and a pick to remove its stones from their places, but feebler tools will soon overturn a tent and make a ruin of it. The body is liable to dissolution from causes so minute as to be imperceptible—a breath of foul air, an atom of poisonous matter, a trifle, a mere nothing may end this mortal life! I hope that you and I duly remember the frailty of our bodies. We are not so foolish as to think that because we are in robust health, today, we must necessarily live to old age! We have lately had among ourselves abundant evidence that those who appear to be the healthiest are often the first to be taken away—while feeble persons linger on among us, whose lives are a continued wonder and a perpetual struggle! When we think of the brittle ware of which our bodies are made, it is not strange that they should soon be broken.

Is it not a wonderful thing that we continue to live? Much more wonderful than that we should die? Dr. Watts has wisely said—  
***“Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And dies if one is gone.  
Strange that a harp of thousand strings  
Should keep in tune so long!”***

Some small affair interferes with a minute valve or organ of secretion, mischief is engendered by it, the whole current of life is hindered and, byand-by, death ensues. It is a very delicate process by which dust remains animated! A thousand things can stop the process and then our body is dissolved! Paul, therefore, because he saw his body to be frail as a bubble, looked forward to the time when the earthly house of his soul would be dissolved. When he was writing this Epistle, he had many signs about him that his body *would* be dissolved. His many labors were telling upon him. He was worn down with fatigue. He was spent in his Master’s service.

He was so full of the heavenly fire that he could never rest! After he had evangelized one city, he was forced to hasten to another. If he were driven out of one village, he hurried to the next, for he was eager to deliver the message of salvation. He wore himself out with labor and he felt, therefore, that the day would come when his body would give way under the intense excitement of his life-agony. In addition to this, he endured cold and hunger, nakedness and sickness brought upon him by his missionary sacrifices. He had a hard time of it as to physical endurance and I should think there was scarcely a limb of the man that did not suffer in consequence of the imprisonments, scourging, stoning and other hardships which he had suffered. He felt that one of these days, in all probability, the house of his tent would come down through the violence of his persecutors.

Once he most touchingly spoke of himself as, “such an one as Paul the Aged”—and aged men cannot get away from the consciousness that their body is failing. Certain crumbling portions warn the old man that the house is dilapidated; the thatch which has grown thin or blanched tells its tale. There are signs about the aged which warn them that their earthly house was not built to stand forever—it is a tabernacle or tent set up for a temporary purposes—and it shows signs of waxing old and being ready to pass away. Therefore Paul was led to feel that both from the natural frailty of the body and, also, from the injuries which it had already sustained, there was before him the evident probability that the earthly house of his tabernacle would be dissolved.

Besides, Paul’s frail body had been subject to exceedingly great perils. I saw, the other day, an encampment of gypsies out upon the common. Many of this wandering race were sitting under a coarse covering sustained by sticks. I should exaggerate if I called them poles—and I could not help feeling that such an abode was all very well on a warm day, but not at all desirable when the east wind was blowing, or a shower of sleet was driving along, or a deluge of rain descending. The Apostle’s body was a tent which was subjected to great stress of weather. God had not screened him, though one of the most precious men that even lived! He was exposed to more danger than almost any other of the Lord’s servants.

Here is his own account of the matter—“Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” Well might he reason that before long his poor shepherd’s shanty would give way under such rude blasts! Besides, Paul knew that so many others whom he had known and loved had already died, and he gathered from this that he would, himself, die.

There used to sit in this house a Brother who has often assured me that he would not die, and that if any Christian man *did* die it was because he grieved the Lord. I am sorry to say that I have missed that Brother for many months. I hope he has not yet disproved his own theory, but I am sure that he will do so, sooner or later, unless our Lord should hasten His advent. Whenever I meet with an enthusiast who boasts that he shall never die, I find it best to let him wait and see. One fine old Irish clergyman has frequently sought to instruct me in the art of being immortal! And he has been grieved and angry because I never set much store by the long life which he offered me. Though an old man, he assured me that he would never die—he expected, in a short time, to throw out all the infirmities of his years in the form of a rash—and then to be as vigorous as ever!

Alas, the good rector is buried and his crazy brain is at rest. It is appointed unto men once to die. I should have thought that since so many of the excellent of the earth have fallen asleep, *nobody* would ever have been so mad as to raise a question about its being the common lot. Our crowded cemetery supply 10,000 arguments why each one of us may expect to die in due time. This earthly house of our tabernacle will be dissolved—all things unite to warrant the belief.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this was all that Paul expected on the sad side and, truly, it is not much, is it? Certain Swiss peasants not very long ago were feeding their flocks on one of the lofty upland valleys. On one side of the pasture stood a number of chalets, or wooden huts, in which they were accustomed to live during the summer. They were poor shelters which they left as soon as the winter set in. One day they heard a strange rumbling up in the lofty Alps and they understood what it meant—it meant that a mass of rock or snow or ice had fallen and would soon come crushing down in the form of an avalanche. In a brief space, their fears were realized, for they saw a tremendous mass come rushing from above, bearing destruction in its course. What did it destroy? Only the old, crazy chalets—that was all. Every man of the shepherds was safe and untouched—the event was, to them, a matter which caused a Te Deum to be sung in the village Church below rather than a subject for mourning and sorrow. They said, “The avalanche is terrible, but it has not slain the aged mother, nor crushed the babe in its cradle. It has injured none of us, but only buried a few hovels which we can soon rebuild.”

Their case is a picture of ours. The avalanche of death will fall, but O you saints, when it comes, this is all it will do for you—your earthly house will be dissolved! Will you fret over so small a loss? No evil will come near to you! The poor hut of the body will be buried beneath the earth, but as for *yourself*, what will you have to do but to sing an everlasting Te Deum unto Him who delivered you from death and danger—and raised you to His own right hand? It would not long affect a man if his tent should be overthrown—he would shake himself clear of it and come forth—it would not otherwise disturb him. So death shall not affect us for the worse, but for the better! The dissolution of this hampering frame shall give us liberty! Today we are like birds in the egg—so long as the shell is whole, we are not free—death breaks the shell!

Does the fledgling lament the dissolution of the shell? I never heard of a bird in its nest pining over its broken shell! No, its thought runs otherwise—to wings and flight and sunny skies! So let it be with us. This body will be dissolved. Let it be so—it is good it should be! We have been glad of it while we have needed it and we thank God for the wondrous skill displayed in it—but when we no longer require it, we shall escape from it as from imprisonment and never wish to return to its narrow bounds! Death, as it pulls away our sackcloth canopy, will reveal to our wondering eyes the palace of the King in which we shall dwell forever and, therefore, what cause have we to be alarmed at it? I have set out the whole catastrophe before you—and surely no Believer trembles in view of it!

**II.**So now we pass on to the second head—THE PROVISION OF WHICH THE APOSTLE PAUL MOST SURELY KNEW. He knew that if his tent dwelling was overthrown, he would not be without a home! He knew that he would not have to open his eyes in a naked condition and cry, “Woe’s me, where am I to fly? I have no dwelling place!” No, he knew that if this tent-house were gone, he had “a building of God.” Paul was not afraid of going to “purgatory”—though of late, some, even among Protestants, have, in a modified form, revived that grim lie and have told us that even Believers will have much to bear before they will be fit for eternal happiness! The Apostle held no such opinion! On the contrary, he wrote—“We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God.”

He did not expect to be roasted alive for the next thousand years and then to leap from “purgatory” to Paradise. But he did expect to go, as soon as ever his earthly house was dissolved, into his eternal house which is in the heavens! He had not even the thought of lying in a state of unconsciousness till the Resurrection. He says, “We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have [we have *already*] a building of God.” He says not, “we *shall* have it,” but, “we *have* it”—“we know that we have it.” The picture seems to me to be as though one of you should dwell in his garden, in a tent, for a while. Somebody inquires what would happen if a gale of wind should blow your tent away in the night. “Oh,” you say, “I have a house over yonder. I would go within doors and live there.”

What a comfort to know that whatever occurs to our temporary gear, we have a fixed and settled abode to which we can at once repair! This makes us feel independent of all dangers and helps us joyfully to welcome the inevitable, come when it may! What did the Apostle mean, however? For this text is said to be a very difficult one. He meant, first—the *moment* his soul left its body, it would *at once* enter into that house of which Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.” Do you want to know about that house? Read the Book of the Revelation and learn of its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, its walls of rarest gems! Read of the river which winds through it and of the trees which bear their fruit every month! If, after that, you desire to know more concerning this house, I can but give you the advice which was given by John Bunyan in a similar case.

One asked of Honest John a question which he could not answer, for the matter was not opened in God’s Word and, therefore, Honest John bade his friend live a godly life and go to Heaven and see for himself. Believe no dreams, but bide your time, believing in the Lord Jesus, and you shall shortly know all about the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! Paul, however, meant that in the fullness of time he would again be clothed with a body. He regarded the waiting time as so short that he almost overlooked it, as men forget a moment’s pause in a grand march. Ultimately, I say, he expected to be housed in a body—the tenthouse which was blown down and dissolved would be developed into a building so rich and rare as to be fitly called, “a building of God, a house not made with hands.”

This, also, is our prospect. At this present time, in this mortal body, we groan being burdened, for our spirit is liberated from bondage, but our body is not yet emancipated, although it has been bought with a price. We are “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” and so, “the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” Our soul has been regenerated, but the body waits for the process, which, in its case, is analogous to regeneration, namely, the resurrection from the dead. Disembodied saints may have to wait a few thousand years, more or less, dwelling in the Father’s house above—but there shall come, eventually, the sounding of the trumpet and the raising of the dead—and then the perfected spirit shall dwell in a body adapted to its glory. The certainty of the resurrection raises us above the dread which would otherwise surround the dissolution of our body.

A child sees a man throwing precious metal into a melting pot and he is sad because fair silver is being destroyed. But he that knows the business of the refiner understands that no loss will come of the process—only the dross of that silver will be taken away—and the pure molten mass poured out into a comely mold will yet adorn a royal table! Well, my Brothers and Sisters, are we assured that to lose this vile body is clear gain since it will be fashioned according to the glorious Body of the Lord Jesus? Let us pass on to consider how Paul could say he knew this. This wonderfully enlightened 19th Century has produced an order of wise men who glory in their ignorance! They call themselves “Agnostics,” or know-nothings! When I was a boy, it would have seemed odd to me to meet with a man who gloried in being an ignoramus and yet that is the Latin for that Greek word, “Agnostic.”

Is it not singular to hear a man boastfully say, “I am an ignoramus”? How different is our Apostle! He says, “We know.” Where did this confidence come from? How did he know? First, Paul knew that he had a Father in Heaven, for he felt the spirit of sonship. He knew, also, that his Father had a house and he was certain that if ever he lost the tent in which he lived, he would be sure to be welcomed into his own Father’s house above! How do our children know that if ever they are in need of a house they can come home to us? Did they learn that from their tutors at school? No, their childhood instincts teach them that our house is their home, just as chickens run under the mother hen without needing to be trained. Because they are our children, they feel that as long as we have a house, they have a house, too. Paul, therefore, unhesitatingly said, “We know.”

And Brethren, we know the same through like confidence in our Father’s love. In the house of the many mansions we feel quite sure of a hearty welcome in due time! We cannot be shut out from our Father’s home! We cannot be houseless wanderers while our royal Father dwells in His palace! We are not merely hopeful on this matter, but certain! And, therefore we say, “I know.” Paul knew, again, that he had an elder Brother and that this Brother had gone before to see to the lodging of the younger brothers and sisters. Paul remembered that Jesus had said, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am you may be also.” So Paul had no question whatever! If the Lord had gone to prepare a place, there would be a place for him, for he never knew his Divine Lord to set about anything and fail therein!

Can we not all trust our Forerunner? Have we any doubts of Him who has entered within the veil as our Representative? No! As we are sure that Jesus has passed into the heavens on our behalf, so are we sure that when this tent-house body is dissolved, there remains a rest and home for our souls! Doubtless, Paul also thought of the Holy Spirit, that blessed One who deigns to live with us in this frail house of clay which is, in many ways, an uncomfortable and unsuitable abode for Him by reason of the sin which has defiled it. He condescends to dwell in these mortal bodies and, therefore, when we leave our earthly house, He will leave it, too! And we are persuaded that a place will be found where we may still abide in fellowship. As our bodies have been honored to entertain the Holy Spirit, we may be sure that in our hour of need He will find an abode for us. He has been our guest and, in His time, He will be our Host!

This we know, for we know the love of the Spirit. He who has made our body His temple will find a rest for our souls. Thus, from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we gather assurance that we shall not wander to and fro unhoused, even though this mortal frame should be dissolved! Besides, let me tell you something. Paul knew that when he died there was a Paradise prepared, for he had already been there! You remember how he locked up that story till he could keep it no longer and, then, 15 years after its occurrence, he let out the blessed secret? Let me read his words, “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows). Such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows), how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter.”

He says he was taken up to the third Heaven! It was, therefore, idle to tell Paul that there was no home for him hereafter, for he had seen the place! “Well” you say, “I have not seen it.” No, but you fully believe the witness of Paul, do you not? For my own part, I am sure that Paul would not say that which is false and, inasmuch as he went into the third Heaven or Paradise, and saw it, I believe that there is such a place! Remember that this is the place to which the Lord Jesus admitted the dying thief, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” This is the place where Jesus is and where we shall be with Him forever, when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved! Yet, again, dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I know that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, there will be a new body for us, because our Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. In my mind the ultimate answer to my deepest unbelief is the fact of the rising of Jesus from the dead!

No matter of history is anything like so well attested as the fact that our Lord was crucified, dead and buried—and that He did, on the third day— rise again from the dead. This I unhesitatingly accept us a fact and this becomes my anchorage. Inasmuch as Jesus is the Representative of all who are in Him, it is as certain that the Believer will rise since Jesus has risen. The Apostle says, “We know,” and remembering these grand Truths of God, I am sure that his words are not a bit too strong! No, if I knew any word in the English language which would express more assurance than the words, “to know,” I would use it this morning for myself! Much more, then, might the Apostle use it for himself. This we are also sure of, namely, that if our Lord Jesus is alive and in a place of rest, He will never leave His chosen and redeemed ones without house or home! Where He has found a Throne, His people shall find a dwelling!

Delightful is our old-fashioned ditty—  
***“And when I shall die, Receive me, I’ll cry, For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why. But this I do find, we two are so joined,  
He won’t be in Glory and leave me behind.”***

There is such an attachment between Christ and the Believer—yes, more—such a vital, essential, indissoluble, tender marriage union that separation is impossible! As no man among us would ever be content to see his wife in prison if he could set her free, or to leave her outside in the cold when he could bring her to his fireside in comfort, so Christ, to whom our soul is espoused in eternal wedlock, will never rest until He has brought every one of His own beloved to be with Him where He is—that they may behold His Glory—the Glory which the Father has given Him. No Believer in Jesus has any doubts about that! I am sure you can all say, as Paul did, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands.”

“Ah,” asks one, “but how is a man to know that he has an interest in all this? Suppose I know that the children of God are thus favored, how am I to know that I am one of them?” I invite you to self-examination on this point. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart? Then it is written, “He that believes in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live. He that lives and believes in Me shall never die.” Having believed in Christ, the Apostle knew that he was safe, for the promises are to Believers, and if any man is a Believer, every promise of the Covenant belongs to him. We obtain further assurance of this by our possessing the new life. Dear Friend, have you entered into a new world? Do you feel within you a new heart and a right spirit? Have old things passed away and have all things become new? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Then it is all right with you! That new life cannot die, your new-born nature must inherit everlasting bliss. “Fear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

In addition to this, do you commune with God? Do you speak with Christ? None perish who commune with the Father and the Son. Jesus cannot say, at the last, “I never knew you; depart from Me,” for He *does* know you, and you know Him. “Oh,” you say, “He knows enough of me, for I am always begging.” Just so, go on with that trade! Be always a spiritual mendicant. The Lord of Love will never cast away a pleading suppliant! He who frequents the Throne of Grace shall infallibly reach the throne of Glory! Beside, does not the Spirit, Himself, also bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? And if children and heirs, are we afraid of being left naked in the world to come? I hope that many of us have now reached the full assurance of faith so that we believe and are sure. Can you not say, each one for himself— “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day”?

These are the ways in which Believers know that they are Believers! And then, by the Word of God they know that all things are theirs, so that if their earthly house should fail they would be received into everlasting habitations.

**III.**Lastly, as to THE VALUE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE TO US. To be sure that when this body dies, all is well—is not that worth knowing? Secularists accuse us of taking men’s minds away from the practical present that they may dream over a fancied future. We answer that the best help to live for the present is to live in prospect of the eternal future. Paul’s confident belief that if his body should be dissolved, he would be no loser, kept him from fainting. He knew what the worst would be and he was prepared for it. Great storms were out, but the Apostle knew the limit of his possible loss and so was ready. All we can lose is the frail tent of this poor body. By no possibility can we lose more. When a man knows the limit of his risk, it greatly tends to calm his mind. The undiscoverable and the unmeasured are the worst ingredients of dread and terror—but when you can gauge your fears, you have removed them.

Our Apostle felt that he had been sent into the world with the great design of glorifying God by winning souls and building up saints—and he was fully resolved to keep to the ministry which he had received. He argues with himself that his most dangerous course would be to faint in his life-service, for perseverance in his calling could bring with it no greater risk than death—and that he summed up as losing a tent and gaining a mansion! The Roman emperor might strike off his head, or a mob might stone him to death, or he might be crucified like his Master—but he made light of such a fate! It was to him only the coming down of the old tent—it did not affect his undying spirit—he smiled and sang, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

The prospect of his heavenly house made his present trials seem very light, for he felt like a man who sojourns for a night at a poor inn, but puts up with it gladly because he hopes to be home on the morrow. If we were trying tent life for a season we should probably cry out, “A fearful draft comes in at that corner! How damp it is under foot! How cramped one feels!” Yet we should smile over it all and say, “It will not be for long. We shall soon be in our house at home.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, an hour with our God will make up for all the trials of the way! Be of good courage and press on. This changed, for Paul, the very idea of death— death was transformed from a demon into an angel! It was but the removal of a tottering tent that he might enter into a permanent palace!

Some of God’s own children are much troubled through fear of death because they do not know what it is. If they were better taught, they would soon discover, in their present source of sorrow, a subject for song! I would like, here, to say that I have known some of my Master’s doubting and fearing servants die splendidly! Do you remember how Mr. FeebleMind, when he crossed the river, went over dry-shod? Poor soul, he thought he should surely be drowned, and yet he scarcely wet the soles of his feet! I have known men of God go like Jacob all day long, weary and faint, feeling banished from their Father’s house—and yet when they have laid their head down for their final sleep, they have had visions of angels and of God! The end of their journey has made amends for the rough places of the way.

It shall be so with you, Brother and Sister Believer. There is usually a dark place in every Christian’s experience. I have seen some travel in sunlight almost the whole of the way and then depart in gloom. And I have thought none the worse of them for it. And I have seen others struggle forward through a fog for the first part of their pilgrimage and then come out into cloudless day. At one period or another beneath these lowering skies the shadow falls across our way, but surely, “light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” As I have thought of some of my dear Brothers and Sisters that I have seen die very sweetly, and I have remembered that they were, in life, lowly and self-distrustful, I have compared them to persons who, when they drink their tea, forget to stir the sugar at the bottom of the cup. How doubly sweet the drink becomes as they near the bottom—they have more sweetness than they can well bear!

Would it not be wise to stir the tea at once and enjoy the sweetness from the brim to the bottom? This is the benefit of faith as to the future, for it flavors the present with delight. But what if saints should miss immediate comfort for a while—how richly will they be compensated! What will it be to open your eyes in Heaven! What a joy to fall asleep on the bed of languishing and to wake amid the celestial choir of Hallelujahs! “Where am I? Ah, my God! My Christ! My Heaven! My all! I am HOME!” Sorrow and sighing shall flee away! Does not this view of things give a transfiguration to death? O you poor unbelievers, how I pity you, since you have no such glorious hopes! O that you would believe in the Lord Jesus and enter into eternal life!

Faith had such an effect upon Paul that it made him always calm and brave. Why should he be afraid of a man that could not do him harm? Even if his persecutor killed him, he would do him a service! What had he to fear? This made Paul wise and prudent. He could use his judgment, for he was not fluttered. He was not like some of you that are only a little ill and straightway you are filled with fright—and you make yourselves worse than you otherwise would be, so that the doctor has to contend with a frightened mind as well as a diseased body! He who is calm, restful and happy is already on the road to a cure. He is quiet because he is in his Father’s hands, and whether he lives or dies, all is well—and this conviction helps the physician to remove his bodily malady. I say again, there is no way to live like learning to die! And he who can afford to be careless whether he lives or dies is the man who will so live as to die triumphantly. Oh, that all of you felt the quiet which comes of trusting in the Lord Jesus!

How sad to know that you may die at any moment and to be unprepared for the change! I do not wonder that you are unhappy! You have good reason for being so. Oh that you were wise and would make the future sure by faith in the risen Lord! In Martin Luther’s time and before his era, men who had lived evil lives were often in great fear when they came to die—and in their terror they would send to a monastery and procure a monk’s robe in which to be buried. What a foolish fancy! Yet so it was that they hoped to fare better in the day of judgment for being wrapped in brown cloth and covered with a hood! Be ours a better garment! Here is a wish of holy Rutherford—“His believed love shall be my winding sheet and all my grave-clothes. I shall roll up my soul and sew it up in the web of His sweet and free love.”

Is not that your idea? It is surely mine! If we are laid to sleep in such a cloth, there will be no fear of our waking! It will happen to us as to the man who was laid in Elisha’s grave and at once arose as soon as he touched the Prophet’s bones. No man can lie dead if wrapped up in the love of Christ, for His love is life! He that has touched the love of Christ has touched the heart of the life of God and he must live! So let us give ourselves up to that Divine love and, trusting in our Lord, let us go onward to eternal bliss till the day breaks and the shadows flee away! Let us triumph and rejoice that there is prepared for us a “building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

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PREPARATION FOR HEAVEN  
NO. 3538

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1916.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has also given us the earnest of the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 5:5.~~***

HOW very confidently Paul contemplates the prospect of death! He betrays no trembling apprehensions. With the calmness and serenity, not merely of resignation and submission, but of assurance and courage, he appears joyous and gladsome, and even charmed with the hope of having his body dissolved and being girt about with the new body which God has prepared for His saints! He that can talk of the grave and of the hereafter with such intelligence, thoughtfulness, faith and strong desire as Paul did, is a man to be envied. Princes might well part with their crown for such a sure and certain hope of immortality! Could emperors exchange their treasures, their honors and their dominions, to stand side by side with the humble tent-maker in his poverty, they would be great gainers. Were they but able to say with him, “We are always confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,” they might well barter earthly rank for such a requital! This side of Heaven, what can be more heavenly than to be thoroughly prepared to pass through the River of Death? On the other hand, what a dreary and dreadful state of mind must they be in who, with nothing before them but to die, have no hope and see no outlet—the pall and the shroud their last adorning—the grave and the sod their destination! Without hope of rising again in a better future, or realizing a better heritage than that which should know us no more before long—no prospects of seeing God face to face with rejoicing—well may men dislike any reference to death! So they shrink from the thought of it. Far less can they tolerate its being talked of in common conversation. No marvel that they recoil from the shade of mortality when they are so ill prepared to face the reality of the soul’s departure! But, dear Friends, since it is so desirable to be ready to depart, it cannot be inexpedient sometimes to talk about it—and on my part the more so, because there is a proneness in all our minds to start aside from that grave topic which, as God shall help us, shall be our subject this evening—preparation for the great hereafter! “For,” says the Apostle, “God has worked us for this same thing”—He has prepared us for the dropping of the present body and the putting on of the next! And “He has given us the earnest of His Spirit.”

Our three departments of meditation will be— *the work of preparation itself*. *The Author of it.* And *the seal which He sets to it—*the possession of which may resolve all scruples as to whether we are prepared or not.

**I.**THE WORK OF PREPARATION stands first. Is it not almost universally admitted that some preparation is absolutely essential? Whenever the death of a friend or comrade is announced, you will hear the worstinstructed say, “I hope, poor man, he was prepared.” It may be but a passing reflection or a common saying. Yet everybody will give expression to it, “I hope he was ready.” Whether the words are well understood or not, I do not know, but the currency given to them proves a unanimous conviction that some preparation is necessary for the next world. And, in truth, this thought is in accordance with the most elementary facts of our holy religion. Men by nature need something to be done for them before they can enter Heaven—and something to be *done in them*. Something to be done with them, for by nature they are enemies to God. Dispute it as you will, God knows best. He declares that we are enemies to Him, and alienated in our hearts. We need, therefore, that some Ambassador should come to us with terms of peace and reconcile us to God. We are debtors as well as enemies to our Creator—debtors to His Law. We owe Him what we cannot pay and what He cannot pardon. He must exact obedience and we cannot render it! He must, as God, demand perfection of us, and we, as men, cannot bring Him that perfection. Some Mediator, then, must come in to pay the debt for us, for we cannot pay it. Neither can we be exempted from it. There must be a Substitute who shall stand between us and God—One who shall undertake all our liabilities and discharge them—and so set us free, so that the mercy of God may be extended to us!

In addition to this, we are all criminals. Having violated the Law of God, we are already condemned. We are not, as some vainly pretend, introduced to this world on probation. Our probation is over—we have forfeited all hope! We have broken the Law of God and the sentence is gone out against us—and we stand by nature as condemned criminals, tenants of this world during the reprieve of God’s mercy, in fear of a certain and terrible execution—unless Someone comes in between us and that punishment—unless some gracious hand brings us a free pardon! Unless some Divine Voice pleads and prevails for us that we may be acquitted! If this is not done for us, it is impossible that we should entertain any wellgrounded hope of entering Heaven. Say, then, Brothers and Sisters, has this been done for you? I know that many of you can answer, “Blessed be God, I have been reconciled to Him through the death of His Son! God is no enemy of mine, nor I of Him—there is no distance, now, between me and God—I am brought near to Him and made to feel that He is near to me and that I am dear to Him.” Full many here present can add, “My debts to God are paid! I have looked to Christ, my Substitute. I have seen Him enter into Suretyship engagements for me and I am persuaded that He has discharged all my liabilities! I am clean before God’s bar! Faith tells me I am clean.” And, Brothers and Sisters, you know that you are no longer condemned! You have looked to Him who bore your condemnation and you have drunk in the spirit of that verse, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Surely this is a preparation for Heaven! How could we enter there if our debts were not discharged? How could we eternally obtain the Divine Favor if we were still condemned criminals? How could we dwell forever in the Presence of God if we were still His enemies? Come, let us rejoice in this—that He has worked us for this same thing—having championed our cause from the cradle to the grave!

Preparation for Heaven consists still further *in something that must be worked in us*, for observe, Brothers and Sisters, that if the Lord were to blot out all our sins, we would still be quite incapable of entering Heaven unless there was a change worked in our *natures*. According to this Book, we are dead by nature in trespasses and sins—not some of us, but all of us—the best as well as the worst! We are all dead in trespasses and sins. Shall dead men sit at the feasts of the Eternal God? Shall there be corpses at the celestial banquets? Shall the pure air of the New Jerusalem be defiled with the putrefaction of iniquity? It must not, it cannot be! We must be quickened—we must be taken from the corruption of our old nature into the incorruption of the new nature, receiving the incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever. Only the living children can inherit the promises of the living God, for He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. We must be made living creatures by the new-creating power of Grace, or else we cannot be made meet for Glory. By nature we are all worldly. Our thoughts go after earthly things. We “mind earthly things,” as the Apostle says. We seek after the world’s joys. The world’s maxims govern us. The world’s fears alarm us, the world’s hopes and ambitions excite us. We are of the earth, earthy, for we bear the image of the first Adam. But, Brothers and Sisters, we cannot go to Heaven as worldly men, for there would be nothing there to gratify us. The gold of Heaven is not for barter to use, nor for covetousness to hoard. The rivers of Heaven are not for commerce, neither are they to be defiled by men. The joys and glories of Heaven are all spiritual, all celestial—

***“Pure are the joys above the skies***

***And all the region peace.”***  
Such peace is of a heavenly kind, and for heavenly minds. Carnal spirits, greedy, envious spirits—what would they do in Heaven? If they were in the place called Heaven, they could not be in the state called Heaven, and Heaven is more a state than a place! Though it is probably both, yet it is mainly the former, a state of happiness, a state of holiness, a state of spirituality which it would not be possible for the worldly to reach! Therefore, you see, Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit must come and give us new affections. We must have a fresh objective set before us. In fact, instead of minding the things that are seen, we must come to love and to aspire to the things that are not seen! Our affections, instead of going downwards to things of earth, must be allured by things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God!

In addition to our spiritual death and worldliness, we are all unholy by nature. Not one of us is pure in the sight of God. We are all defiled and all defiling, but in Heaven they are “without fault before the Throne of God.” No sin is tolerated there—no sin of thought, or word, or deed! Angels and glorified spirits delight to do God’s will without hesitation, without demur, without omission. And we, like they, must be holy, or we cannot enter into their sacred fellowship—

***“Those holy gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin, and shame!  
None shall obtain admission there  
But followers of the Lamb.”***

So what a change must come over the carnal man to make him holy! Through what washings he must pass! What can wash him white, indeed, but that far-famed blood of the Son of God? Through purification he must pass! What, indeed, can purify him at all but the refining energy of God the Holy Spirit? He alone can make us what God would have us to be, renewed in His image in holiness and righteousness!

That a great change must be worked in us, even ungodly men will confess, since the idea of the Heaven of the Scriptures has always been repulsive, never agreeable, to unconverted men and women. When Mohammed would charm the world into the belief that he was the Prophet of God, the Heaven he pictured was not at all the Heaven of holiness and spirituality. His was a Heaven of unbridled sensualism, where all the passions were to be enjoyed without let or hindrance for endless years! Such a Heaven that sinful men would like—therefore, such the Heaven that Mohammed painted for them, and promised to them! Men in general, be they courtly, or be they coarse in their habits, when they read of Heaven in the Scriptures with any understanding of what they read, curl their lips and ask contemptuously, Who wants to be everlastingly singing Psalms? Who could wish to be always sitting down with these saints talking about the mighty acts of the Lord and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom? Such people cannot go to Heaven, it is clear—they have not character or capacity to enter into its enjoyment! I think Whitefield was right. Could a wicked man be admitted into Heaven, he would be wretched there—being unholy, he must be unhappy. From sheer distaste for the society of Heaven, he might fly to Hell for shelter! With the tumult of evil passions in his breast, he could not brook the triumph of righteousness in the city of the blest. There is no Heaven for him who has not been prepared for it by a work of Grace in his soul. So necessary is this preparation—a preparation *for* us, and a preparation *in* us. And if we ever have such a preparation, beyond all question we *must have it on this side of our death*. It can only be obtained in this world. The moment one breathes his last, it is all fixed and settled. As the tree falls, so it must lie. While the nature is soft and supple it is susceptible to impression, stamp what seal you may upon it. Once let it grow cold and hard, fixed and frigid, you can do so no more, it is proof against any change. While the iron is flowing into the mold you can fashion it into what implement you please. Let it grow cold, in vain you strive to alter its form! With pen of liquid ink in your hand you write what you will on the paper, but the ink dries, the impress remains, and where is the treachery that shall tamper with it? Such is this life of yours. It is over, all over with you for eternity, beyond alteration or amending when the breath has gone from the body. Your everlasting state is fixed then—

***“There are no acts of pardon passed  
In the cold grave to which we hasten,  
But darkness, death, and long despair  
Reign in eternal silence there.”***

We have no intimation in the Word of God that any soul dying in unbelief will afterwards be converted to the faith. Nor have we the slightest reason to believe that our prayers in this world can at all affect those who have departed this life. The masses of priests are fictions, without the shadow of Divine Authority. “Purgatory,” or “Pick-Purse,” as old Latimer used to call it, is an invention for making fat larders for priests and monks! The Scriptures of the Truth of God give it no countenance. The Word of God says, “He that is holy, let him be holy still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” Such as you are when death comes to you, such will judgment find you, and such will the eternal reward or the eternal punishment leave you, world without end! Preparation is needed—and the preparation must be found before we die.

Moreover, we ought to know— *for it is possible for a man to know whether he is thoroughly prepared.* Some have said not, but they have usually been persons very little acquainted with the matter. The writings of those grand old divines of the Puritan period abundantly prove how thoroughly they enjoyed the assurance of faith! They did not hesitate to express themselves in such language as the Apostle used—“We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” They were known to speak as Job did when he said, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” And indeed, many of the children of God among us at this present time are favored with a confident, unstaggering confidence that, let their last hour come when it may, or let the Lord, Himself, descend from Heaven with a shout—there will be nothing but joy and peace for them—no cause for trembling, nothing that can give them dismay! Why, some of us live from year to year in constant assurance of our preparation for the bliss that awaits and the rest that remains for God’s people!

Beloved, God has not so left us in such a dubious case that we always need to be enquiring, “Am I His, or am I not?” He has given us good substantial grounds to go upon to make sure work of it. He tells us that, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—if we have been obedient to these two commands, we shall be saved, for our God keeps His word! He tells us that such Believers, patiently continuing in well-doing, inherit eternal life. If we are kept by His Grace, walking in His fear, we may rest assured that we shall come to the ultimate end of such a life, namely, the Glory which abides for the faithful! We need not harbor endless questions. What miserable work it is to stand in any doubt on this matter! Let us not be satisfied till we are sure and confident that Heaven will be ours! Alas, how many put off all thoughts of being prepared to die! They are prepared for almost anything except the one thing for which it is most necessary to be ready. If the summons should come to some of you at this moment, how dread it would be! Were we to see an angel hovering in the air, and should we have intelligence by a message from the clouds that one of us must, on a sudden, leave his body behind him and appear before God, what cowering down, what trembling, what muttering of forgotten prayers there would be with some of you! You are not ready! You never will be ready, I fear. The carelessness in which you have lived so long has become habitual. One would think you had resolved to die in your sins! Have you ever heard the story of Archaeus, the Grecian despot, who was going to a feast, and on the way a messenger brought him a letter and seriously importuned him to read it? It contained tidings of a conspiracy that had been formed against him, that he would be killed at the feast. He took the letter and put it in his pocket. In vain the messenger urged that it was concerning serious matters. “Serious matters, tomorrow,” said Archaeus, “feasting, tonight!” That night the dagger reached his heart while he had about him the warning which, had he heeded it, would have averted the peril!

Alas, too many men say, “Serious things tomorrow!” They have no misgiving that when their sport is over, they will have alike the leisure and the leanings for these weighty matters. Were it not wiser, Sirs, to let these grave affairs come first? Might you not, then, find some better sport of nobler character than all the froth and frivolity to which fashion leads on—a holy merriment and a sacred feasting that well become immortal spirits? How vain and groveling the mirth which reduces men to children, pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw—then brings them down to driveling fools and often degrades them till they become worse than brutes! I wish I could imprint a solemn thought on the mind of some careless individuals. Reckon you not that time is short, that life is precarious, that opportunities cross your path at lightning speed, that hope flatters those on whom the fangs of death are fixed, that there is no vestibule in which to fit your frame of mind, that the shock will always come suddenly at last? What sentence more trite? What sentiment more prevalent? Yet what solemnity more neglected than *this*—“Prepare to meet your God”? Propound it, profess it, preach it as we may, the most of men are unprepared! They know the inevitable plight. They see the necessity of preparation, but they postpone and procrastinate, instead of preparing! God grant you may not trifle, any of you, until your trembling souls are launched into that unknown sphere, but not unfeared, and read your doom in Hell. Now—

**II.**AS TO THE AUTHOR OF THIS PREPARATION FOR DEATH, the text says, “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.” It is God, alone, then, who makes men fit for Heaven! He works them to the same purpose. Who made Adam fit for Paradise but God? And who must make us fit for the better Paradise above but God? That we cannot do it ourselves is evident. According to the Scriptures, we are dead in trespasses and sins. Can the dead start from the grave of their own accord? Do you think to see coffins opened and gravestones uplifted by the natural energy of corpses? Such things were never dreamed of! The dead shall surely rise, but they shall rise because God raises them. They cannot vitalize their inert frames, neither can the dead in sin quicken themselves and make themselves fit for the Presence of God! Conversion, which prepares us for Heaven, is a new creation. That word, “creation,” puts all the counsel, the conceit and the contrivance of man into the background. If anyone says that he can make a new heart, let him first go and make a fly. Not until he has created such a winged insect, let him presume to tell us that he can make a man a new creature in Christ Jesus! And yet to make a fly would not demonstrate that a fly could make itself—and it would offer but a feeble pretext for that wonderful creation which is supposed in a man’s making himself a new heart! The original Creation was the work of God, and the New Creation must likewise be of God! To take away a heart of stone and give a heart of flesh is a miracle. Man cannot do it—if he attempts it—it shall be to his own shame and confusion. The Lord must make us anew! Have not we who know something of the Lord’s working in us, this same thing, been made to feel that it is all of His Grace ? What first made us think about eternal things? Did we, the stray sheep, come back to the fold of our own accord? No! Far from it—

***“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God.”***  
And ever since we have been living men in Christ Jesus. To whom must

we ascribe our preservation and our progress? Must we not attribute every victory over sin and every advance in the spiritual life, to the operation of God, and nothing at all to ourselves? A poor simpleton once said, “‘Twas God and I did the work.” “Well, but, Charlie, what part did you take in it?” “Surely, then,” he said, “I did all I could to stop the Lord, and He beat me.” I suppose, did we tell the simple truth, we could say much the same. In the matter of our salvation, we do all we can to oppose it— our old nature does—and He overcomes our evil propensities. From first to last, Jesus Christ has to be the Author and the Finisher of our salvation, or it never would have been begun, and it never would have been completed!

Think, Beloved, of what fitness for Heaven is. To be fit for Heaven a man must be perfect! Go, you who think you can prepare yourselves—be perfect for a day! The vanity of your own mind, the provocation of this treacherous world and the subtle temptation of the devil would make short work of your empty pretensions! You would be blown about like chaff. Creature perfection, indeed! Was ever anything so absurd? Men have boasted of attaining it, but their very boasts have proved that they possessed it not! He that gets nearest to perfection is the very man who sighs and cries over the abiding infirmities of his flesh. No, if perfection is to be reached—and it must be, or we shall not be fit for Heaven—it must be worked by the operation of God! Man’s work is never perfect—it is always marred on the wheel. His best machinery may still be improved upon! His finest productions of art might still be excelled. God alone is Perfect and He alone is the Perfecter. Blessed be God, we can heartily subscribe to this Truth, “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.”

But what shall I say to those of you, my Friends, who have no acquaintance with God? You certainly cannot be fitted for Heaven! Your cause is not committed to Him. He is doing nothing for you. He has not begun the good work in you. You live in this world as if there were no God. The thought, the stupendous thought of his “Being” does not affect you. You would not act any differently if there were 20 Gods or if there were no God. You utterly ignore His claims on your allegiance and your responsibility to His Law. Virtually in thought and deed you are without God in the world. Poor forlorn creature, you have forgotten your Creator! Poor wandering Soul, you have fallen out of gear with the universe! You have become alienated from the great Father who is in Heaven! I tremble at the thought. To be on the wide sea without rudder or compass—to be lost in the wilderness where there is no way! Cheerless as your condition is, remember this—though you see not God, God sees you. God sees you now! He hears you now. If you breathe but a desire towards Him, that desire shall be accepted and fulfilled! He will yet begin to work in you that gracious preparation which shall make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light! And now, thirdly—

**III.**LET THE SEAL OF THIS PREPARATION be briefly, but attentively considered.  
The Apostle says, “He that has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us *the earnest of the Spirit*.” Employers frequently pay during the week, a part of the wages which will be due on Saturday night. God gives His Holy Spirit, as it were, to be a part of the reward which He intends to give to His people, when, like hirelings, they have fulfilled their day. Our country friends just before harvest go out into the fields and they pick half a dozen ears that are ripe, braid the ends and hang them up over the mantle shelf as a kind of earnest of the harvest. So God gives us His Holy Spirit to be in our hearts as an earnest of Heaven—and as the ears of corn are of the same quality and character as the harvest, so the gift of the Holy Spirit is the foretaste of Heaven. When you have Him, you have a plain indication to your soul of what Heaven will be! You have a part of Heaven—“a young Heaven,” as Dr. Watts somewhere calls it, within you!  
Ask yourself, then, dear Hearer, this question, “Have I received the earnest of the Spirit?” If so, you have the preparation for Heaven! If not, you are still a stranger to Divine things and you have no reason to believe that the Heaven of the saints will be your heritage. Come, now, have you received the Holy Spirit? Do, you reply, “How may I know?” Wherever the Holy Spirit is, He works certain Graces in the soul—repentance, to wit. Have you ever repented of sin? I mean, do you hate it? Do you shun it? Do you grieve to think you should once have loved it? Is your mind altogether changed with regard to sin, so that what once seemed pleasure is now pain, and all the sweetness of sin is poison to your taste? Where the Holy Spirit is, repentance is followed by the whole train of Graces, all in a measure, not any in perfection, for there is always room to grow in Grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Such is patience, which submits to the Lord’s will. Such, too, the gracious disposition of forgiveness, which enables us to bear injuries and to forgive those that vex us. Such, likewise, that holy courage which is not ashamed to acknowledge our Lord, or to defend His cause. In fact, where the Holy Spirit is bestowed, all the Graces of the Spirit will be communicated in some degree. Though they will all need to grow, still there will be the seeds of them all. Where the Holy Spirit is, there will be the joy! No delight can be more animating or more elevating than that which springs from the indwelling of God in the soul! Think of God coming to abide in this poor bosom! Why, were a cross of diamonds or pearls glittering on your breast, some might envy you the possession of such a treasure—but to have God within your breast is infinitely better! God dwells in us and we in Him. Oh, sacred mystery! Oh, birth of unspeakable joy! Oh, well of Divine bliss that makes earth like Heaven! Have you ever had this joy—the joy of knowing that you are pardoned? The joy of being sure that you are a child of God? The joy of being certain that all things work together for your good? The joy of expecting that before long, and the sooner the better, you shall be forever beyond gunshot of fear, and care, and pain, and need? Where the Spirit of God is, there is more or less of this joy, which is the earnest of Heaven!  
This gift, moreover, will be conspicuously evidenced by a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is not in you if you rely on anything but Jesus—but if, as a poor guilty sinner, you have come to Him, partaken of His gracious pardon, kissed His blessed feet, and are now depending upon Him, alone—you have received the Holy Spirit and you have got a foretaste of Heaven!  
Brothers and Sisters, it is intensely desirable that we should seek more to be consciously filled with the Holy Spirit. We get easily contented with a little spiritual blessedness. Let us grow more covetous of the best gifts. Let us crave to be endued with the Holy Spirit and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire. The more we get of Him, the more assurance we shall have of Heaven for our peace, the more foretastes of Heaven for our happiness and the more preparation for Heaven in lively hope!  
Thus have I shown you the need of preparation, the Author of preparation and the great Seal which proves the truth of that preparation. If your honest conscience allows your humble claim to have received this sacred token of salvation, how happy you would be! Do not be afraid to be happy! Some Christians seem to court the gloom of despondency as if they dared not bask in the sunshine of Heaven. I have sometimes heard people say that *they have not enjoyed themselves*. No, dear Friends, pity, I think , if any of us ever should! It would be a poor kind of enjoyment if we merely enjoyed ourselves. But, oh, it is delightful when you can enjoy *your God* and when you can enjoy the mercies that are in Him, the promises that are in Him and the blessings which, through Him, come to you! When you gather round the Table of the Lord’s Love, do not be afraid to partake of the feast! There is nothing put there to be looked at. There is no confectionery spread out for show. If you dare conclude that you are living in Christ, and living on Christ, do not be afraid to sing as you go home—  
***“Now I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,  
I bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes.”***  
It will be a blessing to your family for you to be happy. You may find that something has gone wrong while you have been away. Go home as happy as you can be and you will be better able to bear the cares and vexations that must and will befall you. Keep your spirit well worked up to the fear of the Lord and the enjoyment of His Presence. Then, if some little matter should come to disquiet you, you can say, “Who am I that I should he vexed and chafed, or lose my temper, or be cast down about such a matter as this? This is not my sphere of well-being. This is not my Heaven. This is not my God.”—  
***“If you should take them all away,  
Yet should I not repine—  
Before they were possessed by me  
They were entirely Thine.  
Nor would I speak a murmuring word,  
Though the whole world were gone,  
But seek enduring happiness  
In You, and You alone.”***  
But, oh, suppose you feel persuaded and honestly admit that you are not prepared to die, not made meet for Heaven? Do not utterly despair, but be grateful that you live where the Gospel is preached! “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Be much in hearing the Word and be much in earnest prayer that the hearing may be blessed to your soul. Above all, give diligence to that Divine Command which bids you trust in Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. Eternal Life lies in the nutshell of that one sentence, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” All that is asked of you—and even that Grace gives you— is simply to trust in Him who, as Son of God, died for the sins of men! God give you that faith, and then may you meet death with joy, or look forward to the coming of the Lord with peace, whichever may be your lot. Amen.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #912 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GLORIOUS HEREAFTER AND OURSELVES  
NO. 912

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 23, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Now He that has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”  
2 Corinthians 5:5.~~***

IT is a very comforting thing to be able to see the work of God in our own hearts. We can clearly enough perceive the effects of the Fall—the workings of our inward corruption are always sufficiently perceptible. We have not to search long for the foul handiwork of Satan within us, for his temptations vex us day by day, and too often wound us to our dismay. The evil influences of the world are also exceedingly apparent to the eyes of self-examination. It is, therefore, consoling to the highest degree when, amidst all this disfiguring of the vessel by the hands of evil, we can see growing traces of the Great Artist’s hand still fashioning the clay upon the wheel and undoing the mischief of His enemies.

It is a sweet thing to be able to say with the Apostle that God has worked us to the most grand of all designs. When the Creator of the world puts His all-wise hands to the work of our new creation, we are favored in the highest degree, and ought to be filled with gratitude.

It appears from the text that the Apostle found the indications of the Divine work in a groan. Observe, “We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.” In that groan of his burdened soul he saw the working of the eternal God, and he exclaimed, “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.” Believers may trace the finger of God in their holy joys when the soul, like the lark, mounts up towards Heaven and carols her song of gratitude. But, just as surely is the Holy Spirit present in their sorrows for sin, their inward conflicts, their hungering and thirsting after righteousness, their deep-fetched sighs, and their groans which cannot be uttered.

My Brethren, so long as it is the work of God it is comparatively a small matter to us whether our hearts’ utterance is song or sigh. Let us be assured that it is worked by the Spirit, and either the one or the other is a token for good. If it is but proven that “the Lord is there,” we hear a voice which says, “It is I, be not afraid.”

Our text brings before us a great work of God with a distinct object— our being “clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven.” And looking at the words minutely, we see that the one design is accomplished by three great processes. The Lord has worked in us desires after the heavenly Glory. “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.” The Apostle had twice over spoken of groaning after the heavenly House, and we

understand him here to affirm that this groaning was worked in him by God.

Secondly, the Lord has worked in us a fullness for the eternal world, for so the text may be understood. “He that has fitted us for” the heavenly inheritance of which the Spirit is the earnest. Then thirdly, God has given to Believers, in addition to desires after and fitness for an earnest of the Glory to be revealed, which earnest is the Holy Spirit. Let us speak of these three things as the Holy Spirit may instruct us.

**I.**God’s work is seen in our souls in causing us exciting, vehement DESIRES AFTER being “clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven.”

This earnest desire, of which the Apostle has been speaking in the preceding verses, is made up of two things—a painful groaning and sense of being burdened while we are in this present life, and a supreme longing after our promised portion in the world to come. Dissatisfaction with the very idea of finding a continuing city here, amounting even to groaning, is the condition of the Christian’s mind. “We look not at the things which are seen,” they are not worth a glance. They are temporal and therefore quite unfit to be the joy of an immortal spirit.

The Christian is the most contented man *in* the world, but he is the least contented *with* the world. He is like a traveler in an inn, perfectly satisfied with the inn and its accommodation, considering it as an inn, but putting quite out of all consideration the idea of making it his home. He waits by the way, and is thankful, but his desires lead him ever onward towards that better country where the many mansions are prepared. The Believer is like a man in a sailing vessel, well content with the good ship for what it is, and hopeful that it may bear him safely across the sea, willing to put up with all its inconveniences without complaint.

But if you ask him whether he would choose to live on board in that narrow cabin, he will tell you that he longs for the time when the harbor shall be in view, and the green fields, and the happy homesteads of his native land. We, my Brethren, thank God for all the appointments of Providence—whether our portion is large or scant we are content because God has appointed it—yet our portion is not *here*, nor would we have it here if we might!—

***“We’ve no abiding city here,***

***Sad truth were this to be our home.”***  
No thought would be more dreadful to us than the idea of having our portion in this life, in this dark world which refused the love of Jesus, and cast Him out of its vineyard. We have desires which the whole world could not fulfill. We have insatiable yearnings which a thousand empires could not satisfy. The Creator has made us to pant and long after Himself, and all the creatures put together could not delight our souls without His Presence—

***“Hopeless of joy in anything below, We only long to soar,  
The fullness of His love to feel,  
And lose His smile no more.”***

In addition to this dissatisfaction, there reigns within the regenerate heart a supreme longing after the heavenly state. When Believers are in their right minds, their aspirations after Heaven are so forcible that they despise death itself. When faith is weak, then the pains and the groans of dying make a black cloud of forebodings which darken the spirit, and we shrink from the thought of departing.

But when we know that our Redeemer lives, and look forward to the Resurrection and to the Glory to be revealed, we cry***—  
“Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,  
My soul should stretch her wings in haste, Fly fearless through death’s iron gate,  
Nor fear the terrors as she passed.”***

Whatever the separation of the soul from the body may involve of pain or mystery, the Believer feels that he could dare it all to enter at once into the unfading joys of Heaven. Sometimes the heir of Heaven grows impatient of his bondage. Like a captive looking out of the narrow window of his prison beholds the green fields of the unfettered earth, and marks the flashing waves of the ocean, ever free—and hears the songs of the free tenants of the air—he weeps as he views his narrow cell and hears the clanking of his chains.

There are times when the most patient of the Lord’s banished ones feel the home sickness strong upon them. Like those beasts which we have sometimes seen in our menageries, which pace to and fro in their dens, and chafe themselves against the bars—uneasy, unhappy, bursting out every now and then into fierce roars—as though they yearned for the forest or the jungle. Even so we also chafe and fret in this, our prison, longing to be free. As by the waters of Babylon the sons of Zion sat down and wept, even so do we. Dwelling in Kedar’s tents and sojourning with Mesech, we long for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest—

***“O my sweet home, Jerusalem,  
Would God I were in you!  
Would God my woes were at an end,  
Your joys that I might see.”***

Having thus seen that the groaning worked in us by God is made up of dissatisfaction with this world and anxious desire for the world to come, we may profitably consider it yet a little further. What is it that makes the Christian long for Heaven? What is that within him which makes him restless till he reaches the better land? It is, first, a desire for the unseen. The carnal mind is satisfied with what the eyes can see, the hands can handle, and the taste enjoy. But the Christian has a spirit within him which has passions and appetites which the senses cannot gratify.

This spirit has been created, developed, enlightened, and instructed by the Holy Spirit, and it lives in a world of unseen realities of which unregenerate men have no knowledge. While in this sinful world and earthly

body, the spirit feels like a citizen exiled from his native land. It stands upon the outmost borders of its own region and longs to penetrate into the center of spiritual things. Hampered with this body of clay, the spirit, which is akin to angels, cries after liberty. It longs to see the Great Father of Spirits, to commune with the bands of the pure spirits forever surrounding the Throne of God, both angels and glorified men.

It longs, in fact, to dwell in its true element. A spiritual creature, begotten from above can never rest till it is present with the Lord. Oh, to see the things which we have heard of in metaphor and simile, to enjoy them really with our spirits! The harps, the crowns, the palms—what must it be to possess such joys? The streets of transparent gold, the river of the water of life, the glassy sea, the Throne of the Great King—what must all these be? Until these joys and glories be all our own, our souls will always cry and sigh.

Moreover, the Christian spirit pants after holiness. He who is born again of incorruptible seed finds his worst trouble to be sin. While he was in his natural state he *loved* sin, and sought pleasure in it. But now, being born of God and made liken to God, he hates sin. The mention of it vexes his ears. The sight of it in others causes him deep sorrow—the presence of it in his own heart is his daily plague and burden. If he could be rid of sin, this mortal body might not be to him a load. But because the tendencies of the animal passions are always towards evil, he longs to be rid of this vile body so that he may be clothed with his House which is in Heaven—from which all these passions will be expelled.

Oh, to be without the tendency to sin, without the possibility to sin! What bliss the prospect affords! My Brethren, if we could be placed in the meanest and most destitute condition, and yet could be perfect, we would prefer it to being sinful, even though we should reign in the palaces of kings. Our spirit, therefore, cries after the immortal state, because sin will be forever banished from it.

In the Christian’s spirit there is also a sighing after rest. “There remains a rest for the people of God,” as though God had put in us the longing for what He has prepared. We labor daily to enter into that rest. Brethren, we long for rest, but we cannot find it here. “This is not our rest.” We cannot find rest even within ourselves. Wars and fights are continuous within the regenerate spirit. The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit wars against the flesh. As long as we are here it must be so. We are in the camp of war, not in the chamber of ease. The trumpet must sound, and the clash of arms must be heard. We must go to our watchtower and continue there both night and day, for we are militant as yet, and not triumphant.

Our soul pines to be at rest. When shall the rowers of our spirit indulge themselves to the full without the fear of falling into sin? When shall my memory remember nothing but what will glorify God? When shall my judgment always rightly balance all events? When shall my desires be after nothing but my Lord? When shall my affections cling to nothing but Him? O when shall I possess the rest of the sinless, the rest of the satiated, the rest of the secure, the rest of the victorious? This longing for rest helps to inflame the Christian’s desires for the House not made with hands.

This Divinely-worked desire is made up of another element, namely, a thirst for communion with God. Here, at the nearest, our state is described as being “absent from the Lord.” We do enjoy fellowship with God, for, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,” but it is remote and dark. “We see through a glass darkly,” and not as yet face to face. We have the smell of His garments from afar, and they are perfumed with myrrh, and aloes, and cassia—but as yet the King is in His ivory palaces—and the gate of pearl is between us and Him.

O that we could come to Him! O that He would even now embrace us, and kiss us with the kisses of His mouth! The more the heart loves Christ, the more it longs for the greatest possible nearness to Him. Separation is very painful to a bride whose heart is burning for the bridegroom’s presence. And such are we—longing to hear the most sweet voice of our Spouse and to see the countenance which is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. For a saved soul to long to be where its Savior is, is no unnatural desire! To be with Him is far better than earth’s best, and it would be strange if we did not long for it.

God, then, has worked in us this in all its forms. He has made us to dread the thought of having our portion in this life. He has created in us a supreme longing for our heavenly Home, has taught us to value unseen and eternal things, to pant after holiness, to sigh after sinless rest, and to yearn after closer fellowship with God in Christ Jesus. My Brethren, if you have felt a desire such as I have described, give the glory of it to God! Bless and love the Holy Spirit who has worked this same thing in you, and ask Him to make the desires yet more vehement, for they are to His glory.

Bear with a word in praise of this God-worked groaning. This desire after the world to come is above ordinary nature. All flesh is grass, and the grass loves to strike its root deep into the earth. It has no tendrils with which to clasp the stars. Man by nature would be content to abide on earth forever. If you long for a holy and spiritual state, your desire is not of nature’s creation. God has worked it in you. Yes, I will venture to say that the desire for Heaven is contrary to nature. For as there is an inertia in matter which makes it indisposed to move, so is there in human nature an indisposition to leave the present for the future.

Like the snail, we stick to the rock on which we crawl. We cling to earth like the ivy to the wall. We are afraid to set sail upon that unknown sea of eternity, and therefore shiver on the shore. We dread to leave “the warm precincts of this house of clay,” and hovel as this body is, we count it dear. It is the Lord who forbids our lying among the pots and gives us the wings of a dove to mount aloft. As soon would a clod seek the sun as a

soul seek its God, if a miracle of Grace were not worked upon it.

While they are contrary to the old nature, such aspirations prove the existence of the new nature. You may be quite sure that you have the nature of God in you if you are pining after God. And if your longings are of a spiritual kind, depend upon it—you are a spiritual man. It is not in the animal to sigh after mental enjoyments, neither is it in the mere carnal man to sigh after heavenly things. What your desires are, that your soul is. If you are really insatiably hungering after holiness and after God, there is within you that which is liken to God, that which is essentially holy. There is, indeed, a work of the Holy Spirit within your hearts.

I shall detain you awhile to notice the means by which the Holy Spirit quickens these desires within our spirits. This desire after a portion in the unseen world is first infused in us by regeneration. Regeneration begets in us a spiritual nature, and the spiritual nature brings with it its own longings and desires. These longings and desires are after perfection and God. Imagine an angel imprisoned in a stable—it is perfectly certain that it would be discontent with the place where the horned oxen lay. If it felt that the Divine will commanded it to tarry there for awhile, I doubt not that the bright visitant would contentedly put up with the confinement.

But if it had liberty to leave the society of beasts, how gladly would the bright spirit ascend to its native place! Yes, Heaven is the place for angels, the true abode of holy spirits and we, too, since our spiritual nature is born from above, long to be there—nor shall we be content until we are. These desires are further assisted by instruction. The more the Holy Spirit teaches us of the world to come the more we long for it. If a child had lived in a mine it might be content with the glimmer of candle light. But if it should hear of the sun, the green fields and the stars, you may depend upon it—the child would not be happy until it could ascend the shaft and behold for itself the brightness of which it had heard. And as the Holy Spirit reveals to us the world to come we feel longings within us, mysterious but mighty, and we sigh and cry to be where Jesus is.

These desires are further increased by sanctified afflictions. Thorns in our nest make us take to our wings. The embittering of this cup makes us earnestly desire to drink of the new wine of the kingdom. We are very much like our poor who would stay at home in England and put up with their lot, hard though it is. But when at last there comes a worse distress than usual, then straightway they talk of emigrating to those fair and boundless fields across the Atlantic where a kindred nation will welcome them with joy.

So here we are in our poverty, and we make the best of it we can. But a sharp distress wounds our spirit and then we say we will run away to Canaan, to the land that flows with milk and honey. For there, we think, we shall suffer no distress, neither shall our spirits hunger any more. Heavenly desires are still farther inflamed by communion with Christ. The sweets as well as the bitters may be made to increase our longings after the world to come. When a man has once known what fellowship with Jesus is, he then pines to enjoy it forever. Like the Gauls on this side the Alps, who, when they had once drank the Italian wines, said one to another, “It must be a fair land where they grow such wine as this. Come, Brethren, let us draw our swords and cross the Alps and take the vineyards for ourselves.”

Thus does the love of Jesus set us longing to be with Him— ***“Since I have tasted of the grapes,  
I oftentimes long to go  
Where my dear Lord the vineyard keeps,  
And all the clusters grow.”***

Communion with Christ sharpens the edge of our desire for Heaven. And so, to close this vein of thought, does elevation of soul. The more we are sanctified and lifted above the grossness of earthliness into conformity with Jesus, the more we long for the world to come.

A peasant at the plow is quite content to mix with his fellow laborers— but suppose he forms a passion for the study of the stars, feels a poet’s frenzy, develops mathematical powers, learns the science of flowers—or in any way discovers the treasure hidden in the field of learning? He will be sure to be uneasy in ignorance, and will pine for books and education. He dreams of schools, and colleges, and libraries. His fellow plowmen laugh at him and count him but a fool. If they have enough to eat and drink and clothe themselves, they are content—but he has wants for which the village has neither sympathy nor supply.

His elevation of mind has brought with it groans—desires to which, had he no more ambition than his fellows—he would have been a stranger. So is it with the regenerated man—in proportion as he is elevated by the Holy Spirit by growth in Divine Grace, the higher he rises—the more he longs to rise. To him that has, it is given, and he desires to have in abundance. With a sacred covetousness he pants after yet higher degrees of Grace, and after Glory itself. Thus have I opened up to you the desire which the Holy Spirit works in us. “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.”

**II.**Our second subject of discourse is THE FITNESS FOR HEAVEN which is worked in us. Calvin’s interpretation of the text is, “He that has fitted us for the same thing is God.” Ah, how true this is! There is no fitness whatever in man by nature for communion with his God. It must be a *Divine* work within him. The Father works in us fitness for Heaven by separating us in the everlasting decree to be His own. Heaven is the place of God’s own abode—we must be God’s own people to be fit to be there. He fits us by adopting us into His family, by justifying us through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by preserving us by His power.

The Son of God has an equal share in the working of this fitness. He fits us by blotting out our iniquities and by transferring to us His righteousness—by taking us into marriage union with Himself. The Holy Spirit, forever to be blessed, has His share in this work. It is He who first infuses

the new nature. He who gives us spiritual food for the new nature, giving us to feed upon the flesh and blood of Christ. It is He who instructs and develops that new nature, and through the blood of Jesus makes the man meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, who thus in blessed union “has worked us for the same thing.”

Now, let me describe with great brevity the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing us for Glory. As we have already hinted—and we must necessarily traverse much the same ground—fitness for Heaven, as worked in us by the Spirit, consists, first, in the possession of a spiritual nature. Heaven is pre-eminently a spiritual region and those who have no nature begotten from above would not by any possibility be able to enjoy the bliss of Heaven. They would be quite out of their element. It could not be a Heaven to them. A garden bee in the midst of the flowers is at home and gathers honey from all their cups and bells.

But open the gate and admit a swine, and it sees no beauty in lilies, roses, or other flowers. Therefore it proceeds to root, and tear, and spoil in all directions. Such would an unregenerate man be in Heaven. While holy saints shall find bliss in everything in the Paradise of God, an ungodly sinner would be at war with everything in that holy region. Fitness for Heaven lies much in a holy *nature—*a love of Heaven is as contrary to fallen humanity as light to darkness. Do you not feel it so? Left to yourselves, O saints of God, do you not know that you would go back to Egypt? Do you not feel that the old nature lusts after evil?

Well, then, as you cannot possibly inherit Heaven unless you delight in *holiness*, you owe this fitness for the perfect state to the Holy Spirit. Fitness for Heaven lies in a capacity to delight in God. I have always loved that first question and answer in the Assembly’s Catechism, “What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Not to enjoy *yourself* forever, not even to enjoy the harps of gold, the angelic society and the feasts of the beatified—but to enjoy*God* forever. If a man has as yet no delight in God and takes no solace in thoughts of Him, he has no fitness for Heaven, and cannot get there. But if you delight in God, it is God that has “worked you to the same thing.”

Fitness for Heaven will lie very much in love to the saints. Those who do not love the people of God on earth would find their company very irksome forever. Here the unrighteous can manage to endure the company of the godly because it can be diluted with an admixture of graceless men. But up there the people shall be all righteous and their conversation shall be all of Christ and of things Divine—such society and such conversation would be weariness, itself, to godless hearts. My Hearer, if you delight in the company of the Believers—and if the more spiritual their conversation the more you enjoy it—then you have been worked to this same thing by the work of the Holy Spirit in your soul, and you may bless the Lord for it.

Joy in service is another sweet preparation for Heaven. Heaven is sinless service. They serve God day and night in His Temple—service without weariness, service without imperfection, service without cessation. Now do you delight to serve God? If so, you evidently have a fitness for Heaven. But as you once abhorred that service, and were the bondslave of the Prince of Darkness—if you now long and wish to glorify your God—you have been worked thereto by the Holy Spirit’s power.

Conformity to Christ Jesus, again, is another preparation for Heaven. Much of Heaven consists in being like Christ. It is the very object of Divine Grace that we should be conformed to His image, that He should be the first-born among many Brethren. Now, if you are growing, by His Grace, somewhat like Christ—if you desire to be like He is, imitating His tender, loving, brave, prayerful, obedient, self-sacrificing spirit—you have some fitness for the skies. But that fitness was not there by *nature*. You were once as unlike Christ as possible. God has worked all this in you.

I am afraid that I go from one point to another rather too rapidly, but the gist of it all is this—Heaven is the world of *spirits*, the land of *holiness*, the House of *God—* and if we have any capacity for the enjoyment of Heaven, it has been worked in us *by God*. The unfitness of unrenewed souls for Heaven may be illustrated by the incapacity of certain uneducated and coarse-minded persons for elevated thoughts and intellectual pursuits.

When a little child, I lived some years in my grandfather’s house. In his garden there was a fine old hedge of yew of considerable length which was clipped and trimmed till it made quite a wall of verdure. Behind it was a wide grass walk which looked upon the fields. The grass was kept mown, so as to make pleasant walking. Here, ever since the old Puritan Chapel was built, godly divines had walked and prayed and meditated. My grandfather was likely to use it as his study. Up and down it he would walk when preparing his sermons, and always on Sundays when it was fair, he had half an hour there before preaching.

To me it seemed to be a perfect Paradise, and being forbidden to stay there when Grandfather was meditating, I viewed it with no small degree of awe. I love to think of the green and quiet walk at this moment. But I was once shocked, and even horrified, by hearing a farming man remark concerning this sanctum sanctorum, “It’ ud grow a many ‘taturs if it wor ploughed up.” What cared he for holy memories? What were meditation and contemplation to him? Is it the chief end of man to grow potatoes and eat them? Such, on a larger scale, would be an unconverted man’s estimate of joys so elevated and refined as those of Heaven.

Alphonse Karr tells a story of a man servant who asked his master to be allowed to leave his cottage and sleep over the stable. What was the matter with his cottage? “Why, Sir, the nightingales all around the cottage make such a ‘jug, jug, jug’ at night, that I cannot bear them.” A man with a musical ear would be charmed with the nightingales’ song—but here was a man without a musical soul who found the sweetest notes a nuisance. This is a feeble image of the incapacity of unregenerate man for the enjoyments of the world to come—as he is incapable of enjoying them, so is he incapable of longing for them.

But if you and I have grown out of all taste for the things of sin and time. If we are sighing for holy, godly joys, we have therein an evidence that God has worked in us, by His Grace, and will continue to do so till we are made perfect and immortal.

**III.**The text informs us that in addition to working in us desires and fitness for Glory, the Lord has graciously given to us an EARNEST OF GLORY. An earnest, as you all know, is unlike a pledge, in some respects. A pledge has to be returned when the matter which it ensures is obtained—but an earnest is a part of the thing itself. A man has so much wage to take on Saturday night, he receives a part of it in the middle of the week, it is an earnest of the full payment—a part of the payment itself.

So the Holy Spirit is a part of Heaven itself. The work of the Holy Spirit in the soul is the bud of Heaven. Divine Grace is not a thing which will be taken away from us when we enter Heaven, but which will develop into Glory. Grace will not be withdrawn as though it had answered its purpose, but will be matured into Glory. What is meant by the *Holy Spirit* being given to us as an earnest? I believe it signifies, first, that the very dwelling of the Holy Spirit within our soul is the earnest of Heaven.

My Brothers and Sisters, if God Himself condescends to make these bodies His temples, is not this akin to Heaven’s honors? Only put away sin, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would make even this earthly state to be heavenly to us. O my Brethren, you little know what a weight of Glory is contained in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! If you did but know it and believe in it always, the sorrows of this life would become trivial, and as for the frowns of men you would deride them. *God dwells in you*. You walk among the sons of men unknown and despised, yet as angels see you, you are the objects of their wonder! Rejoice that in this, then, you have an earnest of Heaven.

But everything the Holy Spirit works in us is an earnest of Heaven. When the Holy Spirit brings to us the joys of hope, this is an earnest. While singing some glowing hymn touching the New Jerusalem, our spirit shakes off all her doubts and fears and anticipates her everlasting heritage. When we enjoy the full assurance of faith and read our title clear to mansions in the skies—when faith, looking simply to the finished work of Christ, knows whom she has believed, and is persuaded that he is able to keep that which she has committed to Him—this is an earnest of Heaven. Is not Heaven security, confidence, peace?

The security, confidence, peace which spring from faith in Jesus Christ are part and parcel of the Heaven of the blessed. Heaven is the place of victory, and, my dear Friends, when we are victorious over sin, when the Holy Spirit enables us to overcome some propensity, to put down our anger, to crush our pride, to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts— then in that conscious victory over sin we enjoy an earnest of the triumph of Heaven. And once more, when the Holy Spirit gives us to enjoy fellowship with Jesus Christ, and with one another—when in the breaking of bread we feel the union which exists between Christ and His members— we have a foretaste of the fellowship of Heaven.

Do not say, then, that you know nothing of what Heaven is. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” But, “He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Spiritual natures *do* know what Heaven is—in the sense of knowing from the *drop* what the *river* must be like—of understanding from the *beam* what the *sun* must be. Its fullness you cannot measure, its depth you cannot fathom, its unutterable bliss you cannot tell.

But still you know of what character the Glory will be—you know that pure are the joys of the blessed, and all their dwellings peace. You know that fellowship with Christ and with holy spirits makes up much of Heaven, and you know this because the earnest of the Spirit is a part and parcel of the thing itself.

I conclude with a practical remark or two. If these things are so, what emotions are most fitting for us? Answer—first, O Believers in Jesus, be thankful! Overflow with thankfulness. Remember these things are not your own productions. They are not flowers of your own garden—they have been planted in your soul by another Hand—and watered by a superior Power. Give all the glory to His holy name, for to Him all the glory belongs. Not a good desire in you was self-originated, no part of your fitness for Paradise was self-formed. Grace has done it, Divine Grace has done it all!

Adore and bless the Holy Spirit who has worked all your works in you, for you are “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” Be thankful! As the birds created sing to pour out their song. As the flowers, the handiwork of God, load the air with their perfume—so sing—and let your lives be all-fragrant with gratitude to Him who has worked you to the same thing.

Another emotion we ought all to feel who have this worked in us is that of reverence. When a scholar knows that all he has learned has been taught him by his master, he looks up from his master’s feet into his master’s face with respectful reverence and esteem. O reverence the Holy Spirit! Let us, in our public ministry, and in our private meditations always stand in awe of Him. I am afraid we too much forget Him—let us, instead, reverence Him especially by obedience to His faintest monitions. As the leaves of the aspen tremble to the faintest breath of the wind, so may we tremble to the faintest breath of God’s Holy Spirit.  
Let us prize the Word of God because He wrote it. Let us love the ordinances because He puts life and power into them. Let us love His indwelling, and never grieve Him lest He hide His face from us. “He that has worked us for the same thing is God.” Vex not His Spirit, but anxiously ask that He would continue His work, and complete it in righteousness.

Lastly, our heart ought to feel great confidence this morning. If the good thing had been worked by ourselves, we might be sure that it would fail before long. Nothing of mortal man was ever perfect. But if He that has begun the good work is God, there is no fear that He will forsake or leave His work undone. They shall never say of Him, “ He began to build and was not able to finish.” No war of His was ever undertaken and then given up because He had not counted the cost. God has begun, God will complete. His promise is “Yes and amen,” and never was forfeited yet. Therefore let us be well assured, and let our hearts be glad.

Dear Hearers, the unhappy thing about this is that there are so many who have no desires for the blessed hereafter, no fitness for it, no earnest of it. Ah, then, the prophecies that are within you—what do they foretell? No yearning for Heaven—does not that foretell that there is no Heaven for you? No fitness for the Presence of God. What does that say? Why, that in the Presence of God you shall not rest. Earnest of the Spirit? Why, you almost laugh at the idea. Ah, then, no earnest is a proof that there is no reward for you.

But what then? Will you be annihilated? Will you pass out of this existence and cease to be? Dark as were that prospect—yes, dark as midnight—yet were it brighter than the fate which the Word of God allots you. There will be darkness, but you shall *live* in it. There will be death, but in it you must ceaselessly exist. For if the righteous are promised “life eternal,” it is also written, “these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*.” God save you from such woe by leading you to trust the Savior. Then you will confess with us, “He that has worked us for the same thing is God,” and unto God be the glory. Amen.

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THE BELIEVER IN THE BODY AND OUT OF THE BODY  
NO. 1303

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 2, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Now He that has prepared us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are  
always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, (for we walk by faith, not by sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it is good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:5-10.~~***

IT is quite clear that the Apostle did not consider his body to be himself. He speaks of it as being the frail tent or tabernacle in which he dwelt and, again, as the garment with which, for a while, he was clothed. That tent or tabernacle he expected to see dissolved. And that garment he expected to put off. He distinguished between the outward man which would perish and the inward man, which was his true self, which he speaks of as, “renewed day by day.” The Apostle reckoned upon rising here in the body, according to the Divine will, till he had finished the work which was given him to do. And then he expected to put off his mortal flesh and to be an unclothed and disembodied spirit.

Such is the condition, at the present time, of all the saints who have departed. They are well described as “the spirits of just men made perfect.” With the exception of Enoch and Elijah, who carried their bodies with them into the celestial world, all departed Believers are now spirits unclothed of their bodies and wearing only such array as befits spiritual existences. Is it difficult to conceive of them in that condition? I do not think it should be. Spirits *without*bodies are not such marvelous things as spirits *in* bodies!

You meet, everyday, as you walk the streets, spirits in bodies, spirits that quicken flesh and bone and muscle and move a mass of material from place to place. If we had never seen such a thing as a body kept in life and filled with power by an immaterial, invisible and spiritual substance, it would be a very hard thing to realize. No man among us knows how it is that this inner spirit of ours is connected with the body. Where is the point of union? What is the link between soul and sinew? Where does spirit begin and where does matter end? We know that if we will to move our arm it is moved, but how does the mind that wills, manage to grasp the materialism which obeys its bidding? How is spirit capable of acting upon matter at all?

How is it that a spirit can dwell within an abode of flesh, look out of these eyes, listen through these ears, speak by these lips and perform its will by these hands? Eyes and ears and hands are but earth—they are

made of such matter as we meet with in other parts of the solid world, mere dust of the earth, materialism wisely molded—but yet corruptible materialism. And yet the soul somehow manages to indwell and inhabit its house of clay—a far more wonderful thing, it seems to me, than for a spirit to exist without a body! We shall find it easy to conceive of a spirit disentangled of materialism in proportion as we have learned to meditate upon *spiritual* things and to feel the powers of the world to come.

Multitudes around us know nothing of anything which does not appeal to their senses. But the man who has been renewed by the Spirit of God is, himself, made spiritually minded and, therefore, the idea of disembodied spirits is not strange to him. Let us, according to Scripture, look forward to a condition in which our perfected spirits shall abide with Christ, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). Yet Paul did not expect that the disembodied state would last forever, for he was assured of the resurrection of the body.

He did not despise the body so as to hope never to see it again, but he reckoned that after it had been put off, it would undergo a change and thus would be so renovated that at the coming of the Lord he would put it on afresh—and so his spirit would again be clothed! He expected that mortality would be swallowed up by life. And we, also, confidently indulge the same hope. The fabric which was put into the ground when the Believer was buried was sown in corruption. We expect to see it raised in perfection.

That which we laid in the tomb the other day was a poor dishonored corpse on which decay was working its fierce will. But we shall see it raised in glory, radiant with the light which made Moses’ face shine! That which we committed to Mother Earth, we lowered into the grave in weakness, but it shall as surely rise in power! That which was buried was a soulish body, only fit for the natural soul. It was not adapted for the movements and aspirations of the regenerated spirit. But we know that when it shall rise, it will be a spiritual body adapted to our highest nature, fitted to be the palace of that gracious life which makes us sons of God! The Apostle’s great expectation was the perfection of his entire manhood— spirit, soul and body in Christ Jesus!

He was confident in the expectation that though his body would be houseless for awhile, by the dissolving of his earthly tabernacle, he would soon enter into a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens, and stand before the Presence of God both as to his body and his soul made perfect in Christ Jesus! This was confident expectation. From the text it is clear that this belief had a powerful influence over the Apostle. It had especially two effects upon him—one was to make him “always confident” and the other was to create in him a high ambition.

“Therefore,” he says, “we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.” He felt that wherever he might be and in whatever condition he might exist, the only thing he had to care for was that he might be pleasing to Him who had redeemed him with His precious blood. And so, whether in the body or out of the body, it mattered little to him so long as he could be accepted of the Lord in Jesus Christ. Of the Apostle’s*confidence*and *ambition* we are going to speak this morning, as the Spirit of God may graciously help us.

**I.** And first, dear Friends, THE BELIEVER HAS REASON FOR CONSTANT CONFIDENCE. The Apostle tells us, “Therefore we are always confident.” And then, again, lest we should lose the sense by the interjected sentence in the seventh verse, he says, again, “We are confident, I say.” The condition, then, of the Christian, when he is living in faith of resurrection and eternal life, is a condition of continual confidence. It is a confidence which regards both the life which now is and the state in which we expect to live before we reach the fullness of the promised Glory. It is a confidence which concerns the present state—for while we are at home in the body, we are always confident—a confidence which equally concerns, and rather more so, the state which is to come. “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

First, let me speak with you upon *the confidence which the Believer has in reference to his present condition while he is at home in the body*. Our translators have been somewhat unfortunate in their choice of terms in this instance, for they have lost part of the interest of the passage. We should have seen more beauty in these words if they had given us their literal meaning a little more closely. Let me read them to you as they may be read—“We are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are from home as to the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be from home as to the body and to be at home with the Lord. Why we labor, that, whether from home, or at home, we may be accepted of Him.”

You see the point lies in *at home* and *from home*. These words are as near an approach to the original as could readily be found, though they do not exhaust the sense of the Greek terms. Here, then, in the present state, we are said to be *at home* in the body. But we are at home in a very modified sense, for it is a home which is not a home, but only a frail lodging, a temporary tenement to accommodate us till we reach our true and *real* home in the New Jerusalem. It is such a home as a soldier has in the camp at a bivouac, or as a passenger has when he is crossing from continent to continent. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had each a home, but it was in a strange country and they were daily looking for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

While we are in this present state we are at a disadvantage, for we are dwelling in a house which is not, as yet, in our home country, and by it we are kept from our real home in the fatherland above. In a sense, however, this body *is* a home, for here dwells the living, thinking, active mind—somewhere in the brain—from where it spreads itself and rules all the members of the body. We know that within the walls of this earthly fabric, our spirit is ordained to live for awhile, a lamp burning within a pitcher, a precious jewel set in a ring of clay. It is a house for which we have no little affection, and we are loath to quit it—

***“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being ever resigned, Left the warm precincts of this house of clay, Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?”***

We complain of the infirmities of our bodies, but we are in no hurry to leave them! They threaten to fall upon as in their decay, but we linger in them, still, till death serves a writ of ejection and, at the same time, pulls down the tenement. We have, some of us, lived in our body for 40 years. Some of you for 60 or 70 years and it is natural that we should have made a home of it, such as it is. And it is small marvel that we are in no haste to emigrate—even the temptation of that brighter home and the “many mansions”—is not always enough to make us wish to be gone! But yet this body is not a fitting home for us and we often discover, by experience, how inconvenient it is.

It is a poor old tent, easily overturned, constantly getting torn. And the older it gets, the more trouble it takes to patch it up and to keep it in habitable repair. In the course of years it has become soiled, creased and worn-out, like the tents of Kedar. With the wear and tear of many years, it becomes more and more evident that it is not a worthy dwelling place for the child of a King, nor a fit abode for an immortal Spirit born from on high! We have suffered many inconveniences from this crumbling tabernacle in many ways, but especially in *spiritual* things. We have been willing to watch, but the body has been inclined to sleep. The spirit has been willing, but the flesh has been very weak. We have been numbered with weariness, pain, care and bodily appetite when we have desired to be altogether engrossed with heavenly things.

Sometimes, when we would sing, a throbbing headache makes us sigh. When we would rejoice with unspeakable joy, a palpitating heart depresses us. And when we would go about our Master’s business, a lame foot or a decaying constitution hinders us so that we dwell in a house which is beneath the quality of so noble a creature as a spirit. We have to put up with flesh and blood, but we are outgrowing them—we feel we are—there is a something within us which warns us that, like certain of the sea creatures which have to break their shells up as they grow, so we are growingly in need of another and better abode.

We are like the young chick within the eggshell—it has been a home for us until now, but it is becoming too tight for us—we begin to chip it and we sometimes wish it would break altogether, that we might enjoy fuller liberty. “We that are in this body do groan, being burdened,” and groan, we shall, till the day of our full redemption and the deliverance of the body from the bondage of corruption!—

***“Welcome, sweet hour of full discharge,  
That sets my longing soul at large,  
Unbinds my chains, breaks up my cell,  
And lets me with my God to dwell.”***

According to the expression of the Greek, ours is a home in a foreign country. We are not dwelling among our own people at present, but we are exiles in a far-off land. We are not alone, for a numerous band of our Brothers and Sisters are with us, even as the Jews found company of their own race in Babylon, in whose songs and sighs they could unite. But this is exile to us, we have no inheritance here. “A possession of a burying place” is all that we need ask for and all that we shall soon have, for this world is not our rest.

The Lord has not been pleased to give us our portion in this life—our inheritance lies on the other side of the Jordan. We are at home in the body, but, as I have already said, it is but a lodging place in the midst of a strange country in which we are pilgrims and sojourners as all our fathers were. We are wayfaring men hastening away and passing through a foreign land among people who speak not our tongue, know not our customs, understand nothing of the place to which we are going and, therefore, cannot understand us. They even think us mad when we talk about another country, of which they have no idea, and for which they have no longing. We are at home only in a narrow sense, as a man may be said to be at home when, being in banishment, he takes up his abode, for awhile, in a foreign town. It can never be more than this.

It is a home, too, which keeps us from our true home. We are not yet where we can see our Lord and hear His voice. We are not yet in the “rest which remains for the people of God.” Today we are at school, like children whose great holiday joy is to go home. We are laborers and this is the work field. When we have done our day’s work we shall go home, but this is the workshop, not the home. It is a very sweet thing, after a week of hard work, to reach home at last, to take off one’s dusty clothes and throw them aside and feel that toil is over for the present and rest has come. In this world we cannot find a total rest so as to be completely at ease and at home. We shall only reach that happy condition when we are out of this foreign world.

No sense of perfect home rest ever comes over the soul while we are here, except as faith anticipates the joys prepared above. There remains a rest for the people of God, but in this body and in this world it is not to be had. Home is the place where one feels secure—our house is our castle. Outside, in the world, men watch your words and, if they can, they misrepresent or misinterpret them. You have to fight a battle of life, outside, but it is a very blessed thing if the battle is over when you cross your own threshold. Then you are no longer misunderstood, but are appreciated and loved around your own fireside. Beneath our own dear rooftree there is nobody to catch us up, nobody to quibble at us! Only wife and children and friends who love us and delight in us.

Well, Brothers and Sisters, we find no such home *spiritually* in this world, for this is the place of conflict and watchfulness. Here we dwell among enemies and we have to sorrowfully cry—“My soul is among lions, among those that are set on fire of Hell.” We sing—

***~~“Woe’s me that I in Mesech am  
A sojourner so long!  
That I in tabernacles dwell  
To Kedar that belong.  
My soul with him that hates peace  
Has long a dweller been:  
I am for peace; but when I speak,  
For battle they are keen.  
My heart mourns and pines~~***

***~~To reach that peaceful shore,  
Where all the weary are at rest,  
And troublers vex no more.”~~***

In Heaven there will be no foes to watch against, nor men of our own household to be our worst enemies. Home, sweet home is to be found *above*—and from that home our present home in the body is keeping us. Home, too, is the place of the closest and sweetest familiarities. There all

unbend. The judge takes off his gown and the soldier his sword—and both play with their children. He who wears his belt out of doors, finds himself stripped of it when he comes among his own kin. There is the kiss of affection, there are the blandishments of love. Here, alas, our spirits cannot take their fill of heavenly familiarities, for distance comes between. We long for the vision of love, but it comes not as yet.

But up *there* what indulgence shall be accorded to us! What discoveries of the love of God in Christ Jesus! Then shall the cry of the spouse in the song be fulfilled forever and ever—“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine.” Then shall the inmost heart of Christ be known to us and we shall dwell in Him forever and ever in closest communion! This home of ours in the body keeps us away from such communion with God as the glorified ones above enjoy without ceasing! Said I not, truly, that our present state has its drawbacks—such as make a man sigh and cry to be gone?

But, dear Friends, the main point in which the present state is at a disadvantage compared with the future one is that here we have to live entirely by faith. We walk here by faith, not by sight. You believe in God, but you have not beheld His Glory as the blessed dead have done. You believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is in One “whom having not seen, you love.” You believe in the Holy Spirit and you have been conscious of His Presence, by faith, but there is a something better yet—a clearer sight is yet to be had which we cannot enjoy while we tarry here. At present we take everything on the testimony of God’s Word and the witness of His Spirit, but we have not yet seen the Celestial City, nor heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps, nor eaten at the banquets of the glorified!

We enjoy a foretaste of all these and anticipate them by faith, but actual enjoyments are not for this world. What a man *sees*, why does he yet hope for? This place is the realm of hope we cannot expect to see. But we are *going* to the place where we shall not so much believe as *behold*, where we shall not so much expect as enjoy! We are nearing the country where we shall—

***“See and hear, and know,***

***All we desired or wished below.”***  
And faith shall be exchanged for the clearest sight. Here we gaze through the telescope at heavenly things, but we cannot get into contact with them as we wish to do. But when we have shaken you off, O flesh, then shall we actually come into sight and fruition—and shall behold the Savior, as He is—face to face!

These are the inconveniences, then, of this present state, but Paul, despite all these disadvantages was confident. “We are always confident,” says he. He was contented, he was happy, he was courageous, he was steadfast! And why? Why, Brothers and Sisters, because he had a hope of the immortality to be revealed! He knew that as soon as ever he shook off this body, his soul would be with Christ! He knew that in some future day, when Christ should come, his body and his soul, remarried, should be forever beatified with the Lord and, therefore, he counted all the disadvantages of this life to be as nothing—“these light afflictions which are but for a moment.”  
He laughed to scorn anything that he had to suffer here below, because of the “exceeding weight of Glory” which his faith realized, as soon, to be revealed! Observe, also, that his confidence came from God’s work in his soul. “He that has prepared us to the same thing is God.” He was sure he should one day be perfect and immortal because God had begun to work in him to that very end! When the statuary takes the block of stone and begins to carve it into a statue, we get the promise of that which is to be. I no sooner see the master workman take the first stroke, than I feel sure of a work of art, because I see that he has begun to work towards that end. From that work the mason may turn aside, or he may die and, therefore, I cannot be sure that from the chosen stone there will leap out, by-and-by, the statue.

But God never undertakes what He does not finish! He never fails for lack of power, or because of a change of mind. And so, if today I am the quarried block of marble—if He has begun to make the first chippings in me of genuine repentance and simple faith towards Himself—I have the sure prophecy that He intends to work upon me till He has worked me up into the perfect image of Christ, to be immortal and immaculate like my Lord! Paul, by faith, knew that by a Divine decree, before all worlds were created, he was predestinated to be made a perfect and immortal being! He saw that God had created him for that very purpose and newly created him to that end.

He felt the working of God preparing him—he could feel the Spirit of God operating in him, giving him newness of life, causing him to hate sin and to receive, more and more fully, the likeness of Christ, his Master. “He has prepared me for the same thing,” said the Apostle and, therefore, he felt confident that to this end he should be brought. Again, there was another ground of confidence—“who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” You know what an “earnest” is. It is not a mere pledge, for a pledge is *returned* when that which it certifies is given. An earnest is a *part* of the promise itself.

A man is to receive a wage at the end of the week. In the middle of the week he obtains a part of the money. This is more than a pledge of the rest—it is an earnest of the whole—a most sure and positive pledge of that which remains unpaid. The man who has received the Spirit of God in his soul has obtained the Immortal Seed which will expand into perfection! He is forgiven and accepted! And the Spirit helps his infirmities in prayer, fills him with faith, perfumes him with love, adorns him with holiness and makes him commune with God—all this is the earnest of his perfected condition—and the beginning of the joys to come! The beginning of the infallible assurance of all those joys which the Lord has prepared for them that love Him!

No man ever had the Spirit of God dwelling in him, molding him to the Divine will, but what he ultimately obtained the heavenly state, for the Spirit of God does not leave His work undone. Neither does He bestow Divine gifts to take them away again. “Therefore,” says Paul, “we are always confident.” We have a hope which enters into that which is within the veil. We know what image the Lord is working in us and we have received the Holy Spirit as the earnest of eternal blessedness! Therefore, come what may, we are filled with a sacred courage and a sublime peace which make

us await the future with calmest confidence.

Now we shall pass on to the next point, which is that *Paul was equally confident about the next state into which he expected, soon, to pass*, namely, the condition of a disembodied spirit. Nature, when it acts apart from Grace, shrinks from the thought of dying. But death can have no terrors for the man whom it lands in a condition which he prefers. By turning to the text, we see that Paul *preferred* the state into which death would cast him. “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” That is, we have a preference for being away from this home in the body, that we may be at home with the Lord! He looked at the state into which he would soon come by the dissolution of his body as a more desirable one than even his life of confidence here below!

Yet let us observe that it was not because Paul thought it would be better to be without a body than with one that he thus spoke. He has told us already, “not for that we would be unclothed.” He did not desire to be a disembodied spirit for its own sake. There are certain mystics who look upon the body as a wretched encumbrance. The thought of resurrection has no pleasure to them and, therefore, they spiritualize the doctrine and make it to be no resurrection at all. The Apostle was not of their mind. He called the body the temple of God and desired its perfection, not its destruction.

The Lord has constituted man to be a wonderful continuation of many forms of existence—a link between the angel and the animal, a mixture of the Divine and the material—a comprehensive being taking up into himself the Heaven which is above him and the earth on which he treads. Our great Creator does not mean us to be maimed creatures forever. He intends us to dwell with Him eternally in the perfection of our humanity. When our Lord Jesus died, He did not redeem one half of man, but the whole man—and He means not to leave any part of the purchased possession in the enemy’s hands.

We ought not to think that to be half a man would be more desirable than to be a whole man, for our Lord Jesus does not think so. We should be waiting, expectantly, for the Second Advent of our Lord, who will call His saints from their tombs and redeem them altogether from the power of the grave. We should, even now, rejoice that this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. It will be evident to you all, dear Friends, that if Paul preferred the disembodied state to this, as the text tells us he did, then the spirits of those saints who have left their bodies in the grave are not annihilated—they live on!

Paul could not have counted it better to be annihilated than to lead a life of holy confidence. The saints are not dead! Our Lord gave a conclusive answer to that error when He said, “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.” Those who have departed this life are still alive! We are sure of that, or else Paul would not have preferred that state. Neither are they unconscious, as some say, for who would prefer torpor to active confidence? Whatever trials there may be in the Christian life here below, the man of faith really does enjoy life and could not prefer unconsciousness.

Neither are the saints in purgatorial fires, as the Babylonian harlot says! Nobody would desire to be tormented and we may be sure that the Apostle Paul would not have been willing to be in purgatory more than to live here and serve his Lord! Brothers and Sisters, the saints live! They live in consciousness and in happiness! Moses came and talked with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, though he had no body, just as readily as Elijah did, though that mighty Prophet carried his body with him when he ascended in a chariot of fire. The *body* is not necessary to consciousness or to happiness. The best of all is that the spirits of the departed are with Christ. “To be with Christ, which is far better,” said the Apostle. “Forever with the Lord,” their portion is allotted them.

It is the Lord’s own prayer—“I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” And the prayer is fulfilled in them! “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from now on, yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” This made the Apostle something more than confident and courageous in the prospect of death. He was willing to depart into the disembodied state because he knew he would be at home with the Lord in it!

I wish you to dwell a minute on that thought of being at home with the Lord. We rejoice that we have Christ with us here, spiritually, for His Presence brings us spiritual blessings of a very high order, and joys prophetic of the joys of Heaven, but still we have not His *bodily* Presence. We have, now, a sight of our Lord through a telescope, as it were. But we do not see Him near at hand. We speak to Him as through a trumpet across the sea—we do not talk to Him face to face. Ah, what will it be to be at home with Christ! When we reach His own palace gate and sit at His own table, we shall know Him far better than we do now! And He will look more lovely in our eyes than ever, because we shall see Him more clearly.

The sound of His voice will be much sweeter than anything we have heard in the Gospel here below, for we shall actually hear Him speak! Will we not take our fill of Him when we once behold Him? I think I shall never want to take my eyes off Him, but find a Heaven, an eternity, an infinity of bliss in drinking Him in with all my eyes and all my heart! To be at home with Him will be to understand infinitely more of Him than we have ever dreamed of as yet. Ah, you do not know His Glory! You could not bear to behold it as yet. You would fall at His feet as dead, in a swoon of delight, if you could but gaze upon Him while you are yet in this frail body! When disembodied you shall not have the flesh to throw a mist over your eyes, but you shall behold the King in His beauty and be able to bear the joy.

In that condition to which we are speeding, we shall also be beyond all doubt as to the truth of our holy faith. There will be no more mistrust of our Lord or of His promises. And we shall no more doubt the power of His blood or our share in His atoning Sacrifice. Sometimes the dark atheistic thought will come, “Is it not all a dream?” You shall never have such a thought, there, for you will be at home with Jesus! Now there arises the troublesome question, Were you a real Believer? Has Jesus really washed you in His blood? You will be beyond all such enquiries when you are

absent from the body and present with the Lord!

Now you have to walk by faith and you must not try to get beyond faith, for that is the mode of spiritual life for this present state. But after death you will no more walk by faith—you will have sight and fruition—and these will banish all the doubts which try your faith while in the body. How pleasant and desirable does the prospect of actual fruition cause Heaven to become, even though we know that, for awhile, we shall be away from the body. In the future state we shall communicate with Christ more sensibly than we do now. Here we speak with Him, but it is by faith through the Spirit of God. In Heaven we shall actually speak to Him in His immediate Presence and hear His voice while He personally speaks to us.

Ah, what we shall have to tell Him! What will He have to tell us! Truly, I dare not venture into these great deeps of expectation lest I drown myself in the delights of hope! Oh, the joy which awaits us! It is almost too much for me to think of! When we are at home with Him, without the body, and also, I suppose, even more when we are at home in the resurrection body, we shall have greater capacity for taking in the Glory of our Lord than we have now. Sometimes He fills us with His love which passes knowledge and then we think we know very much of Him. But oh, my Brothers and Sisters, our knowledge is but that of little babes as yet! We are such small and shallow vessels that a few drops of Christ’s love soon fill us up and we begin running over! But He will enlarge us till we hold great measures of Him and, then, He will fill us with all the fullness of God!

You have, sometimes, tried to imagine what Heaven must be like. Well, you shall have many such heavens! No, ten thousand times as much delight in God as you have ever dreamed of! If even here He does for us exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think, what will He do for us *there*? As for His Person and His sweetness—and His excellence and His Glory—you have only touched the hem of His garment! You have only, like Jonathan, dipped the end of your rod in that flood of honey and it has enlightened your eyes! But oh, when you shall be at home with Him, you shall feast to your heart’s content! Here we sip, but there we shall drink full bowls! Here we eat our daily morsel, but there the heavenly feast will never break up!

Now, putting these two things together, the present state and the next, we have great reason, like the Apostle, to go on, from day to day, with holy courage and confidence. If the way is rough, it leads to an unspeakably joyful end—so let us trip over it cheerfully! And if the way should grow rougher, still, let us show still greater confidence, for one hour with our God will make up for it all and infinitely more!

**II.** The last point I can only spend a few minutes upon. It is this—THE BELIEVER HAS REASONS FOR AN ABSORBING AMBITION. According to the text, we are to live alone for Jesus—“Why we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.” From now on, my Brothers and Sisters, the one great thing we have to care about is to please our Lord. You are saved and Heaven is your portion. Now, from this time on, concentrate all your thoughts, your faculties and your energies upon this one design—to be acceptable with Jesus Christ. Live for Him as He has died for you. Live for Him alone.

Believer, it ought to be your ambition to please Christ in every act you do. Do not say, “How will this please myself or please my neighbor?” But ask, “How will this please my Lord?” And, remember, it is not by the action, alone, that He will be pleased, but the *motive* must be right or you will fail. Oh, cry to Him to keep your motives clean, pure, elevated, heavenly—for groveling aims will be a sour leaven and will render the whole loaf unfit to offer. Nor is it merely the motive—it is the spirit in which the whole thing is done. Labor, Brothers and Sisters, with a Divine ambition to please Jesus Christ in your thoughts, in your wishes, in your desires, in everything that is about you.

I know you will have to lament many shortcomings and errors. There will be much about you that will be displeasing to Him. Take care that it is also displeasing to you and never be pleased with that which does not please Him. Never accept anything in yourself which He would not accept. With all your ardent spirit watch every movement of your soul that no power or passion so moves as to vex His Holy Spirit. Seek to please Him every moment while you are upon the earth. You know what sort of things Jesus did and what He would like you to do—follow His every step—obey His every word.

He has bid you walk in holiness as He did, O sin not against Him! He bids you clothe the naked, feed the hungry, teach the ignorant, visit the sick, look after the fatherless and widows—all these things He speaks of as peculiarly pleasing to Himself and as mentionable to the honor of His saints in the day of His appearing. Let these things be in you and abound in you! Be fruitful in those Graces which were most conspicuous in Him. Do not let a day pass without doing something with the one objective of pleasing Christ.

We do a great deal because it is customary, or because Church opinion expects it. But to do holy acts directly for Christ, simply and alone for love of Him—this should be our constant habit. Have we not some alabaster box to break to anoint His head? Have we not some tears with which to wash *His* feet? Need I urge that something, however humble, should frequently be done, even at the cost of self-denial, for His dear sake? Yes, let *everything* be done as unto Him. For then, mark this last, we shall please Him in the next state, for, “we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.” The child of God is *glad* of this!

The text might be translated, “we shall all be *manifested* before the Judgment Seat of Christ.” Today men do not understand us, but they will know us in that day! I will guarantee you this one thing—if you will live the most devoted and disinterested life possible—you will find people sneering at you and imputing your actions to selfish motives. They will put a cruel construction on all you do or say. Well, it does not matter, for we shall all be manifested at the Judgment Seat of Christ, before God and men and angels! Let us live to please Him, for our integrity of motive will be known at the last, and put beyond all dispute!

The world said of one man that he preached from selfish motives, while all the time he had no thought but for God’s Glory. The Lord will make it clear how false was the judgment of men. They said of another man that he was very earnest, but that he wanted to win popularity. Yet all the while he cared not one straw for human praise. Such a man need not trouble himself—the smoke will clear away in that Great Day and he will

be seen in his uprightness! If you have lived only to please Christ, you need not be afraid of His coming, for in that day He shall clear away all slander and misrepresentation—and you shall stand out vindicated and justified before an assembled universe!

In that day, when God shall publicly justify His saints, He will make all men, angels and devils know that they are truly just. The solemn verdict of God will be one to which the whole universe of intelligent spirits will give in their assent. They will say, “YES,” to the sentence passed by the Lord Jesus! They, themselves, would bring in a verdict in favor of Believers in that last testing day if it were left to them! As for the ungodly, the condemning sentence shall be not only just, but such as the whole universe shall assent to! The punishment which God will lay upon sinners for the evil deeds done in the body, will not then be caviled at, as too severe! It will be such a sentence as every intelligent spirit shall be compelled to own to be right.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, let us so live that while our lives shall challenge no judgment on the score of merit—for that thought we utterly abhor—yet there shall be in our lives evidences of our having received Grace from God and evidences of our being acceptable with Christ. For if we do not so live, we may talk what we like about faith and boast what we please about experience—without holiness no man shall see the Lord. If our life has never had in it that which pleases Christ, then the evidence will be taken against us that we were not pleasing to Him, that we had no spiritual life, that we had no Grace in the heart and that we were not saved. Then there will remain nothing for us but to be condemned with the ungodly.

Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, do not let us care whether we live or die! Let us not suffer ourselves to be alarmed about the passage out of this world into the next state, but let us be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” I have been twice to the grave this week, with two of our aged friends—a Sister and a Brother—who have passed into Glory. And the lesson which they have left behind for our edification is—let us not be concerned whether we are at home in the body or whether we are at home with Christ, but, living or dying, let us be careful to please Jesus!

I wish I knew how to enforce this lesson and send it home to every Believer’s heart, but I must rather pray the Holy Spirit to do so. May He write it on my soul and on yours! And may we all be found practicing it from this time forth, even forever. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 4:14-18; 5.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—865, 858, 850.**

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Sermon #677 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH VERSUS SIGHT

NO. 677

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”  
2 Corinthians 5:7.*

I THINK the Apostle is explaining here how it was he could say that while he was at home in the body, he was absent from the Lord—and through what means he felt that this was not the state in which he wished to be forever. Having been possessed, and actuated, and moved by the principle of faith, he was not content to tabernacle in a body which could only be dwelt in satisfactorily through the influence of the faculty of sight. The Apostle, however, mentions here a great general principle—“We walk by *faith*, not by sight.” In talking upon this text this evening, we shall— without pretending to go into it fully—speak, first of all, upon the posture mentioned. Then upon the two principles contrasted, and finally upon a certain caution which is here implied.

**I.**First, a word or two about THE POSTURE MENTIONED. Paul, speaking of Believers, says: “We walk by faith, not by sight.” Walking is, of course, a posture which implies the possession of life. You can make a dead man sit in a certain position, or even stand in a chosen attitude— but to*walk* necessitates the possession of inward *life*. It becomes with us, therefore, a question, in the first place, whether we have the life of God within us.

In the sense in which the term “walk” is here used, the ungodly man does not walk at all. He hastens after his own lusts and he treads in the way of the flesh. But in a spiritual sense he is, and always must be a stranger to “walking” until God has quickened him. When we see corpses walking along our roads and pass them at eventide in our streets, then shall we expect to see Christian feelings, Christian emotions, and Christian character exhibited by unconverted men—but not till then! There must first be an *inward life* before there can be the *outward sign* of it.

Walking is a position which also signifies activity. You would suppose, from the way in which some Christians deport themselves, that their whole life was spent in meditation. It is a blessed thing to *sit*—

***“With Mary at the Master’s feet,”***

but we walk as well as sit. We do not merely learn, but we practice what we know. We are not simply scholars, but, having been taught as scholars, we go on to show our scholarship by working in the vineyard or wherever else the Master may be pleased to place us. The quietists and mystics are a class of people who have a peculiar attraction for my mind, and I suppose the mention of such a name as that of Madame Guyon, who, among females, stands at the very head of the school, will awaken in many of you many sweet remembrances of times enjoyed in reading her blessed hymns and of her sweet and admirable life.

But, after all, it is not the highest style of Christian living to be a mystic or a quietist. “We walk.” Some Christians seem as if they always sit, but, “we walk.” You would gather, indeed, from what others say, that the whole life of a Christian is to be spent in prayer. Prayer, it is true, is the vitality of the secret parts of Christian life, but we are not always on our knees! We are not constantly engaged in seeking blessings from Heaven. We do, “continue in prayer,” but we are also engaged in showing forth to others the blessings which we have received, and in exhibiting in our daily actions the fruits which we have gathered on the mountaintop of communion with God. “We walk,” and this implies activity.

Oh, I would that some Christians would pay a little attention to their legs instead of paying it all to their heads! When children’s heads grow too fast it is a sign of disease and they get the rickets or water on the brain. And there are some very sound Brethren who seem to me to have got some kind of disease—and when they try to walk, they straightway make a tumble of it—because they have paid so much attention to perplexing doctrinal views instead of looking, as they ought to have done, to the practical part of Christianity.

By all means let us have doctrine! But by all means let us have precepts, too. By all means let us have inward experience, but by all means let us also have outward “holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.” “We walk.” This is more than some can say. They can affirm—“We talk. We think. We experience. We feel”—but true Christians can say, with the Apostle Paul, “We walk.” Oh that we may ever be able to say it, too! Here, then, is the activity of the Christian life.

In the posture of walking there is also implied *progress*. A man does not walk unless he makes some headway. We are not always practicing the goose-step. We are not always lifting our foot and then putting it down in the same place. This may do very well for the beginners in the awkward squad at drill, and I am afraid that a great many of us are still in that squad—but the Christian who has got through his childhood, and has grown somewhat, makes *progress*. There are some who will tell you that they do not know that they have made any progress, or, if they do not say this, you can see that they have made none.

They are as bad-tempered as when they first joined the Church. They are as changing, as narrow-minded, as critical, as easily “carried about with every wind of doctrine” as they were at first. Such persons give some cause for suspicion as to whether they know much about the Divine life at all—because they who have the Divine life truly in them can say—“We walk.” They go from strength to strength. Every one of them appears in Zion before God. They are not satisfied with being in the Way—they desire also to *walk* in the Way. God does not say to us—“This is the Way,” and then stop—He says, “This is the Way, *walk* in it.”

We are always to be making advances. We are to be going from faith in its beginnings to faith in its perfections—from faith to assurance—from assurance to full assurance. And from there we are to go to the full assurance of hope to the full assurance of understanding—always forward, waxing stronger and stronger. There is a progress to be made in every Christian Grace and he who carefully marks the terms used about Christian Graces will discover that there are degrees in all of them, while each of them are degrees one above the other. Walking implies progress and the genuine Christian, when he is in a healthy state, may truthfully say—“We walk.”

Walking also implies perseverance. When a man goes along a step or two and then stops, or returns, we do not call that walking. The motion of the planets, as seen by the eye have been described by the poet as “progressive, retrograde, and standing still.” I am afraid there are many people of whom this would be a true description, but the true Christian keeps on. And though there may often appear to be times when he stops, and seasons when he goes back, yet the Scripture is not broken where it says that, “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.”

The Christian’s motto is, “Upward and onward.” Not as though he had already attained, either was already perfect—he presses forward to the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. We are not true Christians if we stop, or start, or turn aside. As an arrow from a bow that is drawn by some mighty archer speeds straightway towards its goal, such is the Christian life as it is and such is it as it always should be. We make progress, and we persevere in so doing.

I think, however, that by the term “walk” the Apostle meant to signify that, in the ordinary and customary actions of life we are actuated by faith. You know walking is the common way of moving. You do not often talk of a child’s walking. You do speak of it, of course, but you generally say, “There are the little ones running about the house.” You do not say that they are “walking about the house,” because the way of moving with the young is generally running, inasmuch as they have a great deal of extra energy and have not yet got into the wear and tear of life.

You do not find lambs walking at all in the ordinary way in which sheep do. Now, it is very easy, in the beginning of the Christian life, to run in the ways of the Lord with rejoicing—but running, after all, is not the most manly form of progress—it is not that which can be kept up for long! Running fatigues and tires you—*walking* is that kind of progress in which a man continues hour after hour. And after his night’s rest he rises again to walk on as before until he reaches his goal.

In Scripture we often read of men who, by faith, did great exploits. “By my God I have broken through a troop. By my God I will leap over a wall.” Now this is a very great thing to do, and some Christians are always fixing their eyes upon exploits of faith. The Apostle Paul cut through troops and did leap over walls, but in this place he speaks of the common actions of life. It is as if he said—“I not only leap walls by faith, but I walk by faith! I not only break through troops by faith, but I go and do my business by faith.”

That man has not yet learned the true spirit of Christianity who is always saying, “I can preach a sermon by faith.” Yes, Sir, but can you make a coat by faith? “I can distribute tracts, and visit the district by faith.” Can you cook a dinner by faith? I mean, can you perform the common actions of the household, and the daily duties which fall to your lot in the spirit of faith? This is what the Apostle means. He does not speak about running, or jumping or fighting, but about walking—and he means to tell you that the ordinary life of a Christian is different from the life of another man— that he has learned to introduce faith into *everything* he does. It was not a bad saying of one who said that he, “did eat and drink, and sleep eternal life.” We want not a home-spun religion, but a religion that was spun in Heaven and that will do to wear at home and about the house. “We walk by faith.”

The Mohammedan worships his god at the “holy hour.” The true Christian calls all hours “holy,” and worships always. Some set apart the seventh day of the week, and therein do well, but in setting apart *all* the seven days, and *living* to God, and entering into rest throughout them all, we do better still. Our souls should not keep our religion for the Tabernacle and the pew, and the closet, and the open Bible, and the bended knee. Our religion must become the *atmosphere* in which we live, the element in which our soul breathes! Our God must dwell in us, and we dwell in Him. We must feed upon Christ, not as a special dainty, but as “the bread of Heaven,” and drink of Him, not as a luxury, but as “the water of life.”

We must wear our piety, not as some holiday garment, but as our everyday dress and then it is that we get into the spirit of true religion.  
Summing up all, then, the whole of the Christian life which is implied in the term, “walk,” is here spoken of, and it is influenced by the principle of faith which we are now about to speak.  
**II.**And now, secondly, in the text we have TWO PRINCIPLES CONTRASTED. There is walking by*faith*, and there is walking by *sight*. The most of men, all men, indeed, naturally walk by sight. They have a proverb that, “Seeing is believing,” and they are wise men, for they trust people as far as they can see them, and no further. The world thinks itself uncommonly knowing in always depending upon its own sight.  
The highest degree of worldly wisdom seems to be just this—see everything for yourself and do not be taken in. Do not be led by the nose by anybody, but follow your own understanding. This is the text which the world’s Solomons always preach from—“Self-made Men”—that is the title of their book! Self-reliance—that is the name of their principle, and, according to the world, the best and grandest thing that a man can do is to have faith in himself! Their maxim is, “Know things for yourself. Look after the main chance. Make money—make it honestly if you can, and honorably if possible, but, if not, make it anyhow, by hook or by crook.” “Take care of Number One”—this is the world’s learned dictum.  
Now the Christian is the very opposite of this. He says—“I do not care about looking after the things that are seen and are temporal. They are like dissolving views, or the scenes from a child’s magic lantern—there is nothing in them—they are but phantoms and shadows. The things that are not seen influence me because they are *eternal.* They endure, remain, abide, and therefore they affect a creature which has learned that it has, not mortality alone, but*immortality*, and who, expecting to live forever, therefore seeks for things which will be like his own existence.”  
Now, since the world thinks itself so very wise for holding everything it can, and thinks the Christian such a great fool for giving up what he can see for what he cannot see, in contradiction to the world’s proverb, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”—let us see where the wisdom of this matter is, and where it is not. In the first place, we notice that walking by sight is a very childish thing. Any child can walk by sight, and so can any fool, too. We know how a child feels when it looks at a mountain, and we have all felt the same when we have gone to Switzerland and other places.  
I had a friend with me, who said of a certain mountain—“I will undertake to be at the top in half-an-hour.” It took us five and a half hours steady toiling, and we did not go slowly either! Of course my friend judged by his*sight*, and not being accustomed to mountains, and not knowing that sight is a very different thing when it comes to deal with different landscapes—not knowing that a judgment which would be pretty accurate in England would be totally wrong in the mountains of Wales, and still more erroneous in Switzerland—not knowing all this, I dare say he would be startled at eventide, expecting to find himself at the top before the sun went down, whereas he would not have reached it till the middle of the night!  
A child always judges everything by what he sees. You give him a number of coins. They are all counterfeit, but he is so pleased with them that he does not care about having real sovereigns—he is just as glad to have those he has, for they look quite as good. You offer him sixpence and when he is yet a youngster he will give you your sixpence back for a penny because the penny is the larger of the two. He judges by sight, which, you see, is a childish principle altogether. When a man grows up he no longer judges so much by sight. He has learned a great many things in this world and he has discovered that his eyes may be very greatly mistaken at times.  
The child says—“How quickly these stars move! How fast the moon hastens through the clouds!” The man says—“No, no. It is the clouds that are moving.” The child says that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, and admires its motion. But the man knows that the sun does not move at all, and that it is the *earth* that is moving. He believes this, and thus in a certain degree he has faith because he cannot see the world move. Hodge once said he would not believe the world moved at all because he found that his house still stood in the same place, and Hodge proved himself to have been thus only a big child. But it is a very manly thing to believe something which you cannot see. Even in common philosophy it is so.  
The children all sat at home in England, and in Spain, and in France and they said—“Oh, this is all the world, this is,” and they had their Mediterranean Sea in the middle of the earth. But there was a man among them who said he did not believe it but thought the world was round, and that there was another half to it. “You are a fool,” they said. “Fool or not,” he replied, “I believe it.” And Columbus stood up, head and shoulders taller than the rest of his fellows and got a few to go with him and started—a company of fools they were called. They could not see anything!  
They sailed on, and on, and on, for many weary days, and the unbelievers said they had better go back. There were several pieces of seaweed floating about which looked as if they came from some other shore, or had been washed down some not far distant river. Columbus did not care much for these seaweeds because he believed, and believed firmly, that there was another half of the globe. And when the land birds came and lighted on his ship, though they gladdened his heart, yet they did not make him believe any the more. And when he saw America, and stood on the strand of the land of gold, he still only had to keep on as he had done. He had walked by faith before, and he could continue in the same course now. When he came back everybody said—“What a wonderful man is Columbus!” Just 50 and all the rest were children—he was the only true man among them.  
Now the Christian is a man! I mean to say he is “a man” in the Scriptural sense of the term. He has become a full-grown man in Christ Jesus, and while the worldling says—“This is all the world. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Let us make money and spend it and enjoy ourselves, for this is the end of the world”—the Christian says, “No, there must be another half to the world! I am sure there must be another land beyond the sea, so I will loose my anchor and turn my helm, and try to find it. I will leave this world to you children and will seek another and a more heavenly one.”  
So we sail away and by-and-by we see the bits of seaweed. And when at last the angelic messengers come, like birds of Paradise, and light upon the masts of our vessels, then we thank God that we were ever enabled, with true manly courage, to loose our anchor, to set out upon our voyage and to turn our helm towards the sea! We thank Him that we believed in God and were actuated by a noble principle of faith, compared with which the world’s wisdom is but the folly of the child. This, then, is the first thing we have to say about these two principles—that the one is childish while the other is manly.  
Again, the one is groveling while the other is noble. I think the world must be pretty well ashamed of itself if it still considers this poor earth to be all that a soul has to live for. I feel as if I could not talk upon the matter. Solomon tried everything there was in this world—riches, power, pleasure—every sort of delicacy and delight he had, beyond the point of satisfaction—and what was his verdict upon it all? “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!” A man earning his bread all day long—what is he? Is he better than the donkey that I saw a little while ago at Carisbrook Castle, pumping up water and always going round? What more is he than that?  
“Well, but he makes money and acquires houses and land.” Yes, and there is only so much more probate tax to be paid when he dies, and I suppose the worms know no difference between a man who died worth three hundred thousand pounds and a poor wretch who was buried by the parish! It does not come to anything more than that! The children go to the seaside with their little wooden spades and build up a pier of sand, but the tide comes and washes it away—and this is just what men do— they build with heavier stuff, which gives them more care and not half so much merriment in piling up as the youngsters have in digging up their sand. But the end is just the same!  
Only the children live to build again, while these big children, these grovelers, are washed out to sea with all their works and perish everlastingly. You have walked upon the beach, I dare say, when the sea has gone down. I do not mean the beach at Ramsgate where everybody goes, but a long way out in some quiet spot. If you have, you will have seen what hundreds of little mounds there are all over the beach, where the worms have come up and made a number of small heaps. That is all we do, and it is all that the world is—just a big place covered all over with little heaps of dirt that we have all piled up.  
But where have we gone? If there is not another world to live for, I must say that this life is a most unutterably empty kind of thing! It is not worthy of a man! But oh, to believe what God tells me—that there is a God— that God became flesh to bear me up to Himself! To believe that I am God’s *son—*that I have an immortality within myself which will outlast the stars—that I shall one day see His face and sing His praise forever with cherubim and seraphim! Why, there is something *here*! The man who believes this feels as if he begins to grow! He bursts the poor engrossments of his flesh and expands into something worthy of a man who is made in the image of the Most High!  
The principle of seeing everything, and of liking only to get what I can see, and touch, and handle is the poor instinct of beasts and birds, but the principle of living upon what I *cannot* see, and upon something that I can believe, is one worthy of a man. As much as man is higher than the beast, so much and yet more a thousand-fold is the life of faith superior to that of mere sight and feeling.  
Again—there is something exceedingly ignorant about believing only what I can see. What, then, shall I believe? Even in common life the man who walks by sight must necessarily be a fool—I say *necessarily* because nine out of ten things in the world that are the most wonderful and potent *cannot* be seen—at least not by the eyes. A man who will not believe in electricity—well, what can you make of him in these days? Such a man will believe in the vapor that puffs from the steam engine, but since nobody ever did or could see steam, inasmuch as it is an invisible agent, he cannot ever believe in that!  
He lives in the midst of a great world and he cannot account for most things in it because he will not believe in anything beyond what he *sees.* If he carries this principle out—the marvels of other countries, and the wonders of other ages are all shut out from his poor dull mind. And this is most decidedly the case with regard to *spiritual* things. If you only walk by sight, and only believe what you see, what do you believe? You believe that while you are living here it is a good thing to make the best you can of it. And that then you will die and be buried, and that will be the end of you! What a poor, miserable, ignorant belief this is!  
But when you believe in what God reveals and come to walk by faith, how your information expands! Now riddles are all solved, and the inexplicable is understood! Now you begin to comprehend things in a way which you never could have done had you walked only by sight. Now you can understand those trials and troubles that come to you! Now you can understand the complexity of your nature and the inward conflicts that you feel within you. You could never have done this on the principle of sight— but believing what God says you have got into a state in which you shall be educated and taught till you become wise—and able to have fellowship with the only wise God!  
Let me say, again, that walking by sight is such a very deceptive way of walking. After all, the eyes do not see anything—it is the *mind* that sees *through* the eyes. The eyes in every man have some sort of defect in them—they need to be educated for a long time before they tell the truth! And even then there are a thousand things about which they do not always speak truly. The man who walks by his eyes will be deceived in many ways. The angler baits his hook and casts his fly upon the water, and the silly fish, which jumps by sight, has the hook in its jaws in a moment. You can evermore, if you will, go from bad to worse in unseen danger if you will judge according to the sight of the eyes.  
The world is wise enough to say that, “Honesty is the best policy.” The world was not quite itself when it said that, for mostly it is present gain that Satan sets before us, and present pleasure. “Snatch the hour as it passes,” says Satan. “These things are sure—you do not know what may come afterwards.” And so is the poor soul deceived by judging according to what he *thinks* he sees, whereas the man who has a God to go to, and to believe in, is never deceived. The promise to him always stands fast. The Person of Christ is always his sure refuge, and God Himself is his perpetual inheritance.  
Let me add, again, that the principle of sight is a very changeable one. You can see well enough, you know, in the day, but what will you do in the night when you cannot see? It is well enough to talk of walking by sight in the light

but what will you do when the darkness comes on? It is very well to talk about living on time present while you are here, but when you go upstairs and lie on your deathbed, what about the principle of living for the present then? When you cannot stay here any longer—when, notwithstanding all the ties which held you to earth, Death begins to drag you away and you cry to him—“Stop! I cannot leave wife, and children, and business just yet!” And when Death remorselessly tears you away from all that is dear to you—how about the principle of sight then? It is a strange principle to die with, but, let me say, on the other hand, that the principle of faith does best in the dark!  
He who walks by faith can walk in the sunlight as well as you can, for he walks with God—he has enlightened eyes, but he can walk in the dark as you cannot, for his light is still shining upon him. He trusts in the unseen and in the invisible—and his soul rejoices when present things are passing away. We will not tarry longer upon this point except to say one thing, namely, that those who walk by sight walk alone. Walking by sight is just this—“I believe in myself.” Whereas walking by faith is—“I believe in God.” If I walk by sight I walk by myself. If I walk by faith then there are two of us, and the second one—ah, how great, how glorious, how mighty is He!  
He is the Great All-in-All! He is God All-Sufficient! Sight goes to war at its own charges and becomes bankrupt and is defeated. Faith goes to war at the charges of the King’s Exchequer and there is no fear that Faith’s bank shall ever be broken. Sight builds the house from its own quarry and on its own foundation, but it begins to build and is never able to finish. And what it does build rests on sand and falls. But Faith builds on the foundation laid in eternity—in the fair colors of the Savior’s blood—in the Covenant of Grace! It goes to God for every stone to be used in the building and brings forth the top-stone with shouts of, “Grace, Divine Grace unto it.”  
Beloved, when you say, “I will do so-and-so,” you may be very proud. But when you can say, “God will do so-and-so, and I believe it,” then you will be humble and yet you may glory and boast as much as you will because there are *two* of you together. It is not “the sword of Gideon,” but, “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon,” and Jehovah cannot be defeated. “The life that I live I live not, but Christ hides in me,” and this is the grand advantage. In living by sight you have to get your own wisdom, your own judgment, your own strength to guide you. And when you get into trouble you must be your own deliverer, and your own comforter, and your own helper or else you must run to somebody as weak as yourselves who will only send you deeper down into the mire.  
But when you walk by faith, should there seem to be a mistake *you* have not made it. Should anything seem to go wrong, you did not steer the ship. And if the ship should run aground, you are not answerable and will not be blamed. It is yours to be watchful and careful, and to believe that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are the called according to His purpose. But besides this we know that nothing can go wrong while God is in the vessel! Blessed be God, when Christ is on Lake Gennesaret there may come a stormy night, but every vessel gets safely to port and we can always sing—  
***“Be gone unbelief, my Savior is near,  
And for my relief will surely appear.  
By faith let me wrestle, and He will perform, With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm.”*  
III.**And now, having contrasted the two principles, I am about to close by noticing THE CAUTION IMPLIED in the text. The Apostle says positively, “We walk by faith,” and then he adds negatively, “not by sight.” The caution, then, is—NEVER MIX THE TWO PRINCIPLES. Some of you will not know what I am talking about but I will try to make you understand it. Some of you are actuated in what you do by something that you can *see*. You can see your children, and you will work for them. You can see money—you will strive for that. You can see such-and-such temporal good—you will seek after that.  
But the Christian believes in God and he lives to God. He lives as if there were a God, but you live as if there were no God. He believes in a hereafter—you say you do, too—but you live as if there were no hereafter, while the Christian lives as if there was one. He believes in sin, and you say you do, and yet you never weep about it—while the Christian lives as if sin were a real disease and he could not bear it. You say you believe in Christ the Savior, but you live as if you did not believe in Him. The Christian lives upon his belief that there is a Savior. All that he does is affected and acted upon not by what he *sees*, but by what he does *not* see and yet believes! He walks according to that faith.  
Now, the thing that neither you nor I can understand is this—how is it that the man who has once learned to walk by faith can be so stupid as ever to mix the two principles together? You may go on a journey by land, or you may go by water, but to try to swim and walk at the same time would be rather stupid. A drunken man tries to walk on both sides of the street at once—and there is a sort of intoxication that sometimes seizes upon Christians which makes them also try to walk by two principles. They cannot do it! It is like trying to go due east and due west at the same time. The principles themselves are antagonistic to one another and yet there are some Christians who attempt it.  
Shall I show you what I mean by this? You say—“I believe God loves me. I have prospered in business ever since I have been a Christian.” Yes—the first part of that is faith—but the second part of it is sight. Suppose you had not prospered in business, what then? Why, according to your way of reasoning, you would have said—“I do not believe that God loves me, for I have not prospered in business since I have been a Christian.” So, you see, you would really be walking by *sight*.  
Genuine Christian reasoning is this—“I have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that as many as receive Him are the sons of God. I have received Him, and I am therefore a son of God. Now, whether my Father kisses me or flogs me, I know that I am His son. I am not going to be guided by my state and condition, but by my faith as to the promise of the Word. He says that if I have received Christ I have the privilege to be a child of God. Then, whether I am rich or poor—whether I am sick or healthy—all these are matters of sight. I do not bring them into the calculation. I take the naked Word of God as it stands—that I am God’s child. If He slays me I am His child. If He lets me go to prison, if He should suffer me to rot in a dungeon, or to burn at the stake, I am still His child! I do not look upon circumstances as at all affecting my position.”  
Oh Beloved, if you once begin calculating your position before God according to your *temporal* circumstances, where will you be? Do not talk any more of believing—you have given it up—and you are really walking by sight. Perhaps many of you do not make precisely this mistake, but there is another way of doing it. “Now,” says one, “I have believed in Jesus Christ, but I am afraid I am not saved, for I feel tonight so depressed in spirits, and so unhappy.” “Oh,” says another, “you need not tell me that I have trusted in Jesus Christ, for I am sure I am saved, because I feel so happy.”  
Now you are both wrong, as wrong as wrong can be! When you said you trusted in Christ—so far, so good. But when you said you were afraid you were not saved because you were so *unhappy*, or, on the other hand, that you were sure you were saved because you were so *happy*—that, also, is walking by sight! You see you are mixing up the two principles which will no more go together than fire and water. If I have believed in Jesus Christ, I may at this moment, through disease of body or some other present temporal affliction, be very heavy in spirit—but I am saved notwithstanding. “He that believe on Him is not condemned.”  
I may be very troubled. I may see a great deal in myself that may make me distressed—but if I believe, I am not condemned, and cannot be. Or, if I have strong faith and am possessed of great joy, that is no proof of my being saved. It is my *believing* that is the proof of that. I do not hang upon my feelings—I rely simply upon Christ! I must learn the difference between feeling and believing or else I shall always be blundering and making mistakes. You sometimes get taken by the Lord to the mountaintop and you have such sweet communion with Him! And then you say—“My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.”  
Ah, poor Simpleton, you do not know what you are saying, for in a short time you may go down into the depths and cry—“All Your waves and Your billows have gone over me.” You think that God has forgotten to be gracious and you begin to write bitter things against yourself—whereas that is the very time to “have faith in God”—  
***“When we in darkness walk,  
Nor feel the heavenly flame,  
Then is the time to trust the Lord,  
And wait upon His name.”***  
You think that you will use your candle in the daytime, but candles were made for the night! Faith is not meant for sweet frames and feelings only—it is meant for dark frames and horrible feelings. Do you think that the minister has no changes? If he had no changes within he would know himself to be a Moabite and not an Israelite, for it is Moab that is settled on his lees!  
What, then, is the way to maintain peace when there are changes within the soul? How can we be peaceful when we are sometimes taken up to Heaven and are another time cast down? Why, the only way is never to be unduly elated by prosperity without or within and never to be unduly depressed by adversity or by doubts and fears! We must learn to live neither upon things without nor upon things within, but upon things *above* which are the true food for a new-born spirit. What is your title for Heaven, Christian? Every evidence will one day be taken from you except that which is comprised in these three words: “It is written.”  
The genuine foundation upon which I may rest for salvation is this: “God has said it.” It is not, “I have *experienced* it,” for there will often be times when I shall be afraid that my experience is a delusion. But if “God has said it,” we can never be afraid! On the oath and Covenant of the Most High we must, every one of us, come and build! If we do that, all shall be well with us. But this is a work so far above human nature that human nature does not even understand it, and though I have tried to speak very plainly, I am conscious that I have spoken in riddles to many of you. God Himself must open the eyes to understand what living faith means, and then He must give that living faith and perpetuate it or else, as Israel went back in their hearts to Egypt, so shall we go back to the garlic and onions of the things that are seen and have but little of the manna which comes from an unseen Heaven.  
And now, in closing, I would affectionately bid you take heed of one thing. You must be sure if you walk by faith, that you walk by the *right* faith. I mean you must be sure that it is faith in Jesus Christ. If you put faith in your dreams, as some of you still do—or in anything you thought you saw when you were walking, or in a voice you thought you heard from the clouds, or in texts of Scripture coming to your mind—if you put faith in anything else but Christ—I do not care how good it may be or how bad it may be—you must beware, for such a faith as that will give way. You may have a very strong faith in everything else but Christ and perish!  
There was an architect who had a plan for building a lighthouse on the Eddystone Rock. He was quite satisfied, and as he sat by the fire looking at his plans he was quite sure that no storm that ever came could shake the building. He applied for the contract to build the lighthouse and did build it—and a very singular-looking place it was. There were a great many flags about it and ornaments and it looked very promising. Some shook their heads a little, but he was very, very firm and said he should like to be in it himself in the worst wind that ever blew. He was in it at the time he wanted to be—and he was never heard of again—nor was anything more ever seen of his lighthouse. The whole thing was swept away. He was a man of great faith, only it happened to be founded on mistaken principles.  
Now sometimes, because there is a way of talking which looks very much like assurance, you may say, “I am not afraid. I never had a doubt or a fear. I know it is all right with my soul. I am not afraid of the test of the Day of Judgment.” Well, whether you wish it or not, that test for the labor of your lighthouse will come. And if it should prove that you built it *yourself*, it will be swept away—and you with it. But if your soul takes God’s Word, and reading that Word, believes it and is willing to be taught its inward meaning—if you take that Word as it stands, and rest upon it, and act upon it with all your heart and soul—the worst storm that ever blew shall never shake your rock and refuge, nor you, either! And you shall be safe when earth’s old columns bow and all her wheels shall go to wreck and confusion.  
Rest in the Lord Jehovah! Depend on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for all that you need! Rest wholly in Him with the whole weight of your soul and spirit and then there shall be no fear that what you shall see is God’s face with acceptance! May God teach us faith on the right principle, and may we walk by it, and not by sight—and then the Lord shall give us that reward which is given to those who walk by faith in the living God!

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #413 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TO DIE OR NOT TO DIE!  
NO. 413

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 11, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Willing rather to be absent from the body and  
to be present with the Lord.”  
2 Corinthians 5:8.~~***

I once heard two good men holding a dialogue with one another. I should not like to have the task of saying which I thought the better man of the two. I believe them both to be sincere followers of the Savior and both of them, I think have a good hope through grace. One of them said he should be glad to go to Heaven. He wished that his time was come. He did not see anything here worth living for and he should be only too glad if now the summons should reach him that he should cross the river and arrive in the Promised Land. The other brother said he did not feel so. He thought he had many reasons why he would rather just then live than die.

He thanked God that he had lived to see the Church in prosperity and it made his heart glad. He should like, he said, to be a sharer of the Church’s joy for years to come. Besides, he had those he loved on earth and he said perhaps it might be a weakness in him but certainly he could not join in the other brother’s aspirations—at least not to the same extent. I stood by. I do not know that I volunteered then any very strong words by way of notice of what either of them said, yet I took notes of their conversation. Thinking the matter over it suggested to me a few thoughts which I shall endeavor to present to you tonight. May the topic be interesting and may you feel your own interest in it.

Now there was one of the Brethren who would *rather not depart but stay*. I will take up that side of the question first and show when such a desire is wrong and when it is right. The other Brother, like Paul, said he would *rather depart* for he thought it far better. I will take up that side of the question afterwards and show when that, too is wrong and when that, too, is right. I think they must both be sifted and to pronounce a judgment upon either prematurely as right or wrong would be to perpetrate an injustice and to commit an error.

Sometimes it is wrong for a Christian man to say, “I do not want to die—I would rather live.” And one of the first cases is *when that Christian man has grown worldly*. I think it was Dr. Johnson who being taken by one of his friends over to his fine house and along the walks of his beautiful garden, observed to him—“Ah, Sir, these are the things that make it

hard to die.” To leave the comforts of life. To go from a nest that is wellfeathered and to stretch our wings into the air. To leave the house which our industry has built, the objects familiar to our senses, the projects that absorb our interest and above all, the family—I say willingly—to leave these is difficult. All these are so many strings tying us down like ropes which fasten the baboon which would flee if once its cords were cut.

But, Brethren, this is wrong in a Christian man. What is there in this present world that he should love, compared with the world to come? Has Christ taught him to find his solace here? Did Christ come from Heaven that we should find a Heaven below? No, rather has He taught us that the enjoyments of this world are not fit meat for the noble spirits which He has re-created. Men must eat angels’ food. They cannot live by bread alone. The world was never meant to fill a believer’s soul. He may find some contentment in it—for “every creature of God is good and is to be received with thanksgiving.”

But to set this world in comparison with the next so as to be unwilling to let it go in order to receive the crown of life—this were folly—this were madness, this were wickedness in the godly man. In such a sense as that the thing is wrong.

And again, when the Christian man wishes to stay here, *because he has a secret fear of dying*, it is wrong. Brethren, I would not speak harshly to those who, “by fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.” I would speak encouragingly to them. What did Christ come into the world for? He came to deliver those who are subject to this bondage. And did Christ come in vain? No, Brethren. Then let us shake off these chains. They are unworthy of the men who have a part and lot in Christ Jesus the Redeemer.

Afraid to die? Why, you are afraid of a stingless enemy. Afraid of a shadow—no, you are afraid of Heaven’s own portals. You are afraid of your Father’s servant whom He sends to bring you to Himself! Be more afraid of living than of dying, for there are more fears in life than in death. In fact, to the Christian there is no fear in death. “Oh, but,” you say, “the pains and groans of death!” “No,” say I, “they are the pains and groans of life.” There are no pains and groans in death. Death occupies but an instant—it is but, as it were, a pin’s prick and all is over. It is*life* that gives the pains. The sighs, the groans and the strife are not those of death—but those of life struggling against death—when the strong man will not yield himself.

So says one of our poets—  
***“How deep implanted in the breast of man The dread of death! I sing its sovereign cure. Why start at death?—Where is he? Death arrived Is past. Not come or gone; he’s never here.  
Before hope, sensation fails; black-boding man Receives, not suffers, death’s tremendous blow.”***

Brethren, when Jesus Christ died for our offenses and was raised again for our justification, He “loosed the pains of death.” Our old Divines were accustomed to say—“Then there are only a few loose pains for the believer to suffer.” Death seizes not the Christian with the strong grip of an officer of Justice. Rather does death beckon the soul away to be present with the Lord!

Let those fear to die whose sins lie heavy on their consciences. Let those fear to die who have heaped sin upon sin, who have rejected the atonement, have trampled on the blood of sprinkling, have cast behind their backs the invitations of mercy and live and die in their sins. But you—you fear death? You whose sins are forgiven? You who are clothed in Jesus’ righteousness? You to whom death is admission into immortality? You to whom death is but the end of dying and the beginning of life? You fear death? Why Sirs, surely you know not what spirit you are of. Such fear of dying is wrong in the Christian. Let him strive against it and by getting more grace let him overcome his dread.

Then again, if the Christian’s fear of dying is *the result of his doubting his interest in Christ*, that is wrong. We have no right to doubt. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” But some read it as though it said, “He that doubts shall be saved.” In this very verse the Apostle says, “We are always confident.” Now, some divines hate the very word “confidence” and some professors of religion think that a Christian has nothing to do with confidence. And yet, the Apostle says, “We are always confident.” And, indeed, the Apostle knew what was the proper spirit for a believer—that he might not be trembling between death and life, between hope and fear, with “of,” and “but,” and “perhaps”—for his only rocks.

No, that is not the spirit of a child of God. One would think, to hear some men talk, that the atonement of Christ was a quagmire, a bog, or bending ice which might give way under our feet. But, Brethren, it is not so. It is a rock more lasting than the rocks on which the earth is piled and more enduring than the solid columns which support Heaven’s starry roof. Why fear, then? Why doubt? Why tremble? Such pining after life, such fears of death because we doubt our Savior are disreputable in a Christian man. Let us seek to overcome them—that being always confident, we may be willing to depart—which is far better.

One more point I ought not to pass over here, albeit I do not know in which scale to put it—whether to call it right or wrong. When the Christian had rather stay here *because he has a large family dependent upon him* and he says, “How can I die?” “Ah,” he says, “the Apostle Paul had

not a house to maintain and a responsible business to manage for the support of his dependent household. He lived in single blessedness and when he journeyed he took all his stock-in-trade with him. But if I were to die just now, I should leave my widow without provision and my children would be all but penniless orphans.”

Well now, that is a right consideration. The religion of Christ does not teach us to deny our natural affections and if any man desire not to provide for his own household, he is worse than a heathen man and a publican. But mark, if that care gets to be earning care—if it is a distrustful care as to God’s Providence—then it is wrong, for many a time has a believer closed his eyes in perfect peace, though he knew that he left his dear ones without a heritage, for he has put God’s promise between his lips—“Leave your fatherless children and let your widow trust in Me.”

I think I may tell a story that might aptly illustrate this. Though some are here whom it concerns, the name not transpiring it can do no hurt. I have heard of a poor laboring man whose children were at that time struggling for their bread and suddenly the pangs of death came on him. As he lay dying, this was the legacy he left his children—children, mark you who are this day, many of them, rich and all of them together with his widow to her dying day—they have been comfortably provided for. He said to his wife, as he was dying—“You will find so many shillings in that box over there”—and you would think he was going to say, “Take care of it, it is the last I have.”

But no. He said, “I owe just that sum of money to Mrs. So-and-So down in the village. Take it and pay her. It is all I owe in the world and then I can die content.” As a Christian man he died and left to his children a better heritage than many a peer of the realm has bestowed, though he has given estates over the acres of which a bird’s wing might flag in the attempt to fly. And I say from that very moment—and there are those here who can bear me witness—from that very moment that man’s family rose in circumstances. From that very instant they began to rise in respectability and position in life and they make it their boast that their father left them such a heritage as that.

Oh, Christian man, you may in the strength of an unwavering faith in God close your eyes in peace. Let not your social position too much disturb you, but while you make all the provision you can let not your provision ever stint you in your generosity to Christ’s cause, or mar the peace with which you go to your death-pillow. He that has been with you will also be with your seed. I cannot boast many years of observation—I cannot say as David did—“I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”—but there be many gray-headed ones who can say that and set to their seal that God is true.

Having thus brought out what I think the wrong side of the matter, let me now show you when I think it may be right for the believer to say, “I would rather live than die.” And that is, first, *when he feels that he has not yet done much for the matter and a field of labors is just opening before his eyes.*“Oh,” says he, “I should not like to go to Heaven yet, for I have done so little for Him on earth.” As a valiant soldier, with the field of battle in view, he wants to win a victory. The fight is just beginning and he has not had an opportunity of distinguishing himself. He has been in the rear and he says to himself, “I want an opportunity of rushing to the front and thinning my new laurels, so that before the battle be over I may be distinguished for serving my country.”

So many a young Christian may, with a noble ambition, say—“I do not want my part in the battle to be over yet. I had rather stay a little longer, till I have fought the good fight and finished my course.” Christian! Christian! If you say thus, who can blame you? Your desire to remain is commendable indeed. But perhaps we have been long in the field and we are saying—“I do not want to die yet, because the laborers are few”? Oh, let me stay till I see others raised up to preach the Gospel that I love. Great Commander of our hosts, let my hand hold Your standard till another hand stronger than mine shall grasp it. Let me stand in the fore-front of the battle, till You find someone else to bear the world’s opprobrium and tug and toil for souls even in the very fire.”

I can quote Carry and Ward and Pierre, who when they were laid down with sickness at Serampore, prayed that they might live a little longer, because every godly man in India was then worth a thousand. They seemed to say, “If any would come and take my place, gladly would I go to find repose. But I have to keep this gap, or guard this bulwark. Oh Captain, call me not away, lest Your name be dishonored and Your enemies get to themselves triumph.” If Elisha said, “My Father, my Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof”—much more can you conceive the charioteer of God who has long held in the rapid steeds, standing upright in his chariot, as he feels the death-film gathering over his eye and he is about in sheer exhaustion to cast down the reins.

Because he can hold them no longer, you can hear him cry, “Let me just live until I can pass the reins to my successor’s hands and transfer, like Moses, the guardianship of Israel to a Joshua who shall lead them into the Promised Land.” In those two cases and there may be others—it would be allowable for the believer to say, “To abide in the flesh is more needful for You and therefore I prefer rather to live than die.”

I now take the second stage of the controversy and shall try to deal fairly with that. When is it right and when is it wrong for a believer to wish to go to Heaven?

First, it is wrong *when he wants to get there to get away from his work.*Sometimes when we have got a hard task to do for the Lord we wish that the rest would come and we talk almost peevishly of the “rest that remains for the people of God.” There be some lazy spirits who would like an everlasting Sabbath, when they might always sit still and do nothing. That is their notion of Heaven—

***“There on a green and flowery mount,***

***Our weary souls shall sit.”***  
My own constitutional idleness always makes me look forward to Heaven as a place of rest, for in everything I do I am obliged to drive myself to do it for the Master’s sake. And there are many, I dare say, who suffer from a torpid and sluggish liver, to whom the thought of Heaven as a place of rest is generally the paramount one.

Well, now, I do not think that we ought to wish to go to Heaven to have done with work. Suppose you were to employ a laborer and he came to you about ten o’clock in the morning and said, “Master, it is a very hot day, I wish it was six o’clock at night.” You would say, “Let me see, how many hours have you been at work—there is your money, take it and go. I want none of those laggard fellows about my premises that are always looking for six o’clock.” Or suppose you had another man engaged by the week and you met him on Thursday and he said, “I wish it was Saturday, Sir, I wish it was Saturday night.”

“Ah,” you would say, “A man that always looks for Saturday night is never worth his master’s keeping. Just go on with your work till it is finished and then when Saturday night comes it will be all the more welcome to you.” And yet, Brethren you and I have been guilty of that same unworthy listlessness with regard to the things of Christ. We have wanted to get away from the work. It was too hard and too hot for us—so we would even wish to skulk into Heaven that we might repose our wearied souls upon the green and flowery mounts. Now that is wrong. Get up with you, get up with you! “Six days shall you labor and do all that you have to do. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.” If you murmur at the six days of labor for Christ Jesus in His vineyard—how shall you hope to enjoy with Him the eternal Sabbatism that remains for the people of God?

Some, too, wish to get away from this world *because there is some little discouragement that they have met with in laboring for Christ*. Jonah thought he would rather go to Tarshish than to Nineveh. There are many spiritual Jonahs who had rather go to Heaven than they would go to their pulpits again, or to the place where they have been taunted, ridiculed and persecuted. It is the same spirit of disobedience and unbelief. They want to get out of the work and away from the discouragements of it and so they say they would like to go Home. I knew a man a little while ago—and he who tells the tale knows by experience the truth of it—I knew a man who, thinking of his own responsibility and of the solemn work which lay upon him, having met with some rough words and being somewhat cast down, wished to go to Heaven.

And he has been ashamed of himself ever since, for he thought within himself—what business had he the first time he met with an enemy, to say to his Captain, “Please let me go home.” We have read this last week some excellent stories of valiant men. There are a few instances that ought perhaps to be told for our encouragement. There was a certain officer in a certain battle, which we need not mention, but which ought to be called forever, “The Battle of the Spurs.” This gentleman, finding there was no chance, rode as quickly as he could to Washington to say it was a mistake. Yes, of course that is what he went for. He was not at all afraid. Of course he did not return home, because he did not like the look of the campaign, or thought there might be a chance of his being cut down.

Perhaps that was not the reason. Perhaps he was a very brave man and so he showed his back to the enemy, thinking that the back alone of so brave a man would be enough to confound his foes. Perhaps that was it. And perhaps that may be the reason why you and I want to go to Heaven when we get a little uncomfortable. But to tell you the truth, I suspect it was abominable cowardice. And I suspect it is the same with you and with me. We get cowardly and afraid of the world lest its opposition stain our pride—afraid of Satan—whom it is our duty to resist. And tender of the flesh which it is our great duty to mortify and not to pamper. And withal we are distrustful of God as our Helper. It is then we fretfully say, “Let us go to Heaven.”

Fancy Martin Luther talking like that! Melancthon did it once, but Martin Luther said, “No, no, Melancthon, you are not going to Heaven yet. I will not have it,” and down he went and prayed while Melancthon said, “Let me die, Luther.” But Luther said, “No, we want you and you are not to be let off yet, you must stand in the thick of the battle till the fight changes and victory is ours.” Thus, to wish to get away from our appointed place of trial and conflict, because of discouragements, is wrong in the extreme.

And there are some —I would not speak severely but truthfully—some there are who want to go to Heaven, *to get away from the Lord’s will on earth*. They have had so much pain, that they would like to be released from it. We cannot, we will not, blame them. If we had the same sufferings, we should have the same desire. But yet does it not sometimes amount to this, “Father, I see the cup is there and I know I ought to drink

it, but if the cup cannot pass from me, let me pass away from it”? Does it not sometimes amount to this, “This furnace is very hot, Lord, take me out of it to Heaven at once”? Does it not come to this, “Lord, You have tried me so sorely. I do not like these trials. I have an objection to Your will and I should like to be removed from the necessity of enduring it”?

Such people never do die, remember, for years afterwards—because the Lord knows they are not fit to die. When we want to die to get away from our pains, we generally keep on living. But when we are able to say, “Well, let it be as He wills. I would be glad to be rid of pain, but I would be content to bear it if it is God’s will,” then patience has had her perfect work and it often happens that the Lord says, “It is well, My child—your will is My will and now it is My will that you should be with Me where I am.”

And now, bear with me patiently while I try to show when such a desire as this is not only undeserving of censure, but truly praiseworthy, exceedingly commendable and eminently to be desired. Brothers and Sisters, if you long to go to Heaven *because you are conscious of your daily sins and want to be rid of them*—if, seeing your perpetual mistakes, transgressions and iniquities, you are saying—

***“Sin, my worst enemy before,  
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more;  
My inward foes shall all be slain,  
Nor Satan break my peace again”—***

it is a good desire, for to be perfectly holy is an aspiration worthy of the best of men. You may—I am sure you will—in the thought that you shall be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing say, “Jesus, make no tarrying, but quickly take Your servant to Yourself.”

Suppose, again, that you wish to serve God better than you do and you say, “Oh, my Master, I cannot serve You here as I would. I would like to be removed to Heaven that I might serve You day and night in Your temple, that I might fly on Your errands, sing Your praises without ceasing and adore You before Your face with raptures here unknown.” Then, inasmuch as it is a proper thing for the servant of God to desire to be a better servant and a more faithful and obedient steward, it must be right and proper for him to long to be conformed unto his Master’s image, that he may serve his Master without imperfection.

Oh, methinks, Brethren, this should be one of the strongest reasons to make us long to get from this world and gain the promised home.  
Again, when you and I have been at the Lord’s Table, or in some service where we have had great enjoyment, we have gone home singing in our hearts—  
***“Now I have tasted of the grapes, I sometimes long to go  
Where my dear Lord the vineyard keeps,  
And all the clusters grow.”***  
You have had the earnest and you want to have the whole of the redemption money. You have tasted of Eschol’s grapes and you want to go and live in the land that flows with milk and honey. If you did not want to go, it would be as strange as it would be wicked.  
Oh Jesus! When we have sipped Your love, we have longed to bathe in it. When we have tasted some of Heaven’s dewdrops, we have longed to drink of the river of God that is full of water. When we have come up some of the lower knolls of the hill, we have panted to climb the mountain’s summit and stand where God dwells in the high places of eternity— ***“Hopeless of joy is anything below,  
We only long to soar,  
The fullness of His love to feel,  
And lose His smile no more.  
His hand, with all the gentle power,  
The sweet constraint of love,  
Has drawn us from this restless world,  
And fixed our hearts above.”***  
Such earnests make us pant for Heaven and it cannot be wrong if such is the case.  
Again, when you have had near fellowship with Christ—when you have *seen His face and leaned your head upon His bosom—*it would indeed be a strange thing if you did not wish to be with Him where He is. I would not believe that a woman loved her husband if she never cared for his society. The affianced one has seen her betrothed husband but for a moment and she wishes to see him again and longs for the time when they shall never part again. And so the heart that is affianced to Christ longs to be happy, pants for His embrace and to sit with Him at the marriage supper. If I were to compare Christ with wine, I would say He is such wine that the more you drink, the more you long to drink.  
If I compare Him to food—though He stops one hunger He gives us another. Oh, I think that was a splendid thought of Rutherford’s, when, having floated upon the river of Christ’s fellowship, he said—“Oh, that my ship would sink and founder in the sea! Oh, that it would go down till forty fathoms of His love should reach over the mast head of my highest thoughts! Oh, to be swallowed up in Christ—to be lost in Him—as the ray is lost in the sun and the drop in the sea!” If you did not long for this it would be a shame indeed! If you did not long to see His face it would seem as though you had no love for Him and would never be conformed in His image.  
Brethren, I shall say no more, except to put these few thoughts together. You are a child—he is not a loving child that does not wish to see his father’s face. How some of us used to long for the holidays! We used to make a little almanac and put down the days and mark them off one by one. Six weeks before the time, we would begin to count how many days there were and every morning we would say there was one day less before we went home. Either he is a bad child—or he has got a bad father—that does not want to go home. Now we have got a good and blessed Father and I hope He has made us His true children and we want to see His face.  
We long for the time when we shall no longer be under tutors and governors, but shall come home to enjoy the inheritance. Brethren, we are also laborers. It were a strange thing if the laborer did not wish to achieve the end of his toils. It were indeed a strange thing if, industrious though he is, he did not prefer the end of his toils to the beginning. It were contrary to nature and I think contrary to grace, if the farmer did not long for the harvest and if he that toils did not desire to receive the reward. We are not only laborers, Brethren, but mariners—mariners that are often tempest-tossed.  
The sails are rent to shreds. The timbers are creaking. The ship drives along before the blast—who does not want to get into port? Which man among you does not desire to say—“See, the harbor is near. Lo, the red lights!” Who among you would not wish to cast anchor now and say, “I have passed the floods and now I am come to my desired havens”? Brethren, we are not only mariners but pilgrims—pilgrims of the weary foot, having here no continuing city. Who does not want to get to his home?— ***“Home, home, sweet home!  
There’s no place like home!”***  
Heaven is my home and there is no place like Heaven! No, if you put me in a palace it is not my home. No, though the world were at my feet, it were not my home. Home! Home! Who will not long for home?  
And last, what soldier does not long for victory? He would not still the fight, but he wishes it were triumphantly over. He does not turn his back, but breasting the foe he marches on with deadly tramp, with bayonet fixed, keeping the line, till, going over the dead bodies of his enemies, at last he reaches the camp, takes it by storm and puts the banner of his country where once waved the standard of his foe. What Roman soldier did not anticipate the triumph, Brethren? What Roman cohort lid not expect to join in the triumphal procession? What commander did not aspire to the vote of thanks at the capitol?  
Let us then pant for home. It is the end of the battle. It is the reward of victory. Let us not long for Heaven to escape from the fight, but as a victory that is the result of it. And now what say you? Do you say—

***“To Jesus, the crown of my hope,***

***My soul is in haste to be gone?”***  
Oh, some of you can say it. God grant you your desire. May you find the promised rest when God’s time shall come. And I would say for myself—I would say for you—“Oh, God, in Your own time come quickly—come quickly—come, Lord Jesus!”

How different the feelings of those of you who have no Heaven hereafter! To you Death is a chasm and there is no hope to bridge it! It is dread without a promise. It is despair without an end! Sinner, pray God that you may not die. Think not of dying, Man, for if your troubles are great here they will be greater hereafter. He that commits suicide to get out of trouble leaps into the gulf to escape from the water—drowns himself to prevent himself from getting wet. He leaps into the fire because he is scorched.

Do it not, do it not. He that kills himself goes with his hands red with blood before his Maker and goes there to his own damnation. But, Soul, since you are yet alive may God teach you to confess your sins and to seek for mercy. Remember it is to be had for he that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Trust Christ with your soul. He is worthy of your confidence. He will keep you and will “present you faultless before His Father’s presence with exceeding great joy.”

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THE GREAT ASSIZE  
NO. 1076

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 25, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done,  
whether it is good or bad.”  
2 Corinthians 5:10.~~***

THIS morning we preached [ **THE RESURRECION CREDIBLE, #1067**] concerning the resurrection of the dead and it seems consistent with order to carry forward our thoughts, this evening, to that which follows immediately after the resurrection, namely, the general judgment, for the dead rise on purpose that they may be judged in their bodies. The Resurrection is the immediate prelude to the Judgment. There is no need that I try to prove to you from Scripture that there will be a general judgment, for the Word of God abounds with proof-passages. You have them in the Old Testament. You find David anticipating that great assize in the Psalms (especially in such as the 49th, 50th, 96th and the three that follow the 96th), for most assuredly the Lord comes—He comes to judge the earth in righteousness.

Very solemnly and very tenderly does Solomon, in the Ecclesiastes, warn the young man that let him rejoice as he may and cheer his heart in the days of his youth for all these things God will bring him into judgment, for God will judge every secret thing. Daniel in the night visions beholds the Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven and drawing near to the Ancient of Days. Then He sits upon the Throne of Judgment and the nations are gathered before Him. It was no new doctrine to the Jews— it was received and accepted by them as a most certain fact that there would be a day in which God would judge the earth in righteousness.

The New Testament is very express. The 25th of Matthew which we read to you just now, contains language which could not possibly be more clear and definite, from the lips of the Savior Himself. He is the faithful Witness and cannot lie. You are told that before Him will be gathered all nations and He shall divide them, the one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Other passages there are in abundance, as, for instance, the one that is now before us, which is plain enough. Another we might quote is in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the first chapter, from the 7th to the 10th verse.

Let us read it, “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

The book of the Revelation is very graphic in its depicting that last general judgment. Turn to the 20th chapter, at the 11th and 12th verses. The Seer of Patmos says, “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Time would fail me to refer you to all the Scriptures. It is asserted over and over again by the Holy Spirit, whose word is Truth, that there will be a judgment of the quick and of the dead.

Beside that direct testimony, it should be remembered there is a cogent argument that so it must be from the very fact that God is just as the Ruler over men. In all human governments there must be an assize held. Government cannot be conducted without its days of session and of trial, and, inasmuch as there is evidently sin and evil in this world, it might be fairly anticipated that there would be a time when God will go on circuit and when He will call the prisoners before Him and the guilty shall receive their condemnation. Judge for yourselves—is this present state the conclusion of all things? If so, what evidence would you cite of Divine justice in the teeth of the fact that the best of men are often in this world the poorest and the most afflicted, while the worst of men acquire wealth, practice oppression, and receive homage from the crowd?

Who are they that ride in the high places of the earth? Are they not those great transgressors who, “wade through slaughter to a throne and shut the gates of mercy on mankind”? Where are the servants of God? They are in obscurity and suffering full often. Do they not sit like Job among the ashes, subjects of little pity, objects of much upbraiding? And where are the enemies of God? Do not many of them wear purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day? If there is no hereafter, then Dives has the best of it and the selfish man who fears not God is, after all, the wisest of men and more to be commended than his fellows!

But it cannot be so. Our common sense revolts against the thought! There must be another state in which these anomalies will all be rectified. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable,” says the Apostle. The best of men were driven to the worst of straits in those persecuting times for being God’s servants. What do you say, then? Finis coronat opus, the end crowns the work? That cannot be the final issue of life, or Justice itself were frustrated. There must be a *restitution* for those who suffer unjustly—there must be a punishment for the wicked and the oppressor! Not only may this be affirmed from a general sense of justice, but there is in the conscience of most men, if not of all, an assent to this fact.

As an old Puritan says, “God holds a petty session in every man’s conscience which is the earnest of the assize which He will hold by and by, for almost all men judge themselves and their conscience knows this to be wrong and that to be right. I say ‘almost all,’ for there seems to be in this generation a race of men who have so stultified their conscience that the spark appears to have gone out and they put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. The lie they seem to approve, but the truth they do not recognize. But let conscience alone and do not stupefy her and you shall find her bearing witness that there is a Judge of all the earth who must do right.”

Now this is peculiarly the case when conscience is allowed full play. Men who are busy about their work or entertained with their pleasures often keep their consciences quiet. As John Bunyan puts it, they shut up Mr. Conscience; they blind his windows; they barricade his doors—and as for the great bell on the top of the house which the old gentleman was apt to ring, they cut the rope of it so that he cannot get at it—for they do not wish him to disturb the town of Mansoul. But when death comes it often happens that Mr. Conscience escapes from his prison, and then, I assure you, he will make such a din that there is not a sleeping head in all Mansoul! He will cry out and avenge himself for his constrained silence and make the man know that there is a something within him not quite dead which cries out, still, for justice and that sin cannot go unpunished.

There must be a judgment, then. Scripture asserts it—that should be enough—but by way of collateral evidence the natural order of things requires it and conscience attests it. Now we come to consider what our text says about the Judgment. I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, if I should speak coldly tonight on this momentous Truth of God, or fail to excite your attention and stir your deepest emotions, forgive me! And may God forgive me, for I shall have good reason to ask God’s forgiveness seeing that if ever a topic should arouse the preacher to a zeal for the honor of his Lord and for the welfare of his fellow creatures—and so make him doubly in earnest—it is this.  
But then, permit me to say that if ever there was a theme quite independent of the speaker—which on its *own* account, alone, should command your thoughtfulness—it is that which I now bring before you. I feel no need of oratory or of well-selected speech—the bare mention of the fact that such a judgment is impending and will before long occur might well hold you in breathless silence, still the very throbbing of your pulse and choke the utterance of my lips! The certainty of it, the reality of it, the terrors that accompany it—the impossibility of escaping from it all appeal to us now and demand our vigilance.

**I.**I ask you now, who IS IT, OR WHO ARE THEY THAT WILL HAVE TO APPEAR BEFORE THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT? The answer is plain, it admits of no exemption—“We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” This is very decisive if there were no other text. We must all appear—that is to say, every one of the human race. We must all appear. And that the godly will not be exempted from this appearance is very clear, for the Apostle here is speaking to Christians. He says, “We walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident. We labor,” and so on. And then he puts it, “We must all appear.” So that, beyond all others, it is certain that all *Christians* must appear there.

The text is quite conclusive upon that point. And if we had not that text, we have the passage in Matthew which we have read, in which the sheep are summoned there as certainly as are the goats. And we have the passage in Revelation where all the dead are judged according to the things which are written in the books. They are all there. And if the objection should be raised, “We thought that the sins of the righteous, being pardoned and forever blotted out, they could never come into judgment,” we have only to remind you, Beloved, that if they are so pardoned and blotted out, as they undoubtedly are, the righteous have no reason to *fear* coming into judgment! They are the persons who covet the judgment and will be able to stand there to receive a public acquittal from the mouth of the great Judge.

Who, among us, wishes, as it were, to be smuggled into Heaven unlawfully? Who desires to have it said by the damned in Hell, “You were never tried or else you might have been condemned as we were”? No, Brothers and Sisters, we have a hope that we can stand the trial. The way of righteousness by Christ Jesus enables us to submit ourselves to the most tremendous tests which even that burning day can bring forth! We are not afraid to be put into the balances. We even desire that day when our faith in Jesus Christ is strong and firm, for we say, “Who is he that condemns?” We can challenge the Day of Judgment! Who is he that shall lay anything to our charge in that day, or at any other, since Christ has died and has risen again?

It is necessary that the righteous should be there that there may not be any partiality in the matter whatever—that the thing may be all clear and straight—and that the rewards of the righteous may be seen to be, though of Grace, yet without any violation of the most rigorous justice. Dear Brethren, what a day it will be for the righteous! For some of them were—perhaps some here present are—lying under some very terrible accusation of which they are perfectly guiltless. All will be cleared up, then, and that will be one great blessing of that day. There will be a resurrection of *reputations* as well as of bodies! Men call the righteous fools—then shall they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!

They hounded them to death as not being fit to live. In early ages they laid to the Christians charges of the most terrible character which I should count it shame to mention. But then they will all be clear—and those of whom the world was not worthy, who were driven and hunted about and made to dwell in the caves of the earth—they shall come forth as worthy ones and the world shall know her true aristocracy, earth shall own her true nobility! The men whose names she cast out as evil shall, then, be held in great repute, for they shall stand out clear and transparent without spot or blemish! It is well that there should be a trial for the righteous, for the clearing of them, the vindication of them and that it should be public, defying the ridicule and criticism of all mankind. “We must all appear.”

What a vast assembly, what a prodigious gathering, that of the entire human race! It struck me as I was meditating upon this subject, what would be the thoughts of Father Adam as he stood there with Mother Eve and looked upon his offspring? It will be the first time in which he has ever had the opportunity of seeing all his children met together. What a sight will he then behold—far stretching, covering all the globe which they inhabit, enough not only to people all earth’s plains, but crown her hilltops and cover even the waves of the sea, so numberless must the human race be if all the generations that have ever lived, or shall ever live, shall at once rise from the dead! Oh, what a sight that will be!

Is it too marvelous for our imagination to picture? Yet it is quite certain that the assemblage will be mustered and the spectacle will be beheld. Everyone from before the Flood, from the days of the Patriarchs, from the times of David, from the Babylonian kingdom—all the legions of Assyria, all the hosts of Persia, all the phalanx of the Greeks, all the vast armies and legions of Rome, the barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, the free, men of every color and of every tongue—they shall all stand in that great day before the Judgment Seat of Christ! There come the kings—no greater than the men they call their slaves! There come the princes—but they have doffed their coronets, for they must stand like common flesh and blood!

Here come the judges to be judged, themselves, and the advocates and barristers needing an advocate on their own account. Here come those that thought themselves too good and kept the street to themselves. There are the Pharisees, hustled by the Publicans on either side and sunk down to the natural level with them! Mark the peasants rising from the soil! See the teeming myriads from outside the great cities streaming in, countless hosts such as no Alexander or Napoleon ever beheld! See how the servant is as great as his master! “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” are now proclaimed. No kings, no princes, no nobles can shelter themselves behind their order or assert a privilege or claim an immunity. Alike on one common level they all stand together to be tried before the last tremendous tribunal!

There shall come the wicked of every sort. Proud Pharaoh shall be there! Senacherib the haughty! Herod, who would have slain the young Child. Judas, who betrayed his Master. Demas, that sold Him for gold, and Pilate, who would gladly have washed his hands in innocence. There shall come the long list of infallibles—the whole line of popes—to receive their damnation at the Almighty’s hands! And the priests that trod upon the necks of nations and the tyrants that used the priests as their tools— they shall come to receive the thunderbolts of God which they so richly deserve! Oh, what a scene it will be! These little companies which look to us so large when they are gathered together beneath this roof, how do they shrink into the drop of a bucket as compared with the ocean of life that shall swell around the Throne at the last great Judgment Day! They shall all be there.

Now, the most important thought connected with this, to me, is that *I* shall be there! To you young men, that *you* will be there. To you, you aged of every sort, that *you*, in propria persona—each one shall be there. Are you rich? Your dainty dress shall be put off. Are you poor? Your rags shall not exempt you from attendance at that court. None shall say, “I am too obscure.” You must come up from that hiding place. None shall say, “I am too public.” You must come down from that pedestal. Everyone must be there. Note the word, “We.” “*We* must all appear.” And still further note the word, “Appear.” “We must all *appear*.” No disguise will be possible. You cannot come there dressed in masquerade of profession or attired in robes of State! We must appear—we must be seen through, must be displayed, must be revealed! Off will come your garments and your spirit will be judged of God, not after appearance, but according to the inward heart.

Oh, what a day that will be when every man shall see himself and every man shall see his fellow, and the eyes of angels and the eyes of devils and the eyes of God upon the Throne shall see us through and through! Let these thoughts dwell upon your minds while you take this for the answer to our first enquiry, who is to be judged?

**II.**Our second question is, WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE? “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” That Christ should be appointed Judge of all mankind is most proper and fitting. Our British law ordains that a man shall be tried by his peers and there is justice in the statute. Now the Lord God will judge men, but at the same time it will be in the Person of Jesus Christ the Man. Men shall be judged by a Man. He that was once judged by men shall judge men.

Jesus knows what man should be—He has been under the Law Himself in deep humility. He can hold the scales of justice evenly for He has stood in man’s place and bore and braved man’s temptations. He therefore is the most fit Judge that could be selected. I have sometimes heard and read sermons in which the preacher said that a Christian ought to rejoice that his Judge is his Friend. There may be no impropriety intended, still, it seems to me rather a questionable suggestion. I should not like to put it in that way, myself, because any judge that was partial to his friends when he sat on the judgment seat would deserve to come off the seat immediately! As a Judge I expect no favoritism from Christ. I expect when He sits there He will deal out even-handed justice to all. I cannot see how it is right for any minister to hold it forth that we should find encouragement in the Judge being our Friend.

Friend or no Friend, we shall go in for a fair trial, every one of us, and Christ will not be a respecter of persons. Of Him whom God has appointed to judge the world, it shall not be said, when the assize is over, that He winked at the crimes of some and extenuated them, while He searched out the faults of others and convicted them. He will be fair and upright throughout. He is our Friend, I grant you, and He will be our Friend and Savior forever! But, as a Judge we must keep to the thought and believe and maintain it that He will be impartial to all the sons of men. You will have a fair trial. He that will judge you will not take sides against you.

We have sometimes thought that men have been shielded from the punishment they deserved because they were of a certain clerical profession or because they occupied a certain official position. A poor laborer who kills his wife shall be hanged, but when another man of superior station does the same deed of violence and stains his hands with the blood of her whom he had vowed to love and cherish, the capital sentence shall not be executed upon him. Everywhere we see in the world that with the best intentions Justice somehow or other does squint a little. Even in this country there is just the slightest possible turning of the scale and God grant that may be cured before long! I do not think it is intentional and I hope the nation will not long have to complain about it. There ought to be the same justice for the poorest beggar that crawls into a casual ward as for his lordship that owns the broadest acres in all England.

Before the Law, at least, all men ought to stand equal. So shall it be with the Judge of all the earth. Fiat justitia, ruat caelum. Christ will by all means hold the scales even. You shall have a fair trial and a full trial, too. There shall be no concealment of anything in your favor and no keeping back of anything against you. No witnesses shall be borne across the sea to keep them out of the way. They shall all be there and all testimony shall be there—and all that is needed to condemn or to acquit shall be produced in full court at that trial—and therefore it will be a final trial. From that court there will be no appeal. If Christ says, “Cursed!” cursed must they be forever. If Christ says, “Blessed!” blessed shall they be forever.

Well, this is what we have to expect, then, to stand before the Throne of the Man, Christ Jesus the Son of God, and there to be judged.  
**III.**Now the third point is, WHAT WILL BE THE RULE OF JUDGMENT? The text says, “that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it is good or bad.” Then it would appear that our actions will be taken in evidence at the last. Not our profession, not our boasts, but our *actions* will be taken in evidence at the last, and every man shall receive according to what he has done in the body. That implies that everything done by us in this body will be known. It is all recorded—it will be all brought to light. Therefore, in that day every secret sin will be published.  
What was done in the chamber—what was hidden by the darkness shall be published as upon the housetop—every secret thing. With great care you have concealed it—most dexterously you have covered it up—but it shall be brought out to your own astonishment to form a part of your judgment. There, hypocritical actions as well as secret sins will be laid bare. The Pharisee who devoured the widow’s house and made a long prayer will find that widow’s house brought against him and the long prayer, too, for the long prayer will then be understood as having been a long lie against God from beginning to end! Oh, how fine we can make some things look with the aid of paint and varnish and gilt! But at the last day off will come the varnish and veneer, and the true metal, the real substance will then be seen.  
When it is said that everything that is done in the body will be brought up as evidence against us or for us, remember this includes every omission as well as every commission—for that which is not done that ought to have been done is as greatly sinful as the doing of that which ought not to be done. Did you not notice, when we were reading that 25th chapter of Matthew, how those on the left hand were condemned, not for what they did, but for what they did *not* do—“I was hungry and you gave Me no meat: I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink”? Where would some of you stand, according to this rule, who have lived in neglect of holiness, and neglect of faith, and neglect of repentance before all your days?  
Think, I pray you! Recollect, too, that all our words will be brought up. For every idle word that man shall speak he will have to give an account. And all our thoughts, too, for these lie at the bottom of our actions and give the true color to them, good or bad. Our motives, our sins of the heart—especially our hatred of Christ, our neglect of the Gospel, our unbelief—all of these shall be read aloud and published unreservedly. “Well,” says one, “who, then, can be saved?” Ah, indeed, who then can be saved? Let me tell you who.  
There will come forward those who have believed in Jesus, and albeit they have many sins to which they might well plead guilty, they will be able to say, “Great God, You did provide for us a Substitute and You did say that if we would accept Him He should be a Substitute for us and take our sins upon Himself. And by Your Grace we did accept Him and our sins were laid on Him, and we have now no sins—they have been transferred from us to the great Savior, Substitute and Sacrifice.”  
And in that day there will be none who can put in an objection to that plea. It will hold good, for God has said, “Whoever believes on Christ Jesus shall never be condemned.” Then will the actions of the righteous, the gracious actions, be brought forth to prove that they had faith. For that faith which never evidences itself by good works is a dead faith and a faith that will never save a soul. Now, if the dying thief were brought up, he would say, “My sins were laid on Jesus.” “Yes, but how about your good works? You must have some evidence of your faith,” Satan might reply. Then would the recording angel say, “The dying thief said to his fellow thief who was dying with him, ‘Why are you railing?’ In his last moments he did what he could—he rebuked the thief that was dying with him and made a good confession of his Lord. *There* was the evidence of the sincerity of his faith.”  
Dear Hearer, will there be any evidence of the sincerity of *your* faith? If your faith has no evidence before the Lord, what will you do? Suppose you thought you had a faith and went on drinking. Suppose you did as I know some have done here—go straight from this place into the public house? Or suppose you joined the Christian Church and remained a drunk? Yes, and women have done that also as well as men. Suppose you professed to have faith in Christ and yet cheated in your weights and measures and common dealings? Do you think that God will never require these things at your hands? Oh, Sirs, if you are no better than other men in your conduct, you are no better than other men in your character—and you will stand no better than other men on the Judgment Day!  
If your actions are not superior to theirs, you may profess what you will about your faith but you are deceived, and as deceivers, you will be discovered at the Last Great Day. If grace does not make us differ from other men, it is not the Divine Grace which God gives His elect. We are not perfect, but all God’s saints keep their eyes on the great Standard of perfection, and with strong desire, aim to walk worthy of their high calling of God and to bring forth works which prove that they love God. And if we have not these signs following faith, or if they are not put in as evidence for us at the Last Great Day, we shall not be able to prove our faith.  
Oh, you who have no faith in Christ, no faith in Jesus the Substitute— that terrible negative, that treacherous unbelief of yours will be a condemning sin against you! It will be proof positive that you hated God, for a man must hate God, indeed, who will spurn His counsels, give no heed to His reproof, scorn His Grace and dare the vengeance of Him who points out the way of escape and the path that leads to life! He that will not be saved by God’s mercy proves that he hates the God of Mercy! If God gives His own Son to die and men will not trust in His Son, will not have Him as their Savior—that one sin, if they had no other—would at once prove that they were enemies of God and black at heart.  
But if your faith is in Jesus. If you love Jesus. If your heart goes out to Jesus. If your life is influenced by Jesus. If you make Him your Example as well as your Savior, there will be evidence—you cannot see it, but there will be evidence—in your favor. For notice those gracious things, when the evidence was brought, and Christ said, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat—thirsty and you gave Me drink,” they said, “O Lord, we never knew this.” Should any man stand up here and say, “I have plenty of evidence to prove my faith,” I would reply, “Hold your tongue, Sir! Hold your tongue! I am afraid you have no faith at all or you would not be talking about your evidence.”  
But if you are saying, “Oh, I am afraid I have not the evidence that will stand me in good stead at the last,” yet if all the while you have been feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, and doing all you can for Christ, I would tell you not to be afraid. The Master will find witnesses to say, “That man relieved me when I was in poverty. He knew I was one of Christ’s and he came and helped me.” And another will come and say (perhaps it will be an angel), “I saw him when he was alone in his chamber and heard him pray for his enemies.”  
And the Lord will say, “I read his heart when I saw how he put up with rebuke, and slander, and persecution, and would not make any answer for My sake. He did it all as evidence that My Grace was in his heart.” You will not have to fetch up the witnesses—the Judge will call them, for He knows all about your case—and as He calls up the witnesses, you will be surprised to find how even the ungodly will be obliged to consent to the just salvation of the righteous. Oh, how the secret deeds and the true heart-sincerity of the righteous, when thus unveiled, will make devils bite their tongues in wrath to think that there was so much of Grace given to the sons of men with which to defeat persecution, to overcome temptation and to follow on in obedience to the Lord!  
Oh yes, the deeds, the deeds, the deeds of men—not their prating, not their profession, not their talk, but their *deeds,* (though nobody shall be saved by the *merits* of his deeds)—their deeds shall be the *evidence* of their Grace, or their deeds shall be the evidence of their *unbelief.* And so, by their works shall they stand before the Lord, or by their works shall they be condemned as evidence and nothing more.  
**IV.**Now the last point is this—WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF THIS JUDGMENT? Will sentence of acquittal and condemnation be given and then the whole thing be over? Far from it! The judgment is with a view to the thereafter—“That every man may receive the things done in his body.” The Lord will grant unto His people an abundant reward for all that they have done. Not that they *deserve* any reward since God first *gave* them Divine Grace to *do* good works—then took those good works as evidence of a renewed heart—and then gave them a reward for what they had done!  
Oh, what a bliss it will be to hear it said, “Well done, good and faithful servant”—to you that have worked for Christ when nobody knew it to find that Christ took stock of it all—to you that served the Lord under misrepresentation to find that the Lord Jesus cleared the chaff away from the wheat and knew that you were one of His precious ones. For Him, then, to say, “Enter into the joy of your Lord,” oh, what a bliss will it be to you! But to the ungodly, how terrible! They are to receive the things that they have done, that is to say, the punishment due—not every man alike, but the greater sinner the greater doom.  
To the man who sinned against light a greater damnation than to the man who had not the same light—Sodom and Gomorrah their place; Tyre and Sidon their place and then to Capernaum and Bethsaida their place of more intolerable torment because they had the Gospel and rejected it— so the Lord Himself tells us. And the punishment will not only be meted out in proportion to the transgression, but it will be a development of the evil actions done in the evil consequences to be endured, as every man shall eat the fruit of his own ways. Sin, after the natural order, ripens into sorrow. This is not a blind fate, but it is the operation of a Divine Law, wise and invariable. Oh, how dreadful it will be for the malicious man to have to forever gnaw his own envious heart—to find his malice come home to him as birds come home to roost—to hoot forever in his own soul!  
How terrible for the lustful man to feel lust burning in every vein which he can never gratify—for the drunk to have a thirst which not even a drop of water can allay—for the glutton who has fared sumptuously every day, to be in perpetual hunger. How excruciating for the soul that has been wrathful to be forever wrathful with the fire of wrath forever burning like a volcano in his soul! And the rebel against God forever a rebel, cursing God whom he cannot touch and finding his curses coming back upon himself! There is no punishment worse than for a man who is sinfully disposed to gratify his lusts, to satiate his bad propensities and to multiply and fatten his vices. Only let men grow into what they would be and then see what they would be like!  
Last Saturday, it may be, there were half-a-dozen broken heads and wives and children were in one general skirmish. Keep those people together—let their vigor continue unimpaired by age or decay while they keep on developing their characters. Why, they would be worse than a herd of tigers! Let them give way to their rage and anger, with nothing to check their passions. Let miserly, greedy people forever go on with their greed. It makes them miserable here, but let these things be indulged in forever and what worse Hell do you need? Oh, sin is Hell and holiness is Heaven! Men will receive the things done in their body.  
If God has made them love Him, they shall go on to love Him. If God has made them trust Him, they shall go on to trust in Him. If God has made them to be like Christ, they shall go on to be like Christ and they shall receive the things done in their body as a reward. But if a man has lived in sin, “he that is filthy shall be filthy still.” He that has been unbelieving shall be unbelieving still. This, then, shall be the worm that never dies and the fire which never shall be quenched, to which shall be added the wrath of God forever and forever! Oh, that we may have Grace, every one of us, to flee to Christ!  
He is our only safety! Simple faith in Jesus is the basis for the character which will evidence at last that you are chosen of God! A simple belief in the merits of the Lord Jesus, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, is the rocky foundation upon which shall be built up, by the same Divine hands, the character which shall evidence that the kingdom was prepared for us from before the foundations of the world! God work in us such a character, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 28, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead.”  
2 Corinthians 5:14.~~***

THE Apostle and his brethren were unselfish in all that they did. He could say of himself and of his brethren that when they varied their modes of action they always had the same objective in view—they lived only to promote the cause of Christ and to bless the souls of men. He says, “Whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we are sober, it is for your cause.” Some may have said that Paul was too excitable and expressed himself too strongly. “Well,” he said, “if it is so, it is to God.” Others may have noticed the reasoning faculty to be exceedingly strong in Paul and may, perhaps, have thought him to be too coolly argumentative. “But,” said Paul, “if we are sober, it is for your cause.” Viewed from some points the Apostle and his co-laborers must have appeared to be raving fanatics, engaged upon a Quixotic enterprise and almost, if not quite, out of their minds.

One who had heard the Apostle tell the story of his conversion exclaimed, “Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning does make you mad,” and no doubt many who saw the singular change in his conduct and knew what he had given up and what he endured for his new faith had come to the same conclusion. Paul would not be at all offended by this judgment, for he would remember that his Lord and Master had been charged with madness and that even our Lord’s relatives had said, “He is beside Himself.” To Festus he had replied, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

And to Corinthian objectors he gave a still fuller reply. Blessed are they who are charged with being out of their mind through zeal for the cause of Jesus! They have a more than sufficient answer when they can say, “If we are beside ourselves, it is to God.” It is no unusual thing for madmen to think others mad and no strange thing for a mad world to accuse the only morally sane among men of being fools and lunatics! But Wisdom is justified of her children. If others assailed the Apostle with another charge and insinuated that there was a method in his madness—that his being all things to all men showed an excess of prudence—and was no doubt a means to an end, which end it is possible they hinted at was a desire for power, he could reply most conclusively, “If we are sober, it is for your cause.”

Paul had acted so unselfishly that he could appeal to the Corinthian Church and ask them to bear him witness that he sought not theirs but them. And that if he had judged their disorders with great sobriety it was for their cause. Whatever he did, or felt, or suffered, or spoke, he had but one design in it—the Glory of God in the perfecting of Believers and the

salvation of sinners. Every Christian minister ought to be able to use the Apostle’s words without the slightest reserve. Yes, and every Christian should be able to say the same—“If I am excited, it is in defense of the Truth of God. If I am sober, it is for the maintenance of holiness. If I seem extravagant, it is because the name of Jesus stirs my inmost soul—and if I am moderate in spirit and thoughtful in mood—it is that I may in the wisest manner subserve the interests of my Redeemer’s kingdom.”

God grant that weeping or singing, anxious or hopeful, victorious or defeated, increasing or decreasing, elevated or depressed we may still follow our one design and devote ourselves to the holy cause! May we live to see Churches made up of people who are all set on one thing and may those Churches have ministers who are fit to lead such a people because they, also, are mastered by the same sacred purpose. May the fire which fell of old on Carmel fall on our altar, whereon lies the sacrifice, wetted a second and a third time from the salt sea of the world, until it shall consume the burnt sacrifice and the wood, the stones and the dust—and lick up the water that is in the trench. Then will all the people see it and fall upon their faces, and cry, “The Lord! He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

The Apostle now goes on to tell us why it was that the whole conduct of himself and his co-laborers tended to one end and objective. He says, “The love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then the all died.” I give you here as exact a translation as I can. Two things I shall note in the text—first, under constraint. Secondly, under constraint which his understanding justified.

**I.**Our main point will come under the head, “UNDER CONSTRAINT. Here is the Apostle, a man who was born free, a man who beyond all others enjoyed the greatest spiritual liberty—glorying that he is under constraint! He was under constraint because a great force held him under its power. “The love of Christ constrains us.” I suppose, “constrains us,” is about the best rendering of the passage that could be given, but it might be translated, “*re*strains.” The love of Christ *re*strains true Believers from self-seeking and forbids them to pursue any objective but the highest. Whether they were beside themselves or sober, the early saints yielded to Divine restraint, even as a good ship answers to her helm or as a horse obeys the rein.

They were not without a restraining force to prevent the slightest subjection to impure motives. The love of Christ *controlled* them and held them under its power. But the word, “restrained,” only expresses a *part* of the sense, for it means that he was, “coerced or pressed,” and so impelled forward as one carried along by pressure. All around him the love of Christ pressed upon him as the water in a river presses upon a swimmer and bears him onward with its stream. Bengel, who is a great authority, reads it, “Keeps us employed,” for we are led to diligence, urged to zeal, maintained in perseverance and carried forward and onward by the love of Jesus Christ. The Apostles labored much, but all their labor sprang from the impulse of the love of Jesus Christ.

Just as Jacob toiled for Rachel solely out of love to her, so do true saints serve the Lord Jesus under the Omnipotent constraint of love. One eminent expositor reads the word, “constrains us,” as though it signified that the Lord’s servants were kept together and held as a band under a banner or standard. And he very appropriately refers to the words of the Church in the Song of Songs, “His banner over me was love.” As soldiers are held together by rallying to the standard, so are the saints kept to the work and service of their Lord by the love of Christ which constrains them to endure all things for the elect’s sake and for the Glory of God—and like an ensign—is lifted high as the center and loadstone of all their energies. In our Lord’s love we have the best motive for loyalty, the best reason for energy and the best argument for perseverance!

The word may also signify, “compressed,” and then it would mean that all their energies were pressed into one channel and made to move by the love of Christ. Can I put restraint and constraint, and all the rest, into one by grouping them in a figure? I think I can. When a flood is spread over an expanse of meadow land and stands in shallow pools, men *re*strain it by damming it up—and they *con*strain it to keep to one channel by banking it in! Thus compressed it becomes a stream and moves with force in one direction. See how it quickens its pace! See what strength it gathers! It turns yonder wheel of the mill, makes a sheep wash, leaps as a waterfall, runs laughing through a village as a brook where the cattle stand in the summer’s sun. Growing all the while, it develops into a river, bearing boats and little ships! And this done, it still increases and stays not till it flows with mighty flood into the great sea.

The love of Christ had pressed Paul’s energies into one force, turned them into one channel and then driven them forward with a wonderful force till he and his fellows had become a mighty power for good—always active and energetic. “The love of Christ,” he says, “constrains us.” All great lives have been under the constraint of some mastering principle. A man who is everything by turns and nothing long, is a nobody! A man who wastes life on whims and fancies, leisure and pleasures, never achieves anything! He flits over the surface of life and leaves no more trace upon his age than a bird upon the sky. But a man, even for mischief, becomes great when he becomes *concentrated*.

What made the young prince of Macedon, Alexander the Great, but the absorption of his whole mind in the desire for conquest? The man was never happy when he was at ease and in peace. His best days were spent on the battlefield or on the march. Let him rush to the front of the battle and make the common soldier grow into a hero by observing the desperate valor of his king—and then you see the greatness of the man! He could never have been the conqueror of the world if the insatiable greed of conquest had not constrained him. From this come your Caesars and your Napoleons—they are whole men in their ambition, subject to the lust of dominion.

When you carry this thought into a better and holier sphere, the same fact is clear. Howard could never have been the great philanthropist if he had not been strangely under the witchery of love to prisoners. He was more happy in a hospital or in a prison than he would have been at Court or on the sofa of the drawing room. The man could not help visiting jails— he was a captive to his sympathy for men in bondage—and so he spent his life in seeking their good. Look at such a man as Whitfield or his associate, Wesley. Those men had but one thought and that was to win souls for Christ—their whole being ran into the one riverbed of zeal for God and made them full and strong as the rushing Rhone. It was their rest to labor for Christ! It was their honor to be pelted while preaching and to be maligned for the name of Jesus! A bishopric and a seat in the House of Lords would have been the death of them! Even a throne would have been a rack if they must have ceased hunting for souls.

The men were under the dominion of a passion which they could not withstand and did not wish to weaken. They could sing***—  
“The love of Christ does me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men!  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the fiery wave.”***

Their whole life, being, thought, faculty, spirit, soul and body became one and indivisible in purpose. And their sanctified manhood was driven forward irresistibly so that they might be likened to thunderbolts flung from the eternal hand which must go forward till their end is reached. They could no more cease to preach than the sun could cease shining or reverse his course in the heavens!

This kind of constraint implies no compulsion and involves no bondage. It is the highest order of freedom, for when a man does exactly what he likes to do, if he wants to express the enthusiastic joy and delight with which he follows his pursuit, he generally uses language similar to that of my text. “Why,” he says, “I am engrossed by my favorite study. It quite enthralls me. I cannot resist its charms, it holds me beneath its spell.” Is the man any the less free? If a man gives himself up to a science, or to some other pursuit, though he is perfectly free to leave it whenever he likes, he will commonly declare that he cannot leave it—it has such a hold upon him that he addicts himself to it!

You must not think, therefore, that when we speak of being under constraint from the love of Christ we mean, by it, that we have ceased to exercise our wills, or to be voluntary agents in our service. Far from it! In fact, we acknowledge that we are never so free as when we are under bonds to Christ! No, our God does not constrain us by physical force. His cords are those of love and His bands are those of a man. The constraint is that which we are glad to feel—we give a full assent to its pressure—and therein lies its power. We rejoice to admit that, “The love of Christ constrains us!” We only wish the constraint would increase every day.

We have seen that Paul had a great force holding him—we advance a step further and note that the constraining force was the love of Christ. He does not speak of *his* love to Christ—that was a great power, too, though secondary to the first. But he is content to mention the greater, for it includes the less—“The love of Christ constrains us,” that is, Christ’s love to us is the master force! And O, Brothers and Sisters, this is a power to which it is joy to submit! This is a force worthy to command the greatest minds! “The love of Christ.” Who shall measure this Omnipotent force? That love, according to our text, is strongest when seen in His dying for men. Mark the context, “because we thus judge, that if One died for all.” The peculiar display of the love of Christ which had supreme sway over Paul was the love revealed in His *substitutionary death*!

Think of it a moment. Christ the Ever-Blessed, to whom no pain, nor suffering, nor shame could come, loved men! O singularity of love! He loves guilty men, yes, loves His enemies! Loving poor fallen men, He took their nature and became a Man. Marvelous condescension! The Son of God is also Son of Mary and, being found in fashion as a Man, He humbles Himself and is made of no reputation. See Him taken before human judges and unjustly condemned! Seized by Roman lictors and lashed with the scourge! Gazing a little longer, you see Him nailed to a cross, hung up for a felon, left amid jeer and jibe and cruel glance and malicious speech to bleed away His life till He is actually dead and laid in the grave!

At the back of all this there is the mystery that He was not only dying, but dying in the place of others, bearing almighty wrath, enduring that dread sentence of death which is attached to human sin. Herein is love, indeed, that the infinitely Pure should suffer for the sinful, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! Love did never climb to so sublime a height as when it brought Jesus to the bloody tree to bear the dread sentence of inexorable Law! Think of this love, Beloved, till you feel its constraining influence!

It was love eternal, for long before the earth was fashioned, the eternal Word had set His eyes upon His people and their names were engraved on His heart. It was love unselfish, for He had nothing to gain from His redeemed—there were harps enough in Heaven and songs enough in the celestial city without their music! It was love most free and spontaneous, for no man sought it or so much as dreamed of it! It was love most persevering, for when man was born into the world and sinned and rejected Christ—and He came to His own and His own received Him not—He loved them still, loved them even to the end. It was love—what shall I say of it? If I were to multiply words I might rather sink your thoughts than raise them!

It was love infinite, immeasurable, inconceivable! It surpasses the love of women, though the love of mothers is strong as death and jealousy is cruel as the grave. It passes the love of martyrs, though that love has triumphed over the fury of the flame. All other lights of love pale in their ineffectual brightness before this blazing sun of love, whose warmth a man may feel but upon whose utmost light no eye can gaze! He loved us like a God! It was nothing less than God’s own love which burned within that breast which was bared to the spear that it might redeem us from going down into the Pit! It is this force, then, which has taken possession of the Christian’s mind and, as Paul says, “constrains us.”

Now we may advance another step and say that the love of Christ operates upon us by begetting in us love to Him. Brothers and Sisters, I know you love our Lord Jesus Christ, for all His people love Him. “We love Him because He first loved us.” But what shall I say? There are scarcely any themes upon which I feel less able to speak than these two—the love of Christ to us and our love to Him—because somehow love needs a tongue elsewhere than this which dwells in the mouth. This tongue is in the head and it can therefore tell out our thoughts—but we need a tongue in the *heart* to tell out our emotions which have now to borrow utterance from

the brain’s defective orator.

There is a long space between the cool brain and the blazing heart— and matters cool on the road to the tongue, so that the burning heart grows weary of chill words. But oh, we love Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, we truly love Him! His name is sweet as the honeycomb and His Word is precious as the gold of Ophir. His Person is very dear to us—from His head to His feet He is altogether lovely. When we get near Him and see Him at the last, I think we shall swoon away with excess of joy at the sight of Him and I, for one, ask no Heaven beyond a sight of Him and a sense of His love! I do not doubt that we shall enjoy all the harmonies, all the honors and all the fellowships of Heaven, but if they were all blotted out, I do not know that they would make any considerable difference to us if we may but see our Lord upon His throne, and have His own prayer fulfilled, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” He is happiness to us, yes, He is All in All!

Do you not feel that the sweetest sermons you ever hear are those which are fullest of Him? When I can sometimes hear a sermon, it sickens me to listen to fine attempts to philosophize away the Gospel, or to pretty essays which are best described as a jingle of elegant words. But I can hear with rapture the most illiterate and blundering Brother if his heart burns within him and he heartily speaks of my Lord, the Well-Beloved of my soul! We are glad to be in the place of assembly when Jesus is within, for whether on Tabor with two or three, or in the congregation of the faithful—when Jesus is present it is good to be there.

This joyful feeling, when you hear about Jesus, shows that you love Him and your endeavors to spread the Gospel show that you love His cause. The love of Christ to you has moved you to desire the coming of His kingdom and you feel that you could give your *life* to extend the borders of His dominions! He is a glorious King and all the world should know it! Oh that we could see all the nations bowing before His scepter of peace! We love Him so much that till the whole earth smiles in the light of His throne, we can never rest. As to His Truth, a very great part of our love to Christ will show itself by attachment to the pure Gospel. I have not much patience with a certain class of Christians, nowadays, who will hear anybody preach so long as they can say, “He is very clever, a fine preacher, a man of genius, a born orator.”

Is cleverness to make false doctrine palatable? Why, Sirs, to me the ability of a man who preaches error is my sorrow rather than my admiration! I cannot endure false doctrine, however neatly it may be put before me. Would you have me eat poisoned meat because the *dish* is of the choicest ware? It makes me indignant when I hear another gospel put before the people with enticing words by men who would gladly make merchandise of souls! And I marvel at those who have soft words for such deceivers.

“That is your bigotry,” says one. Call it so if you like, but it is the bigotry of the loving John who wrote—“If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” I would to God we had all more of such decision, for the lack of it is depriving our religious life of its backbone and substituting for honest manliness a mass of the tremulous jelly of mutual flattery. He who does not hate the false does not love the true! And he to whom it is all the same whether it is God’s Word or man’s, is himself unrenewed at heart! Oh, if some of you were like your fathers, you would not have tolerated in this age the wagon loads of trash under which the Gospel has been of late buried by ministers of your own choosing! You would have hurled out of your pulpits the men who are enemies to the fundamental doctrines of your Churches and yet are crafty enough to become your pastors and undermine the faith of a fickle and superficial generation! These men steal the pulpits of once orthodox Churches because otherwise they would have none at all!

Their powerless theology cannot, of itself, arouse sufficient enthusiasm to enable them to build a mousetrap at the expense of their admirers and, therefore, they profane the houses which your fathers have built for the preaching of the Gospel and turn aside the organizations of once orthodox communities to help their infidelity! I call it by that name in plain English, for “modern thought” is not one whit better—and of the two evils I give infidelity the palm, for it is less deceptive. I beg the Lord to give back to the Churches such a love to His Truth that they may discern the spirits and cast out those which are not of God.

I feel sometimes like John, of whom it is said that though the most loving of all spirits, yet he was the most decided of all men for the Truth of God. Once when he went to the bath and found that the heretic, Cerinthus, was there, he hurried out of the building and would not tarry in the same place with him! There are some with whom we should have no fellowship! No, not so much as to eat bread! And though this conduct looks stern and hard, it is after the mind of Christ, for the Apostle spoke by Inspiration when he said, “If we, or an angel from Heaven preach to you any other Gospel than that which you have received, let him be accursed.” According to modern efficiency he ought to have said, “Let him be kindly spoken with in private, but pray make no stir! No doubt the thought was original and we must not question his liberty. Doubtless, he believes the same as we do, only there is some little difference as to terms.”

This is treason to Christ, treachery to the Truth of God and cruelty to souls! If we love our Lord we shall keep His Words and stand fast in the faith, coming out from among the false teachers! Nor is this inconsistent with charity, for the truest love to those who err is not to fraternize with them in their error, but to be faithful to Jesus in all things! The love of Jesus Christ creates in men a deep attachment to the Gospel, especially to the doctrines which cluster around the Person of our Lord. And I think more especially to that doctrine which is the cornerstone of all, namely, that Christ died in the place of men. He who touches the doctrine of Substitution, touches the apple of our eye! He who denies it, robs our soul of her only hope, for there we gather all our consolation for the present and our expectation for days to come. A great force, then, held the Apostle— that force was the love *of* Christ—and it worked in Him love*to* Christ in

return!

Now, this force acts proportionately in Believers. It acts in every Christian more or less, but it differs in degree. We are all of us, alive, but the vigor of life differs greatly in the consumptive and the athletic—and so the love of Jesus acts upon all regenerate men, but not to the same extent. When a man is perfectly swayed by the love of Christ, he will be a perfect Christian. When a man is growingly under its influence, he is a growing Christian. When a man is sincerely affected by the love of Christ, he is a sincere Christian. But he in whom the love of Christ has no power whatever is not a Christian at all. “I thought,” says one, “that *believing* was the main point.” True, but faith works by love and if your faith does not work by love it is not the faith which will save the soul.

Love never fails to bloom where faith has taken root. Beloved, you will feel the *power* of the love of Christ in your soul in proportion to the following points. In proportion as you *know* it. Study, then, the love of Christ— search deep and learn its secrets. Angels desire to look into it. Observe its eternity—without beginning. Its immutability—without change. Its infinity—without measure. Its eternity—without end. Think much of the love of Christ, till you comprehend with all saints what are its breadths and lengths. And as you know it, you will begin to feel its power. Its power will also be in proportion to your sense of it. Do you feel the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit? Knowing is well, but *enjoyment* as the result of believing is better! Does it not sometimes force the tears from your eyes to think that Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you?

On the other hand, does it not at times make you feel as if, like David, you could dance before the ark of the Lord, to think that the love of God should ever have been set on *you—*that Christ should die for *you*? Ah, think and think again—for you the bloody sweat, for you the crown of thorns, for you the nails, the spear, the wounds, the broken heart—all, all for love of *you* who were His enemy! In proportion as your heart is tender and is sensitive to this love, it will become a constraining influence in your whole life. The force of this influence will also depend very much upon the Divine Grace which dwells within you. You may measure your Grace by the power which the love of Christ has over you. Those who dwell near their Lord are so conscious of His power over them that the very glances of His eyes fill them with holy ardor. If you have much Grace you will be greatly moved by the love which gave you that Grace and made you wondrously sensitive to it. But he who has little Grace, as is the case with not a few, can read the story of the Cross without emotion, and can contemplate Jesus’ death without feeling. God deliver us from a cold and hard marble heart!

Character also has much to do with the measure in which we feel the constraint of Jesus’ love. The more Christ-like the more Christconstrained. You must become, dear Brothers and Sisters, by prayer through the Holy Spirit, to be like Jesus Christ. And when you do, His love will take fuller possession of you than it does at this moment and you will be more manifestly under its constraining power. Our last point upon this head is that wherever its energy is felt it will operate after its kind. Forces work according to their nature—the force of love creates love—and the love of Christ begets a kindred love. He who feels Christ’s love acts as Christ acted. If you really feel the love of Christ in making a sacrifice of Himself you will make a sacrifice of yourself. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

We shall, for our Lord’s sake, count all things but dross for the excellency of His knowledge. O Soul, you will have no choice left after you have once known and chosen your Lord! If that road leads to wealth, but if it does not glorify Christ, you will at once say, “Farewell wealth.” That road leads to honor—you will be famous if you will take that path. But if it will bring no glory to Christ, if you feel the power of His love in your soul, you will say, “Farewell honor! I will embrace shame for Christ, for my one thought is to sacrifice myself for Him who sacrificed Himself for me.” If the love of Christ constrains you, it will make you love others, for His was love to others, love to those who could do Him no service, who deserved nothing at His hands. If the love of Christ constrains you, you will specially love those who have no apparent claim upon you and cannot justly expect anything from you, but on the contrary deserve your censure. You will say, “I love them because the love of Christ constrains me.”

Dirty little creatures in the gutter. Filthy women polluting the streets. Base men who come out of jail merely to repeat their crimes—these are the fallen humanities whom we learn to love when the love of Christ constrains us! I do not know how else we could care for some poor creatures, if it were not that Jesus teaches us to despise none and despair of none. Those ungrateful creatures, those malicious creatures, those abominably blasphemous and profane creatures whom you sometimes meet with and shrink from—you are to love them because Christ loved the very chief of sinners! His love to you must be reflected in your love to the lowest and vilest. He is your Sun—be you as the moon to the world’s night.

The love of Jesus Christ was a practical love. He did not love in thought, only, and in word, but in deed and in truth—and if the love of Christ constrains us—we shall throw our souls into the work and service of love. We shall be really at work for men, giving alms of our substance, enduring our measure of suffering and making it clear that our Christianity is not mere talk, but downright work! We shall be like the bullock of the burnt offering, laid upon the altar to be wholly consumed. We shall consider nothing but how we can most completely be eaten up with the zeal of God’s House, how without the reserve of one single faculty we may be entirely consumed in the service of our Lord and Master. May the Lord bring us to this!

**II.**THE CONSTRAINT OF WHICH WE HAVE SPOKEN WAS JUSTIFIED BY THE APOSTLE’S UNDERSTANDING. “The love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge.” Love is blind. A man may say that in the affairs of love he exercises a calm discretion, but I take leave to doubt it. In love to Christ, however, you may be carried right away and be as blind as you like and yet you shall act according to the most sound judgment. The Apostle says warmly, “The love of Christ constrains us,” and yet he adds with all coolness, “because we thus judge.” When understanding is the basis of affection, then a man’s heart is fixed and his conduct becomes

in a high degree exemplary. So it is here.

There is a firm basis of judgment—the man has weighed and judged the matter as much as if the heart were out of the question—but the logical conclusion is one of all-absorbing emotion and mastering affection as much as if the understanding had been left out of the question. His judgment was as the bronze altar, cold and hard, but on it he laid the coals of burning affection, vehement enough in their flame to consume everything. So it ought to be with us. Religion should be with a man a matter of intellect as well as of affection—and his understanding should always be able to justify the strongest possible passion of his soul, as the Apostle says it did in the case of himself and his brethren.

They had reasons for all that they did. For, first, he recognized Substitution—“We thus judge, that if One died for all.” O Brothers and Sisters, this is the very sinew of Christian effort—Christ died in the sinner’s place! Christ is the Surety, the Sacrifice, the Substitute for men! If you take the doctrine of vicarious Sacrifice out of the Christian religion I protest that nothing is left worth calling a revelation! It is the heart, the head, the soul, the *essence* of our holy faith—that the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all and with His stripes we are healed! The Apostle firmly believed this to be a matter of fact and then, out of his belief, there grew an intense love to Jesus, as well there might. Did Jesus stand in *my* place? Oh, how I love Him! Did He die for *me*? Then His love has mastered me and will always hold me as its willing captive! O sacred Substitute, I am Yours and all that I have!

In the next place, he recognized union to Christ, for, he said, “If One died for all, then the all died,” for so it runs, that is to say, the all for whom Christ died, died in His death. His dying in their place was their dying! He dies *for* them, they die *in* Him. He rises, they rise in Him. He lives, they live in Him. Now if it is really so, that you and I who have believed in Christ are one with Christ and members of His body, that Truth of God may be stated coolly, but like the flint, it conceals a fire within it! For if we died in Jesus, we are dead to the world, to self—to *everything* but our Lord! O Holy Spirit, work in us this death even to the fullest! The Apostle recognizes the natural consequence of union with the dying Lord and resolves to carry it out.

Brothers and Sisters, when Adam sinned, *we* sinned. And we have felt the result of that fact—we were constituted sinners by the act of our first representative and every day we see it to be so. Every little child that is carried to the grave bears witness that death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned in Adam, even though they have not personally sinned after the similitude of his transgression. Now, just as our sin in Adam effectively operates upon us for evil, so must our death with Christ effectively operate upon our lives for good. It ought to do so. How can I live for myself? I died more than 18 centuries ago! I died and was buried! How can I live to the world? Eighteen hundred years ago and more the world hung me up as a malefactor—yes, and in my heart of hearts I have also crucified the world—and regard it as a dead malefactor. How shall I fall in love with a crucified world, or follow after its delights? We thus died with Christ.

“Now,” says the Apostle, “the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then the all died.” All who were in Christ, for whom He died, died when He died. And what follows from it but that they should not live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again? We are one with Christ and what He did *for* us we did *in* Him and, therefore, we are dead because He died! Therefore we ought no longer to live in the old selfish way, but should live only to the Lord. This is the basis upon which the intellect rests and then the affections yield themselves to the sacred force of Jesus’ dying love.

I close with the following reflections, putting them very briefly. The first reflection is—how different is the inference of the Apostle from that of many professors. They say, “If Christ died once for all and so finished the work of my salvation, then I am saved and may sit down in comfort and enjoy myself, for there is no need for effort or thought.” Ah, what a mercy to feel that you are saved and then to go to sleep in the corner of your pew! A converted man and, therefore, curled up upon the bed of sloth! A pretty sight, surely, but a very common one! Such people have but little or no feeling for others who remain unconverted. “The Lord will save His own,” they say and they little care whether He does so or not. They appear to be dreadfully afraid of doing God’s work, though there is not the slightest need for such a fear, since they will not even do their *own* work!

These are presumptuous persons, strangers to the Grace of God, who know not that the main part of salvation lies in our being saved *from* selfishness and hardness of heart! It is the devil’s inference that because Christ did so much for me I am now to do nothing for Him! I must even beg the devil’s pardon, for I scarcely think that even *he* is base enough to draw such an inference from the Grace of God. Assuredly he has never been in a position to attempt so detestable a crime. It is to the last degree unutterably contemptible that a man who is indebted to the Lord Jesus Christ for so much should then make the only consequence of his indebtedness to be a selfish indolence! Never will a true child of God say, “Soul, take your ease. You are all right—nothing else matters!”

Oh no! “The love of Christ constrains us.” How much more ennobling, again, is such conduct as that of the Apostle than that of many professed Christians? I am not about to judge anyone, but I would beg you to judge yourselves. There are some and I would try to hope that they may be Christians—the Lord knows them that are His—who give to the cause of God, who serve God, after a fashion. But still, the main thought of their life is not Christ nor His service, but the gaining of wealth! That is their chief objective and towards it all their faculties are bent. There are other Church members—God forbid we should judge them—whose great thought is success in their profession. I am not condemning their having such a thought, but the chief ambition of the Apostle and of those like he was not this, but something higher! The chief aim of all of us should be nothing of *self*, but serving Christ! We are to be dead to everything but our Lord’s Glory, living with this mark before us—this prize to be strained after—that Christ shall be glorified in our mortal bodies!  
In our business, in our studies, in everything, our slogan must be,

Christ, Christ, Christ! Is it not a far more noble thing for a man to have lived wholly unto Christ than for mammon, or honor, or for himself in any shape or form? I speak as to wise men—judge what I say! Do you not think, also, that such a pursuit as this is much more peace-giving to the spirit? People will judge our conduct and they are sure to judge as severely as they can. If they see us zealous and self-denying they will say of us, “Why, the man is beside himself.” This will not matter much to us if we can reply, “It is for God.” Or if they say, “Oh, you old sober sides, how grave you are,” we shall not be offended if we can reply, “Ah, but it is for the good of others that I am sober.”

You will be very little distressed by sharp criticisms if you know that your motive is wholly unselfish. If you live for Christ and for Christ, alone, all the carping of men or devils will never cast you down. Do you not think that a life spent for Jesus only is far more worth looking back upon at the last than any other? If you call yourselves Christians, how will you judge a life spent in making money? It cannot be very much longer before you must gather up your feet in the bed and resign your soul to God. Now, suppose yourself sitting in your chamber all alone, making out the final balance-sheet of your stewardship—how will it look if you have to confess, “I have been a Christian professor. My conduct has been outwardly decent and respectable, but my chief purpose was not my Master’s Glory. I have lived with the view of scraping together so many thousands and I have done it.”

Would you like to fall asleep and die with that as the consummation of your life? Or shall it be, “I have lived to hold up my head in society and pay my way and leave a little for my family”? Will that satisfy you as your last reflection? Brothers and Sisters, we are not saved by our works, but I am speaking, now, upon the consolation which a man can derive from looking back upon his life. Suppose he shall have felt the power of my text and shall be able to say, “I have been enabled, by the Grace of God, to which I give all the glory, to consecrate my entire being to the entire glorification of my Lord and Master. And whatever my mistakes, and they are many—and my wanderings and failures, and they are countless—yet the love of Christ has constrained me, for I judged myself to have died in Him, and I have lived to Him. I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith”?

Why, I think it were worth while so to die! To be constrained by the love of Christ creates an heroic life, exalted, illustrious—no, I must come down from such lofty words—it is such a life as every Christian *ought* to live! It is such a life as every Christian *must* live if he is really constrained by the love of Christ, for the text does not say the love of Christ *ought* to constrain us—it declares that it *does* constrain us. Brothers and Sisters, if it does not constrain you, judge yourselves that you be not judged and found wanting at the last! God grant we may feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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IS CONVERSION NECESSARY?  
NO. 1183

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 19, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17.~~***

A FEW days ago I was preaching in Lancashire upon the putting away of sin by our Lord Jesus and the consequent peace of conscience enjoyed by the Believer. In the course of the sermon I related my own conversion, with the view of showing that the simple act of looking to Jesus brought peace to the soul. Now, the diocese of Manchester is presided over by a bishop who has a deservedly high place in public esteem for his zeal, industry and force of character. And, feeling that he did not agree with me, he has very properly taken an opportunity to warn the working men, whom he addressed, against drawing improper inferences from my story. And he has done this in a manner so courteous that I only wish all discussions were conducted in the same spirit.

The best return I can make for his courtesy is to enlarge upon the subject and carefully guard his utterances from injurious inferences, even as he has protected mine. The idea of controversy is not upon my mind at all, nor have I any other feeling towards Bishop Fraser than that which is honestly expressed in a hearty prayer that God may bless him. But I am thinking of the many who will read his remarks who, I trust, may afterwards read mine—and as the point is of the utmost conceivable importance and deeply concerns the souls of our hearers—it is well that neither should be misunderstood and that, by all means, a Truth of God so vital should be brought into prominence. The bishop does not doubt for a moment that my own conversion was correctly described by me—and that like cases have occurred at other times—but he fears lest others should suppose that they must be converted in exactly the same manner.

In that fear I fully participate! It has always been a special point with me to show that God’s Spirit calls men to Jesus in different ways. Some are drawn so gently that they scarcely know when the drawing began. Others are so suddenly affected that their conversion stands out with noonday clearness. Perhaps no two conversions are precisely alike in detail. The means, the modes, the manifestations all vary greatly. As our minds are not cast in the same mold, it may so happen that the Truth of God which affects one is powerless upon another. The style of address which influences your friend may be offensive to yourself—and that which leads him to decide may only cause you to delay. “The wind blows where it will.” The Holy Spirit is called, “the free Spirit,” and in the diversity of His

operations, that freeness is clearly seen.

Again and again have I warned you against imitating others in the matter of conversion, lest you be found counterfeits, and it is well when another voice unites with me in the warning. Yet in all true conversions there are points of essential agreement—there must be in all a penitent confession of sin and a looking to Jesus for the forgiveness of it—and there must also be a real change of heart such as shall affect the entire life. Where these essential points are not to be found there is no genuine conversion! The bishop goes on to remark upon Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress” and its description of the burdened pilgrim and his finding rest at the Cross. The bishop mistakes honest John, for he says that, “the pilgrim, having failed to get his wife to take the same gloomy view of fleeing from the wrath to come, and to accompany him in his flight, set out alone. There they had a man who deserted his home and home duties, leaving them to take care of themselves—but if a man stayed at home and his heart was right, he would have been saved in the day of doom.”

Surely allegory is not to be read in this fashion. John Bunyan never meant to teach that any man should forsake his home and neglect his family! No one ever charged him with doing so! In his imprisonment he worked hard at tagging laces to support his family and his affection for his poor blind child is well known. John Bunyan was no monk, but as true a father, citizen and friend as ever lived. The passage is part of an *allegory* and represents an awakened man as resolving to seek the Savior, whether others would do so or not—a man alive to his own condition and responsibility—and therefore determined to pursue the right road, even if the nearest and dearest refused to bear him company. It is not implied that he *left* the company of his family in *temporal* things, for with these the allegory has nothing to do! I feel sure the bishop knows too well the value of decision of mind and of that strong resolve to be right which dares to be singular, to say a word wittingly against one of the bravest of the virtues.

The bishop continues, “The pilgrim went on his journey and at the sight of the Cross, the great bundle, which was the burden of his past sins, fell off his back. Falling down before the Cross, he thought of Him who hung upon it, and of the great doctrine of Atonement, and the burden dropped from his back, and he rose what is called ‘a converted man.’” The bishop is inclined to think that this story of Bunyan’s conversion has given a color to a great part of what is called Protestant Theology in these days. He has noticed that a great number of our theological ideas come, rather, from Milton, and “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” than from the Bible, for he does not find a single case in the Bible at all analogous to or resembling the case of John Bunyan. He then denies that the case of the penitent thief is at all to the point, or even the conversion of the Apostle Paul—and he bids his hearers remember that it is, “better not to dream those dreams of conversion that might happen to one and not to another.”

Now, so far as Milton is concerned, the bishop is right, but I challenge his statement with regard to Bunyan’s, “Pilgrim,” and differ from him altogether in his judgment of Paul’s conversion. He fears that some may imagine a particular manner of conversion to be necessary, but my fear is much greater, that from Bishop Fraser’s words, far more will infer that *no conversion is necessary at all*. My fear is not so much that they should say, “I must be converted like John Bunyan,” but that they will whisper, “It is all an idle tale. The bishop means that we have only to do our duty and be sober and honest, and all will be well, whether we are converted or not.”

Our text says that “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” And my point is just this that any man who is united to Christ has experienced a great change. I do not lay down hard and fast lines about*how* the conversion is to be worked, but the imperative word is, “You must be born again,” and the exhortation speaks to all mankind, “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Even to this hour our Lord says, “Verily I say unto you, except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

My line of discourse will be as follows—according to our text and many other Scripture, *a great change is needed in any man who would be saved.* Secondly, *this great change is frequently very marked.* And thirdly,*this change is recognizable by distinct signs*.

**I.**IN ORDER TO HAVE TRUE SALVATION A RADICAL CHANGE IS NECESSARY. This change is a thorough and sweeping one, and operates upon the nature, heart and life of the convert. Human nature is the same to all men and it will be idle to try to turn the edge of Scriptural quotations by saying that they refer to the Jews or to the heathen, for at that rate we shall have no Bible left us at all! The Bible is meant for *mankind* and our text refers to *any* man, of any country and of any age. “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

We prove this point by reminding you, first, *that everywhere in Scripture men are divided into two* classes, with a very sharp line of distinction between them. Read in the Gospels and you shall find continual mention of sheep lost and sheep found, guests refusing the invitation and guests feasting at the table, the wise virgins and the foolish, the sheep and the goats. In the Epistles we read of those who are “dead in trespasses and sin,” and of others to whom it is said, “And you has He quickened,” so that some are alive to God and others are in their natural state of spiritual death. We find men spoken of as being either in darkness or in light. And the phrase is used of “being brought out of darkness into marvelous light.” Some are spoken of as having been formerly aliens and strangers and having been made fellow citizens and brethren. We read of “children of God,” in opposition to “children of wrath.”

We read of Believers who are not condemned and of those who are condemned, already, because they have *not believed*. We read of those who have “gone astray,” and of those who have “returned to the shepherd and bishop of their souls.” We read of those who are “in the flesh and cannot please God,” and of those who are chosen and called and justified—whom

the whole universe is challenged to condemn. The Apostle speaks of “us who are saved,” as if there were some saved while, upon others, “the wrath of God abides.” “Enemies” are continually placed in contrast with those who are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” There are those that are “far off from God by wicked works,” and those who are “made near by the blood of Christ.”

I could continue till I wearied you. The distinction between the two classes runs through the whole of the Scriptures, but never do we find a *hint* that there are some who are naturally good and do not need to be removed from the one class into the other, or that there are persons between the two who can afford to remain as they are. No, there must be a Divine work making us *new* creatures and causing all things to become new with us, or we shall die in our sins. *The Word of God, besides so continually describing two classes, very frequently and in forcible expressions speaks of an inward change by which men are brought from one state into the other*. I hope I shall not weary you if I refer to a considerable number of Scriptures, but it is best to go to the Fountainhead at once.

This change is often described as a *birth*. See the third chapter of the Gospel of John, which is wonderfully clear and to the point, “Except a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This birth is not a birth by Baptism, for it is spoken of as accompanied by an intelligent faith which receives the Lord Jesus. Turn to John 1:12, 13, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” So that Believers are “born again,” and receive Christ through *faith*—a regeneration imparted in infancy and lying dormant in unbelievers is a fiction unknown to Holy Scripture!

In the third of John our Lord associates faith and regeneration in the closest manner, declaring not only that we must be born again, but also that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. We must undergo a change quite as great as if we could return to our native nothingness and could then come forth fresh from the hand of the Great Creator. John tells us, in his first Epistle, 5:4, that, “Whatever is born of God overcomes the world,” and he adds, to show that the new birth and faith go together, “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” To the same effect is 1 John 5:1, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” Where there is true *faith*, there is the new *birth*, and that term implies a change beyond measure complete and radical.

In other places this change is described as a *quickening*. “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1). We are said to be raised from the dead together with Christ and this is spoken of as being a very wonderful display of Omnipotence. We read, (Eph. 1:19), of “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.” Regeneration is a very prodigy of Divine strength and by no means a mere figment fabled to accompany a religious ceremony. We find this change frequently described as a *creation*, as, for instance, in our text, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

And this, also, is no mere formality, or an attendant upon a rite, for we read in Galatians 6:15, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” No outward rites, though ordained of God, Himself, effect any change upon the *heart* of man—there must be a creating over again of the entire nature by the Divine hand—we must be “created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10), and we must have in us “the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). What a wonderful change that must be which is first described as a birth, then as a resurrection from the dead—and then as an absolute creation! Paul, in Colossians 1:13, further speaks of God the Father, and says, “Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” John calls it a “passing from death unto life” (1 John 3:14), no doubt having in his mind that glorious declaration of his Lord and Master—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

Once more, as if to go to the extremity of forcible expression, Peter speaks of our conversion and regeneration as our being “begotten again.” Hear the passage (1 Peter 1:3), “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” To the same purport speaks the Apostle James in his first chapter, at the 18th verse—“Of His own will He begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.” My dear Friends, can you conceive of any language more plainly descriptive of a most solemn change? If it is possible with the human tongue to describe a change which is total, thorough, complete and Divine, these words describe it! And if such a change is *not* intended by the language here used by the Holy Spirit, then I am unable to find any meaning in the Bible—and its words are rather meant to bewilder than to instruct, which God forbid we should think! My appeal is to you who try to be content without regeneration and conversion—I beseech you, do not be satisfied—for you never can be in Christ unless old things are passed away with you and all things become new.

Further, *the Scriptures speak of this great inner work as producing a very wonderful change in the subject of it*. Regeneration and conversion— the one the secret cause and the other the first overt effect—produce a great change in the character. Read Romans 6:17, “But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Again at verse 22, “Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Mark well the description the Apostle gives in Colossians 3:9, when, having described the old nature and its

sins, he says, “Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man.”

The Bible swarms with proof texts. The change of character in the converted man is so great that, “they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). And as there is a change in character, so there is a change in feeling. The man had been an enemy to God before, but when this change takes place he begins to love God. Read Colossians 1:21, “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked worlds, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight.” This change from enmity to friendship with God arises very much from a change of man’s judicial state before God. Before a man is converted he is condemned, but when he receives spiritual life we read, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This altogether changes his condition as to inward happiness. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” which peace we never had before.

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement.” O Brothers and Sisters, conversion makes a most mighty difference in us, indeed, or else what did Christ mean when He said, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? Does He, after all, give us no rest? Is the man who comes to Jesus just as restless and as devoid of peace as before? God forbid! Does not Jesus say that when we drink of the water which He gives to us we shall never thirst again? What? And are we to be told that there is never a time when we leave off thirsting, never a time when that Living Water becomes in us a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life? Our own experience refutes the suggestion!

Does not Paul say in Hebrews 4:3, “We which have believed do enter into rest”? Our condition before God, our moral tone, our nature, our state of mind are made, by conversion, totally different from what they were before. “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Why, Beloved, instead of supposing that we can do without conversion, the Scriptures represent this as being the grand blessing of the Covenant of Grace! What did the Lord say by His servant Jeremiah? “This shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after these days, says the Lord, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jer. 31:33). This passage Paul quotes in Hebrews 10:16, not as obsolete, but as *fulfilled* in Believers!

And what has the Lord said by Ezekiel? Listen to the gracious passage, and see what a grand blessing conversion is—“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes; and you shall keep My judgments and do them” (Eze. 36:26, 27). Is not this *the* blessing of the Gospel by which we realize all the rest? Is not this the great work of the Holy Spirit by which we know the Father and the Son? And is not this necessary to make us in accord with future glory? “He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

There is to be a new Heaven and a new earth, for the first Heaven and the first earth shall pass away. And can we believe that the old carnal nature is to enter into the new creation? Is that which is born of the flesh to enter into the *spiritual* kingdom? It can never be! No, a change as wonderful as that which will pass over this world when Christ shall re-create it must pass over each one of us, if it is not so already. In a word, if we are in Christ Jesus we are new creatures, old things are passed away! Behold, all things are become new! Do you know anything about this? I trust that a great number of you have experienced it and are showing it in your lives, but I fear some are ignorant of it. Let those who are unconverted never rest till they have believed in Christ and have a new heart created and a right spirit bestowed. Lay it well to heart that a change *must* come over you which you cannot work in yourselves, but which must be worked by Divine power.

There is this for your comfort, that Jesus Christ has promised this blessing to all who receive Him, for He gives them power to become the sons of God.

**II.**Secondly, I now remark that THIS CHANGE IS FREQUENTLY VERY MARKED AS TO ITS TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES. Many souls truly born of God could not lay their finger upon any date and say, “At such a time I passed from death unto life.” There *was* such a time, however, though they may not be able to fix upon it. The act of conversion is often, as to many of its circumstances, so surrounded by preceding works of restraining Grace that it appears to be a very gradual thing. The rising of the Sun of Righteousness in the soul is comparable to the dawning of day, with a gray light, at first, and a gradual increase to a noonday splendor. Yet, as there is a time when the sun rises, so is there a time of new birth. If a dead man were restored to life, he might not be able to say exactly when life began, but there *is* such a moment. There must be a time when a man ceases to be an unbeliever and becomes a believer in Jesus. I do not assert that it is necessary for us to *know* the day, but there is such a time.

In many cases, however, the very day and hour and place are fully known and we might expect this, first, *from many other works of God*. How very particular God is about the time of creation! “The evening and the morning were the first day.” “God said, ‘Let there be light’—and months afterwards there came a little gray dawning and a solitary star.” “Oh no!” you say, “You are quoting from imagination!” Yes, I am. The Scripture has it, “God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” *Immediate* work is God’s method of creating! All through the six days’ work He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. There is generally a likeness between one act of God and another—and if in the old creation the fiat did it all—it does seem likely upon the very face of things that in the new creation the fiat of the eternal Word should be equally quick and powerful

in its working.

Look at the acts of God in the Person of Christ when He was here among men. The water turns at *once* to wine, the fig tree immediately withers away, the loaves and fishes are at once multiplied in the hands of the disciples. Miracles of healing were, as a rule, instantaneous. In one instance the Lord puts clay on the blind man’s eyes and sends him to wash—but lengthen the operation as much as you like—it is still very briefly summed up in, “I washed and do see.” Yonder paralytic man is lying on his bed. Jesus says to him, “Take up your bed and walk,” and he does so at once! The leprosy was cured with a touch, devils fled at a word, ears were unstopped instantly and withered limbs restored. He spoke to the waves and the winds and they were calm at once!

And as to the resurrections which Christ worked, which are His acted parables of regeneration, they were all instantaneous. Jesus took the little girl by the hand and said, “*Talitha cumi.*” She opened her eyes and sat up. He bade the bier stand still on which was the young man. He said— “Young man, I say unto you, arise”—and he arose straightway. Even the carcass of Lazarus, which had begun to corrupt, yielded at once to His word. He did but say, “Lazarus, come forth,” and there was Lazarus! As the Master worked on men’s bodies, so does He constantly work upon men’s souls! And it is according to analogy to expect that His works will be instantaneous. Such they constantly are, for are they not daily before us?

We might also look for many instances of vividness if we consider the work itself. If it is worthy to be called a resurrection, there must manifestly be a time in which the dead man ceases to be dead and becomes alive. Take the opposite process of dying—we commonly say that such a man was long in dying. That is a popular description, but strictly speaking, the actual death must be instantaneous. There is a time in which there is breath in the body and another time in which there is none. So must it be in the reception of life! That life may seem to come by slow degrees into the soul, but it cannot really be so—there must be an *instant* up to which there was no life and beyond which life began. Is not that self-evident? Isn’t it wonderful that that instant should fix itself on the memory and in many cases be the most prominent fact in a man’s whole history? It is called a creation.

Now creation is necessarily a work which happens in an instant, for a thing either is or is not. There is no intervening space between nonexistence and existence. There is the sharpest conceivable line between that which is not and that which is. So in the new creation there must be a time when Divine Grace is not received and a time when renewing it is, and we may naturally expect that in so grand a work there would be, in many cases, a marked boundary line at which the work begins. But, Brothers and Sisters, we need not talk of what we might *expect—*let us look at the facts. What are the facts about the conversions mentioned in Scripture? We hear much of educational processes which supersede conversion, but they are among the many inventions unknown to Apostolic history.

The bishop tells us that he does not find a single case in the Bible at all resembling the case of John Bunyan. It is very curious how very differently we read. I at once turn to Paul, but the bishop says he is not a case in point, for he did not feel the burden of sin fall off his back. I cannot guess how the bishop knows what Paul endured during his three days’ blindness, but my own notion, gathered from Paul’s, after saying and doing, is very different. The man was one moment an opponent of Christ and the next moment was crying, “Who are You, Lord?” For three days he was blind and fasted. Was he not, then, feeling the power of the Law, and casting away his own righteousness? And when Ananias came to tell him more fully the Gospel and to bid him arise and be baptized, was there no removal of sin? Did he remain as before?

There are two things spoken of—he was to be baptized, and also to receive another and spiritual washing—was the first real and not the second? The Apostle always speaks of the whole thing as if he had cast away his own righteousness and counted it but dung to lay hold on Christ. And he continually glories in having peace with God, though he did not claim perfection in the flesh. He had not attained perfection, but he had attained salvation! He calls himself the chief of sinners, but this was as a retrospect—surely Bishop Fraser does not really mean to insinuate that the great Apostle still remained the chief of sinners? If so, I must say the morality of his teaching is not such as one would expect from him.

Some have said that Paul’s case is a special and solitary one. But this is an error, for he says, himself, that Jesus Christ in him showed forth all long-suffering *for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting* (1 Tim. 1:15, 16). That which is a pattern is not a special case. Though the Lord does not always work to a pattern in details, yet the case of Paul suddenly converted is the pattern, rather than the exception. Let us look at other instances. A Samaritan woman comes to the well to draw water. Christ speaks to her. She is converted and goes away to tell the men of the city. Is not that a case of sudden conversion? Zaccheus is in a tree—he is a rich publican, and a sinner. Jesus cries, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down.” He comes down, receives Jesus into his house, and proves his salvation by his works. Is not that a sudden conversion?

Matthew sits at the receipt of custom, another publican and sinner. Jesus says, “Follow Me.” He rises and follows Jesus. Is not that a sudden conversion? Three thousand persons gather at Pentecost. Peter preaches to them and tells them that Jesus, whom they had murdered, was really the Christ of God. They are pricked in the heart! They believe and are baptized on the same day. Have we not here 3,000 sudden conversions? Sudden enough to prove my point. Further on, the jailer has gone to his bed, having fastened Paul and Silas in the stocks. His prisoners pray and sing praises unto God. There is an earthquake. The jailer in alarm cries, “What must I do to be saved?” He believes in Jesus, then and there, and is baptized with his believing household. Are not these “at all analogous to

John Bunyan’s pilgrim” and his losing his load? It really seems to me as if it would be much more difficult to find a *gradual* conversion in Scripture than a sudden one, for here they come, one another, men and women brought to Jesus Christ who knew Him not before, in whom the Scripture is fulfilled—“I am found of them that sought Me not.”

Furthermore, we need not go back to Scripture for this. The matter of the conversion of souls is one about which I feel it a weariness to argue, because these wonders of Divine Grace happen daily before our eyes. It is like trying to prove that the sun rises in the morning. By the space of 20 years there has certainly never occurred to me a single week, and I might with truthfulness say scarcely a solitary day, in which I have not heard of persons being converted by the simple preaching of the Gospel either here or elsewhere when I have borne witness for Christ. And these conversions have been in far the greater majority of instances very clear and welldefined.

Sometimes the children of godly parents who have been long hearing the Word are converted, and in them the inward change is as marked as if they had never heard the Gospel before! Infidels become Believers! Romanists forsake their priests! Harlots become chaste, drunks leave their cups and, what is equally remarkable, Pharisees leave their self-righteous pride and come as sinners to Jesus! Why, if this were the proper time and place, I might say to you now assembled, “Brothers and Sisters, you who have experienced a great change and know that you have experienced it, and can tell how it came about, stand up”—and you would rise in numbers like a host and declare—“Thus and thus, God met with us under the preaching of His Truth, and thus did He turn us from darkness to marvelous light.” I would to God that every man that hears me this day had received such a distinct conversion that it would be so plain to him that he was a new creature that he could no more doubt it than he can doubt his existence!

**III.**Thirdly, THIS CHANGE IS RECOGNIZABLE BY CERTAIN SIGNS. It has been supposed by some that the moment a man is converted he thinks himself perfect. It is not so among us, for we question the conversion of any man who thinks himself perfect. It is thought by others that a converted man must be henceforth free from all doubts. I wish it were so. Unhappily, although there is faith in us, unbelief is there, also. Some dream that the converted man has nothing more to seek for—but we don’t teach that—a man who is alive unto God has greater needs than ever. Conversion is the beginning of a lifelong *conflict*—it is the first blow in a warfare which will never end till we are in Glory.

In every case of conversion there are these following signs. There is always *a sense of sin*. No man, rest assured, ever found peace with God without first repenting of sin and knowing it to be an evil thing. The horrors which some have felt are not essential, but a full confession of sin before God—and an acknowledgment of our guilt—is absolutely required. “The whole,” says Christ, “have no need of a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Christ does not heal those who are not sick! He never clothes those who are not naked, nor enriches those who are not poor. True conversion *always* has in it a humbling sense of the need of Divine Grace.

It is also always attended with simple, true and real *faith* in Jesus Christ. In fact, that is the king’s own mark and without it nothing is of any worth. “Like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And that passage is put side by side with, “you must be born again,” in the same address, by the same Savior, to the same inquirer! Therefore we gather that *faith* is the mark of the new birth, and where it is, there the Spirit has changed the heart of man—but where it is not, men are still, “dead in trespasses and sin.”

Conversion may be known, next, by this fact, that it changes the *whole* man. It changes the principle upon which he lives. He lived for self—now he lives for God. He did right because he was afraid of punishment if he did wrong—but now he shuns evil because he*hates* it. He did right because he hoped to merit Heaven, but now no such selfish motive sways him—he knows that he is saved and he does right out of gratitude to God! His objects in life are changed—he lived for gain, or worldly honor—now he lives for the Glory of God! His comforts are changed—the pleasures of the world and sin are nothing to him—he finds his comfort in the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. His desires are changed—that which he once panted and pined for, he is now content to do without. And that which he once despised, he now longs after as the hart pants after the water brooks.

His fears are different—he no longer fears man, but fears his God. His hopes are also altered. His expectations fly beyond the stars— ***“He looks for a city which hands have not piled. He pants for a country by sin undefiled.”***

The man has begun a new life. A convert once said, “Either the world is altered or else I am.” Everything seems new! The very faces of our children look different to us, for we regard them under a new aspect, viewing them as heirs of immortality! We view our friends from a different standpoint. Our very business seems altered. Even taking down the shutters in the morning is done by the husband in a different spirit, and the children are put to bed by the mother in another mood. We learn to sanctify the hammer and the plow by serving the Lord with them! We feel that the things which are seen are shadows—and the things which we hear are but voices out of dreamland. But the *unseen* is substantial and that which mortal ears hear not is the Truth of God.

Faith has become to us “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” I may go on to talk about this, but none will understand me except those who have experienced it—so let not those who have *not* experienced it say it is not true. How do they know? How can a man bear witness to what he has *not* seen? What is the value of testimony from a man who begins by saying, “I know nothing about it”? If a credible witness declares that he knows such a thing to have happened,

it would be easy to find 50 persons who can say that they did *not* see it, but their evidence goes for nothing. Here are men of position, quite as keen in business and able to judge between fact and fiction as other men—they tell you solemnly that they have, themselves, experienced a wonderful, thorough and total change of nature. Surely if their honest testimony would be taken in any court of law it ought to be taken in this case! Brethren, I pray that we may know what this change is, and if we do know it, I again pray that we may so live that others may see the result of it upon our characters and inquire what it means. The phenomena of conversion are the standing miracles of the Church.

“Greater things than these shall you do,” said Christ, “because I go to My Father.” And these are some of the greater things which the power of the Holy Spirit still performs. This day the dead are raised, blind eyes are opened and the lame are made to walk. The *spiritual* miracle is greater than the physical one. These spiritual miracles show that Jesus lives and puts life and power into the Gospel. Tell me of a ministry which never reclaims the drunk, never calls back the thief to honesty, never pulls down the self-righteous and makes him confess his sin—that, in a word, never transforms its hearers—and I am sure that such a ministry is not worth the time which men spend in listening to it! Woe unto the man who at the last shall confess to a ministry fruitless in conversions!

If the Gospel does not convert men, do not believe in it! But if it does, it is its own evidence and must be believed. It may be to some of you a stumbling block, and to others foolishness, but unto those who believe, it is the power of God unto salvation, saving them from sin! Beloved Hearers, may we all meet in Heaven! But to meet in Heaven we must all be renewed, for inside yonder gates of pearl none can enter but those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus our Lord. God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 3.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—175, 448, 603.**  
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CHRIST THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS NEW  
NO. 1328

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away;  
behold, all things are become new.”  
2 Corinthians, 5:17.~~***

WE shall try to preach, this morning, of Christ as the Author of the new creation and may we be enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak to His Glory. To create all things new is one of His most famous achievements! May we not only gaze upon it but be partakers in it. What says Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes? Does he not tell us, there, that “the thing that has been shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun”? No doubt Solomon was correct in this declaration, but he wrote of this world and not of the world to come of which we speak. For, behold, in the world to come, that is to say, in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, all things are new!

To the wisest mind, if unrenewed, there is *nothing* new, but to the humblest of the regenerated ones, all things have become new. The word, “new,” seems to harmonize sweetly with the name and work of our Lord Jesus, inasmuch as He comes in after the old system had failed and begins anew with us as the Father and Head of a chosen race. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant and has come to place us in a new relationship towards God. As the second Adam, He has delivered us from the old broken Covenant of Works wherein we lay under the curse and He has placed us under the new infallible Covenant of Grace wherein we are established by His merit.

The blood of Jesus Christ is said to be “the blood of the New Covenant”—there is thus a connection with newness even in the most vital point of our dear Redeemer’s Person. The blood is to Him the life, thereof, and apart from that blood He can bestow no remission of sin. Thus there is a newness about that essential life-flood, for when He gives us to drink of His cup of remembrance, He says, “this is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” “Now has He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much, also, He is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better promises.”

The old Covenant, the old ceremonial Law, the old spirit of bondage and the whole of the old leaven, Jesus has purged out of the house. He has admitted to a new dispensation wherein Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. When our Lord Jesus came into the world, His birth of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit was a new thing, for thus had the Prophet Jeremiah said of old in the name of the Lord, “How long will you go about, O you backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.” Unto us a Child

is born who is the virgin’s Son, in whom we do rejoice because He comes into the world without taint of original sin, after a new fashion, as never man was born before!

Coming thus into the old world, He publishes new doctrine, for His doctrine is called Gospel, or Good News. It is the freshest news that an anxious heart can hear! It is the most novel music by which a troubled breast can be soothed! Jesus Christ’s teaching is still the best news of these days, as it was centuries ago. Though the world has had nearly 1900 years of the glad tidings, the Gospel has the dew of its youth upon it and when men hear it they still ask, as the Greeks did of old, “What new doctrine is this?”

Our Lord Jesus has come to set up, by the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, a new kingdom, a kingdom having new laws, new customs, a new charter and new riches. It is a kingdom which is not of this world—a kingdom founded upon better principles and bringing infinitely better results to its subjects than any other dominion that has ever been. Into that kingdom He introduces only new men, who are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, who therefore love His new commandments and serve Him in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Moreover, Christ has opened for us an entrance into the kingdom of Heaven above, for now we come to God “by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.” When, in days to come, we shall meet Him again, there will still be novelty, for He has said, “I will not drink from now on of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” Indeed, concerning our Lord and Master, everything is new and was it not so prophesied? For did not Isaiah say, in the 43rd chapter, 18th verse, “Remember you not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?”

And to the same effect was his prophecy in the 65th chapter, 17th verse: “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” This newness of everything was to be a leading feature in Messiah’s reign and it has already been so, but far more shall this be seen in the latter days. Does not John in Revelation 21:5, say, “He who sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new”? Foretold in former ages as the Creator of new heavens and a new earth, our Lord shall, at last, in the summing up, be plainly seen to be the Maker of all things new.

Do you wonder, Beloved, that if a man is in Christ he is a new creature? If everything that Christ touches is made new, if He refreshes and revives, if He re-establishes and re-edifies and new-creates wherever He goes, are you at all astonished that those who live nearest to His heart— no, are in vital *union* with His blessed Person—should also be made new? It would be very astonishing if it were *not* so! Let us direct our attention, then, to the teaching of the text, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.”

**I.** We shall first consider with brevity THE GROUND OF THE NOVELTY which is here spoken of. It is, “If any man is in *Christ*, he is a new creature,” not otherwise. No man comes to be a new creature by any process apart from Christ. “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature,” but if any man is *not* in Christ, he is *not* a new creature, nor can he become so except by connection with Him of whom it is written that He is “the beginning of the creation of God.” As in the old creation, “without Him was not anything made that was made,” so is it in the new! He makes all things new, but the things that are apart from Him have waxed old and are ready to perish—neither can they renew their youth.

As well might the face of the earth hope to be renewed with spring apart from the sun, as for a soul to hope for spiritual renewal apart from Jesus! The wonderful newness produced by regeneration and new creation is the work of the Holy Spirit and His operations are all in union with the Lord Jesus and aimed at His Glory. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and He that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” But how comes it that a man is, indeed, a new creature if he is in Christ?

I answer, first, it comes necessarily from *the representative Character of Christ* towards those who are in Him. If you wanted a man to be made a new creature, and were Omnipotent, what process would suggest itself to you? I think a double one. To make an old creature into a new creature, there must first be the stroke which ends him and then the touch which begins him anew. To put it more plainly, there must be *death* and then *life*. Now, has that taken place upon those who are in Christ? Of course it has, if it has taken place upon Christ, Himself, because He is the Head and represents the members!

As Adam acted for the seed in him, so Christ has acted for the seed in Him. See, then, Beloved, Christ has died. He came before the Judgment Seat with our sins upon Him, the Representative of those of whom He is the Head. And in Him, death, which was the penalty of sin, was fulfilled to the letter—its most bitter dregs being drunk up. Jesus died. We are certain that He died, for the executioners broke not His legs because they saw that He was already dead. So one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and there came out blood and water. We know that He died, for the jealous eyes of His enemies would not have permitted Him to have been taken down from the Cross unless the life had assuredly departed.

He was laid in the grave, assuredly dead, under the dominion of Death for the time being. And you and I who are in Him, at that time, died in Him. “If one died for all, then all died.” Such is the proper translation of that passage. We died, for He died in our name. Our sin was punished in Him by the death which He endured. You see, then, Brothers and Sisters, we are dead—dead by virtue of our Federal Union with Jesus Christ. I mean not all of you, unless you are all in Christ Jesus. Judge whether it is so with you or not. But I mean as many as the Father gave to Christ! As many as Christ, in His intent, did specially redeem by becoming their Substitute—these were in Him and in Him they died—being crucified with

Him.  
In Him, also, all His people rose again when He rose! On the third day  
He burst the bonds of Death and left the grave on our behalf! See how the  
Holy Spirit, by His servant Paul, identifies us with all this. “Now if we are  
dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that  
Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that  
He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise reckon you, also, yourselves, to be  
dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our  
Lord.”  
As far as He was our Representative, He was a new man when He rose.  
The Law had no claims upon Him—He had been dead and so had passed  
out of its jurisdiction. The Law never had any claim upon the risen  
Christ—it had a claim upon Him when He came under the Law, but when  
He had satisfied it to the last jot and tittle, by death—He was completely  
clear! Has the law of our country any claim upon a man after he is dead?  
If a dead man can be raised again, all his past offenses are done with—he  
begins a new life and is not under the old law.  
And so with Christ and so with us, for here is the point of union—we  
are risen with Him by faith of the Resurrection of Christ. We have been  
dead and buried, and now we are risen, and thus this, which is the very  
best and surest process for making a person a new creature, has been  
undergone by all God’s elect, by reason of the representative and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His glorious representative Resurrection on  
their behalf! But, Beloved, there is another meaning. *We are made new  
creatures by an actual process* as well as by the legal process which I have  
described, and here, also, the same thing is done.  
We are made vitally one with Jesus Christ when we believe in Him—  
and then do we spiritually die and are made to live again. Our faith apprehends the dying of Christ and we feel, at the same time, the sentence  
of death in ourselves. We see how we deserve to die for sin and we accept  
the sentence, confessing our guiltiness before the Most High, and there is  
proclaimed throughout the powers and passions of the soul, a decree from  
God that the flesh shall die with all its lusts. We write down sin as from  
now on dead to us and ourselves as dead to it! We labor to mortify all our  
evil desires and the lusts of the flesh and all that comes of the flesh! When we believe in Jesus, a sword goes through the very loins of sin  
and the arrows of the Lord stick fast in the hearts of the King’s enemies  
that lurk within our spirit. There also comes a new life into us as we behold Jesus risen from the dead. When we believe in Jesus we receive from  
God a new vital principle of superior and heavenly character, akin to Deity—there drops into our soul a sacred Seed from the hand of the eternal  
Spirit, living and incorruptible, which abides forever—and forever brings  
forth fruit after its kind. As we believe in Christ living, we live in Christ  
and live after the fashion of Christ—and the Spirit of Him that raised up  
Christ from the dead dwells in our mortal bodies, making us to live in  
newness of life!  
Now, Beloved, do you know anything about this? Have you been made  
new creatures by death and resurrection? If you have been baptized, you  
have professed that so it has been with you. “Know you not that so many  
of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?  
Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death: that like as  
Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we,  
also, should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together  
in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” In the ordinance of Baptism, by burial in the water and rising up  
from it, there is a setting forth as in a type and figure of our Lord’s burial  
and Resurrection and, at the same time, it is an emblem of the process by  
which we become new creatures in Him.  
But is it*really*so in your souls? Are you from now on dead to the  
world, and dead to sin, and quickened into the life of Christ? If you are so,  
then the text will bear to you a third and practical meaning, for it will not  
merely be true that your old man is condemned to die and a new nature is  
bestowed, but *in your common actions you will try to show this by newness  
of actual conversation*. Evils which tempted you at one time will be unable  
to beguile you, now, because you are dead to them! The charms of the  
painted face of the world will no longer attract your attention, for your  
eyes are blind to such deceitful beauties! You have obtained a new life  
which can only be satisfied by new delights, which can only be excited by  
new objects and constrained by new principles suitable to its own nature!  
This you will continually show.  
The life of God within you will make your actions pregnant with holiness and the end, thereof, shall be everlasting life! Your faith in Christ  
clearly evinces you to be a new creature, for it kills your old confidences  
and makes you build upon a new basis. Your love to Christ also shows  
your newness, for it has slain your old actions and captured your heart  
for Jesus only. And your hope, which is also a gift of the blessed Spirit, is  
set upon new things altogether, while your old hopes are things of which  
you are now ashamed. Thus it is that first, by the Headship of Christ, you  
are legally dead and alive, again.  
Next, by your vital union with Christ, you are dead and alive, again, as  
a matter of experience. And now it is practically proven in your life, from  
day to day, that you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. In all  
these three ways you are new creatures by the double process of dying  
and quickening. You are under a new Adam and so start life afresh as  
new creatures. You are under a new Covenant and commence to act under different principles and so are new creatures. You are quickened by a  
new Spirit and so in thought and word and deed are seen to be new creatures. But all this is *in Christ*, and if you are *not* in Christ you are still in  
the old world which must shortly be destroyed. As “by the Word of God  
were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His  
mouth,” so have you been created by Jesus, the Eternal Word, and quickened by His Spirit or else you still abide in death.  
If your faith has never laid her hand upon Christ’s Sacrifice for sin,  
then your soul has never felt the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit! And all the baptismal regeneration and all else of human invention that may now comfort you is but a vain deceit. You *must* be born again, but it can only be in Christ Jesus, for to “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” “He that has the Son has life; and He that has not the Son of God  
has not life.”  
O that we may all believe in Him, and enter into the new life— ***“Author of the new creation,  
Come with all Your Spirit’s power!  
Make our hearts Your habitation,  
On our souls Your Graces shower.”***  
II. I shall, in the second place, lead you to consider the ESSENCE OF  
THIS NOVELTY. “If any man is in Christ, He is *a new creature*.” Read, and  
the reading will be accurate, “He is a new *creation*.” This is a very sweeping statement. A man in Christ is not the old man *purified*, nor the old  
man *improved*, nor the old man in a *better humor*, nor the old man with  
additions and subtractions! Nor is he the old man dressed in gorgeous  
robes! No, he is a *new* creature altogether! As for the old man, what is to  
be done with him? Can he not be sobered, reformed and made to do us  
useful service? No, he is crucified with Christ and bound to die by a lingering but certain death!  
The capital sentence is passed upon him, for he cannot be mended and,  
therefore, must be ended. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is  
not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be.” You cannot  
change the old nature! It is immutably bad and the sooner it is put away  
as a filthy and unclean thing, the better for us! The Believer, so far as he  
is in Christ, is a new creation! He is not the old stuff put into a new fashion, or the old material worked up into an improved form, but absolutely a  
new creation! To create is to make out of nothing and that is precisely how  
the newborn life came into us. It is not a development, or an outgrowth,  
but a *creation—*a heavenly something called into being by a power from  
above.  
The new man in us is made out of nothing that was in us before, for  
Nature does not assist Grace but is opposed to it. Christ has not found  
light stored away in our darkness, nor life amid the corruption of our  
spiritual death! The new birth is from above and the life produced thereby  
is a new creation and not the goodness of Nature educated till it becomes  
Grace! They are getting up a notion, in certain quarters, that the children  
of pious parents, if not of all mankind, are the children of God by their  
first birth and only need certain training and influences to be brought to  
bear upon them and then they will develop into Christians as they grow  
up into manhood and womanhood.  
One Divine says that our children ought not to need conversion! This  
theory is false throughout, for the best of children are, by nature, heirs of  
wrath even as others! The Grace of God in the soul is a new creation and  
not the natural development of a pious education and training working  
upon the innate goodness of men! Indeed there is no such goodness there  
at all! It is altogether a dream! The new man in Christ is not the old creature washed and put out to school and elevated by “modern thought and culture.” No, the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots—do what you will with them—they will still be an Ethiopian and a  
leopard!  
But the new man in Christ is another creature altogether. Mark you, it  
is not said that the man has something new *about* him, but he, himself, is  
new! It is not merely that in a *spiritual* sense he has new eyes, new hands  
and new feet—but he, he, he, he, himself, is a new creation! Mark that! Do  
you not see, then, that salvation is the work of God? You cannot create  
yourself and you cannot create anything at all! Try and create a fly, first,  
and then you may dream of being able to create a new heart and a right  
spirit in another *person*! But even then it would be quite another matter to  
new create *yourself*.  
Is not the very idea an absurdity? Shall nothing create something?  
Shall darkness create light? Shall sin create holiness? Shall death create  
life? Shall the devil create God? None of these questions are more absurd  
than the idea of the sinner’s being able to new create himself. No, Beloved,  
regeneration is an extraordinary work, demanding Omnipotence to accomplish it! It is, in fact, a Divine work, for it is the supreme prerogative of  
God to create—  
***“Know that the Lord is God alone,  
He can create, and He destroy.”***  
If any man is in Christ, it is not only said that he is a creation, but a *new*  
creation, and the word here translated, “new,” as has been well observed,  
does not signify *recent*, but something altogether different from that which  
previously existed! A book may be new and yet it may be only a fresh copy  
of some old work. But that is not the case in this instance. The creature is  
not a new specimen of the same kind as the old, but another and different  
creation!  
We might almost read the text as if it said, “If any man is in Christ, he  
is a fresh creation, a new kind of creature altogether.” The new creation  
differs essentially from the old, although the first is an instructive emblem  
of the second. The first creation was the work of physical power, the second a work of *spiritual* power—the first created, for the most part, materialism in its various forms—but the new creation deals with spiritual  
things and manifests the most sublime attributes of the Divine Character.  
God, in Nature, is glorious, but in Grace He is all-glorious!  
The second is a creation nearer to the heart of God than the first creation was, for when He made the world He simply said it was good. But  
when He makes the new creation, it is written, “He shall rest in his love;  
He shall rejoice over you with singing.” So gladdening to His heart is the  
sight of the new creature which His Grace has made, that He sings a joyful hymn! Furthermore, we must note that if any man is in Christ, he is a  
new creature and the creation of him bears some resemblance to the creation of the world.  
I have at other times gone through that wonderful first chapter of the  
Book of Genesis, which is a Bible in miniature, and I have shown you how  
it sets forth the spiritual creation. Behold, by nature we lie like chaos—a  
mass of disorder, confusion and darkness. As in the old creation, so in the new. The Spirit of God broods over us and moves upon the face of all things. Then the Word of the Lord comes and says within us, as before in chaos and old night, “Let there be light,” and there is light. After light there comes a division of the light from the darkness and we learn to call  
them by their names. The light is, “day,” and the darkness is, “night.” So to us there is a knowing and a naming of things and a discerning of  
differences in matters which before we were ashamed when we put light  
for darkness. After a while there comes forth in us the lower forms of  
spiritual life. As in the earth there came grasses and herbs, so in us there  
come desire, hope and sorrow for sin. By-and-by there appeared on the  
globe fowl, fish, beasts and living things—and life beyond all count. So,  
also, in the new creation, from having life we go on to have it more abundantly. God, by degrees, created all His works till at last He had finished  
all the host of them. And even so He works on till He completes in us the  
*new creation* and looks upon us with rejoicing! Then He brings to us a day  
of rest, blessing us and causing us to enter into His rest because of His  
finished work. We could draw a very beautiful parallel if we had time, but  
you can think it out

for yourselves.  
Now, notice very carefully that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, and this certifies that a new creation has taken place upon every  
man who is in Christ, whether by nature he was a Jew or Gentile, a moralist or a rake, a philosopher or a fool! When a man is converted and  
brought to Christ, he has invariably become a new creature. If he has believed in Jesus only three minutes, yet he is a new creature! And if he has  
known the Lord 70 years he can be no more. A new creation is a new  
creature and in this matter there is no difference between the babe in  
Grace and the father in Israel!  
As this creation is common to all the saints, so is it *immediate and present*. “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.” It is not spoken of as  
a something that is *to* happen to him in the last article of death, wherein  
some seem to hope that many wonderful changes will be worked in them!  
But he who is in Christ is a new creature *now*. “Neither circumcision nor  
uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creature.” And that new creature is now possessed and, I may add, *consciously* possessed, too, for although there may arise occasional doubts upon this question, yet in a  
man’s inmost self he finds cause to know that there has passed upon him  
a marvelous change which only God, Himself, could have worked. This change is *universal in the man.* The new man is not full grown in  
every part, nor, in fact, in *any* part, and yet in all the portions of his regenerated nature he is a new creature. I mean this—if any man is in  
Christ, it is not merely his mental eye that is a new creation, but he, himself, is a new creation! He has a new heart according to the promise, “A  
new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” He  
has new ears, hearing what he refused to hear before. He has a new  
tongue and can pray with it as he never prayed before! He has new feet  
and these delight to run in the ways of God’s Commandments. I refer, of course, only to His inner man, that is altogether new, and not  
any one part of it, only. If a man is merely enlightened in understanding, what is that? It is good, but it is not salvation! A new brain is not all that is needed to make a new man. A new man is spiritually new-created from head to foot. Though but a babe in Grace and not fully developed in any one part, yet he is new, “created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).Thus  
have I tried to show you the essence of the novelty.  
**III.** Let us next consider THE EXTENT OF THE NOVELTY. “If any man  
is in Christ, he is a new creature: *old things are passed away; behold, all  
things have become new*.” It seems, then, that not only is the man a new  
creature, but he has entered into a new creation. He has opened his eyes  
in a new world! Imagine Adam falling asleep at the gates of Paradise just  
under the cherubim’s flaming sword, with the thorns and thistles springing up before him, and the serpent’s trail behind him! And then further  
picture him lying there in a deep sleep till the Lord touches him, makes  
him open his eyes and causes him to find himself in a better Paradise  
than the one he had lost!  
It was not so in reality, but can you imagine such a thing? If so, it may  
serve as a symbol of what the Lord has done for us. We are made new and  
find ourselves in a new world! What about *the old things*? The text says  
they have passed away. The Greek word gives the idea of their having  
passed away spontaneously. I cannot liken it to anything that I know of  
better than the snow which melts in the sun. You wake up one morning  
and all the trees are festooned with snowy wreaths, while down below  
upon the ground the snow lies in a white sheet over everything. Lo, the  
sun has risen, its beams shed a genial warmth and in a few hours, where  
is the snow? It has passed away!  
Had you hired a thousand carts and horses and machines to sweep it  
away it could not have been more effectually removed. It has passed away.  
That is what the Lord does in the new creation—His love shines on the  
soul, His Grace renews us and the old things pass away as a matter of  
course. Where are your old views about which you used to be so positive?  
Where are those old opinions for which you could freely have knocked a  
man down? Where are those old sneers against God’s people? Where are  
those old pleasures which you took so much delight in? Where are those  
old engrossing pursuits? Had you a hard tug to get away from these  
bonds?  
Where are those old joys, those old hopes, those old trusts, those old  
confidences? Was it difficult to shake them off? Ah, no! Beneath the power  
of the Holy Spirit they have passed away! You hardly know how it is, but  
they have gone and gone completely. As a dream, when one awakes, you  
have despised their image and your heart knows them no more. It is marvelous, in this new creation, how the Lord makes confusion and old night  
to fly! You may call for them and say, “Chaos, where are you?” But no answer comes back, for old things are passed away! Our Lord Jesus Christ  
causes all this! Where His blessed face beams with Grace and truth, as  
the sun with warmth and light, He dissolves the bands of sin’s long frost  
and brings on the spring of Grace with newness of buds and flowers. But when you remove the old what is to take its place? Do you not observe that *new things have come*? “Behold, all things are become new.” Now the man has new views, new notions, new ambitions, new convictions, new desires, new hopes, new dreads, new aims, new principles and new affections! He is led by a new spirit and follows a new course of life! Everything about him, in fact, is as if he had come fresh from the hand of God! Even as with the cleansed leper, as his flesh came, again, to him as the flesh of a little child and he was clean, so it is with the heart renewed by Grace! Beloved, it is delightful to read in the Book of Revelation and anticipate the things which are to be hereafter. How full that book is of novelties which illustrate our subject, for there you read of a *new name*  
which the Lord bestows upon those who overcome.  
Perhaps some of you used to be known by some nickname or vulgar  
epithet while you lived in the world and were a lover of it. Now, in all  
probability, you are called by quite a different name among your Christian  
friends. Saul the persecutor is called Paul when he becomes an Apostle.  
Moreover, there is a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name,  
which no man knows, saving he that receives it. You have been named  
with the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and  
you wear, from now on, that name by which the whole family in Heaven  
and earth is named. Grace also has taught you a *new song*, “He has put a  
new song into my mouth and established my goings.” You are rehearsing  
the music of that glorious band of whom it is written, “They sung a new  
song, saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals  
thereof.”  
Now are you a citizen of a *new city*, the New Jerusalem which comes  
down out of Heaven from God, which shall be established among the sons  
of men in the last days as the world’s metropolis, concerning which they  
shall say, “The temple of God is with men and He does dwell among  
them.” Beloved, each one of you has now become part of *one new man*. Do  
you know what I mean by that? There were once the Jews and the Gentiles, but now, said Paul, Christ “has broken down the middle wall of partition; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace.” The  
mystical body of Christ is the one new man and we are members of that  
body! From now on we have communion with all saints and to us “there is  
neither Greek nor Jew, bound nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.” Even now we have commenced to live in a new Heaven and walk upon a  
new earth—and we are anticipating the time when literally, on this very  
earth where we have struggled, there shall be set up a new condition of  
things, for the first Heaven and the first earth shall have passed away and  
there shall be no more sea. Rolled up like a scroll shall yon blue heavens  
be, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth to which, in  
expectation, we are always drawing near and pressing forward with inward yearning, for already in Christ Jesus we are a part of that new creation which is more fully to be revealed.  
**IV.** Fourthly let us consider THE RESULT OF THIS NOVELTY. “If any  
man is in Christ, he is a new creature.” Well, the result of this novelty is, first, that the man is already a great wonder to himself. You know the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls—the soul passing, first, into one body and then into another—and so existing under different conditions. We do not believe that fiction for a moment, but if it had been true, the memories of such souls must have been stored with varied in  
formation, surpassingly strange to hear.  
Ours is another transformation. It is death and resurrection—the old  
passing away and the new being created—and how remarkable are the  
experiences of the men who have been so transformed! Here is a man who  
is a new creature and he has a very distinct recollection of the time when  
he was something far other than he is now! What a change he has undergone! Suppose a swine could suddenly be turned into a man and yet remember what it did when it was one of the herd! What an experience it  
would have to tell! If you could take a hog from the trough and turn it into  
an emperor, that would not be half so great a change as is accomplished  
when an unregenerated sinner becomes a saint!  
I guarantee you the emperor would not find much cause for glorifying  
in his former swinish state! He would be silent and ashamed when others  
mentioned it. If he alluded to that state, it would always be with the  
blushes of humiliation and the tears of gratitude. If anybody began to talk  
about it and he knew that there might be others about him that might be  
helped by hearing what the Lord had done, he would begin to tell, in a  
gentle, modest way, how the Lord transformed him from a swine into a  
monarch. But he would never, never boast—how could he? In such a case  
the poor swine would have no responsibility and could not be blamed for  
wallowing in the mire.  
But this cannot be said of *us*, for when we acted as swine we knew better and sinned willfully. Still, what a change it is! How I wonder at myself!  
How I marvel at the goodness of my God! How I adore that sacred power  
which has made me the child of two births, the subject of two creations!  
He first made me in the fashion of a man and then made me in the image  
of the Man, Christ Jesus! I was first born to die and then born to live  
eternally! Let us bless God and be full of lowly wonder this morning! The next result of this new creation is, however, that the man does not  
feel at home in this present evil world, for this is the old creation. The new  
man, the twice-born man, feels as if he were out of his element and not in  
a congenial country. He dwells in a body which is nothing better than a  
frail, uncomfortable, easily removed tent in which he groans, earnestly desiring to enter his own house at home, the house not made with hands,  
eternal in the heavens. Wherever he goes, things seem out of order with  
the rule which is set up in his soul. He loves not the world, neither the  
things in the world. The world’s glories do not charm him and its treasures do not enchant him. Earth’s music grates upon his refined ears,  
which are tuned to heavenly harmony! Its dainties do not delight the taste  
which has learned to enjoy the Bread of Heaven. The new creatures pine  
to be in the new creation!  
And Beloved, while we are pining we are preparing! The Spirit of God is  
working us to this same thing and filling us with groans and pangs of strong desires which indicate that we are becoming more and more fit to be partakers with the saints in light—they who see the face of the Beloved without a veil and drink in ever new delights! Mark, once more, while the new creature is thus watching and waiting for the new creation, he is, meanwhile, extending an influence, more or less unconscious, over the old world in which he dwells. Just as our Lord has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for us, so we, His people, are stopping here to prepare a place for  
Him.  
We are, by His Grace, winning men from the world to Christ! We are  
raising the tone of morals, we are spreading light and truth on all sides by  
the power of the Spirit and so we are helping to make the world more  
ready to receive the great King. We are seeking out His jewels. We are  
bringing His rebellious subjects to His feet. The life that is in us seems out  
of place in this mortal frame, for the body is dead because of sin and,  
therefore, we groan, being burdened. As for the world itself, it is not our  
rest, for it is polluted.  
It seems a dreadful thing for the living Spirit to be dwelling in this  
graveyard of a world, but it is necessary for us to be here. We are linked  
with a creation made subject to vanity, because it was thus subjected, not  
willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope that  
the creation, itself, “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into  
the glorious liberty of the children of God.” We are here as links between  
the spiritual and the material and we are working out Divine purposes for  
the fuller display of the Divine Glory!  
We comfort one another with these words and as new creatures in Jesus Christ, we look for the new heavens and the new earth and for the  
coming of your Lord and Savior! Know you not that when He shall appear,  
then shall *you,* also, appear with Him in glory? Let us, even now, bow before Him and salute Him with the language of our hymn—  
***“To You the world its treasure brings!  
To You its mighty bow!  
To You the Church exulting springs  
Her Sovereign, Savior!  
Beneath Your touch, beneath Your smile,  
New heavens and earth appear,  
No sin their beauty to defile,  
Nor dim them with a tear.”***

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18; 5.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—907, 391, 474.**

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THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE  
NO. 881

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 18, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.” 2 Corinthians 5:17.~~***

THIS text is exceedingly full of matter and might require many treatises, and even multitudes of folios to bring forth all its meaning. Holy Scripture is notably abounding. Human teachers are given to verbiage—we multiply words to express our meaning, but the Lord is wondrously concise—He writes as it were in shorthand and gives us much in little. One single grain of the precious gold of Scripture may be beaten out into acres of human gold leaf and spread far and wide! A few books are precious as silver, fewer, still, are golden—but God’s Bible has a bank note in every syllable, and the worth of its sentences is not possible for mortal intellect to calculate.

We have two great Truths of God here which would serve us for the subject of meditation for many days—the Believer’s position—he is “in Christ.” And the Believer’s character—he is a “new creature.” Upon both of these we shall speak but briefly this morning, but may God grant that we may find instruction in it.

**I.**First, then, let us consider THE CHRISTIAN’S POSITION—he is said to be “*in Christ*.” There are three stages of the human soul in connection with Christ—the first is *without* Christ—this is the state of nature. The next is *in* Christ—this is the state of Divine Grace. The third is *with* Christ—that is the state of glory. *Without* Christ, this is where we all are born and nurtured and even though we hear the Gospel and the Bible is in all our houses—and even though we use a form of prayer—yet until we are born again we are without God, without Christ and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

A man may stand at the banqueting table and may be without food unless he puts out his hand to grasp that which is provided. And a man may have Christ preached in his hearing every Lord’s-Day and be without Christ unless he puts forth the hand of faith to lay hold upon Him. It is a most unhappy condition to be without Christ. It is inconvenient to be without gold. It is miserable to be without health. It is deplorable to be without a friend. It is wretched to be without reputation. But to be without Christ is the worst lack in all the world! O that God would make all of us sensible of it who are now the subjects of it and may we no longer tarry in the position of being without Christ!

The next state is that indicated in the text, “ *in* Christ,” of which I will say more, by-and-by. “In Christ” leads to the third state, which we can never reach without this second one, namely, to be *with* Christ—to be His companion in the rest which He has attained, all His work and labor done. To be *with* Him in the Glory which He has gained—made to see it and to participate in it world without end! To be*with* Christ is the angels’ joy. It is the Heaven of Heavens! It is the center of bliss, the sun of Paradise! Let us seek after it and in order that we may have it, let us labor with all our heart and mind to be found in Christ *now*, that we may be in Christ in the day of His appearing.

We now turn to the expression itself, “in Christ.” I never heard of any persons being in any other man but Christ. We may follow certain leaders, political or religious, but we are never said to be included *in* them. We may take for ourselves eminent examples and high models of humanity, but no man is said, in any respect, to be *in* another. But this is a grand old Scriptural phrase in which the disciple and the follower of Christ becomes something more than an imitator of his Lord and is said to be *in* his Master.

We must interpret this Scriptural phrase by Scriptural symbols. We were, all of us, *in* the first Adam. Adam stood for us. Had Adam kept the command, we had all of us been blessed. He took of the forbidden fruit and fell—and all of us fell in him. Original sin falls upon us because of the transgression of our covenant head and representative, Adam the first. But all Believers are in the same sense in Christ, Adam the second, the only other representative Man before God, the heavenly Man, the Lord from Heaven. Now, as in Adam we all fell, so all who are in Christ are *in* Christ perfectly restored.

The obedience of Christ is the obedience of all His people. The Atonement of Christ is a propitiation for all His people’s sins. In Christ we lived on earth, in Christ we died, in Christ we rose and He “has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places” in Himself. As the Apostle tells us that Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him, so were we in the loins of Christ from before the foundation of the world—faith apprehends that blessed Truth of God and thus by faith we are experimentally in Christ Jesus.

Noah’s Ark was a type of Christ. The animals that were preserved from the deluge passed through the door *into* the ark. The Lord shut them in and high above the foaming billows they floated in perfect safety. We are *in* Christ in the same sense. He is the Ark of God provided against the Day of Judgment. We, by faith, believe Him to be capable of saving us—we come and trust Him, we risk our souls with Him, believing that there is no risk. We venture on Him confident that it is no venture—giving up every other hope or shadow of a hope, we trust in what Jesus did, is doing and is in Himself, and thus He becomes to us our Ark and we are *in* Him.

Another similitude may be taken from the old Jewish Law. By God’s commands certain cities were provided throughout all Canaan that an Israelite who should slay his fellow unintentionally might flee there from the avenger of blood. The City of Refuge no sooner received the manslayer than he was perfectly free from the avenger who pursued him. Once within the suburbs or through the gate, and the manslayer might breathe safely. The executioner would be kept at bay. In the same sense we are in Christ Jesus. He is God’s eternal City of Refuge and we, having offended, having slain, as it were, the command of God, flee for our lives and enter within the refuge city where vengeance cannot reach us, but where we shall be safe world without end.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus explains this phrase of being in Himself in another way. He represents us as being in Him as the branch is in the vine. Now the branch derives all its nourishment—its sap, its vitality, its fruitbearing power—from the *stem* with which it is united. It would be of no use that the branch should be placed*close* to the trunk. It would be of no service even to strap it side by side with the stem—it must be actually*in* it by a vital union. There must be streams of sap flowing at the proper season into it—lifefloods gushing into it from the parent stem. And even so there is a mysterious union between Christ and His people—not to be explained but to be *enjoyed*— not to be defined but to be *experienced*.

This is a union in which the very life of Christ flows into us and we, by the virtue that comes out of Him into us, become like unto Him and bring forth clusters of good fruit unto His honor and unto God’s Glory. I trust you know what this means, Beloved, many of you. May you live in the possession of it daily! May you be one with Jesus, knit to Him, united to Him—never to be separated forever! As the limb is in the body, even so may you constantly be one with Jesus. We may be in Christ, also, as the stone is in the building. The stone is built into the wall and is a part of it. In some of the old Roman walls you can scarcely tell which is the firmer, the cement or the stone, for their cement was so exceedingly strong that it held the stones together as though they were one mass of rock. And such is the eternal love which binds the saints to Christ. They become one rock—one palace wall, one temple—to the praise and Glory of the God who built the fabric. Thus you see what it is to be *in* Christ. It is to trust Him for salvation as Noah trusted the ark. It is to derive real life from Him as the branch does from the stem. It is to lean on Him and to be united to Him as the stone leans on the foundation and becomes an integral part of the structure.

The phrase, “in Christ Jesus,” then, has a weight of meaning in it. “How do we come to be there?” asks one. To whom we answer—our union to Christ is practically and experimentally worked in us by *faith* when a man gives himself up to Christ—to sink or swim with Christ. It is when he leans his soul wholly on the Beloved. It is when, as for his good works, he abhors them! And as for his self-righteousness, he counts it dross and dung! It is when he clings to the sole hope of the Cross—then is such a man *in* Christ. He is further in Christ when he loves Jesus, when the heart, having trusted and reposed in the Cross, is moved with deep and warm affection to the Crucified, so that the soul clings to Christ, embracing Him with fervent love.

And then Christ becomes the Bridegroom and the heart becomes his spouse and they are married to one another in a union which no divorce can ever separate. When love and faith come together, then is there a blessedly sweet communion! These two Graces become the double channel through which the Holy Spirit’s influence flows forth daily, making the Christian to grow up more fully unto Christ Jesus in all things. The riper the Christian becomes—the nearer to Glory, the closer to the perfection which is promised—the more completely will he think and act and live and move in Christ his Master, being one with Jesus in all things. I shall not detain you longer over that one matter, every *true* Christian is *in* Christ.

**II.**Now we survey THE BELIEVER’S CHARCTER, for it is said that if any man is in Christ he is a “*new creature*.” This is a great utterance. We shall not attempt to dive into it—this were work for a leviathan scholar—but merely like the swallow, we touch the surface of it with our wing and fly away.

What is meant by the Christian being a new creature? Three thoughts seem to me to spring up from the words and the first is the Believer must, then, have been the subject of a radical *change*. He is said to be a *new* creature, which is of all things a most sweeping change. There are many changes which a man may undergo, but they may be far from being radical enough to be worth calling a new *creation*. Saul is among the Prophets—hear how he prophesies. If they speak with sacred rapture the secrets of God, so does he. Is Saul converted? Scripture tells us that God gave him another heart! Yes, *another* heart, but not a *new* heart.

A man may be changed from one sin to another—from reckless profanity to mocking formality—from daring sin to hypocritical pretension to virtue. But such a change as is very far from being*saving* and not at all like the work which is called a new creation. Ahab went and humbled himself after his murder of Naboth and God turned away His vengeance for awhile from him. But that temporary humiliation of Ahab was no sign of a renewal of his *nature—*it was like the changes of the sea which today is smooth, but which soon will be as ravenous after wrecks as ever—being still unchanged in its *nature*, still voracious and cruel, fickle and unstable. Ahab may humble himself, but he is Ahab, still, and as Ahab will he go down into the Pit.

Conversion is sometimes described in Scripture as *healing*. Yet the idea of healing does not rise to the radical character of the text. Naaman went down to the Jordan full of leprosy and he washed himself and came up, after the seventh immersion, with his flesh clean like unto a little child. But it was the same flesh and the same Naaman and he was by no means a new creature. The woman, bowed down with infirmity those sad 18 years, was marvelously changed when she stood upright, as a daughter of Abraham, loosed at last from her bondage. But she was the same woman, and the description does not answer to a new creature.

No doubt there are great moral changes worked in many which are not saving. I have seen a drunk become sober. I have known persons of debauched habits become regular. And yet their changes have not amounted to regeneration or the new birth. The same sin has been within them, reigning still, though it has assumed a different garb and used another voice. Ah, you may be washed from outward leprosies and you may be made straight from your visible infirmities, but this will not suffice! If you are *in* Christ you must have more than this, for, “if any man is in Christ, he is a *new creature*. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.”

Nor will the most startling changes suffice unless they are total and deep. The Ethiopian might change his skin, the leopard might suddenly lose his spots—these would be strange prodigies, but the leopard would remain a leopard and the Ethiopian would still be black at heart. The improvement would not amount to new *creation*. So may a man give up every outward lust and every crying sin which he ever wished to indulge and yet, unless the change shall go far deeper than the outward life, he is not saved—he is not a new *creature* and, therefore, he is not *in* Christ Jesus. I venture to say that even the metaphor of *resurrection*, which is often applied to conversion, does not go so far as the language of the text.

The young daughter of Jairus is placed upon her bed and she dies. Our Lord comes and says to her, “Tabitha cumi,” and she opens her eyes! She awakes! She lives! She eats! Still she is not a new creature—her mother receives her as the same child. Even Lazarus, who has been dead and is supposed through four days of burial, to have begun to stink—when he is called from the grave by the voice of Jesus, he is the subject of a remarkable miracle—but it scarcely amounts to a new creation. He is the same Lazarus restored, not a new creature, but the same creature vivified from a transient sleep of death. Do you see, then, how very searching the phrase here, “a new creature,” is absolutely a new creation? It is a root and branch change—not an alteration of the walls only, but of the foundation!

It is not a new figuring of the visible tapestry, but a renewal of the fabric itself. Regeneration is a change of the entire nature from top to bottom in all senses and respects. Such is the new birth! Such is it to be *in* Christ and to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. The text says that we are new creatures through being *in* Christ. How does that come about? We have known persons disagree very earnestly against the doctrine that men are saved by a simple faith in Jesus Christ. That is the Gospel and nothing else is the Gospel—and those who do not preach that Truth of God know nothing of God’s Gospel at all—for it is the very soul and essence of the Gospel—the article, as Luther used to say, by which a Church stands or falls.

We are saved by a simple faith in Jesus, but these people argue against this on the ground that there must be a great *moral change* in man before he can be reconciled to God and made qualified to be with God forever. But, my Brothers and Sisters, if the text is true, that those who are in Christ are new creatures, what greater change than this can be desired? I know no language—I believe there is none—that can express a greater or more thorough and more radical renewal than that which is expressed in the term, “a new creature.” It is as though the former creature were annihilated and put away and a something altogether new were formed from the breath of the eternal God—even as in the day when the world sprang out of nothing and the morning stars sang together over a new-made universe! Such is the fruit of being*in* Christ—to be a new creature.

And what? Do you moralists want *more* than this? What? Do you pretenders to perfection, you mystic spiritualists who strive after a strange holiness to which you never attain—you that bind heavy burdens upon men’s shoulders which you do not touch, yourselves, with your fingers. Do you want more than this—for a man to be absolutely made a new creature by being in Christ? How is this done? We reply that the man who is in the first Adam, being translated into the second Adam, becomes legally a new creature. As in the first Adam he is judged and condemned, his punishment is laid upon his Substitute. But as viewed in the second representative Man, he is legally, and before the bar of God’s justice, a new creature.

And this is not all! He who believes in Christ, finding himself completely pardoned as the result of his faith in the precious blood of Jesus, loves Christ and loves the God who gave Christ to be his redemption—and that love becomes a master passion. We have all heard of the expulsive power of a new affection. This new affection of love to God coming into the soul expels love to sin. It enters into the heart of man with such a royal majesty about it that it puts down all his predispositions towards evil and his prejudices against the Most High. And with a real and Divine power it reigns within the soul.

I suppose the mode of this great change is somewhat after this sort—the man, at first, is ignorant of his God. He does not know God to be so loving, so kind, so good as He is. Therefore the Holy Spirit shows the man Christ, lets him see the love of God in the Person of Christ and thus illuminates the understanding. Whereas the sinner thought nothing of God before, or his few stray thoughts were all dark and terrible, now he learns the infinite love of God in the Person of Christ and his understanding gets clearer views of God than it ever had before. Then, in turn, the understanding acts upon the affections. Learning God to be thus good and kind, the heart, which was hard towards God, is softened and the man loves the gracious Father who gave Jesus to redeem him from his sins.

The affections being changed, the whole man is on the way towards a great and radical renewal, for now the emotions find another ruler. The passions, once rabid as vultures at the sight of the carrion of sin, now turn with loathing from iniquity and are only stirred by holy principles. The convert grows vehement against evil, as vehement as he once was against the right. Now he longs and pines after communion with God as once he longed and pined after sin! The affections, like a rudder, have changed the direction of the emotions and meanwhile the will, that most stubborn thing of all, that iron sinew, is led in a blessed captivity, wearing silken fetters. The heart wills to do what God wills. Yes, it wills to be perfect, for to will is present with us though how to perform all that we would we find not.

See then, beloved Friends, how great is the change worked in us by our being in Christ! It is a thorough and entire change, affecting all the parts, powers and passions of our manhood. Grace does not reform us, but *recreates* us! It does not pare away here and there an evil growth, but it implants a holy and Divine principle which goes to instant war with all indwelling sin and continues to fight until corruption is subdued and holiness is enthroned. I shall only pause to ask this one question—do my hearers all know what such a change as this means? Believe me, you must know it *personally* for yourselves, or you can never enter Heaven. Let no man deceive you. That regeneration which is said to be worked in*baptism* is a figment without the shadow of foundation! The sprinkling of an infant makes no change in that child whatever!

Infant baptism is, I believe, a vain ceremony not commanded of God, nor warranted in Scripture! And as the Church of England practices it, it is altogether pernicious and superstitious. If there is any effect following it, it must be an evil effect upon those who wickedly lie unto Almighty God by promising and vowing that the unconscious shall keep God’s Commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life! They cannot do for the child, inasmuch as they cannot even do so for themselves! You must have another regeneration than this—not the work of priestly fingers with their hocus-pocus and superstitious genuflections—but the work of the Eternal Spirit, who alone can regenerate the soul! Only the Holy Spirit can give light to the spiritually blinded eye and sensation to the spiritually dead heart. Be not misled by the priests of this age!

You profess to have cast off Rome—cast off her Anglican children! Wear not the rags of her superstition, nor bear her mark on your foreheads. You must be born again in another sense than formality can work in you. It must be an *inward* work, a *spiritual* work and only this can save your souls! If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, that is, he has experienced a radical change.

Secondly, another thought starts up from the expression in the text. There is *Divine working*here. “A new creature.” Creation is the work of God alone. It must be so. If any doubt it, let us bid them make the effort to create the smallest object. The potter places his clay upon the wheel and shapes it after his own pleasure. He fashions the vase, but he is not the creator of it. The clay was there beforehand—he does but change its shape. Will any man who thinks he can play the Creator produce a single grain of dust? Call now and see if there are any that will answer you—call unto nothingness and bid a grain of dust appear at your bidding! It cannot be!

Now, inasmuch as Paul declares the Christian man to be a new creature, it is proven that the Christian man is the work of God and the work of God, alone, “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The inner life of the Christian is the sole work of the Most High and no one can even *pretend* to lift his finger to help the Creator. In creation, who helped God? Who poised the clouds for Him? Who weighed the hills in scales to aid His skill, or helped Him dig the channels of the sea? Who aided in rolling the stars along? Who took a torch to light up the lamps of Heaven? With whom did the Almighty take counsel and who instructed Him? If there are any that can stand with God in the making of the world, then may some pretend to compare with Him in the conversion of souls. But until that shall be, the new creation is God’s sole domain and in it His attributes, and His attributes, alone, shine resplendent. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.”

The sovereign will of God creates men heirs of Divine Grace. My Brethren, it were more difficult, if such terms are ever applicable to Omnipotence—it were more difficult to create a Christian than to create a world! What was there to begin with when God made the world? There was nothing! But nothing could not stand in God’s way—it was at least passive. But, my Brothers and Sisters, in *our* hearts, while there was nothing that could help God, there was much that could and *did* oppose Him! Our stubborn wills, our deep prejudices, our ingrained love of iniquity—all these, great God, opposed You and aimed at thwarting Your designs.

There was darkness in the first creation, but that darkness could not obstruct the incoming of light. “Light be!” was the eternal fiat and light was! But, O great God, how often has Your voice spoken to us and our darkness has refused Your light! We loved darkness rather than light because our deeds were evil. And it was only when You put on the garments of your Omnipotence and come forth in the Glory of your strength, that at last our soul yielded to Your light and the abysmal darkness of our natural depravity made way for Your celestial radiance! Yes, great God, it was great to make a world, but greater to create a new creature in Christ Jesus!

There was chaos when God began to fit up this world for man. There was dire confusion, rampant disorder. But the Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep and brought order speedily, for chaos could not resist the Spirit. But, alas, the disorder of our soul was stout in resistance to the order of God. We would not have His ways nor yield to His commands. But even as we could we set our faces like a flint against the will and power and majesty of the Eternal, yet has He subdued us—yet has He made us the creatures of His mercy. Unto Him, then, be Glory and strength! Unto Him be praise, world without end!

In the creation of the old world God first gave light and afterwards He created life—the life that crept, the life that walked, the life that dived, the life that flew in the midst of Heaven. So has He worked in our hearts. He has given us the life that creeps upon the ground in humiliation for sin. The life that walks in service, the life that swims in sacred waters of repentance, the life that flies on the wings of faith in the midst of Heaven. And, as God separated the light from the darkness and the dry land from the sea, so in the new creature he has separated the old depravity from the new life. He has given to us a holy and incorruptible life which is forever separated from and opposed to the old natural death. And at last, when the old creation was all but finished, God brought forth man in His own image as the top stone.

A like work He will do in us as His new creatures. Having given us light and life and order, He will renew in us the image of God. Yes, that image is in every man who is in Christ Jesus at this hour. Though it is not yet complete, the outlines, as it were, are there. The great Sculptor has begun to chisel out the image of Himself in this rough block of human marble. You cannot see all the features—the Divine lines are not yet apparent. Still, because it is in His design, the Master sees what we see not. He sees in our unhewn nature His own perfect likeness as it is to be revealed in the day of the revealing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Thus, dear Brethren, I have tried to show you that the work which is worked in us when we come to be in Christ Jesus is a Divine work, because it is a new creation.

I shall pause here, again, and say to each hearer, Do you know what it is to be under God’s hand and to be worked by God’s workmanship? Strangers to God must be strangers to Heaven. Beloved, if you have no more religion than you have worked out in yourself and no more Divine Grace than you have found in your nature, you have none at all! A supernatural work of the Holy Spirit *must* be worked in every one of us if we would see the face of God with acceptance. This change is assuredly worked in every man that is in Christ Jesus. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, this work is begun and shall be carried on in you!

But if you have nothing about you but your own works and resolves—your own praying and reforming—you fall short of the Glory of God and you have not that which will be a passport to the skies. God grant you yet to have it. I pray God His Truth may go right through and through your souls like refining fire and may you not be satisfied unless a true new birth, the work of the living God, is really in your possession even now.

We shall now come to the third point which the singular expression of the text brings up. The expression “a new creature,” indicates *remarkable freshnes*s. It is very long since this world saw a new creature. If what geologists say is true, there have been several series of creatures in different periods of time. And each race has given place to another race of new creatures fresh from creation’s mint—new from God’s hand. But it is now 6,000 years, at least, and some of us think many thousand years more, since the day when this last set of creatures came into this world and started upon the race of life!

All the creatures we now see are old and antiquated. The flower which springs from the soil is the repetition of its like which bloomed 5,000 years ago. Yonder meadows bedecked with yellow kingcups and fair daisies are the facsimiles of those our sires looked upon three score years ago. As for ourselves, removed by long lines of pedigree from the man whom Jehovah formed in the Garden, we by nature show small signs of the undefiled hand and sacred finger. The world is hackneyed and stale and old! Time wearily drags on to its Saturday night—it draws near to the last of its work days with heavy footsteps. Any new creature coming fresh into the world would startle and amaze us all! What would men give if the Almighty hand would form a novelty in life and send it among us?

And yet, you Athenian wits that are forever seeking after some new thing, the text tells you that there are new creatures upon earth, positive new creations—fruits that have the freshness and bloom of Eden about them—flowers unfaded, life with the dew of its youth upon it! And these new creatures are Christian men! These new creatures fresh from the Divine hand, as though just fashioned between the eternal palms, are the men that weep for sin! The men that confess their iniquity! The men that say, “God be merciful to us, sinners.” The men who rest in the blood of the Atonement. The men who love Christ Jesus and live to the Glory of the Most High—these are new creatures! There is a freshness about them! They have just come from the hand of God! They enjoy nearness to God! They get to the fountainhead of life and drink where the crystal stream is cool and clear and not muddied by distant trickling through earthly channels!

There is a freshness, I say, about them which is to be found nowhere else! I believe this, believe it because I have experienced it. This world’s a dream, an empty show—there is nothing lasting beneath the stars—everything of seeming joy soon palls upon the mind. Take to study and ransack all the learned and your mind will soon be satiated with knowledge. Take to travel and behold the fairest realms, climb the summits of the Alps, or traverse the valleys with all their picturesque beauty and you will soon say, “I have exhausted all. I know it. I am weary of it.” Follow what pursuit you will, like Solomon you may get to yourself gardens and palaces, singing men and singing women. Or you may, if your folly is great enough, give yourself to wine. Or if you will, addict yourself to commerce. But of the whole you will say before long, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” The world is but a mirage. It melts. It disappears as the traveler passes on and mocks his thirst with the deceptive image of the true.

But, Beloved, the spiritual life is not so. There is a freshness, a vivacity, a force, an energy, a power about it that never grows stale. He that prayed yesterday with joy, shall pray in 50 years’ time, if he is on earth, with the same delight. He that loves his Maker and feels his heart beat high at the mention of the name of Jesus, shall find as much transport in that name if he lives to the age of Methuselah, as he does now. Year by year its sweets grow sweeter, its lights grow brighter, its novelties grow fresher, its joys more joyous and its exhilarations more intense! We still dance before the ark! While heart and flesh are failing, the spirit gathers new strength, and joy gathers growing force. Let us seek after this new creatureship, this new power, this fresh life, this evervigorous youth that laughs at decrepit earth and worn out time!

Let us seek after this new life which counts even sun and moon and stars but dying things—like flickering lamps smoking out their lives for lack of oil, while the Divine life, since it is fed by God, wears within it a secret immortality which death and Hell and time cannot impair. Now I shall appeal to you again. Do you know anything about this freshness? If you do, you will find that the world does not understand you. A new creature put into this world would be in a very strange position from the mere fact of its being a new creature. Believer, you will find that the world does not suit you as it once did. You will be out of your element, pining for another world—for there must necessarily be a new world to suit a new creature. Are you panting after the new world? God will not give you what He has not taught you to long for, but, your craving and longing are the shadows of the coating mercy. Ask yourselves whether you know these mysteries. If you do not, may the Lord teach you. And if you do, praise and bless His name.

To conclude. This subject leads us to two things. It leads us to selfexamination. May I press upon everyone to search himself, whether he knows what this being made a new creature means! But I will not detain you on this point, lest I weary you on this sultry morning. Pursue practically the exhortation I fail to enlarge upon verbally. I would lead you to another thought, on which I will dwell for a moment. Our subject excites hope in the Christian. If God has made a new creature of him, which is the greatest work of Divine Grace, will He not do the lesser work of Grace—namely, make the new creature grow up unto perfection? If the Lord has turned you to Himself, never be afraid that He will leave you to perish.

If he had meant to destroy you, He would not have done this for you. God does not make creatures for annihilation. Chemists tell us that though many things are resolved into their primary gases by fire, yet there is not a particleless matter on the earth today than there was when it was created. No spiritual life that comes from God is ever annihilated. If you have obtained it, it never shall be taken from you—it shall be in you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. If when you were an enemy, God looked upon you in Grace and changed you and made you what you now are, will He not, now that you are reconciled, continue to preserve and nurture you till He presents you faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy? The Lord grant it to you!

One other word of hope and it is this—if salvation is entirely a creation of God—if God alone can work it, what hope this ought to give the most forlorn sinner! Ah, my dear Friend, if your salvation rested on *you*, you might well despair! Chaos, if it remained with you to make order, order could never be! Darkness, if it were yours to create the light, light could never shine! But *God’s* command brings forth order and light. Sinner, if it were for you to make yourself a saint and work out your salvation alone, you might well despair! But it is *God’s* work and He can do whatever He wills. He can instantly dispel your gloom! He can immediately overcome your unbelief! He can change your heart! He can make you, the greatest of sinners, to become the brightest of saints!

Lift up your heart to Him! He hears prayer! Heaven’s gate is open! Seek, for he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened! And God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 John 3.***  
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“THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION”  
NO. 2837

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 28, 1903.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 8, 1887.~~***

***~~“And has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18.~~***

THERE has been a long-standing quarrel between God and man. It commenced in that day when our first parents hearkened to the serpent’s voice and believed the devil rather than their Maker. Yet God is not willing for that quarrel to continue. According to the goodness of His nature, He delights in love. He is the God of Peace and He has, on His part, prepared everything that is necessary for a perfect reconciliation. His glorious wisdom has devised a plan whereby, without violating His Justice as the Judge of all the earth and without tarnishing His perfect holiness, He can meet man upon the ground of mercy and man can again become the Friend of God. That blessed work was done long ago and now all that remains is that man should be reconciled to God, that he should be willing to end the dispute and that his heart should turn towards his Maker again in love, peace and perfect reconciliation. He bids us, His ministers and, indeed, all His servants—each according to his opportunity, experience, knowledge, ability and Grace—to go abroad among the sons of men and exercise “the ministry of reconciliation,” to labor to bring men into harmony with God, that they may be willing to accept what God has done toward the making of an everlasting peace and ending, once and for all, this grievous quarrel.

You notice, dear Friends, that Paul says that God “has given to us the ministry of reconciliation,” that is, to us men. He might have sent angels to you with the Gospel, but, for a thousand reasons, it was preferable that He should send to men by men. You also observe how the Apostle reassures us by this message, for, if there were a war between two countries, as, for instance, suppose our country should unhappily be at war with France, it would be a token that we desired peace if the ambassador whom we sent to France was a Frenchman who had become domiciled among us. It would be a sure sign that the French sought to be at peace with us if they said to an Englishman living in Paris, “Go to London and try to make peace between the two nations.” It would be a token at once that the desire for peace was sincere and you may be sure that God earnestly desires that there should be peace between you and Himself because He sends men to you with “the word of reconciliation.” This shows His condescension, too, in that He veils His glorious majesty.

A seraph would be far more worthy than I am to stand here to plead with you and, willingly enough would I resign my place to him. I do not know that an archangel could desire a happier or better work than to stand here and speak on behalf of the God of the whole earth and labor to bring back God’s rebellious children to Him—but while his splendor might reveal much of the greatness of God to you, yet you might be terrified and alarmed by the angelic preacher!

But now, the human being who addresses you, being just like yourselves, shows how God lays aside His Glory and holds back the thunder of His power, that He may come and reason with you, face to face, as a man reasons with his friend. He “has committed unto us the word of reconciliation” because we can, in this matter, speak from experience. When we talk about being at peace with God and speak of the joy which this reconciliation brings, we can say, “We know it is so, for we have felt it.” We can enter, with full sympathy, into the case of our friends who are still unreconciled to God. We know the evil of sin and the fear it creates in the conscience, for we have felt it ourselves. We can, therefore, be tender and compassionate to others who are in a similar condition. And we also know something of the sweetness of peace with God through Jesus Christ, for we are living in the enjoyment of it. We know, too, what are the struggles of a poor soul seeking to get that peace, for we struggled into peace through the rich mercy of God! I hope, therefore, that you will see the Wisdom and the Grace of God in choosing one like yourself to plead with you on His behalf and that God will be pleased to bless that instrumentality and make it effectual in your reconciliation unto Himself.

Notice particularly that the ministers of God are not sent to reconcile God *to you*. That great work is already done. As the righteous Judge, He was angry with all sin, but now, seeing that an acceptable Sacrifice has been presented, He is able to meet you with forgiveness in His heart. We are not even sent to find out a way of reconciling you *to God*, for He “has committed unto us the word of reconciliation” as well as “the ministry of reconciliation,” so that all we have to do is, as it were, to translate into today’s language that which God Himself has written in this Book. We have to speak out in simple, earnest, living words, the message which has been dictated to us—not to make up a message, but to act as the mouthpiece of God! Oh, that He might make me that to many a heart here now! Now let us go to this solemn work and may God the Holy Spirit help us in it!

First, then, we wish to *state the objective of true Gospel ministry.*Next, we will *declare the word of reconciliation.*And, then, we will *beseech you to agree with it.*God grant that these points may strike home!

**I.**First, then, let us enquire—WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF TRUE GOSPEL MINISTRY? It is that men should be reconciled to God.  
My unconverted Hearer, you are at enmity against God. I know that you do not always believe that. You say, “I have not yielded my heart to Him, but still, I am not at enmity against Him.” Listen. You do that which displeases Him and you do it without any grief over it, or, whatever compunction you may feel for a time, you do the same thing again and again—and you continue to do it! What does this prove? When a subject constantly rebels against his sovereign, does it not prove that he is disloyal at heart? “By their fruits you shall know them,” is our Lord’s own test. Look, you unconverted ones, see what your fruits are! Do not your wicked works prove that you are at enmity against God? Is it not certain that you do not like to hear much about Him? Am I speaking untruly when I say that you count the Bible very dull reading—that some of you say that Sabbaths spent as Christians ought to spend them are very dreary days? You want something more cheerful. God’s House is too weary a place for you and to think about Him is too much of a task. I put it to your conscience whether it is not so with you. Do you not regard religion as being a very gloomy affair? If you wanted what you call, pleasure, would you think of seeking it in drawing near to God? No, you would be happier if there were no God at all, would you not? And if all the arrangements of Divine Justice, by which God governs the world, should be abolished, would you not be pleased? If you could sin without being checked in it, or threatened with punishment for it, would you not be glad?  
All this proves that you do not love God! The real English of it is that you would destroy God, if you could, in order to have liberty to act according to your own devices. You do not find pleasure in Him. You must admit that your pleasure is found elsewhere. When we truly love a person we find pleasure in being in his company, we are glad to receive letters from him—in fact, anything that the hand of the loved one has touched becomes interesting or even sacred to us. Seeing that it is not so with you, but that you have said to God, “Depart from me! I desire not the knowledge of Your ways”—does not this prove that your heart is at enmity against God? Ah, young people, you may scarcely think that this accusation is a just one, but the more you come to search and look, the more you will find that it is true. If it is not true, I am indeed glad that I need not ask you to be reconciled to God, for you are already reconciled! But then, we shall need to see the proofs that it is so and, among the rest, we shall want to see whether you love God’s Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and trust in Him, for, “He that loves Him that begot, loves Him, also, who is begotten of Him.” If you love the Father, you will love the Son and put your soul’s trust in Him. But it is not so with unrenewed men—they are at enmity against God.  
Our objective, in all our preaching, is that you should really be reconciled to God—not that you should pretend to be so. “Oh, yes,” you say, “we will attend the regular services. If you wish, we will join the church. We will be baptized, or we will be confirmed—and we will take the sacrament.” That is not sufficient. God wants the love of your heart. He wants you to be at peace with Him. Suppose you were to attend to all these external things and still did not love and trust Him—you would be insulting Him—not honoring Him! I tell you, all your church or chapel attendance, your saying of your prayers and your reading of the Bible are of no value in His sight unless your heart is right with Him. That is the point we are aiming at. In vain is all your attendance upon outward worship! In vain is your profession of being reconciled to God unless you really are! You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, or else the work of the minister is not even begun, much less completed.  
We can never be satisfied with your merely listening to us. It is a great thing to have a large and attentive congregation, but it only makes us mourn if we even imagine that you give your ear to us and not to our Master—if you say, “He speaks pleasantly,” or, “He speaks well,” and yet obey not the message we have tried to convey to you! Oh, forget us! Think nothing of us! Reproach us if you will! There is good reason for it, sometimes, but turn unto the Lord our God! “Be you reconciled unto Him”—that is the burden of all our preaching and, therefore, we cannot be put off with your saying that you will be reconciled to God one of these days. We do not preach with a view to getting you to promise to be reconciled *someday*—we beseech you to be reconciled *now*. “Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.” Those are not my words—they are the words of Inspired Scripture itself. *Now,* then—we have nothing to do with tomorrow! It is now, even now, that we beseech you, in Christ’s place, to be reconciled to God! And we want that reconciliation to be worked at once by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Thus I have stated the objective of true Gospel ministry.  
**II.**Now, secondly, I want to make known to you, as plainly as I can, “THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.” What is that word?  
First, I have to tell you that *“all things are of God.”* That is the first sentence of the verse from which our text is taken. If, therefore, you are willing to be at peace with God, there is nothing whatever needed from *you*. God has prepared all things that are needed for this present and perpetual reconciliation! To make the friendship between God and man firm and lasting, all that is needed has been already supplied! There is to be nothing of your will, nothing of your merits, nothing of your doing, nothing of your suffering, but, “all things are of God.” I think I hear one say, “That suits me, then, for I have nothing and I can do nothing.” You need not be anything, Soul. It will be better if you can be nothing and still better if you can be *less than nothing*, “for all things are of God.” That is where “the ministry of reconciliation” begins. Surely, such a message as that ought to help bring men into peace with God!  
And, next, I again remind you that *the reconciling work on God’s part is already done.*He “has given to us the ministry of reconciliation,” but He “reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.” When Jesus hung upon the Cross—when Jesus died—when Jesus rose again, everything was done that was necessary in order that God might be able to forgive the guilty and receive them to His bosom! Nothing can be added to Christ’s completed work, of which He said, “It is finished.” It is as efficacious, today, as it ever was. The work of salvation was done forever and, on God’s part, there is nothing now to be removed in order that all who trust His Son may be at perfect peace with Him.  
The Lord, through the Apostle’s words, *graciously deigns to explain how this came about.* Paul says that He “was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Do you see what that means? You are full of sin, but God will not set that sin down to your account if you trust in His Son’s Sacrifice! You have lived a life of sin, but He will not impute it to you! Perhaps you ask, “How can that be?” I will tell you, directly, but, first, I ask you to believe that it is so. “Not imputing their trespasses unto them.” You are in debt. You owe a great sum that you can never pay, but the person to whom you owe it turns to his account book and he says, “I have nothing down against you—are you not delighted that it is so?” “But I am in your debt.” “I have nothing down against you,” he says again. He knows all about the debt, yet he tells you it is not in his ledger. “But it must be down somewhere,” you say, “that man has set my debt down to the account of somebody else.” That is exactly the case with your sin! Read the last verse of the chapter and you will get the explanation—“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus willingly undertook to stand in the sinner’s place— and if you accept the reconciliation He has made, your debts are put down *beneath His name* and through them all is drawn the red mark of His atoning Sacrifice, canceling them, every one, so that God can say, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins.”  
You see, then, that God meets you on these terms—that whatever your guilt may be, He lays it at the door of Christ and makes *Him to be sin for you* and, then, He puts you into Christ’s place and makes *you to be*“the righteousness of God in Him.” And so He saves you! “That is an extraordinary plan,” you say. It is. It is extraordinary. It wakes the echoes of Heaven every time the angels think of it, but it is God’s plan. Will you have it? What do you say? Will you quibble at it, or will you accept it? Do not let its wonderful character keep you back from it. On the contrary, say, “If God is satisfied with it, I may well be satisfied, too! If God is content with the work of Christ, I am sure I well may be! It is to Him that the debt was due and if He says it is discharged, I believe Him!” If He declares, as He does, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus”—if He teaches His people to say, as He does, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God”—we are glad enough to accept the Truth He reveals!  
And I, for one, am glad enough to proclaim it to you! I have known the time when I could almost have leaped out of the pew when I first learned this simple way of salvation—it did something more than electrify me when I came to understand that this was the way in which God was just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus—and that all that I had to do was simply to accept it, to look to Christ and take Him to be my Substitute! That was what I did and so I obtained peace in believing. Many years have passed since then, but I have never sought for any other confidence, nor do I want any other! Jesus is All in All to my heart at this moment and, therefore, I urge all here present to accept Him. Let every guilty, burdened, heavy-laden sinner come and take Christ, who is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God, saying, “If God meets me thus and is willing to blot out all the past and let me begin over again. If He is willing to cast my sins into the depths of the sea and never call me to account for them, and never lay them to my charge—blessed be His holy name, it does not take me two minutes to consider whether I shall accept this reconciliation or not! I will have it and rejoice to have it! May He grant it to me now!”  
**III.**My third point is this. We are not to be satisfied merely to tell you the Gospel. WE ARE TO BESEECH YOU TO ACCEPT IT, “as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s place, be you reconciled to God.”  
Consider, I pray you, *how unseemly it is for you to be at enmity against your God.*You are a creature whom He has made and you could not exist a single moment longer if it were not for the constant emanation of His power which sustains you in being. You owe everything to Him! You are absolutely in His hands—He can create and He can destroy. A moth beneath your finger would not be one half as easy to crush as you are beneath the finger of God if He becomes angry with you! Is it wise, is it right for the creature to be at war with the Omnipotent Creator?  
Remember, too, *what a good God He is!* He makes the sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good. The rain falls upon the lands of the blasphemer as well as upon the fields of the devout. God gives us fruitful seasons—yes, He gives us everything and He is not provoked against us even though we have continued to rebel against Him. For which of these things do you sin against Him? As I have studied God’s Character and known something of Him by fellowship, I have bowed before His matchless goodness. Oh, it is indeed evil to do anything against One who is pure Love, who is “holy, holy, holy,” altogether without fault! It cannot be right—I put it to your conscience—it cannot be right for you to be at enmity against the pure and holy God! Think of this matter, I pray you, and end your enmity.  
If you are not at peace with God, *you ought to rejoice at any plan by which you may be at peace.*I say, *any* plan. I would take the Bible, if I had never opened it before, and say, “Whatever I find between the covers of this Book of God, I will gratefully accept. I do not mind what plan He proposes, so long as this sad state of things shall come to an end. Can God forgive me? Can He receive me into amity with Himself? Can I be His accepted child? Whatever He proposes, I will agree to accept it even before I know what it is. “But how much more ought you to accept it when the plan is what I have explained to you, namely, one in which there is nothing but mercy on God’s part, though there is nothing but sin on yours—one in which God, in the Person of His Son, takes all the suffering, and you have all the blessing—one in which Jesus takes all the shame and you take all the joy!  
And, mark you, *this is to be had for the asking.* You have but truly to seek it and you shall have it! Forsake your sin. Forsake your evil thoughts. Confess your transgressions to the Lord and come and trust in Him whom God has set forth to be the Propitiation for human sin! That is all that is required—why do you not accept it? Surely it is because sin has maddened you and so fascinated you as to make you slaves to its accursed self, so that you do not turn unto Him even though the way of salvation is so simple, so easy, so sure, so everlasting. I would that I could put a force into the very tones of my voice that would send home this reasoning to your heart! As God’s creature, you ought to be at peace with Him! Any way in which reconciliation could reach you, you ought to be glad to accept—but such a way as this, in which God’s justice is honored and yet His mercy is revealed—ought to strike you as being full of Divine Wisdom and you should at once accept it. Oh, that you would do so!  
Let me further plead with you to be reconciled to God *because the consequences of not being reconciled to Him will be very terrible.* What king is there who, if he were about to go to war and found himself able to raise only a thousand troops, would not stop a while if he found that his adversary were coming to meet him with a million men? “Oh,” says he, “this is too preposterous! My little army could not stand in the field for an hour against my adversary’s vast host. The very first discharge of his dread artillery would sweep both myself and all my little company away.” But the contrast is still greater in your case because you are not, with respect to God, even as strong as a thousand would be against a million! He could devour you as easily and as swiftly as the fire devours the stubble. Let the wax fight with the flame, or the twig contend with the fire before you shall be so foolish as to attempt to contend with God! Throughout your life He proposes terms of peace to you—but there will come a day when He will have no dealings with you through ambassadors—He will deal with you by executioners!  
I think that it was Alexander who, when he besieged a town, would hang out a white flag and at night a lamp of white color—and as long as either of them hung out, it was a token that if the besieged surrendered, they should have the best possible terms. But when he hung out the red flag, or the red lamp, the people knew that every man in that city would be put to the sword. Alexander would offer no other terms, then! He had hung out the white signal long enough and now he had changed his tune. So, all through this life, the white flag is held out to you—but the time will come when, instead, there will be the red flag of vengeance— and woe be unto the ungodly in that day! Modern deceivers may tell you what they like, but God’s Word declares, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” And side by side with it, as if to confirm it, is the other declaration that the righteous shall go into life eternal or everlasting—indicating, by the same Word which is used concerning the righteous, that they shall reign forever and ever, but the doom of the wicked shall be just as lasting. “The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever.” If one is to be shortened, the other must be and I cannot, even with all the pity in my heart, shorten the torments of Hell at the expense of the bliss of Heaven! Nor will God do so. Oh, provoke not the wrath of the Most High! But be at peace with Him this very hour!

Think, too, of *the consequences which will follow when you have peace with God,* for the man who is at peace with God, and knows it, is the happiest of men! He is at peace with all things! He is at peace with life, death, time and eternity. The very beasts of the field are in league with him and the stars in their courses fight for him. All things work for his good now that he has become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Oh, the joy that some of us have experienced through entering into peace with God! We could not describe it to you. Sometimes, it has been so exhilarating that we have felt that we could not communicate any adequate sense of it to our fellow men, for we have heard words which it would not be lawful for a man to utter, save in the ears of those who have felt the same supreme delights! That blessed Book of Solomon’s Song is misunderstood by many Believers because they never knew the joy of conjugal love with Christ and the sweetness of His heart when He lays it bare to His Beloved people. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him” and I can assure you, Beloved, that if you do but become reconciled to God, it will be the best day that you ever spent.

Let me continue pleading with you for a little longer. Do you not know, dear Friends, that *the first person to seek peace in any quarrel should be the offending party?* It is not often that it is so, but it ought to be so. The person who has offended another ought to be the first to seek terms of peace. Now *you* are that person. Come, then, accept the message of love which God sends to you. That I may come very close to you, let me ask, “Have you anything to say against God?” In all earthly quarrels, there are two sides, but it is not so in this case. Is there anything which the Lord has done that you think to be difficult? For instance, is there anything in the terms of peace that He puts before you that you think to be too stern? “Oh,” you say, “His requirements are too strict!” What are those requirements? That you should leave your sin? That is not too much to ask of you. Does not every doctor who wants to heal a sick man who has taken poison, first of all prevent him from taking any more? Sin is poison to you. Would you let your child who has made himself ill by eating some unsuitable thing, keep on eating it? No, you would take it away from him!

That is all that God wishes to do to you—to deny to you that which, if you were wise, you would deny to yourself. This is not a hard thing, surely. “Oh, but what He asks of me is so mysterious! I do not comprehend it.” What is it that you do not comprehend? That you should believe on Jesus Christ? That is as simple as the act of breathing. That you should trust yourself to Christ? “Where is He?” you ask. He is in Heaven, but He is just as able to save you as if He stood here in bodily Presence. Do you not often trust people whom you never see? Some of you have business transactions with people in India—or you trust your money to a banker in Australia, or in America. You never saw the banker and you do not need to see him. You believe that there is such a person and you trust your money to him. Trust your soul to Christ in the same fashion. Though you never saw Him, rely upon Him, for you have read about Him and you believe the story of His birth, life, death and Resurrection.

“Ah,” says one, “but if I were to become religious, I would lose so many pleasures.” I see. But, in order to be reconciled to *God*, I would be willing, if necessary, to lose a thousand pleasures! Do you not feel that if there were some amusement that you loved, that grieved your mother, you would give it up? Husband, if there were something that you did that made the tears stand in your wife’s eyes, even though you liked to do it, would you not give it up for her sake? For those we love, we can readily deny ourselves and count it no denial. But, after all, you know that it is not so. God asks us to give up no pleasure that is real pleasure—and if there is any pleasure at all in it, it is sin. He takes care to give us ten times as much pleasure in His own holy ways. If it were right, I could speak of some here who have known all about the pleasures of the world. They know the pleasures of horseracing. They know the pleasures of the most frivolous company that can be. But I know what their testimony would be, if I asked them. They would say that an hour of peace with God not only recompenses them for the loss of those pleasures, but that they are glad to get rid of all such rubbish, the things of which they are now ashamed!

I do not know how merry a young fellow you may be, but if you are happier than I am, young Man, you must be an uncommonly happy person! I can pick out some, who are much older than I am, and who have more rheumatism in their bones than I have and who also have a good deal of poverty to endure. I could bring you many an old woman who is sitting here, and I could ask her, “Would you change places with that young man who is given up to the guilty pleasures of sin? Come, old Mary, what do you say? This young man says that he would lose pleasure if he were to become a Christian—what do you say? Would you change places with him?” I think I hear her say—

***“I would not change my blest estate  
For all the world calls good or great!  
And while my faith can keep her hold  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”***

So, young Man, you see that we are as happy as you are! We may not make so much noise over it, sometimes, but “still waters run deep” and the quiet joy of the Christian is joy that is worth having.

“Oh, but,” says another, “this is my difficulty. I am afraid God would not receive me even if I were to come to Him.” Just give me your hand, Brother—let me have a grip of it. Now, if I were to assure you that I would receive you into my house, would you believe me? I believe you would. Well, you may doubt me if you like, but you must not doubt my God, or doubt the bleeding Lamb! And He has said, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” He could not put it stronger than that! For no reason and in no way will He cast out any soul that comes to Him, so He will not cast *you* out. But I hear another say, “I have tried and failed.” What have you tried? Have you accepted Christ as the Propitiation for your sin? Have you trusted yourself with Christ? Do you say, “Yes”? Then you are a saved man! God declares that you are. “But I have prayed,” you say. Yes, but that is not the way of salvation. God forbid that I should say a word against prayer! I would say a thousand words *for* it—it is a blessed exercise—but the dead cannot pray, nor can you till you are made alive! The first thing that you have to do is to trust Jesus Christ— and that is the only thing which the Gospel demands of you as the grand condition of reconciliation with God! “This is the work of God, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.”

“Yes, but I have tried to lead a different life.” I know that you have. But suppose I were a physician and I said to you, “Here is the medicine that will cure you,” and you say, “I will not take it, Sir.” “Why not?” “Because I have tried some other medicine in vain.” Would that be logical? The doctor might say, “You may have tried 50 sorts of medicine, but that has nothing to do with what I am giving you—you have to try this.” It must not be *your* way of being saved, but *God’s* way. Your way is to try and live better. But then you do not live better, for you break down again and again. God’s way of saving you is that you trust Jesus Christ and then He will make you live better! Old things shall pass away and all things shall become new when Jesus Christ has you in His hands. Have done with yourself and let Jesus Christ do the whole work and He will save you. That is God’s way of salvation.

I do not know whether I have mentioned the peculiar quibble or quarrel that any heart has with God, but I hope I have done so. I would willingly lay down my very life if I could bring all in this Tabernacle to the Lord Jesus Christ. We preachers, and you teachers in the Sunday school, and you who try to talk privately with individuals—we ought all to be very earnest with them, for this is very solemn work. They are apt to die at any moment and to die, too, without hope. Let us plead earnestly with them for God’s sake. It does seem so sad that a good God should have so many millions of His creatures as His enemies—that He who keeps the very breath in their nostrils, should get no return from them but ingratitude. “The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib,” says God, “but Israel does not know, My people does not consider.” O God, for Your dear sake we would bring men into reconciliation with You if we could!

We must also be in earnest for Christ’s sake, for Christ died for them—He died to save sinners. He had no subordinate aim. This was the one passion of His soul. “He saved others.” “Himself He could not save.” Oh, by the wounds of Jesus, the scars of which are still visible above, be reconciled to God! Trample not upon His precious blood!

We would be earnest with you, also, for your own sakes. In a short time you will be on a sick bed and you will be on the brink of the grave. We pray you, before the death-sweat stands in great beads upon your brow, seek peace with God. Ere yet they that gather about your bed whisper to one another, “He is going,” oh, be at peace with God through Jesus Christ who is our Peace and who reconciles us to the Most High!

And I would be in earnest, last of all—and have my Brothers and Sisters in earnest, too—for our own sakes. “That sounds like selfishness,” says someone. If so, it is a hallowed selfishness. As surely as I am a living man, I have to give an account of this night’s work before the Judgment Seat of God and every Christian worker and, especially, the Christian minister, will have to answer for it whether he declared the Truth of God and declared it with an earnest spirit. I think, sometimes, that it will be the greatest mercy that God ever gave to mortal man if I am able to say, at the last, what George Fox, the Quaker, said just as he died, “I am clear. I am clear. I am clear.” Brother-minister, if you and I, at the last, are clear of the blood of all men, we will lift up an everlasting song of gratitude to our Lord and Master who made us faithful to our charge! We dare not think of standing before Christ’s bar if we have not been in earnest with you. It is as much as our souls are worth to trifle with you— to gather you together on a Sabbath evening, to try and tickle you with fine words, or pretty anecdotes, or mere excitement. This will never do.

Souls, you will either be lost or saved! You will be in Hell among the damned or in Heaven among the blessed—and that very shortly! And if the watchman warns you not, your blood will be required at the watchman’s hand. That we may be able to give in our account, with joy, “be you reconciled to God.” That we may be able to say, “Here we are, Lord, and the children You have given us through our ministry,” “be you reconciled to God.” Dear young people and you aged folk who soon must go, and you in middle life, “be you reconciled to God.” “As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s place, be you reconciled to God.” God reconcile you to Himself, for His dear Son’s sake!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 5:9-21.***

**Verses 9-11.***Therefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your conscience.*The outside world did not understand the preachers of the Gospel—they thought them dreamy enthusiasts, earnest about nothing at all. But Paul says that God understood him and he hoped, too, that the consciences of those to whom he was writing had also understood him. The truly faithful minister of Jesus Christ may know that there are two approvals that he will be sure to get—the approval of his Master and the approval of men’s consciences. Their prejudice may condemn him, his mode of oratory may not suit their fancy, but their conscience must give quite a different verdict— it must approve the faithful preaching of the Gospel.

**12, 13.***For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we are sober, it is for your cause.* Happy Paul who, as a preacher of the Gospel, could write, “If you say that we are beside ourselves, that we are really mad upon religious matters— well, it is to God that we are so! It is not every madman who can say that. “Or if you tell us that we are too serious and sober, it is your case, your cause that makes us so.” Well may we be sober and solemn when we think of the danger in which men’s souls are.

**14, 15.***For the love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.* The true-hearted Christian judges himself to have died when Christ died and, therefore, he feels that he must not live for any objective but the Glory of Christ.

**16.***Therefore, from now on, know we regard no man after the flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.* He is gone back to Glory, so our objective is not to win a kingdom for Him anywhere upon earth. Our aim now is *spiritual—* the proclamation of His Truth, the winning of a Kingdom for Him in the hearts of men.

**17-19.***Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things have become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled unto Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not implying their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*The*work* of reconciliation He committed to His Son—the *word* of reconciliation He has committed to us. It is our high privilege to tell the tidings of the wondrous work by which God is reconciled, so that, without any violation of His Justice, He can have mercy upon those who have offended Him.

**20.***Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.*As if Christ Himself stood here and pleaded with you, He bids His ministers plead on His behalf. In the name of God, He bids us beseech you to be reconciled to God. Ambassadors do not generally beseech men—they stand on their dignity, they make demands for the honor of their sovereign—but Christ’s ambassadors know of no dignity which should keep them from pleading with men.

**21.***For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*  
—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 **PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #318 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

HIGH DOCTRINE  
NO. 318

***~~DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 3, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.~~***

***~~“And all things are of God.”  
2 Corinthians 5:18.~~***

I WOULD have you look on this text as being a summary of all the things which we have preached to you these years. It has been my endeavor, constantly and continually, to maintain that salvation is of God’s good will and not of man’s free will. That man is nothing and that Jesus Christ is both Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. And I think I may truly say, “Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum”—“all things are of God.” And oh my Brethren, what a large summary it is! It contains words which grasp the compass of everything that your mind can think upon—“all things.” And it proclaims Him to be whom all things owe their being—“God.”

Grasp this total if you are able—“All things”! What is here omitted? Surely whatever the Christian can desire is to be found in those words “All things.” But lest even that should not be comprehensive enough, our summary contains a still greater word—one which is supreme over all inasmuch as all things spring from His loins and yet He remains still the same, as full as ever. “All things are of God.” If we are thirsty, here are streams that never can be exhausted. If we are hungry, surely here is bread enough and to spare. If we are poor, here are treasures and riches that are utterly inexhaustible, for here we have all things and all things in God.

I shall hope this morning to do two things. First, to lay down clearly and distinctly the doctrine of this sentence. And then secondly, to show the excellent practical tendency of the doctrine.

**I.**To begin with THE DOCTRINE ITSELF—“All things are of God.” In enlarging upon that doctrine, I shall have need to subdivide it, taking it first as to what and then as to how and then as to why.

“All things are of God!” What is meant here by the term, “all things”? The reply is to be found in the context—all things of the new creation are of God. It is not necessary for us to remind you that all the things of the old creation are of God. None but the infidel will ever for a moment affirm that there is anything which exists apart from the Creator. We believe that He has laid the beams of His chambers in the waters. He has spread out the heavens like a tent to dwell in—the isles have been created by His hand and the winds still are, as they ever were, under His guidance and control. Nothing is and nothing shall be, but that which He ordains, determines and supports.

Concerning the matter of the new creation, it is wonderful that there ever should have been any controversy. Do we call that man an infidel who should teach that some things of the old creation were of man? What name shall I give to the being who will dare to say that anything in the new creation of grace is of man? Surely if the first is an heresy, the second must be an heresy equally damnable and perhaps more so. For the one does but touch the external works of God, while the other thrusts its sacrilegious hand into the internal works of His Grace, plucks the brightest jewel from His crown and treads it in the dust. We hold and ever must maintain that all things, without exception, in the new creation, are of God and of God alone.

“What things” do you say again? We answer, *all* things that refer to the new nature—all things that refer to our new privileges and to our new actions—whatever things refer to the new nature are of God. The personal desire after Christ which is found in the sinner’s contrite heart is of God. The first new hope which gilds the darkness of the poor benighted mind is of God. The first glimpse of new faith, when that man turns his eye to the Savior, is of God. The first beginnings of Divine love in the soul are of God.

Leave men to themselves and the corruption of their nature may fester and rot and breed the fungus of a vile imagination. But the life of God never yet sprung naturally from a dead heart. Whatever thing is good in its beginning, as well as in its perfecting, “comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Some seem to teach that *man* is to take the first step in salvation and God will take the rest. No, Sirs—if man can take the first—he can take the last and take the whole. If man, dead in trespasses and sins, can quicken himself, he certainly can maintain the life of which he is himself the author.

If man—corrupt, debased and cast away from God, can say, unawakened by grace, ‘‘I will repent, I will change my ways and turn to God,” and if he can carry out that resolution to himself and by his own unaided mind—then there is no room for God in salvation at all. Let man have the whole of it and let him have all the glory. But you know, my Hearers, if you have but one good thought in your heart, it is of God. If there is a something which says to you, “Arise and go to your Father,” that voice is God’s voice. If your heart begins to yearn towards the Father, whom you have angered and grieved—and if your feet desire to leave the mountains of sin and vanity and to tread the right road—it is a Father’s hand that draws you, it is a Savior’s voice that sweetly impels you to seek His face, for “all things are of God.”

Everything, moreover, with regard to the new nature is of God—not merely as to its first implanting, but as to its subsequent outworking and full development. Has the Believer strength—it is of God. Does he stand and is he kept from falling—his standing is of God. Is he preserved in the midst of temptation true to his covenant and does he stand in the day of trial firm to his Master—his integrity is of God. There is nothing in him by nature apart from God, which is not vile and deceitful. “In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing.” If there is anything good in my nature, if I have been transformed by the renewing of my mind, if I am regenerate, if I have passed from death unto life, if I have been taken out of the family of Satan and adopted into the family of God’s dear Son and if I am now no more an heir of wrath, but a child of Heaven—then all these things are of God and in no sense and in no degree whatever are they of myself.

Still further—as the new nature is of God, so the new privileges of the new nature are all of God. And what are these? Rich and precious assuredly they are. There is pardon—the washing away of all my sins and who shall say that is not of God? There is justification—the being robed about with a snow white garment, which shall make me meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and is not that of God? There is sanctification, which cuts out the very root of sin and treads the old Adam-nature beneath the feet of the new-born babe in Christ—is not that of God? There is the privilege of adoption, which the Father has given to as many as believe on His only begotten Son, that they may have power to become the sons of God. O Lord, surely this adoption is of You!

There is communion, which, through Christ Jesus, we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. But whoever dared to think of communion apart from the unspeakable grace of the Most High? I am sure, my Brethren, you who have traced the height and depths and lengths and breadths of covenant mercies and covenant privileges, have never yet met with a single privilege which was not of God. You have walked the broad acres of God’s rich grace, but you have not seen there a plant or a flower which was not of His sowing and of His rearing.

When you have gone into the treasure house and have taken down those shoes of iron and of brass, that helmet of proof, that sword of steel—when you have laid hold upon that crown of eternal life that fades not away—you have been constrained joyfully to confess that all these things are of God. You cannot imagine such a thing as a single blessing of grace, a single gift of mercy, which is of yourselves and not of God.

Once again—to conclude this summary, all the actions of the new nature are of God. See yonder missionary leaving house and home and all the comforts of his native land to go and do battle for Christ among a people who will scorn him, mistrust his motives and repay his self-denial with persecution? Do you see him with his life in his hand venturing even death? That man, oppressed with fever incidental to the land in which he has come to live, as he lays on his bed, with a melancholy interval for reflection, never repents of the step which he had taken. He recovers strength enough to crawl out beneath a tree and there he stands and instead of recanting the vows he made of dedication to his Master, he confirms them yet afresh, by once again preaching the Word.

He continues to labor until worn out. He commits his body to the earth far from his fatherland and the homestead of his native land—a witness against the unbelievers—that God has sent the Gospel to them. Shall we applaud the man? Shall we with clamorous songs sing his praise? Let us give him his gift of tribute, he has done valiantly. But let us remember that everything in him that was good, was of God. He would have been idle and indifferent and careless to the souls of men had not God made

him what he was.

Does the martyr burn at the stake? Does the confessor lie and rot in the dungeon? Does the heroic child of God do battle against the current of his times and seem to stem the flood with his own strong arm? Are Christians prepared to suffer contumely and scorn and rebuke and reproof, for Jesus’ sake? Surely all these things are of God. Is there a Christian munificent, generous, thoughtful of the woes of others? Is there another mighty in prayer and diligent in service? Can you meet with a third who lives so near to Christ that his face seems to shine with the luster of Jesus’ love—all these things are of God.

Set down no virtue to man. Good things are exotics in the human heart. They are not like the weeds which spring up naturally in such poor soil as human hearts are made of. They are rare choice flowers brought down of the Spirit’s hand from above and then planted in this unkindly soil. Oh, let us ever know that anything we can ever do or feel or think that is *right*, is of God. My Brethren, discard forever with detestation and abhorrence any doctrine which would lead you to think that any work, or grace—anything just, pure, lovely, or of good report in man, is of man himself.

Depend upon it, though it come to you in the garb of earnestness and paint its cheeks and look fair enough to you, it is the harlot of Popery in another dress. Only let such doctrine be pushed to its fair conclusion and you come at once to salvation by works. Ever stand by the good old Calvinistic banner, the banner which Augustine waved of old and which Paul handed down to us direct from our Master Jesus—and hold, believe and affirm, never swerving from it—that all things in the new creation are of God.

**2.**But the second division of the doctrine was to be the “How.” How and in what respect are all things of God? All things in the new creation are of God in the planning. God from before all worlds planned the new creation with as much exactitude and wisdom as He did the old. There are some men who seem to think that God does His work bit by bit—altering and making additions as He goes on. They cannot believe that God had a plan. They believe that the most ordinary architect on earth has prefigured to himself some idea of what he meant to build, though it were but a mud cottage. But the Most High God, who created the heavens and the earth, when He says, “Behold I make a new Heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness,” has no plan but what is left to the caprice of manhood. He is to have no decrees, no purposes, no determinations, but men are to do as they will and so virtually man is to usurp the place of God and God is to become dependent of man.

No, my Brethren, in all the work of salvation, God is the sole and supreme Designer. He planned the time token and the manner how each of His people should be brought to Himself. He did not leave the number of His saved ones to chance, or to what was worse than chance—to the depraved will of man. He did not leave the choice of the persons to mere accident, but on the stones of the eternal breastplate of the great High Priest He engraved the names of those He chose. He did not leave so much as one tent pin, one single line or yard of canvas to be afterwards arranged. The whole of the tabernacle was given by pattern in the holy mount. In the building of the Temple of Grace every stone was squared and chiseled in the eternal decree—its place ordained and settled. Nor shall that stone be dug from its quarry till the hour ordained. Nor shall it be placed in any other position than that which God, after the counsel of His own will ordained. Everything in the new creation is of God in the planning.

Alas for us, however, if God had simply planned and left the execution to us! Everything in the new creation is of God in the purchase and of God in the procuring. One price has bought His people—that price—the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who contributed so much as a mite to that wealth of treasure which bought our souls? Did He not tread the winepress alone? Had His people a part in enduring the load, the intolerable load of guilt that overwhelmed our suffering Lord, when He Himself bare our sins in His body on the tree? What arm helped Him, or what other foot but His did tread the foeman down? No, O Lord! You have redeemed us by Your blood. We have not contributed thereto. You are Alpha and Omega in this and unto You be all the honor.

And as it was of God in the planning and of God in the purchasing, so it is all of God in the applying and bringing of it home to each individual conscience. The Cross of Christ is not put up there merely for man to look at and then left to chance as to whether men will look or not. There stands the Cross free to every soul that lives, but, nevertheless, God has determined that it shall not be neglected. There is a number that no man can number, who shall by all-constraining grace be brought to clasp that Cross as the hope of their souls.

Jesus shall not die in vain and that because God will make men willing in the day of His power. They are hardened, He can break their hearts. They are stubborn, He can bend their knees. They will not come, but He can make them come. He has a key that can wind up the human heart and make it run at His pleasure. Think not that man is an independent being, so free that God cannot control Him—that were to make man God, deify humanity and undeify the Godhead. Man is free to be responsible, but he is not free from a perpetual bias and inclination to evil. Man is subject to the restraint or the constraint of God. If he does right, then it is God’s constraint and not his free will. When he does wrong, God has left him to himself. But as sure as ever he does good, it is because a Master hand has got him.

Man by nature is as a wild horse dashing yonder to the precipice. If he IS restrained in his course and turns away from danger, it is because he has a mighty rider—One that knows how to pull the bit and guide him as He pleases. And though he kick and plunge and long to turn away, his rider can pull him up upon his very haunches and turn him round and make him go as He wills and lead him as He pleases. In this matter is it

true that all the bringing home of the Gospel to the soul of man is of God.

Nor is this all. The works of the new creation are of God, not only in the planning, procuring and applying, but in the maintaining of them. Leave the Christian to himself to maintain the grace already begun and he is gone. The candle is lit, but the devil’s breath would blow it out. The gas is burning—cut the connection between it and the great gas meter and the light is quenched. The Christian lives, but it is because Christ lives and because he is one with Christ. O Lord, if You should cease to send forth the streams of Your grace, Your glorious Church, with all her beauty, must be as a fading flower. All her strength would be fainting weakness and she herself, though she be as a tower in her glory, must crumble down to the very earth and lie with the base stones of the valley. All is of grace, then, and all of God, in the maintaining.

Still more must it be all of grace in the completing. When you and I shall go up the celestial hills to the gates of Paradise, those last steps shall be of God as much as the first steps. And when we shall stand upon the golden streets and wear the white robe, I am sure we shall not have a word to say about free will, or about self, but our cry will be, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”—unto Him be all the glory forever. Men may hold what doctrine they like on earth. They cannot hold any doctrine in Heaven but that of free, rich and Sovereign Grace. The song never was divided yet and it never will be. There shall be no selfishness to mar its melody, but every heart shall send forth the same melodious notes of music and every tongue shall mingle in the same undivided song—“You have done it. O Lord, You have done it—

***‘Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days.  
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.’ ”***

**3.**My third point of the doctrine was to be the “Why.” Why is it that all things are of God? How can we clearly see this? I shall use no arguments but such as would be manifest and palpable to us all.

Everything in grace must be of God because we are quite clear there cannot be anything of man. Man is in such a position that there can be nothing of him. Lazarus was laying a corpse in his tomb. He comes forth quickened, the grave clothes are taken from him. He lives, he breathes— do you tell me that his resurrection was in part owing to himself? Well, Sir, your mind must be strangely deluded, indeed. What could that dead man do towards his own resurrection? Surely it must be a fact in philosophy which might strike every rational man, that that which does not exist, cannot put itself into existence.

And so my new nature which did not exist before God gave it to me, could not bring itself into being. And yet you say a dead man makes himself alive, or at least does something towards it? Oh, Sir, you cannot mean it, you cannot mean it! To reason with you were ridiculous. You must feel that if a man is dead there is nothing he can do, it must be a work of some superior power that can give him life. So with the sinner dead in sin, what can that sinner do? Unless the Scripture is an exaggeration, unless you are prepared to cast overboard that passage where we are spoken of as being dead in trespasses and sins, I cannot see how you can dream that man is capable of doing anything in the work of grace.

He may work when God sets him working and he will. He may move when God gives him power to move and move he will then with joyful alacrity. But till then—

***“How helpless guilty nature lies,  
Unconscious of her load,  
The heart unchanged can never rise  
To happiness and God.”***

Till the stone shall of itself fly upwards towards the sun, till the sea shall of itself beget fire—and until fire shall by its own nature distil the shower from its own heart—then, and not till then, shall depraved humanity breathe goodness within itself. It must be grace, it must be grace alone.

Let me give you another reason why we are quite sure that all things in the work of grace are of God. It is expressly told us that every good gift and every perfect gift, comes from above. Now, that word “every” is very comprehensive—it does not exclude a single case. Is there any good gift? I am not told that *some* good gifts and some *perfect* gifts are from above, but *every* one. And I am quite sure this rule must apply to any good gift you have—any good gift, in fact, that is in the heart of any man living upon the face of the earth. God were only in part the Father of lights if there were light streaming from somewhere else. God were only in part the world’s benefactor if there were other fountains out of which the world could draw and other helpers who could raise up souls to Heaven.

Yet again—we are quite certain that all things are of God, because all the glory is God’s. Now, if all the glory is God’s, it stands to reason that the work must have been His. For where the work is, there must be the merit. If man has done it, man can claim the honor. If I have been my own Savior, I will claim the honor and the dignity and nothing but superior force can wrest from me the glory which I deserve. But if God has done it and if I must feel that I have been passive in His hands until He made me active, then must I lay all my honors at His feet and crown Him Lord of all. I am quite certain we do not differ here about God’s having all the honor and yet if we should differ about His doing all the work, we might have fair ground on which to dispute His right to take all the glory.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if I want argument, your own experience shall bear witness. You as Christians are compelled to feel—“You have worked all our works in us.” You can say, “We are His workmanship, created of God in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.” Set it down, then, for a certainty—I have tried to explain it as best I can—“All things are of God.” Grasp every mercy of the covenant and every blessing of grace, but say that all things in all senses are wholly and entirely of God—the great Giver of all.

**II.**And now I am proposing, in the second part of my subject, briefly, to show THE EXCELLENT TENDENCIES OF THIS DOCTRINE.

There is one thing about the doctrines of the Gospel which to my mind always commends them—they always enlist the attention of men and rouse them to think. If you hear a sermon in which God’s grace is magnified, you are perhaps offended. You are angry because the doctrinal sentiments are not in keeping with your own carnal pride. For you to be angry is one of the healthiest things that can happen to you. Do not imagine that the sermon has been wasted when it has made you vexed! Conceive not that it has been lost upon you when it has made you angry with it.

Perhaps there was but that joint of the harness through which the arrow could reach you, namely, your own anger against the Truth of God. I have known many who have frankly confessed that after they have been to this place, they felt disturbed. They could not sleep. They hated the preacher and they hated the subject. Yet, in about a month’s time, they felt they must come again. They disliked it so much they were compelled to hear again of this matter. They could not quite see it, in fact, they *would* not. They would still hold to their own opinion, but they said within themselves, “I never thought so much about religion in all my life.” There is a something in these doctrines that drives right into the soul of man. Other forms of doctrine run off like oil down a slab of marble, but this chisels them, cuts into the very quick.

They cannot help feeling there is something here, which if they kick against, it has nevertheless force and they must ask themselves, “Is the thing true or not?” They cannot be content with huffing it and making themselves easy. It takes hold of their thinking powers and wakes them up to enquiry whether these things are so or not. And it is remarkable that the doctrine—that salvation is of God and God alone—has been revived. It has always happened that God has sent a revival of true religion.

To give you a practical illustration—on the Continent I have been informed by many who have had good reason to judge, that the Lutheran Church is, to a very great extent, fallen from its faith and has become Unitarian or Neological and the like. But the Calvinistic Churches never— there they stand just the same. There is a salt in these doctrines which preserves truth. There is savor and a pungency about them which keeps the constitution of men right. It is a great big sheet anchor. It may seem cumbrous and in these modern times it may be said to be rather rusty— but in days of storm, that great big bower anchor will have to be thrown out into the sea again. The more I preach the more am I concerned not to give a double testimony about this matter, but to lay it down clearly and distinctly, that salvation is of God. That all things in fact, in the new creation of grace, are of God and God alone.

And oh, what enthusiasm these Truths of God will stir up in the minds of those who believe them! I have heard them preached by simple, uneducated, unlearned men and the congregations have been bathed in tears. There has been no stolidness upon the countenances of the hearers. They have heard as if they were hearing the very Word of God and felt the power of it. I have preached during this week, in the simplest manner I could, these Truths of God to somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand Welsh people in one congregation and such a sight I ever saw, when all as one man they kept crying out, “Aha! Amen! Amen—Gogoniant.”

The whole sermon through, carried away with enthusiasm because they heard again the good old truths that Christmas Evans used to thunder out to them and which the Welsh still hold intact—even though the English may choose to reject and scorn them. There is something in them that would nerve men on to do mighty deeds. Cromwell’s sword was so sharp and his arm so strong, because he knew the Lord of Hosts and trusted in His mighty power and believed in God’s overcoming grace. This made the Ironsides invincible—there were never such men as they.

The Calvinist’s arm is always strong. He that is of God and knows not man—he who looks to God’s purpose and grace and gives Him all the glory—is not a man to bow before a tyrant, or to kick the feet of any being. He knows himself chosen of God and he stands upright. And yet while standing he is full of a fire—of an enthusiasm that makes him work—and compels him to serve the cause of God and Truth.

That, however, perhaps, is but by-the-by. I have other tendencies to mention concerning this doctrine. The fact that conversion and salvation are of God is an humbling Truth of God. It is because of its humbling character that men do not like it. To be told that God must save me if I am saved and that I am in His hands as clay is in the hands of the potter—“I do not like it,” says one. Well, I thought you would not. Whoever dreamed you would? If you had liked it, perhaps it had not been true. Your not liking it is an indirect evidence of its truthfulness. To be told that, “He must work all my works in me”—who can bring me so low as that? Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? The law of works? No, but by the law of Grace.

Grace puts its hand on their boasting mouth and shuts it once and for all. And then it takes its hand off from the mouth—that mouth now does not fear to speak to man, though it trembles at the very thought of taking any honor and glory from God. I must say—I am compelled to say—that the doctrine which leaves salvation to the creature and tells him that it depends upon himself, is the exaltation of the flesh and a dishonoring of God. But that which puts in God’s hand man, fallen man, and tells man that though he has destroyed himself, yet his salvation must be of God— that doctrine humbles man in the very dust. Only then he is in the right place to receive the grace and mercy of God. It is a humbling doctrine.

Again—this doctrine gives the death-blow to all self-sufficiency. What the Arminian wants to do is to arouse man’s activity. What we want to do is to kill it once and for all, to show him that he is lost and ruined—that his activities are not now at all equal to the work of conversion—that he must look *upward*. They seek to make the man stand up. We seek to bring him down and make him feel that there he lies in the hand of God and that his business is to submit himself to God and cry aloud, “Lord, save, or we perish.” We hold that man is never so near grace as when he begins to feel that he can do nothing at all. When he says, “I can pray, I

can believe, I can do this and I can do the other,” marks of self-sufficiency and arrogance are on his brow. But when he comes to his knees and cries—

***“Oh for this no strength have I,***

***My strength is at Your feet to lie,”***  
then we think that God has blessed him and that the work of grace is in his soul.

O sinner I think not that your own unaided arm can get the victory. Cry unto God and beg Him to take your soul in hand, for you cannot be saved unless He does it for you. Bless Him for the promise which says, “Him that comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Oh, cry to Him, “Lord, draw me by Your grace, that I may run after You. Work all my works in me and bring me to Yourself and save me!” Not to yourself do we bid you look, nor to your prayers, nor to your faith, but to Christ and to His Cross and to that God who is “able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.”

And there is in this doctrine some consolation for the troubled heart. If all things are of God, my Soul, let not your spirit be ruffled and frightened by the tempest. “All things are of God.” If there were one thing of me, I were a lost man. If you were about to build a great bridge and would let me have the placing of one stone, you shall build it as you please and it will fall. Let me have the management of the key stone and I will undertake that it shall not stand. So if in the work of salvation there is one thing left dependent upon myself, it must all fall. But if everything be guaranteed and settled by eternal wills and shalls, then it stands fast and rests secure.

Oh, joyous thought to the Christian! His soul is safe, he has given himself up into Christ’s hands to be kept and now the keeping rests with Christ. He has surrendered himself to his Lord and Master to be preserved and now he knows that come what may, Christ is his buckler and his shield and nothing will hurt him. Jesus keeps daily watch and ward and will preserve him safely to the end. I do not know where our Arminian Brethren get their consolation from. I know if I believed their doctrine, I should be driven to distraction. But believing as I do, that those whom God begins to save, He will completely save and that there is not a single stone in the entire building that can ever fail or give way, my soul can sing—

***“This Covenant stands secure,  
Though earth’s old columns bow.  
The strong, the feeble and the weak  
Are one in Jesus now.”***

I have one more thing to say about this doctrine. It encourages the sinner. Sinner, sinner! Come to Jesus. For “all things are of God.” You are naked—the robe in which you shall be dressed is of God. You are filthy— the washing is of God. Come and be washed. But you are unworthy—your worthiness must be of God. Come as you are and He will cleanse you. You are guilty—your pardon is of God. Come to Him and His pardon shall be freely given. But you say, you are hard-hearted. A new heart is of God. Come to him. He will give you the heart of flesh and take away the heart of stone.

But, you say, “I cannot pray as I world.” True prayer is of God. He will pour out upon you the Spirit of supplication. But you say, my very coming must be of God. Yes, blessed be God for that. And, therefore, if now you feel something saying to you, “Let me go and trust in Christ,” that is of God. Oh, come with cheerfulness. For there is nothing wanted of you, everything is of God. Is your heart barren?—fruitfulness is of God. Is your heart stubborn?—obedience is of God. Can you not repent—He is exalted on high to give you repentance. Repentance is of God. Do you say, “I cannot believe”?—faith is of God. It is one of His unspeakable gifts. But do you say, “I am afraid I shall not be able to persevere”? Perseverance is of God. All*you* are bid to do is simply to be a receiver. Come with your empty pitcher and hold it now to the flowing fountain.

Come with your empty lap and receive the golden store. Come with a hungry mouth to feed and with thirsty lips to drink. You are asked to do *nothing*. You are asked to *be* nothing. Cease from yourself, O Man and begin with God. Leave off now to do and feel and be—and come and trust in Him who did and was and felt for you. And then afterwards, being saved, you shall begin to be and to feel and to act—through a new energy— leading to a new life. To live to Christ, you must first die to yourself. Every hope of mortal nurture must be killed before you can receive a Divine hope within you. Come, bruised and mangled, crushed and broken—come and take Christ to be your All in All. And if you can not stretch out your hands yourself, as indeed you cannot—I speak in my Master’s name, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, by His Spirit’s power—BELIEVE! It is the duty of God’s servants not only to exhort, but with Divine authority to command.

Man with the withered hand! In the name of Jesus, stretch out your hand. You who have never believed or repented! “God commands all men everywhere to repent.” Do you receive the command? The power goes with it. Are you willing to obey it? That will is God’s gift—the power is with the will. Believe Christ. Trust Christ, take him to be everything and you are saved. Your sins are washed away. You are an heir of Paradise and you may rejoice. Clap your wings you angels. Tune your harps anew, you seraphs, you redeemed! Louder, louder, let your strains of music rise toward Heaven! O you cherubim and seraphim, sing loud unto his name, of whom and to whom and by whom are all things, unto whom be glory forever and ever! Amen.

**MY DEAR BRETHREN,**  
I have journeyed happily to the borders of Switzerland and already feel that the removing of the yoke from the shoulder is one of the readiest means of restoring the mental powers. Much of Popish superstition and idolatry has passed under my observation and if nothing else could make me a Protestant, what I have seen would do so. One thing I have learned

anew, which I would have all my Brethren learn—the power of a personal Christ. We Protestants are too apt to make doctrine everything and the Person of Christ is not held in sufficient remembrance. With the Roman Catholic, doctrine is nothing, but the person is ever kept in view. The evil is that the image of Christ before the eye of the Papist is carnal and not spiritual. But could we always keep our Lord before our eyes, His spiritual sense, we should be better men than any set of doctrines can ever make us. The Lord give to us to abide in Him and so to bring forth much fruit.

***C. H. SPURGEON.***  
Baden-Baden, June 15th, 1860.  
Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1124 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD BESEECHING SINNERS BY HIS MINISTERS  
NO. 1124

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 27, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.  
Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God. For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.~~***

MAN became God’s enemy wantonly, without the slightest offense given on God’s part. But man did not make advances towards reconciliation, or express regret because peace was broken. The first overtures for peace are not made by man, the offender, but by our aggrieved and offended God. Therefore our text begins with the declaration, “All things are of God.” Reconciliation of man to his Maker is never achieved by man, but is the work of God from first to last, and to God must be all the glory. The text enforces this Truth by giving us a brief summary. The Lord first finds the messengers of reconciliation by reconciling some men to Himself. He chooses His ministers, having called them into a state of reconciliation.

Read the verse—“All things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” The ambassador is sent, not from man to God, but from God to man. Then the matter of the ambassador’s message is altogether of God, for it is God who has “reconciled the world unto Himself through Jesus Christ.” He gave His Son to be the atoning Sacrifice by the ordained method of substitution—thus it is He, alone, who has made a way of access between fallen man and Himself. Furthermore, the method by which this Atonement is applied to the reconciling of men is also of God. It is not man who beseeches God, but God who beseeches man to be reconciled.

It is not man who cries to Christ, but Christ prays man, through His ministers whom He places in His stead, to be reconciled to God. So that from the first thought of reconciliation, right on through the provision of the Atonement, to the conclusion of the solemn league and Covenant between the heart and God, all things are of God. I am glad to commence my sermon with such a weighty doctrine. I am glad to have such a theme with which to stir the hearts of the reconciled. You owe it all to God, my Brothers and Sisters, therefore render thanks unto the Most High and never attribute to your own wills or to any natural goodness in yourselves, your

present friendship with the Lord. For all this is of God who has reconciled you unto Himself.

In the process of reconciling the sinner to Himself the Lord uses means. He might, if He had pleased, have influenced all human hearts by His Spirit, without a pleading ministry selected from among men, but He has not chosen to do so. God exercises His power over the human mind not miraculously, but in conformity with the laws of the mind. The Spirit of God beseeches and prays men to be reconciled. He deals with us not as with marble or wood, carving and shaping us by mere power. Acting upon the mind of man He does not act according to the laws of matter, but deals with mind after the mode in which minds must be dealt with. And therefore His Divine Grace operates upon human wills by persuasion—“as though God did beseech you by us.” And by pleading—“we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.”

But the means used of the Lord are always such as will ensure that all the glory shall be to Him alone—if God beseeches, there can be no honor to man in yielding to the Divine persuasion, but great glory is due to Him who in infinite condescension *prayed* to His own creatures and stooped from the loftiness of His Glory to beseech His own rebellious subjects to have mercy upon themselves.

This morning I shall try to drive at the heart and conscience with all my might, depending upon the Spirit of God to make my appeals effectual. And with that aim, and no other, I shall first of all speak upon the ambassadors of reconciliation. Secondly, upon the matter of their embassy, the message they have to deliver. And, thirdly, upon the manner in which they are to deliver their message.

**I.** First, then, dear Friends, we will begin with THE AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION. It appears, from the text that they, themselves, were once enemies to God. “All things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself.” Yes, Beloved, when we beseech you to be reconciled to God, we give to ourselves no airs as though we were superior to you by nature, or had been superior in our former conduct before conversion. No, rather we are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. Are you sinful? Such were we. Are you rebellious against God? Such were we. Are your hearts hard? Such were ours. We do not look down upon you from an elevated platform of affected dignity, for we recognize our own nature in yours. Therefore we come to you as to fellow sinners and, albeit it is a sorrowful thing ever to have sinned, we are glad to think that we can speak to you of an evil which has vexed us, the power of which we have painfully felt and penitently mourned, as you must yet do.

We hope that our former condition as sinners and unbelievers will make us speak to you more tenderly and will enable us to reach your hearts the better. God might have sent angels to you and you would, perhaps, at first have been awed by their glory. But their sermons would have been cold and unsympathetic compared with ours, for they could not know your misery and degradation as we do. They would have felt a horror of you and would not have cared to come near you—their purity would have made them regard you as a healthy man regards a leper—it must have done so, kind as, no doubt, they would have tried to be.

But we have no such feelings. We have a horror of your sin but not of you. And looking at you as being what we once were, we say to you, Brothers and Sisters by nature, we trust you will yet become Brothers and Sisters by Grace, and that the blood of Christ, which has made peace between us and God, may also reconcile you to the great Father in Heaven! From the text we gather that though those who are now God’s ministers were once His enemies, they are now reconciled. They are no strangers to the reconciliation which they have to preach, for they have been reconciled themselves. Yes, we were by Divine Grace made to feel the evil of sin. We were led to know its bitterness in our inmost souls and we were led to the Cross, and led to look to the Savior nailed there for human sin. Our guilt disappeared, our burden rolled from our shoulders and we were free!

And now we feel no enmity towards God, but, on the contrary, a love to Him which we desire you to feel. We have no quarrel, now, with our Maker. We desire that He should always do what seems good to Him, for we are sure that His will is always kindness, wisdom and love towards His people. And now as God’s friends we speak to you and tell you that He is a good Friend and a kind Father, that He is willing to forgive and does forgive, most freely, all those who come to Him by Jesus Christ. We have been reconciled and therefore can speak to you, not theoretically, but *experimentally*. We can tell you what we have tasted and handled of the good Word of God and our hope is that, perhaps, you will be influenced by our testimony as that of men like yourselves who have ourselves been saved.

Moreover, it seems that the ambassadors of God were reconciled to God by Jesus Christ in the same way as other sinners. How very different is this confession from the boastings of priests and prelates nowadays! They are not of the same order as the people whom they address, but are reverend and right reverend, and fathers in God. They speak not as sinners saved, called to be servants to their fellow sinners, but as Brahmins, who by the imposition of Episcopal hands have obtained magical powers wherewith to perform potent ceremonies which shall purify men from their sins. These are not such men as we are, but are very far above us, a superior race of beings—a sacred caste! Do you not observe how they fence off wherever they can, one end of the Church for themselves? That pen of theirs is holier than the place where the common people sit.

Do you not observe how they array themselves in white, blue and scarlet, and fine linen, because they are the depositories of mysterious powers which reside in none else? It is not that they are any better in character, nor that they have more zeal for the Truth as it is in Jesus, nor that even the bishops excel in clearness of doctrine, or courage to defend the Truth of God. Brethren, it is preposterous that these men should claim so much when they have so little to show for it! Here are bishops who can bestow the Holy Spirit and yet have not the manliness to speak out while the Church is being Romanized and even the abominable confessional is being set up! I could show tailors and cobblers who are more earnest for the

Gospel than the occupants of the Episcopal bench!  
We are taught to believe that these wonderful beings, the bishops and  
priests, are God’s clergy or heritage, and all the rest of us are mere stony  
laypersons who ought to do them reverence. I suppose the day will come  
when our fellow countrymen will bow their heads in the dust before a  
priest and count themselves thrice blessed if they are but spit upon by  
their reverences. Not thus was it with ministers sent of God in Paul’s day!  
Here is a man who is an Apostle and an Inspired man and all he has to  
say of himself and other ambassadors is this—“All things are of God, who  
has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.”  
No, dear Hearers, we speak to you as Brothers in one common Fall,  
hoping that we may also be Brothers in the great salvation. If ever I enter  
Heaven I shall owe my cleansing to the blood of the Lamb—not one among  
you will owe more to the rich, free Grace of God than I shall. No, there is  
not one among you who shall bow in humbler, lower gratitude than I shall  
before the Throne of Infinite Mercy as he remembers his forgiven sins.  
Having sinned much and had much forgiven, we feel we cannot love  
enough and cannot too plainly tell the story of our dear Master’s Grace!  
And we feel that this is better for you than that we should be something  
superior to you, for we hope you will be won by a Brother’s testimony—by  
the story of one who has received the Grace of God just as you must—and  
is cleansed just as you must be.  
Again, Paul tells us that the ministers of Christ, having been themselves reconciled to God, have a message to deliver which has been given  
to them—“has *given* to us the ministry of reconciliation.” And he repeats  
it—“has *committed* unto us the word of reconciliation.” You see, we have  
nothing to tell you but what God has told us! We have not to stand in our  
pulpits and utter original ideas, or to invent a Gospel for you! No, we are  
simply the bearers of a message which God would have us deliver to you  
and it is at our peril that we add to it or take from it! In these days there  
is a great deal said about, “thinkers,” and by “thinkers” they mean men  
who startle their people with a fresh *heresy* every three months! God save  
us from such thinkers!  
I send my servant to the door with a message and if on the way, she, in  
her wisdom, deliberates and alters my message to suit her own views, I  
must discharge her, for I need someone who will bear my message and not  
make one of her own. God would have His ministers be like transparent  
glass which lets the rays of the sun pass through unchanged—and not  
like painted windows which color all the rays after their own nature.  
Through infirmity we all give some amount of coloring to the Gospel, but  
he is the man according to God’s order of ministry who longs to let the  
Gospel shine right through him and does not send upon the people anything of his own except the earnestness which the Gospel works in him as  
it streams through him. As some glass adds heat to light by concentrating  
the rays, so should the minister add heat to the Gospel, but woe unto him  
if he adds anything beyond! Brothers and Sisters, we have nothing to tell you which we have invented—so if you are saved by it, it will not be due to our skill! We have nothing to tell you but what God commits to us and  
therefore God will have all the glory if your souls are saved.  
Once more, and we add it with all sincerity. When we plead with sinners, our expectation of their being reconciled to God does not lie in our  
pleading, but in the work of the Holy Spirit. I never did expect a sinner to  
be saved because of anything I said or the way in which I said it. I have  
expected God to bless the Word and I have seen it blessed ten thousand  
times, glory be to His name! But I never reckoned that there was any force  
in *my* word, or that there could be any potency in the manner in which I  
spoke the Truth of God. No, it is God beseeching you *by* us, who performs  
the work when He speaks through our lips, makes His own mind to rush  
like a torrent through our mind and bears our mind away by its force.  
When He gives the utterance and then, by His Spirit, applies it to the conscience and the soul, *then* are men reconciled to God, but by no other  
means!  
Therefore do we feel a trembling when we speak to you lest our Master  
should leave us to ourselves and so we should fail to bless you. And therefore do we never come to beseech you for God without first beseeching  
God for you. We know that you will not be saved except the Spirit of God  
shall bless the Word, therefore do we ask the prayers of our Brothers and  
Sisters as well as send to Heaven our own, that the Lord will be pleased to  
take of the things of Christ and by the Holy Spirit apply them to your  
souls.  
So you see, the ambassadors of God are your Brothers. Though I might  
in some respects magnify our office, for it is no small thing to be an ambassador for God, yet after all we are as nothing in the matter. We cannot  
stand between you and God to take any share of praise—“we preach not  
ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord.” We direct you to the Lord and the  
Lord alone for, “all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by  
Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” **II.** The second point of consideration is THE SUBJECT MATTER OF  
OUR MESSAGE—And first the faithful minister’s message to the sons of  
men is this, that reconciliation is only to be obtained towards God on the  
ground of Substitution. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto  
Himself.” “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that  
we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” You cannot reconcile  
yourself to God by weeping and lamenting on account of your past sins.  
There is no efficacy in *regret* to blot out transgression. You cannot reconcile yourselves to God by any future arduous service. All that you can do  
is already due to God—you will have done no more than you ought to have  
done if you should be perfect all the rest of your days.  
Neither can you be reconciled to God by any ceremony of man’s invention, or even of God’s ordaining—He has not made rites and outward  
forms to be the way of Grace. And if you choose them, God will *not* choose  
you. There were many in the olden times who went about to establish  
their own righteousness and would not submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ. And therefore they failed of all reconciliation with  
God. But this is the plan of reconciliation—men were all lost and condemned, for there was no difference between the Jew and the Greek. They  
all lay under condemnation. Jesus came into the world, the eternal Son of  
God, and He took upon Himself our manhood in all its feebleness, that He  
might be our Brother. He lived here for 30 years and more in poverty, obscurity, sorrow and persecution, until at last He died.  
In His death He bore the whole burden of human sin. God laid upon  
Him the iniquity of His people and on the Cross Jesus suffered what His  
people ought to have suffered. What God’s justice must have inflicted  
upon man for sin He inflicted upon Christ. He laid the whole weight of His  
wrath upon Jesus. And now, this day, whoever will come to God by the  
way of the Cross may come. Whoever will hide himself in the wounds of  
Jesus shall be free from the arrows of vengeance. “Whoever believes that  
Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth,” is  
the voice from the Cross of Calvary. And a true voice it is. And whoever  
heeds it shall find eternal life!  
Reconciliation by the blood, by the substitutionary Sacrifice of the Infinite Son of God—this is the message of our ministry. If we do not testify  
this, it were better for us that we had never been born! If we do not preach  
this constantly and incessantly, we have missed our main topic, we have  
failed in the great commission which our Master sent us to execute. We do  
declare it this day, in the name of the Eternal God—O Sinners, there is  
forgiveness through the blood of Jesus! There is mercy, Grace, pardon,  
Heaven, for as many as believe in Jesus, the great Substitute for sin! And  
there is no other mode of reconciliation under Heaven.  
Then we are to tell men that this reconciliation, which was made by  
Christ through His Substitution, was not apart from God, but that God  
was in Christ. We often tell you that Jesus Christ’s sufferings removed the  
wrath of God from His people, and that saying is true, though sometimes  
it is stated in inaccurate language. Yet a great Truth is intended by it. But  
mark this, you must never fall into the idea that God is revengeful and  
angry and that the death of Jesus Christ, His Son, was *necessary* to *pacify* the Father. Beloved, you know better than this! You know that God  
was Love before Jesus died—always Love, always full of Grace and Truth  
towards His people. The act is that the Substitution made on Calvary was  
a Substitution provided by God’s Love, for the Lord, Himself, gave His own  
Son to die as a manifestation of Love as well as a vindication of Justice. God was *in* Christ. God came on earth to reconcile men. God made the  
Atonement for us. God was not made to love us *by* the death of His Son,  
but *because* He loved us and had mercy on us—therefore He gave His Son  
Jesus that the dishonor done to His Law might be wiped out—that the difficulty which stood in the way of His mercy might be removed. That so He  
might be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. Look at the Cross in  
this light, O Sinner, and I trust it may reconcile you to God! It is by that  
bloody sweat, that crown of thorns, that shame and suffering—it is by those five dear wounds, those extreme agonies—that God has removed all hindrance to your reconciliation. God Himself has given to you His Son and He suffered in His Son that you might be reconciled to Himself. It is not Jesus, a stranger, who hangs there to gratify the Father’s vengeance, God forbid—it is God who, in one of His Divine Persons, bears the penalty which the inflexible laws of right and justice demanded of sinful men. Oh, that you would come to Him and be reconciled to Him by the death of His  
Son!  
And now the third announcement of our message is this, that in consequence of God’s having reconciled the world to Himself in Jesus Christ,  
He is able, now, to deal with sinners as if they had never sinned, for that  
is the long and the short of the expression, “Not imputing their trespasses  
unto them.” He treats sinners as if their sins were not theirs. They have  
sinned and they*do* sin, but He does not put their sins down to their account. When He looks upon them in mercy, and they are reconciled to  
Him, there are the sins—but He lays them upon His Son. “The Lord has  
laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”  
We are a mass of sin but He does not account us such, for He has  
made Him to be sin for us, although He personally knew no sin. Substitution is a plan arranged by Wisdom for the joint display of Justice and  
Mercy and by its means the Lord comes near to us to commune with us  
and gives us countless blessings. Having absolved and pardoned us, He  
blesses us as if we had never sinned. Yes, and there is something more  
wonderful than that! God treats poor sinners who are reconciled to Him as  
if they were full of good works, for what does the text say? “He has made  
Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” What a grand expression! He makes us righteous through the righteousness of Jesus! No, not only makes us righteous, but *righteousness*! No, that is not all—He makes us the righteousness of God!  
That is higher than the righteousness of Adam in the garden! It is more  
divinely perfect than angelic perfection! He makes the guilty sinner, when  
he believes in Jesus, to be the “righteousness of God in Him.” Never did  
lips have a sweeter message to deliver than mine! And I murmur not if my  
speech should seem feeble this morning and if I cannot garnish my message with the flowers of oratory. God forbid I should try to do so! To you  
who are guilty there was never a more important message delivered at any  
time and, having heard it, I charge it on your conscience that you value it  
and think it over and accept it! God grant you may.  
We are, moreover, bid to tell man that the Atonement of Christ is not  
confined to the Jew. That God has not reconciled the Jewish nation to  
Himself, but the, “world.” That is to say, Christ has died for all nations,  
classes, sorts and sizes. The Atonement was not made for a class, but for  
*all* classes. Not for the old exclusively, but for the young, too. Not for the  
young only, but for the old as well. This is such an Atonement made by  
Christ upon the Cross that it presents a warrant for every sinner born of  
woman to come to God and say, “Lord, forgive me, for Christ has died.” When we preach the Gospel it is in no stinted terms, looking about and thinking that perhaps there might be half a dozen in the building to whom the Gospel might honestly be spoken. But looking every man and woman in the face, we preach reconciliation by Jesus Christ to them and point them to the atoning blood. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but  
have everlasting life.”  
Let no man, woman, or child here say, concerning himself, that there is  
a difficulty with God which Christ has not removed. The difficulty is in  
your own soul and if you are willing to be reconciled, as sure as you live  
and as sure as God’s Book is true, there is a reconciliation provided for  
you in Jesus Christ, the Son of God! Oh what gladness it is to be allowed  
to speak thus! And now we are to tell men that there is nothing whatever  
needed in order to their reconciliation and acceptance with God except  
what Christ has already worked out, for God was in Christ, reconciling the  
world unto Himself! Not reconciling it by some other means, but reconciling it by *Christ*, doing the work in*Christ*. You have not to

bring Him your  
good works, or your tears, or your mortifications, or your feelings, or emotions, or anything of the sort—you have only to accept what God has provided!  
There is the Propitiation and if you say in your heart, “My God, I take  
it,” you are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Oh, go not abroad  
to heap together your vanities, for they cannot appease Him! Bring none  
of your vain oblations to Him! The incense of your self-righteousness will  
be an abomination to Him! Come as you are, defiled and filthy, polluted  
and wretched, and put your trust in what He has done in the Person of  
His only-begotten Son—and you are reconciled unto God! This, then, is  
the Gospel message with which we are sent.  
**III.** And now, thirdly, and very earnestly, I would speak to you a little  
upon THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS MESSAGE IS TO BE DELIVERED.  
The text tells us very plainly—First, it is to be delivered by beseeching  
men and praying to men. “As though God did beseech you by us we pray  
you.” Then if I should merely tell you, dear Hearers, the Gospel, though  
God might bless it, I have not done all my duty. To inform the intellect is  
not the minister’s sole work. We are to proclaim, but we are to do far  
more—we are to beseech and to pray! We are not merely to convince the  
intellect, but to beseech the heart. Neither are we only to warn and  
threaten, though that has its place, yet it is not to be our main work—we  
are to *beseech*.  
You know how a beggar bows his knees and implores you, when he is  
starving, that you will give him bread? With like earnestness are we  
bound to beseech you to be saved! You know how you will pray a fellow  
creature to help you when you are in sore distress? In that same way are  
we to pray you to be reconciled to God! As I ponder this I feel selfcondemned. I have besought you and I have prayed you sometimes, but  
not as I ought to have done. Oh, to be taught how to beseech men, how to  
pray them! God forbid we should fall into the error of those who think beseeching and praying to be unlawful—it is the Christly principle which  
leads God’s ministers so to do—it is the main part of a minister’s business  
and he who neglects it will have to answer for it before God’s great bar! The text goes on to say that we are to beseech men as though God did  
beseech them. Now how does God beseech them? Read one of the Lord’s  
beseechings in the 1st chapter of Isaiah—how imploring it is! He says,  
“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up  
children, and they have rebelled against Me.” For several verses the Lord  
expostulates, and then pleads—“Come now, and let us reason together,  
says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as  
snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Oh the  
tenderness of that invitation to reason together! There was first a burst of  
righteous indignation to arouse the mind and then came the voice of most  
tender pity to allure the heart. What matchless pleading!  
If this is how ministers are to beseech, we have a high standard set before us. We are to plead with men with a boundless freedom of invitation  
and gentleness of expostulation, so I gather from the 55th of Isaiah, where  
you have another of God’s pleadings—“Ho, everyone that thirsts, come  
you to the waters, and he that has no money; come you, buy, and eat;  
yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Oh,  
think of God’s talking like this to His creatures, and arguing with them—  
“Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for  
that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat you that  
which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Oh what freeness is there, what concern for their welfare, what regret at their mistakes! What gentle upbraiding, as though it were not for His sake but for  
theirs! “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?” Why disappoint yourselves and waste your strength? It is after this fashion that  
we are to beseech men to be reconciled to God.  
Then take another instance of matchless pleading. Turn to Ezekiel  
33:11—“As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the  
wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” And then He says  
to them, “Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O  
house of Israel?” He swears first, to show his deep sincerity that He has  
no joy in a sinner’s death, and then turns to entreaty—“Turn you, turn  
you, why will you die?” There is a passage in Jeremiah 44:4 where the  
Lord is represented as sending His Prophets to say to the people in His  
name—“Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.” There is something  
so appealing, so pathetic about these words that I dare not attempt to  
open them up to you! Their condescension and tenderness are unspeakable.  
Perhaps if there is one passage in Scripture in which the entreaties of  
God are set in a more tender light than in any other, it is to be found in  
the book of Hosea, 11:8, where the Lord cries, “How shall I give you up,  
Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My  
repentings are kindled together.” Oh, how God beseeches men and He means His ministers to beseech them in the same way, with weeping tenderness and melting pathos, if perhaps the stony heart may be sof  
tened and the iron sinew be bowed!  
Do I hear some strong doctrine Brother say, “I do not like this”? My  
dear Brother, I am not careful to answer you in this matter. If the Lord  
appoints it, you ought to approve it and if you do not, you are wrong, and  
the Scripture is not. If God beseeches and bids me beseech as He does, I  
will do it. And though I am counted vile for it by you, then so must it be.  
Besides, it is no derogation for God to beseech His creatures. You say we  
make God beg to His creatures. Assuredly that is how the Lord represents  
Himself—“All day long have I stretched out My hands to a disobedient and  
gainsaying generation.” It is in the Scripture that He represents Himself as  
crying like a chapman at a fair, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to  
the waters,” and bids the passersby to buy His wine and milk. It is wonderful condescension—if He had not so represented it, we dare not have  
done so! But as He has said it, we do but follow His footsteps and quote  
His Words.  
Besides, remember these entreaties of God, in which He stoops to our  
littleness, even when they do not prevail with man, do mysteriously affect  
the Divine purpose. They are a savor of death unto death wherever they  
are not a savor of life unto life. But then, blessed be God, in thousands of  
cases they are the means by which His power works on men’s hearts!  
They do bring men to be reconciled to Him. But I must pass on. Our text,  
speaking of the manner of ministers, tells us that we are to pray souls in  
Christ’s stead. That is to say, we are to preach as if Christ were preaching.  
Oh, what a model for the minister! “We pray you in Christ’s stead!” I am to say to you who are not reconciled to God—“Be reconciled to  
Him,” and I am to say it as if Jesus said it. That would not be in a light or  
trifling manner. That would not be in a cold official style. That would be  
with melting eyes and burning heart. How was Jesus Christ accustomed  
to implore men? Why, sometimes He prayed them by setting before them  
the evil of their ways. “For which of these works do you stone Me?” He  
asked. And so I am to enquire, “For which of God’s works are you His enemy? Are you His enemy because He keeps you in life? Because He has  
raised you from the bed of sickness? Are you His enemy because He gives  
you your bread and your water? Are you His enemy because He sends you  
the Gospel? For which of these works do you hate Him?” Oh, wanton malice, to be at enmity with the infinitely good God!  
Sometimes Christ would plead with men on account of the uselessness  
of their rebellion. “What king,” He asked, “will go to make war with another king without first sitting down to see whether he is able, with  
10,000 to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand?” Why  
will you be God’s enemy when you cannot win the battle? The flax may  
sooner contend with the flame, or the wax with the fire, than you with  
God! Oh, why, then, are you not reconciled to Him? Sometimes Jesus  
pleaded with men on account of the result of their sin, as He did when He  
stood on the brow of the hill and looked down on Jerusalem and said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the Prophets, and stone them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you  
would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”  
Remember that wonderful chapter in Matthew where He speaks of His  
coming with all the holy angels and dividing the sheep from the goats?  
Remember the passages where He treats of the virgins who had no oil in  
their vessels with their lamps? Whoever puts the doctrine of Hell into the  
background, Jesus never did. It is thought in these days that we had better not say much concerning the terrors of the Law, but so thought not  
the Christ of Galilee! His ministry was full of the honest warning which  
proves a tender heart. Oh, Sinners, you will be lost unless you lay hold on  
Christ! And to be lost is something unutterably terrible! Oh the wrath to  
come! The wrath to come! Who among you will endure the devouring fires?  
Who will dwell in everlasting burning?  
Thus the Savior invited. Thus He besought men. And so are we to beseech them. And then you know in what style Jesus pleaded the love of  
God. I do not say He put it into words that I can quote, but remember the  
parable of the Prodigal Son—“When he was yet a great way off, his father  
saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed  
him.” Was not that an eloquent discourse upon the abounding mercy of  
the great Father in Heaven and did not Jesus then tell how willingly God  
receives the penitent, and how gladly He puts away every sin? And, oh,  
how He implored man to be reconciled in such sweet words as these—  
“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you  
rest.” And what a word was that when He said, “Him that comes to Me I  
will in no wise cast out.” Never such a pleader as Jesus!  
His birth among men and dwelling here on earth, was a plea! His actions were pleas! His death was the master plea! Each groan seemed to  
say, “Man, be reconciled to God!” And His last expiring cry of, “It is finished,” what was it but saying, “I have put away everything that separates  
a sinner and his God”? Be reconciled to God was the true meaning of that  
*consummatum est* with which He closed His agony. Once more, it is taught  
us in the text that the duty of the true minister is to bring this matter  
home and press it. We pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to  
God. It comes to this with you, my Friend—God says to you this morning,  
“Throw down your weapons. Why do you contend with your Maker? What  
have I done that you should despise Me? Poor creature that I made, what  
have I done that you should hate Me?  
“I breathed into your nostrils your breath. What have I done that you  
should spend it in speaking against Me? That throbbing heart of yours, I  
give it every pulse. What have I done that you should forget Me, that My  
day should be a weariness and My worship should be an abhorrence to  
you? I have raised you from the bed of sickness, I have given you many  
comforts. I spared your child when she was sick. I have prospered your efforts in business. I have done a thousand things for you—do I deserve to  
be forgotten? Is it right that your heart should be warm to your wife and your child, and cold to Me?” My God, my soul is in sympathy with You that You should be forgotten of your creatures! There is not one of us that loves to be treated unkindly by those to whom we have been kind. Ingratitude is one of the worst of ills. It bites like an adder’s fang and as an unkind child wounds to the quick—and will you be such to your Maker? Will  
you be such to your Creator?  
Come, be quiet for a moment and let the Lord speak with you, and let  
your honest conscience answer Him. What has He done that you should  
be His enemy? What has Christ done—look at His wounds!—that you  
should not love Him? What has the Holy Spirit done that you should resist Him? What will you gain by it? What will be the benefit in time or in  
eternity? I have been almost every week to the grave lately with some one  
or other of my congregation. Soon I may have to be there with you, if I am  
not carried there myself. Well, and what will be the wisdom, when you are  
dead, of having lived without God? What will be the profit of having gained  
the whole world and having neglected your Maker? “Come, O Man, hear  
you His words, and be reconciled to Him!”  
I said throw down your weapons, but I have, now, another message.  
Accept the Lord Jesus. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish  
from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” There is life in a look  
at the Crucified One. Jesus asks no hard thing of you. God your Father  
does not ask you to do impossibilities, or to prepare yourself by a long  
round of performances. His command is most simple and plain. Trust in  
Jesus and you shall be saved. And, being saved, you shall love your God  
and then all war between you and God will be over. God, the Eternal One,  
will bend from Heaven to embrace His once erring child and you shall feel  
the kisses of His love, while in your heart there shall be music, dancing,  
joy and feasting because you have come back to God.  
I do not know how to say more, nor how to plead more strongly. I would  
God that He would beseech you, and that Jesus Christ would pray you,  
and that the Spirit of God would sweetly touch the secret springs of your  
will that you might say—  
***“I yield, by Sovereign Grace subdued,  
Who can resist its charms?  
And throw myself, by love pursued,  
Into my Savior’s arms.”***  
God be thanked for it. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 1.**Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #3148 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST’S AMBASSADORS  
NO. 3148

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1909.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 27, 1873.~~***

***~~“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s place, be you reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:20.~~***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, on verses 18 to 21, are as follows—Sermons #1123, Volume 19— GOD BESEECHING SINNERS BY HIS MINISTERS and #1910, Volume 32—THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

So, then, there is war between man and God. It seems preposterous that man should be in arms against his God, but it is all too sadly true. Shall the gnat contend with the flame? Shall an insect fight against an angel? Even this would not be as absurd as for man, who is utterly insignificant, to make war with God who is Infinite! Man, who is but as the ephemera of an hour, to enter into the lists against the dread, eternal and Almighty God? Accursed was that hour in which our first mother put forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit! From that moment war began between man and his Maker and from the Garden of Eden right on until now man has been an enemy of God! And although God has constantly returned good for evil, and is still the God of love and condescension, yet has man continued to fight against Him—there still is war between Heaven and earth. Otherwise, there would be no need for ambassadors between God and men. This would be proof enough that a state of war prevails. But, alas, in our own hearts we bear, each one of us, sad proofs of the enmity of man and God. And we see, besides, in our fellow men, ten thousand sorrowful instances which prove that they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God and are not the friends of the great Friend of man.

Our text tells us that the ministers of Christ, the Apostles and all others who are sent of God to preach the Gospel, are “ambassadors for Christ.” In speaking upon that matter, we must make some references to ourselves and I especially shall have to ask the earnest prayers of the congregation for myself. I feel that I may well do so, for if Apostles said, “Brethren, pray for us,” how much more may we, who are not worthy to be numbered among the least of our Master’s servants, urge the same plea!

In our text, I think I see, first, *a great mercy implied.* Secondly, *a great office mentioned.* And, thirdly, *a great duty involved*.

**I.**First, here is A GREAT MERCY IMPLIED—“We are ambassadors for Christ.”  
Well, then, it is clear that *there is some hope of peace*. When an ambassador comes upon the stage of action, it is evident that war is not to be waged to the bitter end. But observe that the ambassador is not an ambassador from man to God, but an ambassador from God to man! “We are ambassadors”—not for *you*, but “for Christ.”  
I learn from this, then, that *the peace proposed is one quite unsought by man*. Man revolted against his Maker and was determined to continue in revolt. He was evil and would have remained evil if God had not interposed. Men go astray from God by nature, but they only return to God through Grace. Further, and yet further, and yet further, still, will they go away from God! Deeper and yet deeper will they plunge into the abyss of sin! It is easy for humanity to descend into Avernus, but for it to retrace its steps, “this is the work, this is the difficulty.” And until God, Himself, comes in, man is as unwilling as he is unable and as unable as he is unwilling to make peace with his God! We might have thought, if we had not known the dread nature of sin, that the first thing Adam and Eve would have done, after they had transgressed their Maker’s Law, would have been to cast themselves down at His feet and say, “We have taken of the fruit of the tree of which You have said that we must not eat.” But instead of doing so, they ran away to try to hide themselves from His eyes—and when His voice was heard in the Garden and they were obliged to face Him—instead of frankly confessing their sin, the evil juice of that forbidden fruit had so poisoned their nature that they both began to make excuses! The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” And the woman would not bear the blame, herself, but cast it upon the serpent. There was clear evidence there that man, though he had become a rebel against his God, would not turn unto his God, confess that he had done wrong and beg for mercy. Never did a prodigal say, “I will arise and go to my Father,” until the Grace of God had put that resolve into the prodigal’s heart! The centripetal force, the force which makes us seek the center, is not in us—ours is centrifugal force which drives us further and yet further away from the great center of all Light, Truth, peace and purity. When God draws us, we shall run after Him—but until He does so—we shall still remain afar off from Him. So the sending of an ambassador from God shows clearly that it is not man who seeks peace.  
But then, on the other hand, it shows that *God Himself is desirous of peace,* yet not because it can make any difference to Him whether man is His enemy or not. It may make some difference to the candle if the moth flies into it. The moth will certainly be destroyed by the candle, yet the candle will still shine on, though its light may be in some measure diminished. But what difference can poor creatures such as we are make to God? The blasphemer curses God, yet the sun is just as bright as ever, the dewdrops of the morning are quite as sparkling as ever, the rivers still run on to the sea and the ocean remains the same as before! And as for God, Himself, His Glory continues undiminished and His holiness is untarnished. And though all men could be leagued together in one great conspiracy and should say concerning Jehovah and Christ, His Anointed, “Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us,” what will come of their evil confederacy? “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” His Glory will be just as great even if they determine to be damned! If they will go down to Hell, His Justice will be honored, for they richly deserve their doom. There is no reason, except in God’s Grace, why He should send man an embassy of peace! Generally in war, it is the less who sends to the greater to entreat for peace. It is seldom that the victorious, while still they bear their banners on high, suddenly pause amid the battle and send an embassy to say to the vanquished, “Let there be peace between us.” The conquerors usually wait till the beaten ones know that they are beaten and sue for terms—and they count it gracious on their part to be willing, in the full expectation of yet further victories, to pause awhile to discuss terms of peace. When the commander-in-chief has half won the campaign and sees with absolute certainty that he could utterly destroy his enemy, he does not hurry to put back his sword into its scabbard! But God does— just as though He had been defeated, or as though He was the weaker of the two combatants, or as though it would be to His best interest, He stops in the midst of the battle and sends an ambassador of peace to man! And we, His servants, are sent forth as “ambassadors for Christ” because God desires to be at peace with men!  
Why is this? Certainly not because He fears man, nor because He cannot do without man, nor because He cannot crush Him as an adversary—but simply*because He is very tender, and full of pity and compassion*. “As I live, says the Lord God,” (and that is His own oath), “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” He is a God who is terrible in His justice, but, “He delights in mercy.” To bless men and make them happy is His continual joy— judgment is “His strange work.” It is, as it were, His left-handed work— not that which He delights to do. Even when Justice compels Him to smite and to slay, He says but little about it and He usually does away with the very instruments that He has used for this purpose. Great armies and great nations have been raised up to be the scourges of God, but they have not been heard of afterwards, as though God were so loathe to smite that when He does so, He burns the rod directly—He has done with it, not caring to have it any longer in His sight! But when He comes to men in mercy, God is, as we say, “all there.” He puts forth His Omnipotence in His works of love. He brings out His Omniscience, He employs all His attributes when He comes to bless men. Oh, yes! God delights in Grace and mercy, but He loves not wrath! And it is for that reason—because He is a God full of tenderness, compassion and pity—that He sends an embassy to men and makes His servants to be “ambassadors for Christ.”  
And then, mark you, this also shows us that, *as God desires peace, peace is possible*. Sin has made a very great breach between God and man. God has been insulted to His face and that not merely once, nor twice, but thousands and millions of times! The sin of men would, if it could, become a deicide and kill God, Himself! And this, indeed, it did when it slew the Son of God on Calvary! Every sinner is guilty of high treason against the majesty of Heaven, for he does, as far as he can, snatch from God’s hand the scepter of Sovereignty and plucks from His brow the crown of universal dominion! Sin is not a thing at which God can wink. We sometimes hear persons talk as though God could forgive sin without Christ’s Atonement and without exacting any penalty for it— but that cannot be. Everyone who rules over men, though it is but over a petty nation or a small parish, knows that if the law has no penalties attached to it, it ceases to have any power. It would be a dreadful thing to live in any State where there were no punishments for law-breakers. I read the other day that perhaps it would be better to live where everyone was subject even to tyrannical law than to live where there was no law. It would be truly terrible to live in any place where good and bad would fare precisely alike—where there would be no prison—where the thief and the murderer and the drunkard would be left alone—where all would be regarded as on an equal footing, let them do what they might! Laws must be respected and the breakers of them must be punished.  
Now, if it is so in our imperfect civil communities, it must be much more so in God’s government of the entire universe! It is not merely men with whom God has to deal, though they are to be counted by thousands of millions, but He has to deal with angels, good and bad. And we know not how many—perhaps innumerable races of beings—possibly very different from ourselves, yet like us in this respect, that they are under law and under God’s government! It may be that every starry world teems with myriads of intelligent inhabitants—it is much more likely that it should be so than that it should not be so, seeing that God is not in the habit of creating anything in vain—and we can scarcely imagine that He has made all those mighty orbs to circle around His Throne without suitable inhabitants to render due homage to Him! It becomes incumbent, then, on God—I say this with the utmost reverence for His sacred Majesty, that as He is the Judge of the whole universe, He must do right. If one of our judges should say, “I never can pronounce a sentence of death upon a murderer—my heart is too tender for me to ever order the lash for the thief, or to send the wife-beater to prison.” What would we say to him? Why, we would say, “Then, Sir, if your heart is so tender towards the bad, you are so cruel to the good that you must retire from the bench, for you are unfit to be a judge if you do not punish the guilty.” We remember Abraham’s question, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” We also read that “every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.” As long as God is God, He cannot trifle with sin! You may trifle with it if you will, O foolish Sinner, but it will be at your own imminent peril! But God, the Omnipotent King, the Maker and Judge of All, will not trifle with it. He must crush rebellion. He must punish iniquity!  
“But,” perhaps you say, “you started by telling us that there was hope of peace. But how can that be if the Law’s sentence must be carried out?” I answer that this is the reason for our embassy—this is the great reason for which we are ambassadors for Christ—to say that, in Christ, God is able, without the violation of any demand of justice, to show the fullest mercy to sinners! Through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God’s justice will suffer no blot, no slur if you—coming to Him and confessing your iniquities and believing in His Son—shall be completely pardoned and accepted. Salvation by Substitution was the grand invention of Omniscience—that Christ should bear—  
***“That we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire”—***  
that on His back should fall the stripes that were due to us—that in His heart should be sheathed the fiery sword that ought to have been sheathed in our hearts! It was most just that Christ should stand in our place. If I am asked how His Substitution for us is consistent with justice, I reply—the first sin, by which we were ruined, was not committed by us personally, but it was committed by Adam, our representative. It is therefore perfectly consistent with the highest justice that, as we fell *representatively*, we should be lifted up representatively! We died through Adam’s sin—we live again through Christ’s life and death! And every soul that believes in Jesus may know that Christ was punished in his place. Christ, as his Representative, bore his griefs and carried his sorrows. Christ was wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities—and now all the sins of every such person are blotted out and forever cease to be because Jesus Christ bore the full penalty for them! The Believer’s debt is paid, so it cannot again be demanded of any soul for whom Jesus died!  
These are the terms of peace, then, and this is the blessed Gospel of Peace—“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” This is the Gospel that we preach—that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Peace is possible! O blessed news! Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound! Bright should be the eyes of those who see the feet of the messengers that bring the glad tidings of peace possible between man and God!—  
***“How beauteous are their feet  
Who stand on Zion’s hill!  
Who bring salvation on their tongues,  
And words of peace reveal!”***

Let me add to this the comforting assurance that *peace has been effectually made already in tens of thousands of instances*. There are many of us, now present, who are enjoying the peace that Christ has made on our behalf. Having looked, by faith, to His Sacrifice on Calvary, our sins have gone forever. Having rested where God has rested, even in Jesus, for Jesus is to God a Sacrifice of rest, we now feel perfect peace toward God! We are no longer His enemies, but love Him and desire to obey Him perfectly. And though we do still err and mourn a thousand imperfections, yet we can truly say that we do love Him and that we long to be like He is! Whatever He commands, we at least desire to do and by His Grace we are helped to do it. And whatever He forbids, we desire to abhor and to flee from it as from a poisonous serpent. Blessed be the name of God, we can speak to Him, now, without being afraid that He will destroy us, but saying, “Our Father, who are in Heaven, the Spirit of adoption in our hearts makes us say unto You, ‘Abba, Father, we love You and adore You. Oh, for Grace to love You more!’”

Thus much, then, upon the great mercy that is implied in the Apostle’s declaration that we are “ambassadors for Christ.”  
**II.**Now, secondly, we have here A GREAT OFFICE MENTIONED—“We are ambassadors for Christ.”  
Why did God send ambassadors to men? He might have made peace without doing so, but He has chosen to put honor upon instrumentality and He has dealt with us as with reasonable beings. Further, why did God send men as His ambassadors? Would not angels have been better messengers? The probability is that an angel would have been quite unfit for such work as this. When a man, a sinful man who has, himself, been forgiven, talks to other sinners, he talks very tenderly and sympathetically—at least he ought to do so—and when he meets with any distressed souls, he recollects the time when he was in distress. And when he hears about their doubts and fears, he remembers his own. And when he mourns over their rebellions, he recollects what a rebel he used to be. And therefore he is gentle with them, and longs that, if possible, peace may be made between the rebel and his God. But if an angel had been Christ’s ambassador, after he had preached most earnestly, you would always be able to make this excuse to him, “Ah, you cannot enter into our feelings, for you have never had our temptations and trials.” As you went home, you would say to one another, “That was a grand oration that the angel gave us, but it did not help us much. It was all very well for him to talk as he did, but he has not a wife and children to provide for. He has no poverty to bear. He has not to feel the cold. He has not to suffer through being tempted, as we are, by evil passions and the like.” Possibly, if an angel were to take my place here next Lord’s-Day, there would be many of you who would be very pleased with the change. But I think by the time two or three Sabbaths had passed, you would want your old friend back again, because you would feel that there was, after all, a warmth of brotherhood within the human being’s breast which you could never expect to find in cherubim or seraphim! When we, who once were enemies to God, tell you, who are still at enmity against Him, about our own rebellion and how it was ended by Divine Love, how the Lord melted us down by His Infinite Pity and abounding condescension—you will say to one another, “Let us also go to Jesus. Perhaps we shall find Him equally kind to us.” You will be thus graciously drawn to the Savior by the example of another who was in a similar case to your own. And if we tell you what a loving Lord we have proved Him to be, how easy His yoke has been and how light His burden, perhaps some who are laboring and heavy laden, will say, “We also will accept His gracious invitation which says, ‘Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden,’ and He will give rest to us even as He has given it to these, His messengers.” It was wise and kind, on God’s part, to send men to be “ambassadors for Christ.”  
That word, “ambassadors,” suggests to us a few reflections. First, *every true minister of Christ is engaged upon royal business*. He is doing business for the King of Kings, the great Lord of All! He does not come in his own name, nor in the name of any church nor in the name of any earthly potentate, but he comes in the name of Him who made Heaven and earth and who governs all things by the word of His power! I will, therefore, listen to him, even though he may be an illiterate man, for he is the servant of God. If it was really the Gospel of Jesus Christ that I heard, little would it matter to me whether the lips that uttered it spoke in such tones as the golden-mouthed Chrysostom used of old, or in plain and rugged language like that of Simon Peter. It was his Master who sent him and it was his Master’s business to choose whom He would have as His ambassador! Therefore let me see the Master in the man and hear the Master’s voice in the Gospel which His servant preaches! And let me bless God both for the Gospel and for the man who preaches it. And let me pray that since he has royal business to do, he may have Grace to do it rightly.  
For, as it is royal business, *it is important business*. I know there are some who fancy that to some of us who have preached so long, it is easy work to deliver a sermon. Martin Luther used to say that he never went into his pulpit without having his knees knocking together through fear, although he was a man of dauntless courage. And I can assure you that I never address you without feeling that it would be better for me to engage in breaking stones on the road, or in any job, however hard it might be, than to have to preach the Gospel because if I am unfaithful to the many souls committed to my charge, what must be my portion at the last? Whether you think so or not, to me it seems that every sermon involves me in most dire peril unless Divine Grace makes me faithful. I have not, like a banker, to deal with gold and silver, but with immortal souls which are far more precious! Not with the interests of a State, in which my mistake might be rectified by some abler statesman—but I am concerned about souls which, if once lost, are lost forever! Since God has warned His watchmen against unfaithfulness, He may require the blood of souls at our hands if we warn them not—and He will call us to account if we have kept back any Truth that He has taught us. Sometimes, when we speak faithfully concerning error, people ask, “What need is there of such preaching as that? What have you to do with other people’s religion?” Why, some of us were sent into the world for this very purpose—that we might have to do with other people’s religion! No man under Heaven shall be able to say that we knew that he was believing a lie and yet did not tell him that it was a lie! Not our business to interfere with others when we were sent here on purpose to interfere? If Christ’s ambassador sees others attempting to keep up the war between his King and the rebellious subjects in His Kingdom, it is his business to speak sternly of those enemies of God and man, and to plead with all his soul with the offending subjects to be at peace with his great King and Lord! So, as “ambassadors for Christ,” we have royal business and we have important business—  
***“‘Tis not a cause of small import  
The pastor’s care demands!  
But what might fill an angel’s heart,  
And filled a Savior’s hands.”***  
And next, *all ambassadors have to act in accordance with their commission*. An ambassador must never go beyond his commission. His power comes from his king—he has no power of his own. And if a man who professes to be Christ’s ambassador, puts on the airs of priestcraft and says that he has authority in himself—do not believe him! I have all necessary authority! I speak according to this blessed Book, but I have none at all if I wander from it. Regard not a single syllable that any man, or even an angel from Heaven may say to you if it is not according to Scripture! But when the humblest of us speak according to God’s Word, woe be to those who reject the Truth! The Gospel has such majesty in it that it demands acceptance from all who hear it!  
Again, *an ambassador has no power to make terms with men on his own account.* The “ambassadors for Christ” have simply to declare God’s terms of peace. How pleased some people would be if we could alter this Truth of God just a little and take the corners off that one—if this Doctrine were not so strict and if that precept were not so severe! But what have we to do with that? I have often said, when I have preached what I believed to be the Truth and men have found fault with me for doing so, “the fault is none of mine.” If I send my servant to the door with a message and she delivers the message, saying word for word what I told her to say—and if the man at the door should be angry with her because of the terms of the message, it would be most absurd and wrong! Let him be angry with her master who sent her with the message! And if I speak God’s Word and you object to it, your objection should be against my Master, not against me. I have nothing to do and no minister under Heaven has anything to do—but to preach that which is here in this Book and to explain it in the simplest language possible—and to enforce it in the most earnest manner that he can! And as long as he does that, he speaks with authority. But if he gets away from that, his word is of no more account than the songs that men sing in the street—and he deserves to have no respect from any man!  
Let it be remembered, too, that *the ambassador will have to give an account of how he does his business* and, therefore, it is that I appeal to my beloved friends, the members of the Church, that we may always have their prayers. We shall have to report to our Master how men treated our message and whether they would have peace or not. Sometimes, while preaching, I have felt as if I could imitate that Roman ambassador who met a certain king and told him that the Romans forbade him to advance further. The king somewhat jested at the stern command of the Roman, but the ambassador stooped down and with his stick drew a ring in the dust round the king and said, “You must give your answer before you come out of that circle, for if you step over that line, the Romans will accept it as a signal of war.” I have sometimes felt, when preaching to this great congregation, as if there were some who had to decide for God or for the world before they stepped out of this place, for God’s ambassador had, as it were, drawn a line all round them and said to them, “choose this day whom you will serve. If Jehovah is God, serve Him. Or if Baal is God, serve him.” As we have gone to our home, we have prayed, “O Lord, we have again told the people Your message! We have not told it with the broken heart that we wanted to feel, but we have truly told it as far as the matter of it is concerned, though we have failed in the spirit of our telling it. Now, O Lord, make the people willing in the day of Your power, to accept the peace that Christ has made, for unless You work in them by Your gracious Spirit, we shall have to cry, ‘Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’ for they will reject the Savior, refuse His peace and remain Your enemies even to the end of their lives.” The “ambassadors for Christ” must give to their King an account of how they have done their work. May we be able to do it with joy and not with grief!  
So, then, you see that the ambassador needs to be careful at all points and *he needs to be very faithful*. If he should be unfaithful, surely it must be woe, woe, woe to him forever! The murderer of men used to be hung in chains as a terror to other evil-doers, but what shall be done to the man who is the murderer of souls by his unfaithfulness? As for anyone who buys “the cure of souls” in the market, so mercenary a beginning, so like to the proposal of Simon Magus, looks as though he who acted thus would prove to be like Simon, “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” “Ambassadors for Christ” must start right with clean hands. There must be no bribing in order to get into the ambassadorial office. And they must go on right—no frowns must ever make them turn aside from the Truth of God and no smiles must ever make them soften their speech so as to please the ungodly! If there is any place where the thunderbolts of Divine Wrath fall most heavily, it must be the head and heart of the man whose ministry was an unfaithful one and who went down to Hell with the blood of souls upon his skirts! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, pray for us! *Pray for us!* PRAY FOR US who are called to be ambassadors for Christ!” The choice even of a hymn has often been the means of the conversion of a soul. A sympathetic expression in prayer has given great comfort to mourners. Our very look has sometimes carried conviction to a hearer, though we did not know the person at whom we were looking. And our mode of speech and even our pronunciation has, under God, had some gracious results when He has willed to make it so! Pray for us, then, that we may be always so guided and directed by God that peace may be made between Him and thousands of immortal souls through our instrumentality!  
**III.**I will not detain you many minutes while I speak upon the last point which is A GREAT DUTY INVOLVED.  
And, first, to all to whom the “ambassadors for Christ” may come, let me say, *give us a hearing*. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,” so give us a hearing that we may deliver our message. Do not say, “We will not hear it.” Shall we tell our great King that although He sent us as messengers of peace, the reply of the rebels was, “We do not even want to hear what the King has to say?” Even if you object to us, do not object to our message! Is there something objectionable about ourselves? We are sorry if it is so. But a sensible man, when he knows himself to be in danger, will be glad to accept help even from one whom he does not in all things admire. If you find fault with our tones and censure our manners, and bespatter our persons, do give good heed to our message! When Caesar swam across the river, he held up his Commentaries, so that they should not be injured by getting wet. Surely, if we had to swim through a sea of persecution, we would hold up the Gospel and pray that it might not be carried down by the flood. Strike us if you will, but hear our message! Yes, “hear, and your soul shall live.” If it really is a message from God, hear it! Perhaps some of you say that you do not believe that it is God’s message—but suppose it is? God grant that you may never know, by sad experience, what will follow the rejection of God’s Word of Reconciliation!  
A gentleman from London one day met a poor countryman. It was a Sabbath and the person from London had come down for a holiday. When he met the countryman, thinking himself to be a very wise man, he said to him, “Well, Hodge, I suppose you have been taking a walk through the fields.” “No, Sir,” replied the man, I don’t waste my time on the Lord’s-Day in that way. I have been worshipping Him and listening to His Word.” “So you shut yourself up in a stuffy building for a couple of hours and listen to somebody talking all because you believe the Bible? Don’t you know that it is a pack of nonsense? The learned men have proved that it is so and everyone who believes it is a fool.” “Yes,” said Hodge, “very likely we are great fools. But yet, after all, we country people do know one or two things.” “What do you know?” asked the gentleman. “Well, we know that it is a good thing to have two strings to your bow.” “What do you mean, my good man?” “Well, I mean that I have got two strings to my bow. If this Book should not prove to be true, it has given me a deal of comfort and made me a better man than I was before I learned to value it. So that is one good thing. And if it should prove to be true, that is the second string to my bow—and what a blessed thing it will be to me that I have received it, and have enjoyed it! But look at you, Sir,” he said, “you have not one string to your bow. If the Bible is not true, I am as well off as you are and I think I am happier, on the whole, than you are, whoever you may be. But if it should prove to be true, what will become of you, Sir?” That is the question that I should like to put to anyone who says that the Bible is not true. *Suppose it should be true, Friend? What will become of you*? We who know it is true ask you to listen to the Word.  
The next thing is, embrace the message. It does seem to me to be a most blessed message that I have to bring to everyone here. It is this— ***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One There is life at this moment for you.”***  
Whoever trusts Jesus Christ is at once forgiven and accepted! The war is over and peace is proclaimed the moment that the soul repents of sin and believes in Jesus Christ. There cannot be a simpler, sweeter and safer Gospel than that! Dr. Watts truly wrote—  
***“Let everlasting glories crown  
Your head, my Savior and my Lord!  
Your hands have brought salvation down And writ the blessings in Your Word!  
What if we trace the globe around,  
And search from Britain to Japan?  
There shall be no religion found  
So just to God, so safe for man!”***  
So embrace the message, we pray you, as you love your souls, and would not destroy yourselves! Accept the peace which the Gospel brings to you!  
And then, lastly, I say again to you who have embraced it, and who rejoice in it, *pray for us, pray for us*. I mean not for me, only, but for all who preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or who teach it in any shape or form. I sometimes think that if all our friends knew our many anxieties, cares, and heartbreaks, they would never forget to pray for us. I thank God that many of you do remember us in your prayers, but there are some, perhaps, who forget that we are always in need of prayer—and if there is one person in this world who needs your prayers beyond all others, I am sure that I am that one! Think of the thousands of souls that gather here from Sabbath to Sabbath, drinking in every syllable that falls from our lips. Have you ever calculated how many thousands of persons pass through this place in one year? And then, week by week, the printed sermon goes over nearly the whole earth, not only in the English language, but in the language of all civilized men, almost without exception, so that no man knows where he may not find the sermon that was preached here. We constantly have information from persons who, for instance, have been lying dying of the yellow fever in the hospitals of Havana, or have been in Rio Janeiro, or in Australia, or have wandered into the vast prairies and have come across a log cabin and have found there that same word that was preached here within a short space of time after it dropped from our lips! Pray for us that all this may not be in vain!  
And then, Beloved, this Church has sent out hundreds of ministers who are now located in all parts of the world and, almost without exception, preaching that same Gospel that we have declared unto you! Think, also, of the thousands of members in this Church—some very good people and some very strange ones—many sick, some dying, and always some needing counsel, or warning, or exhortation that requires all our wit and wisdom—and a great deal more to say the right word at the right time! Then there is that which comes upon us daily—the care of scores and hundreds of churches which, if they have any trouble, resort to us and bring their burdens to one who is burdened enough already! We are wretched to the last degree if we have not your prayers! But if you pray for us, nothing can stagger us! If you uphold us by your prayers, God will make us strong! But if you leave us, we shall be weakness itself. Pray for us, for “we are ambassadors for Christ.”  
There are strangers here to whom this part of my discourse may seem egotistic. I cannot help its seeming so to you! But I am speaking to my own friends here about what they know, but of which they sometimes need to be reminded. And if they will pray for me as the result of it, I shall not feel very much troubled in my conscience for having seemed to be egotistic to those who do not know. After all, our reliance is not even upon the prayers of the saints. God is our Helper, and we have done His work in reliance upon His Grace, but we shall be unfaithful tomorrow unless He shall guide and teach and uphold us. Therefore, again we say, Brethren, pray for us! By the love you bear to Christ, pray for us! Amen

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3497 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SOLEMN EMBASSY  
NO. 3497

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1916.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY26, 1871.~~***

***~~“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we implore you on Christ’s  
behalf, be reconciled to God.”  
2 Corinthians 5:20.~~***

THERE has long been war between man and his Maker. Our federal head, Adam, threw down the gauntlet in the Garden of Eden. The trumpet was heard to ring through the glades of Paradise, the trumpet which broke the silence of peace and disturbed the song of praise. From that day forward until now there has been no truce, no treaty between God and man by nature. Man has been at variance with God. His heart has been at enmity towards God. He would not be reconciled to God. Never in the heart of any natural man, unless Divine Grace has put it there, has a desire to reestablish peace been felt or entertained! If any of you long to be at peace with your Maker, it is because His Spirit has made you long for it. Left to yourselves, you would go from conflict to conflict, from struggle to struggle, and perpetuate the encounter until it ended in your eternal destruction! But though man will not make terms with God, nor sue for peace at His hands, God shows His unwillingness any longer to be at war with man. That He anxiously desires man to be reconciled unto Him, He proves by taking the first step. He, Himself, sends His ambassadors. He does not invite them from the other party—that were Grace — but He sends ambassadors and He commands those ambassadors to be very earnest—to plead with men, to pray for them, to beseech them that they would be reconciled to God. I take this to be a sure pledge that there is love in the heart of God! Why, at the very announcement of these tidings, the rebellious sinner’s ears should be opened! It were enough to make him say, “I will listen diligently. I will hear what God the Lord shall speak, for if it is true that He takes the first step towards me and that He is willing to make up this deadly quarrel, God forbid that I should turn away! I will even now hear and attend to all that God shall speak to my soul.” May He bless the message to you, that you may be reconciled to Him without a moment’s delay! John Bunyan puts it plainly enough. “If a certain king is besieging a town and he sends out the herald with a trumpet to threaten the inhabitants that if they do not give up the town, he will hang every man of them, then immediately they come to the walls and give him back a reviling answer! They swear that they will fight it out and will never surrender to such a tyrant. But if he sends an embassy with a white flag to tell them that if they will but surrender and yield to their lawful king, he will pardon every one of them,” even the very vilest of them will relent! Then, says honest John, “do they not come trembling over the walls and throw their gates wide open to receive their gracious monarch.” Would that such a result might be accomplished tonight! While I speak of the great Divine Grace of this Prince of Peace who now sends His ambassadors to the rebellious, may some rebel say, “Then I will be at peace with Him. I will hold out no longer. So irresistible a love as this has dissolved my heart, resolved my choice and compelled my allegiance.”

Well now, let us speak awhile of *the Ambassadors*—*the Commission* with which they are entrusted—*the duty* they have to discharge—and close with a question—*What then*? First, then, we have to speak of—

**I.**THE AMBASSADORS.  
Welcome messengers are they! All nations, with one accord, have agreed to honor ambassadors. Strange, then, that all nations and all people should have conspired to *dishonor the ambassadors of God*! Which of God’s ambassadors in the olden time was not persecuted, rejected, or slain? Were they not stoned, beheaded, sawn asunder? How continually they were maltreated and made to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, though of them the world was not worthy! But there have been some men to whom the ambassadors of God have always been welcome. The men whom God had ordained to eternal life! Those on whose behalf, from before all worlds, He had made an effectual Covenant of Peace. From them the ambassadors get a hearty welcome! Standing here to preach as an ambassador, I shall get but little attention from some of my audience. The proclamation of mercy will sound commonplace to many. They will turn on their heels and say, “There is nothing in it.” But mark you, the ambassador of God will be very welcome to some of you who have bitterly felt your estrangement, to some whose hearts are prepared by a sense of ruin for the good tidings of Redemption—to some in whom the secret mystery of Predestination begins to work by the overt energy of Effectual Calling. These shall find their souls greatly but surely drawn to the proclamation of mercy that shall be made, and they will say, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of peace, that publish salvation!”  
Ambassadors are always*especially welcome to a people who are engaged in a war which is beyond their strength,* when their resources are exhausted and the peril of defeat is imminent. If some tiny little principality has ventured to rebel against a great empire, when it is absolutely certain that its villages will be consumed, its provinces ravaged and that all its power will be crushed, ambassadors are pretty sure to receive a cordial welcome. Ah, man, you have bid defiance to the King of Heaven, whose power is Irresistible, by whom rocks are thrown down, whose voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon, whose hands control the great deep sea! He it is who binds the clouds with a cord and girdles the earth with a belt! Angels that excel in strength cannot stand against Him. From the lofty battlements of Heaven, He hurled down Satan, the great archangel, and the mighty host of rebellious morning stars! How can you stand against Him—shall the stubble contend with the fire? Shall the potter’s vessel resist the rod of iron? What are you but a moth, easily crushed beneath His finger? The breath is in your nostrils, and that is not your own—how, then, can you, poor mortal, contend with Him who only has Immortality? Your breath is broken more rapidly than a sear leaf by the wind! How can you venture to be at war with One who has Heaven and earth at His command, who holds the keys of Hell and of death, and who has Tophet as His source of ammunition against you? Listen to His thunder and let your blood curdle! Let His lightning flash, and how are you amazed! How, then, can you stand against the greatness of His power, or endure the terror of His wrath? Happy for you that terms of peace are proclaimed in your ears! God is willing to cease the warfare. He would not have you be His adversary. Will you not gladly accept what He proposes to you? Never, surely, was war more charged with disaster than that into which you have madly rushed!  
An ambassador is always*welcome when the people have begun to feel the victorious force of the king.* Yonder province has already yielded. Certain cities have been taken by the sword and given up to be sacked. Now the poor miserable inhabitants are glad enough to get peace. They dread the foot of the conqueror, now that they have felt its weight. Doubtless there are some here present who have known the power of God in their conscience. Perhaps He has scared you with visions, and frightened you with dreams. Though it is but the voice of a man that you heard, yet the Law of God has been very terrible to you, and now you find no pleasure in your pleasure! No joy in your joys. God has begun to break your bones with conviction. He has made you feel that sin is a bitter thing. He has made you drunk with wormwood and broken your teeth with gravel. He has brought you down as the fool in the 107th Psalm, by affliction and by labor, and you are crying out in anguish, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Yes, doubtless, you that have once felt the weight of God’s hand upon your conscience, will rejoice to hear that there is an embassy of peace sent to you!  
An ambassador is, likewise, always *welcome to those who are laboring under a fear of total and speedy destruction*. If none of you are in that plight, I remember when I was—when I thought every day it was a marvel of mercies that I was kept alive—and wondered as I woke in the morning if I was not lifting up my eyes with Dives in Hell! Everything about Christ was precious to me then! I think I would have stood in the most crowded Chapel, nor would I have been weary had I sat upon the hardest seat. No length of service would have wearied me, might I but have had an inkling that God would perhaps have mercy upon my soul! My eyes were full of tears. My soul was faint with watching and I would have kissed the feet of any man who would have told me the way of salvation! But, alas, it seemed as if no man cared for my soul, till at last God blessed an humble instrument to give light to His poor dark child. Hence I know that the news of mercy will be exceedingly welcome to you who stand upon the jaws of Hell, fearing that the gates will soon be bolted upon you and that you will be forever lost. You will be ready to cry like our Methodist friends, “Hallelujah, Glory! Hallelujah, Bless the Lord!” while you hear that God still sends an embassy of peace to your soul!  
Most acceptable, too, is a messenger of peace *if the people know that he brings no hard terms.* When a certain king sent to the inhabitants of a town that he would make peace with them, provided he put out their right eyes and cut off their right hands, I am sure the tidings must have caused the utmost consternation—and the ambassador could not be very popular. But there are no hard terms in the Gospel! In fact, there are no terms, no conditions at all! It is an unconditional peace which God makes with men! It is a Gospel which asks nothing of men, but gives them everything! The Lord says, “My oxen and My fatlings are killed. All things are ready, come you to the supper.” There is nothing for man to get ready—all things are prepared. The terms—if I must use a word I do not like—are simple and easy—“Believe, and live.” With what joy should a rebellious sinner hear the voice of the ambassador who brings no hard conditions from God!  
And should not the fame of the King increase the zest with which the embassy is received? Comes it not from Him who cannot lie? No temporary peace is proposed that may presently be broken, but a peace that shall stand fast forever and ever! No temporary armistice, no brief interlude between the deeds of battle do we herald. Peace—eternal, unbroken peace—peace that shall endure in life and outlive death! Peace which shall endure throughout eternity, we testify and make known to you!  
This peace is proclaimed to all men. It is proclaimed without exception. “Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. Such an ambassador bringing such a message must surely be a welcome messenger from his God! Let us ask now, What is—  
**II.**THE COMMISSION OF PEACE which God has entrusted us to proclaim? The words are concise, the sense is transparent. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespass unto them—and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” Let us open the commission. It lies, in a nutshell—“Thus says the Lord of Hosts, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live.” “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” Our commission begins with the announcement that God is Love, that He is full of pity and compassion, that He is desirous to receive His creature back, that He wills to forgive and that He elects, if it is consistent with the high attribute of His Justice, to accept even the most rebellious, and to put them among His children. Our commission goes on to disclose the manner, as well as the motive, of mercy. Inasmuch as God is Love, He, in order to remove all difficulties in the way of pardoning rebels, has been pleased to give His only-begotten Son, that He might stand in the place of those whom God has chosen. Their sins He engaged to take, to carry their sorrows and to make an Atonement on their behalf. Thus the Justice of God would be satisfied and His love flow over to the human race. We declare, therefore, that God has given Christ, and He has made it a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that He came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief! Christ, the Son of God, has become Man. Cheerfully and willingly He took upon Himself our nature, veiled the form of Deity in a humble garb of clay, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a life of holiness and died a death of Sacrifice. Through this marvelous death of the Man, the God, Christ Jesus, God is at peace with His people. The peace is already made, for He is our Peace. God is at peace with every man for whom Jesus died! Jesus Christ stood in the place of His chosen people. Christ was punished for their sins. Justice cannot punish twice for one offense. Christ, the Substitute, being punished, the sinner cannot be amenable for his own offenses. Those for whom Jesus died go free! The proclamation is that God is willing to be reconciled, that He *is* reconciled! It is an announcement, not that you may merely have peace, but that peace is made with God by Jesus Christ for you—full peace, without condition, not half-made, but wholly made—the penalty being completely paid to the last dot and the Sacrifice completely slaughtered till the last drop of blood had expiated the last offense!  
But the proclamation needs something more to give us any satisfaction. Are there any tidings in it for you and me? Well, our message goes on to announce that whoever in the wide world will come to Jesus Christ and commit his cause to Him as Redeemer, Savior and Friend, shall forthwith be at peace with God, receive full pardon for all offenses and be welcomed as a favorite of the Most High! He shall know that for him, Jesus Christ did die in his place and as Surety did stand for him when He appeared before God. From condemnation he is, therefore, free! Of salvation he is, therefore, sure! This proclamation, I say, is to be made universally. Though every man will not be blessed by it, the preacher cannot discriminate between those who must and those who will not inherit the blessing! Though only some will accept it, the preacher is not warranted in showing any partiality. It is the Holy Spirit’s work to impress the Word on the conscience, and to awaken the conscience by the Word of God. As for us, we are willing enough to turn our face to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west! Gladly would we proclaim it to the red man who hunts the savannahs of America, to the swarthy man who never heard the name of Christ, before, or to the white man who has often heard, but never heeded it! The same message, that God has accepted Christ as a Substitute for every man that will believe in Christ, and that whoever trusts Christ to save him is, in that moment, saved, will suffice for all. Yes, we would tell them that before the sinner does trust Christ, he is reconciled unto God by His death because the Atonement which He offered had been accepted, and there was peace foreordained between God and that sinner! What a message I have to present! What a proclamation I have to make! Nothing is necessary on your part—God expects nothing of you to merit His esteem, or to enhance the value of His gift. If repentance is indispensable, He is prepared to give it to you! If a tender heart is needed, He is ready to give you a heart of flesh! If you feel that you have a heart of stone, He has engaged to take it away. Does your guilt oppress you? He says, “I will sprinkle clean water, water of pure fountains, upon them, and they shall be cleansed from all their filthiness. And from all their uncleanness will I save them.” Know, all men, that there is no exception made! When Charles II came back to England there was an amnesty, except for certain persons, and these were mentioned by name—Hugh Peters and others were proscribed—but there is no exception here. I find not any traitors singled out and denounced by name! I have to proclaim an indemnity of such universal import that it is indiscriminate, “Whoever believes on Him shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life.”  
Moreover, there is no exception made in my commission to any form of sin—unless it is the sin against the Holy Spirit—which carries its own evidence as well as its consequence. Those to whom I now speak, if they feel any drawings of heart towards God, have not committed that mortal crime! Murder, theft, forgery, felony, fornication, adultery and covetousness, which is idolatry—black and hideous as is the catalog—here is pardon for the whole! Ransack the kennels, however filthy! Rake the slums, however odious! Drag out the abominations of the age, however degrading! Here is pardon not only possible, probable, but positive! Bring a man here who has stained himself crimson all over with every sort of infamy, though it be not the lapse of an hour, but the habit of a life, yet God is still able to forgive! Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God

y Him!  
I do not know whether you find it very good to hear the proclamation, but I do know that I feel it most gratifying to utter it. Thrice happy am I to have such an announcement to make to rebels. Unknown Hearers, listen to my voice! By what strange chance have yon reckless, heedless, unconverted souls mingled with this throng of worshippers? Not often do you darken the floor of a place of worship! You hardly know how you were led to come in here. To what depths of sin you have run, to what extremities of iniquity you have gone! You marvel to find yourself in the company of God’s people. But since you are here, give heed to the message—“Thus says the Lord, I have blotted out like a cloud your iniquities, and like a thick cloud your sins. Return unto Me, for I am married to you. I have given My blood to redeem you. Return, O wandering child of man! Return, return, and I will have mercy upon you, for I am God, and not man.” Having thus opened my commission, I will endeavor to perform—  
**III.**A VERY SOLEMN DUTY.  
My text supplies me with a warrant. It says, “As though God did beseech you by us, we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be you reconciled unto God.” Then it seems we have not merely to read our commission, but *we have to beseech you to accept it*! Why should we beseech you? Is it not because you are rational creatures, not robots—men, not machines? A machine might be compelled to perform functions without persuasion, but the Spirit of God often acts upon the heart of man by the sound arguments and affectionate entreaties of His servants whom He commissions. We are to beseech you because your hearts are so hard that you are prone to defy God’s power and resist His Grace! Therefore, we pray you to put down your weapons. We are to beseech you because you are unbelieving and will not credit the tidings. You say it is too good to be true that God will have mercy on such as you are. Therefore, we are to put our hand on you, to go down on our knees to you and to beseech you not to put away this blessed embassy! We are to beseech you because you are so proud and self-satisfied that you will sooner follow your own righteousness and cling to your own works than accept a peace already and freely proffered to you! We are to beseech you because you are careless. You give little heed to what is spoken—you will go your way and forget all our proclamations—therefore, are we to press you urgently, instantly, importunately! And we are to beseech you as when a mother pleads for her child’s life, as when a condemned criminal beseeches the judge to have pity on him! I think I never feel so conscious of my own weakness as when I have to ply you thus with exhortations. Oh, there have been a few times in my ministry when I could, with flowing eyes, beseech you to be reconciled to God, but these dry eyes of mine are not so often fountains of tears as I could wish. We need such an one as Richard Baxter to dilate upon this last part of the text. Perhaps we could handle the former part better than he, but he could handle this last far better than we can! Oh, how he would have summoned you by the terrible reality of things to come! With what glaring eyes and seething words he would say, “Oh, men, turn you, turn you, why will you die? You will feel the need of a Savior in the pangs of parting life, when the pulses shall be few and feeble, till with a gasp you shall expire! At the Resurrection, when you will wake up, if not in His likeness, to everlasting shame and contempt! At the Judgment Seat, where your sins shall be published and you shall be called to account for the deeds done in the body! At the dread decree which casts into Hell, forever, those that repent not! You will feel the need of a Savior by the Heaven you will lose and by the Hell into which you will fall! And by eternity, that dread eternity whose years never end—by the wrath to come, the burning indignation of which shall never cool—by the immortality of your own souls, by the perils you now run, by the promises you despise, by the provocations you multiply, by the penalties you accumulate! We do beseech you to be reconciled to God.” Fly to Jesus! Call upon His name! Trust Him, His Word, His work, His goodness and His Grace! This is the way of reconciliation! Bow the knee and kiss the Son. We do beseech you to do so. Acquaint yourselves now with God and be at peace with Him! My text hangs like a crushing weight upon my soul at this moment. It is awful in its grandeur and it is majestically full of Divine Love. I must read the words again in your hearing. Oh, that the sense might break in on your understanding!  
We are to beseech you as though God did beseech you, and we are to do it in Christ’s place. You see, God speaks when His ambassadors speak. I wonder, oh, I wonder, whether I have brains enough to compass the thought of how God would beseech you to be reconciled? ‘Tis the Father’s own pleading with His prodigal son. Can you imagine the father in the parable going after his son and finding him in rags feeding swine? Can you conceive him saying, “My son, my dear son, come back! Come back and I will forgive you all!” You think you hear that son saying to his father “Get you gone, I will not hear of it,” till his father says “My dear son, why will you prefer the company of swine to your father’s house? Why will you wear rags when you might be clothed in the best robe? Why will you starve in a far-off country when my house shall be full of feasting on your return?” What if that son should utter some indignant word and tell his father to his face he would never go back? Oh, I think I see the venerable, loving man falling on his son’s neck and kissing him in his filth just as he is, ( “the great love with which He loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins!”)—and He says to the rebel who insults Him and resents His tenderness, “My dear son, you must come back! I must have you. I cannot be without you. I must have you—come back!” In such a style we ought to plead with men. Ah, then, I cannot plead with you as I would. As though God, Himself, your offended Maker, came to you now as He did to Adam in the cool of the day and said to you, “Oh, return to Me, for I have loved you with an everlasting love,” even so, as though God spoke, would I woo you, you chief of sinners, to return to Him! You know, dear Friends, that the great God did send another Ambassador and that great Ambassador was Christ. Now the Apostle says that we, the ministers, are ambassadors for Christ in Christ’s place. Christ is no more an Ambassador—He has gone to Heaven—we stand in His place to the sons of men, not to make peace, but to proclaim it! What? Am I, then, to speak in Christ’s place? But how can I picture my Lord Jesus standing here? Alas, my imagination is not equal to the task! Would that I had sympathy enough with Him to put myself in His case so as to use His Words! I think I see Him looking at this great throng as once He looked at the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He turns His head round to these galleries, and about on yonder aisles, and at last He bursts into a flood of tears, saying, “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not.” He is choked with tears, and when He has paused a moment, He cries, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. A bruised reed I will not break, nor quench the smoking flax.”  
Again, I think I see Him as He looks at you, again, and when He observes some hearts so obstinate and hard that they will not melt, He unwraps His mantle, and exclaims, “Look here!” Do you mark the gash in His side? As He lifts His hands and shows the nail prints, and points downward to His pierced feet, He says, “By these, My wounds, which I endured when suffering for you, O My people, return unto Me! Come, bow at My feet, and take the peace which I have worked out for you. Oh, be not faithless, but believing! Doubt no longer! God is reconciled! Tremble no more! Peace is established. Toil no more at the works of the Law, cling not to your own doings. Cease to consult your feelings. It is finished! When I bowed My head upon the Cross, I finished all for you! Take salvation! Take it now! Come to Me. Come now to Me just as you are!” Alas, this is but a poor representation of my Lord and Master! I could wish myself laid among the clods of the valley, sleeping in my grave, rather than that I should be so poor an ambassador! But, Lord, why did You choose Your servant, and why did You give this people to still hear His voice, if you will not more mightily enable Him to plead with men? I have no more words, oh, let these tears plead with you! I feel that I could freely give my life if it would avail for the saving of your souls! Gladly would I meet a martyr’s death if you would be persuaded thereby to come to Christ for life! But oh, Sinners, no pleading of mine will ever prevail if the pleading of Christ proves ineffectual with you! To each one of you a distinct proclamation of salvation is addressed. Whoever among you will believe that Christ died and that He is able to save you—and will trust your soul upon what He did—shall be saved. Oh, why reject Him? He will not hurt nor harm you! Lay hold of this good hope, for your time is short! Death is hastening on! Eternity is near! Do lay hold of it, for Hell is hot, the flames, thereof, are terrible! Lay hold of it, for Heaven is bright, and the harps of angels are sweet beyond compare! Lay hold of it! It shall make your heart glad on earth, it shall charm away your fears and remove your griefs! Lay hold of it! It shall bear you through Jordan’s billows and land you safe on Canaan’s side. Oh, by the love of the Father, by the blood of Jesus, by the love of the Spirit, I beseech you, Sinner, believe and live! By the Cross and the five wounds, by the agony and bloody sweat, by the Resurrection and by the Ascension, Sinner, believe and live! By every argument that would touch your nature, by every motive that can sway your reason or stir your passions, in the name of God that sent me, by the Almighty that made you, by the Eternal Son that redeemed you, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, Sinner, I command you, with Divine Authority to sanction my vehemence, that you be reconciled to God through the death of His Son! And—  
**IV.**WHAT THEN?  
When we have answered this question we shall have done. What then? Are there not some of you with whom this peace is made at this good hour? I will go back and tell my Master so. Then there shall be fresh ratifications between you and Him. The angels will hear of it and they will strike their harps anew to sweeter lays than they have known before.  
Others there are of you that will not be reconciled. I must have an answer from you. Do you hesitate? Do you delay? Do you refuse? You shall never have another warning, some of you! No tears of pity shall be wept for you again. No loving heart shall ever bid you come to Christ again—I must have your answer now! Yes or no? Will you be damned or not? Will you be saved or not? I will not have you say, “When I have a more convenient season I will send for you.” Sinner, it cannot be a more convenient one than this! This is a convenient place—it is God’s House. It is a convenient time—it is the Lord’s-Day. Now, Sinner, will you be reconciled, restored, forgiven? “Will you be made whole?” said Jesus, and I say the same to you, “Will you be made whole?” Do you say, “No”? Must I take that for an answer? Mark you, Sinner, I have to tell my Master—I must tell Him when I seek the closet of the King tonight. I must tell Him your reply that you would not. What then remains for an ambassador to do when he has spoken to you in the name of the Sovereign? If you will not turn, we must shake off the dust of our feet against you! I am clear. I am clear of the blood of you all, I am clear. If you perish, being warned, you perish wantonly! The wrath comes upon you, not on him who, to the best of his power, has told his Master’s message. Yet again, I beg you to accept it! Do you still say no? The white flag will be pulled down. It has been up long enough. Shall I pull it down and run up the red flag now? Shall I hurl threats at you because you heed not entreaties?— ***“If your ears refuse  
The language of His Grace,  
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews, That unbelieving race,  
The Lord in anger,  
Shall lift His hand and swear,  
You that despised My promised rest  
Shall have no portion there.”***  
But no, I cannot pull it down, that white flag! My heart will not let me do so! It shall fly there still, it shall fly there as a sign and a symbol of the day of Grace. Mercy is still held out to you. But there is one coming—I can hear his footsteps—who will pull down that white flag. The vision haunts my eyes. That grim, heartless skeleton whom men call, Death, will tear the white flag from its place and up will go the blood-red flag with the black escutcheon of the thunderbolts! Where are you then, Sinners? Where will you be then? You shudder at the thought. He lays his hand on you. There is no escape. Oh, turn you, turn you, turn you! Come and welcome, Sinner, come now while you are welcome! ‘Tis Love invites you! Jesus stretches out His hand to you all the day long. He has stretched out His hands to a rebellious and a gainsaying generation. Do not say, “I will think about it,” but yield to His Love who around you now the bands of a man does cast. Do not make a resolution, but commit yourself to the good confession! Now, even now, may Sovereign Grace compel, and Irresistible Love draw you! May you believe with your heart, may you record your profession at once! Before you close your eyes in sleep, just as you would wish before your eyes are closed in death, may you be at peace with God! I pray God, as I entreat you, that this may come to pass, for His Son, Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *LUKE 18:31-43.***

**Verses 31-34.***Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully treated, and spit upon. And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*It would be hard to imagine our Lord speaking more plainly. He tells them of His sufferings in detail—describes exactly what is to happen. But their thoughts did not run that way, and when you are not expecting a thing, it little matters how very plainly you may be told of it. You are doting upon something else and, therefore, you do not readily perceive the meaning. You know how, when you are expecting to hear a thing said, you can hear it even at a great distance, or you think you hear it from the very motion of the man’s lips. But if he should say something clean contrary to what you expect, then you do not so readily hear. And these disciples of our Lord were looking to see Him made a king— they could not comprehend that the only crown He was to have would be one of thorns—and that the homage paid to Him would be to be scourged and to be spat upon! They did not understand. And don’t you think that sometimes the run of our thoughts may be so contrary to Divine Truth that we may not be able to understand some very plain things in the Bible, which are only difficult to us because our thoughts are not yet running that way? One day when we shall be more completely cleansed from the grossness of this world, many a riddle will become plain enough to us!

**35-39.***And it came to pass, that as He was come near unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, You Son of David, have mercy on me! And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more, You son of David, have mercy on me!* It’s impossible to think that there should be some who think that when results are to be seen, they can ever be regarded as hindrances! For is it not a result of ministry—a result of Jesus passing by—that men cry out, “You Son of David, have mercy on me”? And yet, when the wave sheaf is before them, they seem to put it aside as though it were an impediment in the Savior’s way! “Let Him go on sowing.” Well, but, Sir, it will not hinder Him to let Him also reap a little, for evidently there has been good seed shown in this heart—and here is the outcome of it, for the man is crying—“You Son of David, have mercy on me!” We do not get our sermons interrupted in this way, but what a mercy it will be when they are! And I suppose that in some better times when God’s Spirit more mightily blesses the word, we shall bare to stop our sermons every now and then to deal with anxious souls, or get them to step aside where those that are skillful in Heaven’s surgery may bind up their wounds. They will be crying ever and anon, “Sirs, what must we do to be saved? Jesus, You Son of David, have mercy on me.”

**40, 41.***And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto Him; and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What do you want Me to do for you?*If Christ were to come near to every unconverted person here, and say to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” do you know what it is you want? No. The unhappy circumstance is that the mass of mankind do not know what mercy they should ask for, even if they believed that they had only to ask and have! But, dear Friend, you need deliverance from the power of sin! You need a new heart and a right spirit. You need to give up the sins you love and to follow after the virtues which now you despise! May God give you Grace to know that you need this! But this blind man knew what he wanted.

**41-43.***And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive your sight: your faith has saved you. And immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #1910 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

NO. 1910

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 18TH, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be  
made the righteousness of God in Him.”  
2 Corinthians 5:20, 21.~~***

THE heart of the Gospel is redemption and the essence of redemption is the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ. They who preach this Truth of God preach the Gospel in whatever else they may be mistaken—but they who preach not the Atonement, whatever else they declare—have missed the soul and substance of the Divine message. In these days I feel bound to go over and over again the elementary Truths of the Gospel. In peaceful times we may feel free to make excursions into interesting districts of Truth which lie far afield, but now we must stay at home and guard the hearths and homes of the Church by defending the first principles of the faith. In this age there have risen up in the Church, itself, men who speak perverse things. There are many that trouble us with their philosophies and novel interpretations, whereby they deny the doctrines they profess to teach and undermine the faith they are pledged to maintain. It is well that some of us who know what we believe and have no secret meanings for our words, should just put our foot down and maintain our standing, holding forth the Word of Life and plainly declaring the foundational truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you a parable. In the days of Nero there was great shortness of food in the city of Rome, although there was abundance of corn to be purchased at Alexandria. A certain man who owned a vessel went down to the sea coast and there he noticed many hungry people straining their eyes toward the sea, watching for the vessels that were to come from Egypt with corn. When these vessels came to the shore, one by one, the poor people wrung their hands in bitter disappointment, for on board the galleys there was nothing but sand which the tyrant emperor had compelled them to bring for use in the arena! It was infamous cruelty, when men were dying of hunger, to command trading vessels to go to and fro and bring nothing else but sand for gladiatorial shows, when wheat was so greatly needed. Then the merchant whose vessel was moored by the quay said to his shipmaster, “Take you good heed that you bring nothing back with you from Alexandria but corn. And whereas, before, you have brought in the vessel a measure or two of sand, bring you not so much as would lie upon a penny this time. Bring nothing else, I say, but corn, for these people are dying. And now we must keep our vessels for this one business of bringing food for them.”

Alas! I have seen certain mighty galleys, of late, loaded with nothing but mere sand of philosophy and speculation, and I have said within myself, “No, but I will bear nothing in my ship but the revealed Truth of God, the Bread of Life so greatly needed by the people.” God grant us this day that our ship may have nothing on board it that may merely gratify the curiosity, or please the taste, but that there may be necessary Truths for the salvation of souls. I would have each one of you say—“Well, it was just the old, old story of Jesus and His love and nothing else.” I have no desire to be famous for anything but preaching the old Gospel. There are plenty who can fiddle to you the new music—it is for me to have no music at any time but that which is heard in Heaven—“Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be Glory forever and ever!”

I intend, dear Friends, to begin my discourse with the second part of my text, in which the doctrine of Substitution is set forth in these words— “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” This is the basis and power of those appeals which it is our duty to make to the consciences of men!

I have found, my Brothers and Sisters, by long experience, that nothing touches the heart like the Cross of Christ. And when the heart is touched and wounded by the two-edged sword of the Law, nothing heals its wounds like the balm which flows from the pierced heart of Jesus. The Cross is life to the spiritually dead. There is an old legend which can have no literal truth in it, but if it is regarded as a parable, it is then most instructive. They say that when the Empress Helena was searching for the true Cross of Jesus they dug deep at Jerusalem and found the three crosses of Calvary buried in the soil. Which out of the three crosses was the veritable Cross upon which Jesus died they could not tell, except by certain tests. So they brought a corpse and laid it on one of the crosses, but there was neither life nor motion. When the same dead body touched another of the crosses it lived—and then they said, “This is the true Cross.”

When we see men quickened, converted and sanctified by the Doctrine of the Substitutionary Sacrifice, we may justly conclude that it is the true Doctrine of Atonement! I have not known men made to live unto God and holiness except by the Doctrine of the death of Christ on man’s behalf. Hearts of stone that before never beat with life have been turned to flesh through the Holy Spirit causing them to know this Truth of God! A sacred tenderness has visited the obstinate when they have heard of Jesus crucified for them. Those who have lain at Hell’s dark door, wrapped about with a sevenfold death-shade, even upon*them* has a great light shined! The story of the great Lover of the souls of men who gave Himself for their salvation is still, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the greatest of all forces in the realm of mind!

So, this morning, I am going to handle, first, the great Doctrine, and then afterwards, and secondly, as God shall help me, we shall come to the great argument which is contained in the 20th verse—“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

**I.**First, then, with as much brevity as possible, I will speak upon THE GREAT DOCTRINE. The great Doctrine, the greatest of all, is this, that God, seeing men to be lost by reason of their sin, has taken that sin of theirs and laid it upon His only begotten Son, making Him to be sin for us, even Him who knew no sin and that, in consequence of this transference of sin, he that believes in Christ Jesus is made just and righteous, yes, is made to be the righteousness of God in Christ! Christ was made sin that sinners might be made righteousness! That is the Doctrine of the Substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ on the behalf of guilty men.

Now consider, first, *who was made sin for us*? The description of our great Surety here given is upon one point, only, and it may more than suffice us for our present meditation. Our Substitute was spotless, innocent and pure. “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,” Christ Jesus, the Son of God, became Incarnate and was made flesh and dwelt here among men. But though He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He knew no sin. Though upon Him, sin was laid, yet not so as to make Him guilty. He was not, He *could not* be a sinner—He had no personal knowledge of sin. Throughout the whole of His life He never committed an offense against the great Laws of truth and right. The Law was in His heart—it was His Nature to be holy. He could say to all the world, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” Even His vacillating judge enquired, “Why, what evil has He done?” When all Jerusalem was challenged and bribed to bear witness against Him, no witnesses could be found. It was necessary to misquote and twist His words before a charge could be trumped up against Him by His bitterest enemies. His life brought Him in contact with both the tables of the Law, but no single command had He transgressed. As the Jews examined the Paschal lamb before they slew it, so did scribes and Pharisees, doctors of the Law and rulers and princes examine the Lord Jesus, without finding offense in Him. He was the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot!

As there was no sin of commission, so was there about our Lord no fault of omission. Probably, dear Brothers and Sisters, we that are Believers have been enabled, by Divine Grace, to escape most sins of commission, but I, for one, have to mourn daily over sins of *omission*. If we have spiritual Graces, yet they do not reach the point required of us. If we do that which is right in itself, yet we usually mar our work upon the wheel either in the motive, or in the manner of doing it, or by the selfsatisfaction with which we view it when it is done. We come short of the Glory of God in some respect or other! We forget to do what we ought to do, or, doing it, we are guilty of lukewarmness, self-reliance, unbelief, or some other grievous error. It was not so with our Divine Redeemer! You cannot say that there was *any* feature deficient in His perfect beauty. He was complete in heart, in purpose, in thought, in word, in deed, in spirit. You could not add anything to the life of Christ without its being manifestly an excrescence. He was emphatically an all-round Man, as we say in these days. His life is a perfect circle, a complete epitome of virtue. No pearl has dropped from the silver string of His Character. No one virtue has overshadowed and dwarfed the rest—all perfections combine in perfect harmony to make in Him one surpassing Perfection!

Neither did our Lord know a sin of thought. His mind never produced an evil wish or desire. There never was, in the heart of our blessed Lord, a wish for any evil pleasure, nor a desire to escape any suffering or shame which was involved in His service. When He said, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,” He never desired to escape the bitter potion at the expense of His perfect lifework. The, “if it is possible,” meant, “if it is consistent with full obedience to the Father, and the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.” We see the weakness of His Nature shrinking and the holiness of His Nature resolving and conquering, as He adds, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, but though that flesh often caused Him weariness of body, it never produced in Him the weakness of sin. He took our infirmities, but He never exhibited an infirmity which had the least of blameworthiness attached to it. Never fell there an evil glance from those blessed eyes! Never did His lips let drop a hasty word! Never did those feet go on an evil errand, nor those hands move towards a sinful deed! Because His heart was filled with holiness and love within as well as without, our Lord was unblemished. His desires were as perfect as His actions. Searched by the eyes of Omniscience, no shadow of fault could be found in Him.

Yes, more, there were no tendencies about our Substitute towards evil in any form. In us there are always those tendencies, for the taint of original sin is upon us. We have to govern ourselves and hold ourselves under stern restraint or we would rush headlong to destruction! Our carnal nature lusts to evil and needs to be held in as with bit and bridle. Happy is that man who can master himself. But with regard to our Lord, it was His Nature to be pure, right and loving. All His sweet wills were towards goodness. His unconstrained life was holiness itself—He was “the Holy Child Jesus.” The prince of this world found in Him no fuel for the flame which he desired to kindle. Not only did no sin flow *from* Him, but there was no sin *in* Him, nor inclination, nor tendency in that direction. Watch Him in secret and you find Him in prayer. Look into His soul and you find Him eager to do and suffer the Father’s will. Oh, the blessed Character of Christ! If I had the tongues of men and of angels I could not worthily set forth His absolute perfection! Justly may the Father be well pleased with Him! Well may Heaven adore Him!

Beloved, it was absolutely necessary that an one who should be able to suffer in our stead should, himself, be spotless. A sinner obnoxious to punishment by reason of his own offenses—what can he do but bear the wrath which is due to his own sin? Our Lord Jesus Christ as Man was made under the Law, but He owed nothing to that Law, for He perfectly fulfilled it in all respects. He was capable of standing in the place of others because He was under no obligations of His own. He was only under obligations towards God because He had voluntarily undertaken to be the Surety and Sacrifice for those whom the Father gave Him. He was clear, Himself, or else He could not have entered into bonds for guilty men.

Oh, how I admire Him, that being such as He was, spotless and thrice holy so that even the heavens were not pure in His sight and He charged His angels with folly, yet He condescended to be made sin for us! How could He endure to be numbered with the transgressor and bear the sin of many? It may be no misery for a sinful man to live with sinful men, but it would be a heavy sorrow for the pure-minded to dwell with a company of abandoned and licentious wretches! What an overwhelming sorrow it must have been to the pure and perfect Christ to tabernacle among the hypocritical, the selfish and the profane! How much worse that He, Himself, should have to take upon Himself the sins of those guilty men! His sensitive and delicate Nature must have shrunk from even the shadow of sin and yet read the words and be astonished—“He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Our perfect Lord and Master bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He, before whom the sun, itself, is dim and the pure azure of Heaven is defilement, was made sin! I need not put this in fine words. The fact is, itself, too grand to need any magnifying by human language. To gild refined gold, or paint the lily, were absurd! But much more absurd would it be to try to overlay with flowers of speech the matchless beauties of the Cross. It suffices in simple rhyme to say—

***“Oh, hear that piercing cry!  
What can its meaning be?  
‘My God! My God! Oh why have You  
In wrath forsaken Me?’  
Oh ‘twas because our sins  
On Him by God were laid!  
He who Himself had never sinned,  
For sinners, sin was made.”***

This leads me on to the second point of the text which is, *what was done with Him who knew no sin*? He was “made sin.” It is an amazing expression—the more you weigh it, the more you will marvel at its singular strength. Only the Holy Spirit might originate such language! It was wise for the Divine Teacher to use very strong expressions, for otherwise the thought might not have entered human minds. Even now, despite the emphasis, clearness, and distinctness of the language used here and elsewhere in Scripture, there are found men daring enough to deny that Substitution is taught in Scripture! With such subtle wits it is useless to argue. It is clear that language has no meaning for them. To read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and to accept it as relating to the Messiah—and then to deny His Substitutionary Sacrifice is simply wickedness! It would be vain to reason with such beings—they are so blind that if they were transported to the sun, they could not see! In the Church and out of the Church there is a deadly animosity to this Truth of God. Modern thought labors to get away from what is obviously the meaning of the Holy Spirit, that sin was lifted from the guilty and laid upon the Innocent. It is written, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” This is as plain language as can be used. But if any plainer was required, here it is—“He has made Him to be sin for us.”

The Lord God laid upon Jesus, who voluntarily undertook it, all the weight of human sin! Instead of its resting on the sinner who committed it, it was made to rest upon Christ, who did not commit it. And the righteousness which Jesus worked out was placed to the account of the guilty, who had not worked it out, so that the guilty are treated as righteous! Those who, by nature, are guilty, are regarded as righteous, while He who, by Nature, knew no sin whatever, was treated as guilty! I think I must have read in scores of books that such a transference is impossible, but the statement has had no effect upon my mind. I do not care whether it is impossible or not with learned unbelievers—it is evidently possible with God, for He has done it! But they say it is contrary to reason. I do not care about that, either. It may be contrary to the reason of those unbelievers, but it is not contrary to mine! And if I am to be guided by reason, I prefer to follow my own. The Atonement is a miracle and miracles are to be accepted by *faith* rather than measured by calculation. A fact is the best of arguments. It is a *fact* that the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all! God’s Revelation proves the fact and our faith defies human questioning! God says it and I believe it! And believing it, I find life and comfort in it. Shall I not preach it? Assuredly I will—

***“Ever since by faith I saw the stream  
His flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme  
And shall be till I die.”***

Christ was not guilty and could not be made guilty—but He was treated as if He were guilty because He willed to stand in the place of the guilty! Yes, He was not only *treated* as a sinner, but He was treated as if He had been sin, itself, in the abstract. This is an amazing utterance! The Sinless One was made to be sin!

Sin pressed our great Substitute very sorely. He felt the weight of it in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He “sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.” The full pressure of it came upon Him when He was nailed to the accursed tree. There, in the hours of darkness, He bore infinitely more than we can tell. We know that He bore condemnation from the mouth of man, so that it is written, “He was numbered with the transgressors.” We know that He bore shame for our sakes. Did not your hearts tremble last Sunday evening when our text was, “Then did they spit in His face”? It was a cruel scorn that exhausted itself upon His blessed Person! This, I say, we *know*. We know that He bore pains innumerable of body and of mind—He thirsted, He cried out in the agony of desertion, He bled—He died. We know that He poured out His soul unto death and yielded up the ghost. But there was, at the back and beyond all this, an immeasurable abyss of*suffering*! The Greek Liturgy fitly speaks of, “Your unknown sufferings.” Probably to us they are *unknowable* sufferings. He was God as well as Man and the Godhead lent an Omnipotent power to the Manhood, so that there was compressed within His soul— and endured by it—an amount of anguish of which we can form no conception. I will say no more. It is wise to veil what it is impossible to depict.

This text both veils and discovers His sorrow, as it says, “He made Him to be sin.” Look into the words. Perceive their meaning, if you can. The angels desire to look into it. Gaze into this terrible crystal. Let your eyes search deep into this opal, within whose jeweled depth there are flames of fire! The Lord made the perfectly Innocent One to be sin for us! That means more of humiliation, darkness, agony and death than you can conceive. It brought a kind of distraction and well-near a *destruction* to the tender and gentle spirit of our Lord. I do not say that our Substitute endured a Hell—that were unwarrantable. I will not say that He endured either the exact punishment for sin, or an equivalent for it—but I do say that what He endured rendered to the Justice of God a vindication of His Law more clear and more effectual than would have been rendered to it by the damnation of the sinners for whom He died.

The Cross is, under many aspects, a more full Revelation of the wrath of God against human sin than even Tophet and the smoke of torment which goes up forever and ever. Who would know God’s hate of sin must see the Only Begotten bleeding in body and bleeding in soul even unto death! He must, in fact, spell out each word of my text and read its innermost meaning. There, my Brothers and Sisters, I am ashamed of the poverty of my explanation and I will, therefore, only repeat the full and sublime language of the Apostle—“He has made Him to be sin for us.” It is more than, “He has put Him to grief.” It is more than, “God has forsaken Him.” It is more than, “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” It is the most suggestive of all descriptions—“He has made Him to be sin for us.” Oh depth of terror and yet height of love!

So I pass on to notice in the third place, *who did it*? The text says, “He has made Him to be sin for us.” That is, God Himself it was who appointed His dear Son to be made sin for guilty men! The wise ones tell us that this Substitution cannot be just. Who made them judges of what is right and just? I ask them whether they believe that Jesus suffered and died at all? If they believe that He did, how do they account for the fact? Do they say that He died as an example? Then I ask, is it just for God to allow a sinless Being to die as an example? The fact of our Lord’s death is sure and it has to be accounted for. Ours is the fullest and truest explanation.

In the appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ to be made sin for us, there was, first of all, a display of the Divine Sovereignty. God here did what none but He could have done. It would not have been possible for all of us together to have laid sin upon Christ! But it *was* possible for the great Judge of All, who gives no account of His actions, to determine that so it should be. He is the fountain of rectitude and the exercise of His Divine prerogative is always unquestionable righteousness. That the Lord Jesus, who offered Himself as a willing Surety and Substitute, should be accepted as Surety and Substitute for guilty man, was in the power of the great Supreme. In His Divine Sovereignty He accepted Him and before that Sovereignty we bow! If any question it, our only answer is, “No but, O man, who are you that replies against God?”

The death of our Lord also displayed Divine Justice. It pleased God as the Judge of All, that sin should not be forgiven without the exaction of the punishment which had been so righteously threatened to it, or such other display of justice as might vindicate the Law. They say that this is not the God of Love. I answer, it *is* the God of Love, pre-eminently so! If you had upon the bench, today, a judge whose nature was kindness, itself, it would behoove him, as a judge, to execute justice—and if he did not—he would make his kindness ridiculous! Indeed, his kindness to the criminal would be *unkindness* to society at large! Whatever the judge may be *personally*, he is *officially* compelled to do justice. And “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” You speak of the Fatherhood of God! Enlarge as you please upon that theme even till you make a heresy of it, but still, God is the great moral Governor of the universe and it behooves Him to deal with sin in such a way that it is seen to be an evil and a bitter thing. God cannot wink at wickedness! I bless His holy name and adore Him that He is not unjust in order to be merciful that He does not spare the guilty in order to indulge His gentleness! Every transgression and disobedience has its just recompense of reward. But, through the Sacrifice of Christ, He is able to justly pardon! I bless His holy name that to vindicate His justice He determined that while a free pardon should be provided for Believers, it should be grounded upon an Atonement which satisfied all the requirements of the Law.

Admire, also, in the substitutionary Sacrifice, the great Grace of God. Never forget that He whom God made to be sin for us was His own Son. Yes, I go further—it was, in some sense, His own Self—for the Son is One with the Father! You may not confound the Persons, but you cannot divide the Substance of the blessed Trinity in Unity. You may not so divide the Son of God from the Father as to forget that God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself. It is the Father’s other Self, who, on the Cross in human form, does bleed and die. “Light of light, very God of very God.” It is this Light that was eclipsed, that Godhead which purchased the Church with His own blood! Herein is infinite Love! You tell me that God might have pardoned without atonement? I answer, that finite and fallible love might have done so and thus have wounded itself by killing justice— but the love which both required and provided the Atonement is, indeed, Infinite! God, Himself, provided the Atonement by freely and fully giving up Himself in the Person of His Son to suffer in consequence of human sin!

What I want you to notice here is this—if ever your mind should be troubled about the propriety or rightness of a substitutionary Sacrifice, you may at once settle the matter by remembering that God, Himself, “has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” If God did it, it is well done. I am not careful to defend an act of God—let the man who dares accuse his Maker think what he is doing! If God Himself provided the Sacrifice, you can be sure that He has accepted it. There can be no question ever raised about it, since Jehovah made to meet on Him our iniquities. He that made Christ to be sin for us knew what He did and it is not for us to begin to say, “Is this right, or is this not right?” The thrice Holy God has done this and it must be right! That which satisfies God may well satisfy us. If God is pleased with the Sacrifice of Christ, shall not we be much more than pleased? Shall we not be delighted, entranced, ecstatic to be saved by such a Sacrifice as God Himself appoints, provides and accepts? “He has made Him to be sin for us.”

The last point is, *what happens to us in consequence*? “That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Oh this weighty text! No man living can exhaust it! No theologian lived, even in the most prosperous days of theology, who could ever get to the bottom of this statement!

Every man that believes in Jesus is, through Christ having taken his sin, made to be righteous before God! We are righteous through faith in Christ Jesus, “justified by faith.” More than this, we are made not only to have the character of “righteous,” but to become the substance called “righteousness.” I cannot explain this, but it is no small matter. It means no inconsiderable thing when we are said to be “made righteousness.” What is more, we are not only made righteousness, but we are made “the righteousness of God.” Herein is a great mystery! The righteousness which Adam had in the garden was perfect, but it was the righteousness of *man—*ours is the *righteousness of God*. Human righteousness failed, but the Believer has a Divine righteousness which can never fail! He not only has it, but he *is* it—he is “made the righteousness of God in Christ.” We can now sing—

***“With my Savior’s vesture on,  
Holy as the Holy One.”***

How acceptable with God must those be who are made by God, Himself, to be “the righteousness of God in Him!” I cannot conceive of anything more complete.

As Christ was made sin and yet never sinned, so are we made righteousness, though we cannot claim to have been righteous in and of ourselves. Sinners though we are and forced to confess it with grief, yet the Lord covers us so completely with the righteousness of Christ that only His righteousness is seen and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. This is true of all the saints, even of as many as believe on His name! Oh, the splendor of this Doctrine! Can you see it, my Friend? Sinner though you are and, in yourself, defiled, deformed and debased, yet if you will accept the great Substitute which God provides for you in the Person of His dear Son, your sins are gone from you and righteousness has come to you! Your sins were laid on Jesus, the Scapegoat—they are yours no longer—He has put them away. I may say that His righteousness is *imputed* to you, but I go further and say with the text, “You are made the righteousness of God in Him.” No Doctrine can be more sweet than this to those who feel the weight of sin and the burden of its curse!

**II.**So now, gathering all up, I have to close with the second part of the text, which is not teaching, but the application of teaching—A GREAT ARGUMENT. “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”  
Oh, that these lips had language, or that this heart could speak without them! Then would I plead with every unconverted, unbelieving soul within this place and plead as for my life! Friend, you are at enmity with God and God is angry with you! But on His part there is every readiness for reconciliation. He has made a way by which you can become His friend—a very costly Way to Himself, but free to you. He could not give up His Justice and so destroy the honor of His own Character. But He did give up His Son, His Only-Begotten and His Well-Beloved! And that Son of His has been made sin for us, though He knew no sin! See how God meets you! See how willing, how anxious He is that there should be reconciliation between Himself and guilty men! O Sirs, if you are not saved, it is not because God will not or cannot save you—it is because you refuse to accept His mercy in Christ! If there is any difference between you and God, today, it is not from lack of kindness on His part—it is from lack of willingness on yours! The burden of your ruin must lie at your own door— your blood must be on your own hands!

Now, what we have to say to you, today, is this—we are anxious that you should be at peace with God and, therefore, we act as ambassadors for Christ. I am not going to lay any stress upon the office of ambassador as honorable or authoritative, for I do not feel that this would have weight with you—I lay all the stress upon the peace to which we would bring you. God has reconciled me to Himself and I would gladly have you reconciled, also. I once knew Him not, neither did I care for Him. I lived well enough without Him and sported with the trifles of the day, so as to forget Him. He brought me to seek His face and, seeking His face I found Him. He has blotted out my sins and removed my enmity. I know that I am His servant and that He is my Friend, my Father, my All. And now I cannot help trying, in my poor way, to be an ambassador for Him with you. I do not like that any of you should live at enmity with my Father who made you and that you should be wantonly provoking Him by preferring evil to good. Why should you not be at peace with One who so much wants to be at peace with you? Why should you not love the God of Love and delight in Him who is so kind to you?

What He has done for me, He is quite willing to do for you! He is a God ready to pardon. I have preached His Gospel now for many years, but I never met with a sinner yet that Christ refused to cleanse when he came to Him. I never knew a single case of a man who trusted Jesus and asked to be forgiven, confessing his sin and forsaking it, who was cast out. I say I never met with one man whom Jesus refused, nor shall I ever do so! I have spoken with harlots whom He has restored to purity, drunks whom He has delivered from their evil habit and with men guilty of foul sins who have become pure and chaste through the Grace of our Lord Jesus! They have always told me the same story—“I sought the Lord and He heard me. He has washed me in His blood and I am whiter than snow.” Why should *you* not be saved, as well as these?

Dear Friend, perhaps you have never thought of this matter and this morning you did not come here with any idea of thinking of it—but why should you not begin? You came just to hear a well-known preacher. I pray you forget the preacher and think only of yourself, your God and your Savior. It must be wrong for you to live without a thought of your Maker. To forget Him is to despise Him! It must be wrong for you to refuse the great Atonement—and you refuse it if you do not accept it at once! It must be wrong for you to stand out against your God—and you stand out against Him if you will not be reconciled to Him! Therefore I humbly play the part of an ambassador for Christ and I beseech you believe in Him and live!

Notice how the text puts it—“We are ambassadors for Christ, *as though God did beseech you by us*.” This thought staggers me! As I came along, this morning, I felt as if I could bury my head in my hands and weep as I thought of God beseeching anybody! He speaks and it is done—myriads of angels count themselves happy to fly at His command—and yet man has so become God’s enemy that he will not be reconciled to Him! God would make him His friend and spends the blood of His dear Son to cement that friendship. But man will not have it! Look, the great God turns to *beseeching* His obstinate creatures! His foolish creatures! In this I feel a reverent compassion for God. Must He beseech a rebel to be forgiven? Do you hear it? Angels, do you hear it? He who is the King of Kings veils His Sovereignty and stoops to*beseeching His creatures to be reconciled to Him*! I wonder not that some of my Brethren start back from such an idea and cannot believe that it could be so! It seems so derogatory to the glorious God! Yet my text says it, and it must be true—“As though God did beseech you by us.”

This makes it awful work to preach, does it not? *I* ought to beseech you as though *God* spoke to you through *me*, looking at you through*these* eyes and stretching out His hands through*these* hands? He says, “All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” He speaks softly, tenderly and with paternal affection through these poor lips of*mine*, “as though God did beseech you by us.”

Furthermore notice that next line, which if possible has even more force in it—“*We implore you on Christ’s behalf*.” Since Jesus died in our place, we, His redeemed ones, are to implore others on His behalf. And as He poured out His heart for sinners on their behalf, we must, in another way, pour out our hearts for sinners on His behalf. “We implore you on Christ’s behalf.” Now if my Lord were here, this morning, would He pray you to come to Him? I wish, my Master, I were more fit to stand in Your place at this time. Forgive me that I am so incapable. Help me to break my heart, to think that it does not break as it ought to, for these men and women who are determined to destroy themselves and, therefore, pass You by, my Lord, as though You were but a common felon, hanging on a gallows! O Men, how can you think so little of the death of the Son of God? It is the wonder of time, the admiration of eternity! Souls, why will you refuse Eternal Life? Why will you die? Why will you despise Him by whom, alone, you can live?

There is but one Gate of Life—that gate is the open side of Christ—why will you not enter and live? “Come unto Me,” He says, “come unto Me.” I think I hear Him say it—“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” I think I see Him on that last day, that great day of the feast, standing and crying, “If any man thirsts, let Him come unto Me and drink!” I hear Him sweetly declare, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” I am not fit to implore you on Christ’s behalf, but I do implore you with all my heart! You that hear my voice from Sunday to Sunday, come and accept the Great Sacrifice and be reconciled to God! You that hear me but this once, I would like you to go away with this ringing in your ears, “Be you reconciled to God!” I have nothing pretty to say to you. I have only to declare that God has prepared a Propitiation and that now He entreats sinners to come to Jesus, that through *Him* they may be reconciled to God!

We do not exhort you to some impossible effort. We do not bid you do some great thing. We do not ask you for money or price. Neither do we demand of you years of miserable feeling. But only this—*be reconciled*. It is not so much reconcile yourselves as, “*be* reconciled!” Yield yourselves to Him who round you, now, the bands of a Man would cast, drawing you with cords of love because He was given for you! His Spirit strives with you—yield to His striving. With Jacob, you know there wrestled a Man till the breaking of the day—let that Man, that God-Man, overcome you! Submit yourselves! Yield to the grasp of those hands which were nailed to the cross for you! Will you not yield to your best Friend? He that does embrace you, now, presses you to a heart that was pierced with the spear on your behalf. Oh, yield! Yield, my Friend!

Do you not feel some softness stealing over you? Steel not your heart against it. He says, with a tone most still and sweet, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Believe and live! Quit the archenemy who has held you in his grip! Escape for your life! Look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, but flee where you see the open door of the great Father’s house! At the gate, the bleeding Savior is waiting to receive you and to say, “I was made sin for you and you are made the righteousness of God in Me.” Father, draw them! Father, draw them! Eternal Spirit, draw them, for Jesus Christ, Your Son’s sake! Amen.

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SUBSTITUTION  
NO. 141, 142

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 19, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.~~***

***~~“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.~~***

A BOOK is the expression of the thoughts of the writer. The book of Nature is an expression of the thoughts of God. We have God’s terrible thoughts in the thunder and lightning, God’s loving thoughts in the sunshine and the balmy breeze. We have God’s bounteous, prudent, careful thoughts in the waving harvest and in the ripening meadow. We have God’s brilliant thoughts in the wondrous scenes which are beheld from mountaintop and valley. And we have God’s most sweet and pleasant thoughts of beauty in the little flowers that bloom at our feet. But you will remark that God has in Nature given most prominence to those thoughts that needed to have the pre-eminence. He has not given us broad acres overspread with *flowers*, for they were not needed in such abundance. He has spread the fields with corn, that thus the absolute necessities of life might be supplied. We needed most of the thoughts of His Providence. And He has quickened our industry, so that God’s Providential care may be read as we ride along the roads on every side. Now God’s book of Grace is just like His book of Nature. It is His thoughts written out. This great book, the Bible, this most precious volume, is the heart of God made legible! It is the gold of God’s love beaten out into gold leaf so that therewith our thoughts might be plated and we might also have golden, good and holy thoughts concerning Him. And you will mark that, as in Nature, so in Grace—the most necessary is the most prominent! I see in God’s Word a rich abundance of flowers of glorious eloquence. Often I find a Prophet marshalling his words like armies for might and like kings for majesty. But far more frequently I read simple declarations of the Truths of God. I see here and there a brilliant thought of beauty but I find whole fields of plain instructive Doctrine which is food for the soul. And I find whole Chapters full of Christ which is Divine Manna whereon the soul feeds. I see starry words to make the Scriptures brilliant, sweet thoughts to make them fair, great thoughts to make them impressive, terrible thoughts to make them awful. But necessary thoughts, instructive thoughts, saving thoughts—are far more frequent— because far more necessary. Here and there a bed of flowers, but broad acres of living corn of the Gospel of the Grace of God!

You must excuse me, then, if I very frequently dwell on the whole topic of salvation. But last Sabbath I brought you one shock of this wheat in the fashion of Christ’s promise, which says, “He who calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” And then I sought to show how men might be saved. I bring you now another shock cut down in the same field, teaching you the great philosophy of salvation, the hidden mystery, the great secret, the wonderful discovery which is brought to light by the Gospel— how God is Just and yet the Justifier of the *ungodly*. Let us read the text again and then at once proceed to discuss it. I intend to do today, as I did last Sunday. I shall just be as simple as ever I can. And I shall not attempt one single flight of eloquence or oratory, even if I am capable of it. But let us just go along the ground so that every simple soul may be able to understand—“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” *Note the Doctrine. The use of it. The enjoyment of it.*

**I.**First, THE DOCTRINE. There are three persons mentioned here. *He* (that is God) has made *Him* (that is Christ) who knew no sin, to be sin for *us* (sinners) that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Before we can understand the plan of salvation, it is necessary for us to know something about the three persons and, certainly, unless we understand them in some measure, salvation is impossible to us!

**1.**Here is first, GOD. Let every man know what God is. God is a very different Being from what some of you suppose. The God of Heaven and of earth—the Jehovah of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, Creator and Preserver, the God of Holy Scripture and the God of all Grace, is not the God that some men make unto themselves and worship. There are men in this so called Christian land who worship a god who is no more God than Venus or Bacchus! A god made after their own hearts. A god not fashioned out of stone or wood but fashioned from their own thoughts—out of baser stuff than the heathen attempted to make a god of!

The God of Scripture has three great attributes and they are all three implied in the text. The God of Scripture is a *Sovereign*God. That is, He is a God who has absolute authority and absolute power to do exactly as He pleases. Over the head of God there is no law. Upon His arms there is no necessity. He knows no rule but His own free and mighty will. And though He cannot be unjust and cannot do anything but good, yet is His Nature absolutely free. Goodness is the freedom of God’s Nature. God is not to be controlled by the will of man, nor the desires of man, nor by fate in which the superstitious believe. He is a God doing as He wills in the armies of Heaven and in this lower world. He is a God, too, who gives no account of His matters. He makes His creatures just what He chooses to make them and does with them just as He wills. And if any of them resent His acts, He says unto them—“But, O man, who are you that reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have You made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” God is good. But God is Sovereign, absolute, knowing. There is nothing or no one who can control Him. The monarchy of this world is no constitutional and limited monarch—it is not tyrannical but it is absolutely in the hands of an all-wise God. But mark, it is in no hands but His—no cherubim, no seraphim can assist God in the dispensation of His government—

***“He sits on no precarious Throne,***

***Nor borrows leave to be.”***  
He is the God of Predestination. The God upon whose absolute will the hinge of fate turns—

***“Chained to His Throne, a volume lies,  
With all the fates of men,  
With every angel’s form and size,  
Drawn by the eternal pen.  
His Providence unfolds the book,  
And makes His councils shine,  
Each opening leaf and every stroke,  
Fulfills some deep design.”***

This is the God of the Bible. This is the God whom we adore—no weak, cowardly God who is controlled by the will of men, who cannot steer the boat of Providence, but a God unalterable, infinite, unerring. This is the God we worship. A God as infinitely above His creatures as the highest thought can fly. And still higher than that!

But, again, the God who is here mentioned is a *God of Infinite justice*. That He is a Sovereign God, I prove from the words that He *has made* Christ to be sin. He could not have done it if He had not been Sovereign. That He is a just God, I infer from my text—seeing that the way of salvation is a great plan of satisfying justice. And we now declare that the God of Holy Scripture is a God of inflexible justice. He is not the God whom some of you adore. You adore a god who winks at great sins. You believe in a god who calls your crimes peccadilloes and little faults. Some of you worship a god who does not punish sin. He is so weakly merciful and so mercilessly weak that he passes by transgression and iniquity and never enacts a punishment. You believe in a god, who, if man sins, does not demand punishment for his offense. You think that a few good works of your own will pacify him. You think that he is so weak a ruler that a few good words uttered before him in prayer will win sufficient merit to reverse the sentence. Your god is no God! He is as much a false god as the god of the Greeks, or of ancient Nineveh! The God of Scripture is One who is inflexibly severe in justice and will by no means clear the guilty! “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power. And will not at all acquit the wicked.” The God of Scripture is a Ruler, who, when His subjects rebel, marks their crime and never forgives them until He has punished it, either upon them, or upon their Substitute. He is not like the god of some Dissenters who believe in a god without an Atonement, with only some little show upon a cross, which was not, as they say, a real suffering of sin. Their god, the god of the Socinian, just blots out sin without exacting any punishment. He is not the God of the Scriptures! The God of the Bible is as severe as if He were unmerciful and as just as if he were not gracious! And yet He is as gracious and as merciful as if He were not just—yes, more so!

And one more thought here concerning God, or else we cannot establish our discourse upon a sure basis. The God of Scripture is a*God of Grace*—think not that I am now contradicting myself. The God who is inflexibly severe and never pardons sin without punishment is yet a God of illimitable love! Although as a Ruler He will chastise, yet, as the FatherGod, He loves to bestow His blessing. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies. But had rather that he should turn unto Me and live.” God is Love in its highest degree. He is love rendered more than love. Love is not God but God is Love! He is full of Grace, He is the plenitude of mercy—He delights in mercy! As high as the Heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts of love above our thoughts of despair—and His ways of Grace above our ways of fear. This God, in whom these three great attributes harmonize—illimitable Sovereignty, inflexible Justice and unfathomable Grace—these three make up the main attributes of the one God of Heaven and earth whom Christians worship! It is this God before whom we must appear. It is He who has made Christ to be sin for us, though He knew no sin.

**2.**Thus, we have brought the first Person before you. The second Person of our text is *the Son of God—*Christ, who knew no sin. He is the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds—begotten, not made. Being of the same substance with the Father, co-equal, co-eternal and coexistent. Is the Father Almighty? So is the Son Almighty. Is the Father Infinite? So is the Son Infinite. He is very God of very God—having a dignity not inferior to the Father but being equal to Him in every respect— God over all, blessed forevermore. Jesus Christ is also the son of Mary, a Man like unto ourselves. A Man subject to all the infirmities of human nature, except the infirmities of sin. A Man of suffering and of woe, of pain and trouble, of anxiety and fear. A Man of trouble and of doubt, of temptation and of trial, of weakness and death. He is a Man just as we are, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Now the Person we wish to introduce to you is this complex being, God and Man. Not God humanized, not man Deified, but God, purely, essentially God. Man, purely Man. Man, not more than Man. God, not less than God—the two standing in a sacred union together, the God-Man. Of this God in Christ, our text says that He knew no sin. It does not say that He did not sin. That we know—but it says more than that. He did not *know* sin. He knew not what sin was! He saw it in others but He did not know it by *experience*. He was a perfect stranger to it. It is not merely said that He did not take sin into His heart, but He did not *know* it. It was no acquaintance of His. He was the acquaintance of grief. But He was not the acquaintance of *sin*. He knew no sin of any kind—no sin of thought, no sin of birth, no original, no actual transgression. No sin of lips, or of hand did ever Christ commit. He was pure, perfect, spotless! Like His own Divinity, without spot or blemish, or any such thing, this gracious Person is He who is spoken of in the text! He was a Person utterly incapable of committing anything that was wrong. Lately it has been asserted by some ill-judged ones, that Christ was capable of sin. I think it was Irving who started some such idea that if Christ was not capable of sinning, He could not have been capable of virtue, “For,” they say, “if a man must necessarily be good, there is no virtue in his goodness.” Away with their ridiculous nonsense! Is not God necessarily good? And who dares deny that God is virtuous?

Are not the glorified spirits in Heaven necessarily pure? And yet are they not holy because of that very necessity? Are not the angels, now that they are confirmed, necessarily faultless? And shall anyone dare to deny angelic virtue! The thing is not true! It needs no freedom in order to create virtue. Freedom and virtue generally go together. But necessity and virtue are as much brother and sister as freedom and virtue. Jesus Christ was not capable of sin. It was as utterly impossible for Christ to have sinned, as for fire to drown or for water to burn. I suppose both of these things might be possible under some peculiar circumstances, but it never could have been possible for Christ to have committed or to have endured the shadow of the commission of a sin! He did not know it. He knew no sin.

**3.**Now I have to introduce the third person. We will not go far for him.

The third person is *the sinner*. And where is he? Will you turn your eyes within you and look for him, each one of you? He is not very far from you. He has been a drunk—he has committed drunkenness and reveling and such like and we know that the man or woman who commits these things has no inheritance in the Kingdom of God. There is another, he has taken God’s name in vain. He has sometimes, in his hot passion, asked God to do most fearful things against his limbs and against his soul. Ah, there is the sinner. Where is he? I hear that man, with tearful eyes and with sobbing voice exclaim, “Sir, he is here!” I think I see some woman here, in the midst of us, some of us have accused her, perhaps, and she stands alone trembling and says not a word for herself. Oh, that the Master might say, “neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” I believe, I must believe, that somewhere among these many thousands, I hear some palpitating heart and that heart, as it beats so hurriedly, cries, “Sin, sin, sin, wrath, wrath, wrath—how can I get deliverance?” Ah, you are the man, a born rebel! Born into the world a sinner, you have added to your native guilt your own transgressions. You have broken the Commandments of God, you have despised God’s Love, you have trampled on His Grace, you have gone on until now the arrow of the Lord is drinking up your spirit! God has made you tremble. He has made you to confess your guilt and your transgression. Hear me, then—if your convictions are the work of God’s Spirit—you are the person intended in the text! When it says, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we”—that is *you*—“might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

I have introduced *the person*s and now I must introduce you to*a scene*of a great exchange which is made according to the text. The third person whom we introduce is*the prisoner at the bar*. As a sinner, God has called him before Him—he is about to be tried for life or death. God is gracious and He desires to save him. God is just and He must punish him. The sinner is to be tried. If there is a verdict of guilty brought in against him, how will the two conflicting attributes work in God’s mind? He is loving, He wants to save him. He is just, He must destroy him! How shall this mystery be solved and the riddle be solved? Prisoner at the bar, can you plead, “Not guilty?” He stands speechless. Or, if he speaks, he cries, “I am guilty!”—

***“Should You smite my soul to Hell,***

***Your righteous Law approves it well.”***  
Then, you see, if he has pleaded guilty, there is no hope of there being any flaw in the evidence. And even if he had pleaded, “not guilty,” yet the evidence is most clear, for God, the Judge, has seen his sin and recorded all his iniquities—so that there would be no hope of his escaping. The prisoner is sure to be found guilty! How can he escape? Is there a flaw in the indictment? No! It is drawn up by Infinite Wisdom and dictated by Eternal Justice. And there is no hope there. Can he turn king’s evidence? Ah, if we could be saved by turning king’s evidence, we should all of us be saved! There is an anomaly in our law which often allows the greater criminal to escape, while the lesser criminal is punished. If the one is dastard and coward enough by betraying his comrade, he may save himself. If you turn to the *Newgate Calendar—*if any of you have patience enough to read so vile a piece of literature—you will see that the greater of two murderers has escaped because he turned king’s evidence while the other has been hanged.

You have told on your fellows. You have said, “Lord, I thank You I am not as other men. I am not as that adulterer, or even as that publican. I bless You I am not like my neighbor who is an extortioner, a thief and so on.” You are telling against your neighbor. You are joint sinners and you are telling a tale against him! There is no hope for you. God’s Law knows of no such injustice as a man escaping by turning informer upon others! How then shall the prisoner at the bar escape? Is there any possibility? Oh, how did Heaven wonder! How did the stars stand still with astonishment! And how did the angels stay their songs a moment, when for the first time, God showed how He might be Just and yet be Gracious! Oh, I think I see Heaven astonished and silence in the courts of God for the space of an hour when the Almighty said, “Sinner, I must and will punish you on account of sin! But I love you. The heart of My love yearns over you. How can I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My Justice says, ‘smite,’ but My Love stays my hand and says, ‘spare, spare the sinner!’ Oh, Sinner, My heart has devised it—My Son, the Pure and Perfect, shall stand in your place and be accounted guilty and you, the guilty, shall stand in My Son’s place and be accounted righteous!” It would make us leap upon our feet in astonishment if we did but thoroughly understand this—the wonderful mystery of the transposition of Christ and the sinner! Let me put it so plainly that everyone can understand—Christ was spotless—sinners were vile. Says Christ, “My Father, treat Me as if I were a sinner. Treat the sinner as if He were I. Smite as sternly as You please, for I will bear it and thus the heart of Your Love may overflow with Grace and yet Your Justice be unsullied, for the sinner is no sinner now.” He stands in Christ’s place and with the Savior’s garments on, he is accepted!

Do you say that such an exchange as this is unjust? Will you say that God should not have made His Son a Substitute for us and have let us go? Let me remind you it was purely voluntary on the part of Christ. Christ was willing to stand in our place. He had to drink the cup of our punishment, but He was quite willing to do it. And let me tell you yet one more unanswerable thing—the Substitution of Christ was not an unlawful thing because the Sovereign *God* made Him a Substitute! We have read in history of a certain wife whose attachment to her husband was so great that the wife has gone into the prison and exchanged clothes with him. And while the prisoner was escaping, the wife has remained in the prison. And so the prisoner has escaped by a kind of surreptitious substitution. In such a case there was a clear breach of law and the prisoner escaping might have been pursued and again imprisoned. But in this case the Substitution was made by the highest Authority. The text says, *God* “has made Him to be sin for us.” And therefore Christ did stand in my place and He did make the exchange lawfully. It was with the full determinate counsel of Almighty God, as well as with His own consent, that Christ stood in the sinner’s place, as the sinner does now in Christ’s place. Old Martin Luther was a man for speaking a thing pretty plainly and sometimes he spoke the Truth of God so plainly that he made it look very much like a lie. In one of his sermons he said, “Christ was the greatest Sinner who ever lived.” Now Christ was never a sinner, but yet Martin was right. He meant to say all the sins of Christ’s people were taken off them and put on Christ’s head and so Christ stood in God’s sight as if He *had been the greatest sinner* who ever lived! He was never a sinner. He never knew sin—but good Martin, in his zeal to make men understand what it was, said, “Sinner, you became Christ. Christ, You became a Sinner!” It is not quite the Truth. The sinner is treated as if he were Christ and Christ is treated as if He were the sinner. That is what is meant by the text, God “has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Let me just give you two illustrations of this. The first shall be taken from the Old Testament. When of old, men did come before God with sin, God provided a sacrifice which should be the representative of Christ, inasmuch as the sacrifice died instead of the sinner. The Law ran, “He that sins shall die.” When men had committed sin, they brought a bullock or a sheep before the altar. They put their hand on the bullock’s head and acknowledged their guilt. And by that deed their guilt was *typically* removed from themselves to the bullock. Then, the poor bullock, which had done no wrong, was slaughtered and cast out as a sin offering. That is what every sinner must do with Christ, if he is to be saved. A sinner, by faith, comes and puts his hand on Christ’s head and confessing all his sin—his sin is no longer his —it is put on Christ. Christ hangs upon the tree. He bears the Cross and endures the shame. And so the sin is all gone and cast into the depths of the sea. Take another illustration. We read in the New Testament, that “the Church (that is, the people of God) is Christ’s bride.” We all know that according to the law, the wife may have many debts. But no sooner is she married than her debts cease to be hers and become her husband’s at once. So if a woman is overwhelmed with debt so that she is in daily fear of the prison, let her but once stand up and give her hand to a man and become his wife and there is none in the world can touch her. The husband is liable for all and she says to her creditor, “Sir, I owe you nothing. My husband did not owe you anything. I incurred the debt. But, inasmuch as I have become his wife, my debts are taken off from me and become his.” It is even so with the sinner and Christ. Christ marries the sinner and puts forth His hand and takes the Church to be His. She is in immeasurable debt to God’s Justice. She owes to God’s vengeance an intolerable weight of wrath and punishment. Christ says, “You are My wife—I have chosen you and I will pay your debts.” And He has paid them and got His full discharge. Now, whoever believes in Christ Jesus has peace with God because, “He has made Christ to be sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

And now, I shall have finished the explanation of the text, when I just bid *you remember the consequences of this great Substitution*. Christ was made sin. We are made the righteousness of God. It was in the past, long further back than the memory of angels can reach—it was in the dark past, before cherubim or seraphim had flapped the unnavigated ether— when as yet worlds were not and Creation had not a name—God foresaw the sin of man and planned his redemption. An Everlasting Covenant was formed between the Father and the Son, wherein the Son did stipulate to suffer for His elect. And the Father on His part, did covenant to justify them through the Son. Oh, wondrous Covenant, you are the source of all the streams of atoning love! Eternity rolled on, time came and with it soon came the Fall—and then when many years had run their round—the fullness of time arrived and Jesus prepared to fulfill His solemn engagement. He came into the world and was made Man. From that moment, when He became Man—mark the change that was worked in Him. Before, He had been entirely happy. He had never been miserable, never sad. But now as the effects of that terrible Covenant which He had made with God, His Father, begins to pour wrath upon Him. What? You say does God actually account His Son to be a sinner? Yes, He does. His Son agreed to be the Substitute, to stand in the sinner’s place. God begins with Him at His birth. He puts Him in a manger. If He had considered Him as a perfect Man, He would have provided Him a throne—but considering Him as a sinner, He subjects Him to woe and poverty from beginning to end! And now see Him grown to Manhood. Look at Him— griefs pursue Him, sorrows follow Him. Stop! Griefs, why follow you the Perfect? Why pursue you the Immaculate? Justice, why do you not drive these griefs away?—“The pure should be peaceful and the immaculate should be happy.” The answer comes—“This Man is pure in Himself but He has made Himself impure by taking His people’s sin.” Guilt is imputed to Him and the very imputation of guilt brings grief with all its reality! At last I see Death coming with more than his usual horrors. I see the grim skeleton with his dart well sharpened. I see behind him Hell. I mark the grim Prince of Darkness and all the avengers rising up from their place of torment. I see them all besetting the Savior! I notice their terrible war upon Him in the Garden. I note Him as He lies there wallowing in His blood in fearful soul-death. I see Him as in grief and sorrow, He walks to Pilate’s bar. I see Him mocked and spit upon. I behold Him tormented, maltreated and blasphemed. I see Him nailed to the Cross. I behold the mocking continued and the shame unabated. I mark Him shrieking for water and I hear Him complaining of the forsaking of God! I am astonished! Can this be just that a Perfect Being should suffer thus?—Oh, God, where are You that You can thus permit the oppression of the Innocent? Have You ceased to be King of Justice, else why do You not shield the Perfect One? The answer comes—“Be still. He is perfect in Himself, but He is the Sinner now—He stands in the sinner’s place. The sinner’s guilt is on Him and, therefore, it is right, it is just, it is what He has Himself agreed to, that He should be punished as if He were a sinner, that He should be frowned upon, that He should die and that He should descend to Hades unblessed, uncomforted, not helped, not honored and not acknowledged.” This was one of the effects of the great change which Christ made.

And now, take the other side of the question and I have done with the explanation. What was the effect on us? Do you see that sinner there dabbling his hand in lust, defiling his garments with every sin the flesh had ever indulged in? Do you hear him cursing God? Do you mark him breaking every ordinance that God has rendered sacred? But do you see him in a little while pursuing his way to Heaven? He has renounced these sins! He has been converted and has forsaken them! He is going on the way to Heaven. Justice, are you asleep? That man has broken your Law. Is he to go to Heaven? Listen how the fiends come rising from the Pit and cry—“That man deserves to be lost. He may not be now what he used to be, but his past sins must have vengeance.” And yet there he goes safely on his way to Heaven and I see him looking back on all the fiends that accuse him. He cries out, “Behold, who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” And when one would think all Hell would be up in arms and accuse, the grim tyrant lies still and the fiends have nothing to say! And I see him turning his face Heavenward to the Throne of God and hear him cry, “Who is he that condemns?” As with unblushing countenance he challenges the Judge! Oh, Justice, where are you? This man has been a sinner, a rebel—why not smite him to the dust for his impertinent presumption in thus challenging the Justice of God? “No,” says Justice, he has been a sinner, but I do not look upon him in that light now. I have punished Christ instead of him—that sinner is no sinner now—he is perfect!” What? Perfect? “Perfect, because Christ was perfect and I look upon him as if he were Christ. Though in himself he is all black as the gates of Kedar, I consider him to be fair as the curtains of Solomon! I made Christ the sinner and I punished Christ. I made the sinner Christ and I magnify and exalt him. And I will put a crown of pure gold upon his head and, by-and-by, I will give him a place among them who are sanctified, where he shall, harp in hand, forever praise the name of the Lord!” This is the grand result to sinners of the great exchange. “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

**II.**Now, I have to come towards the close, to my second point, upon which I shall be brief but laborious. WHAT IS THE USE OF THIS DOCTRINE? Turn to the Scriptures and you will see. “Now, then, we are ambassadors for God, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ’s place to be reconciled to God, for”—here is our grand argument—“He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” Brothers and Sisters, I am about to speak to you. I am about to beseech and exhort you—may the Spirit of God help me to do it with all the earnestness which becomes me. You and I shall face each other soon before the bar of the great Judge and I shall be responsible in the day of account for all I preach to you. Not for my style or talent, or lack of talent—I shall only be responsible for my earnestness and zeal in this matter. And now, before God I entreat you most earnestly to be reconciled to Him! You are by nature at enmity with God. You hate Him, you neglect Him, your enmity shows itself in various ways. I beseech you now to be reconciled to God. I might entreat you to be reconciled because it would be a fearful thing to die with God for your enemy. Who among us can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with the eternal burnings? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for our God is a consuming fire. Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. I beseech you, therefore, be reconciled to God!

I might on the other hand use another argument and remind you that those who are reconciled to God are thereby proved to be the inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. There are crowns for God’s friends. There are harps for them who love Him. There is a mansion prepared for everyone who seeks Him. Therefore, if you would be blessed throughout eternity, be reconciled to God! But I shall not urge that. I shall urge the reason of my text. I beseech you, my Hearer, be reconciled to God because if you repent, it is proof that Christ has stood in your place! Oh, if this argument does not melt you, there is none in Heaven or earth that can! If your heart melts not at such an argument as this, then it is harder than the nether millstone—surely you have a soul of stone and a heart of brass if you will not be reconciled to God who has written this for your encouragement!

I beseech you be reconciled to God because in this there is proof that God is loving you! You think God to be a God of wrath? Would He have given His own Son to be punished if He had hated you? Sinner, if God had anything but thoughts of love towards you, I ask, would He have given up His Son to hang upon the Cross? Think not my God a tyrant! Think Him not a wrathful God, destitute of mercy. His Son, torn from His bosom and given up to die, is the best proof of His love! Oh, Sinner, I need not blame you if you did hate your enemy, but I must blame you, call you mad, if you hate your Friend! Oh, I need not wonder if you would not be reconciled to one who would not be reconciled to you. But inasmuch as you will not, by nature, be reconciled to the God who gave His own Son to die, I must marvel at the stupidity into which your evil nature has hurried you! God is Love—will you not be reconciled to Love? God is Grace—will you not be reconciled to Grace? Oh, you are a rebel of the deepest dye if you will still not be reconciled. Remember, too, oh Sinner, that the way is open for your reconciliation. You need not be punished. No, you shall not be! If you know yourself to be a sinner, by the Spirit’s teaching, God will not punish you to maintain His Justice—that Justice is sufficiently maintained by the punishment of Christ! He says, “be reconciled.” The child runs away from his father when he has sinned because he fears his father will punish him. But when his father burns the rod and, with a smiling face says, “child, come here,” surely it must be an unloving child who would not run into such a father’s arms! Sinner, you deserve the sword—God has snapped the sword across the knee of Christ’s Atonement and now He says, “Come to Me.” You deserve infinite, eternal wrath and the displeasure of God—God has quenched that wrath for all Believers and now He says, “Come to Me and be reconciled.”

Do you tell me that you are not a sinner? I was not preaching to you! Do you tell me that you have never rebelled against God? I warn you that though *you*cannot find out your own sins, *God*will find them out! Do you say, “I need no reconciliation, except that which I can make myself?” Be warned that if you reject Christ, you reject your only hope, for all that you can do is less than nothing and vanity! I was not preaching to you, when I said, “Be reconciled.” I was preaching to you, poor afflicted Conscience. I was preaching to you—you that have been a great sinner and transgressor, you that feel your guilt. To you, you adulterer, trembling now under the lash of conviction. To you, you blasphemer, quivering now from head to foot. I preach to You, you thief, whose eyes are now filled with the tears of penitence. You feel that Hell must be your portion unless you are saved through Christ. I preach to you, you that know your guilt! I preach to you and to every one such and I beseech you to be reconciled to God, for God is reconciled to you! Oh, let not your heart stand out against this.

I cannot plead as I wish. Oh, if I could, I would plead with my heart, with my eyes and my lips that I might lead you to the Savior! You need not rail at me and call this an Arminian style of preaching. I care not for your opinion—this style is Scriptural. “As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s place, be you reconciled to God.” Poor broken-hearted Sinner, God is as much preaching to you this morning and bidding you be reconciled as if He stood here, Himself, in His own Person. And though I am a mean and puny man by whom He speaks, He speaks now as much as if it were by the voice of angels, “Be reconciled to God!” Come, Friend, turn not your eyes and head away from me. But give me your hand and lend me your heart while I weep over your hand and cry over your heart and beseech you not to despise your own mercy, not to be a suicide to your own soul, not to damn yourself! Now that God has awakened you to feel that you are an enemy, I beseech you now to be His friend! Remember, if you are now convicted of sin, there is no punishment for you. My Master, Jesus Christ, was punished in your place! Will you believe this? Will you trust in it and so be at peace with God? If you say, “No!” then I would have you know that you have put away your own mercy! If you say, “I need no reconciliation,” you have thrust away the only hope you can ever have! Do it at your own hazard. I wash my hands of your blood. But, but, but, if you know yourself to need a Savior! If you would escape the hellish Pit! If you would walk among them who are sanctified—I again, in the name of Him that will condemn you at the Last Day if you reject this invitation—implore and beseech you to be reconciled to God! I am His ambassador. When I have finished this sermon, I shall go back to court.

Sinner, what shall I say of you? Shall I go back and tell my Master that you intend to be His enemy forever? Shall I go back and tell Him, “They heard me, but they regarded not”? They said in their hearts, “we will go away to our sins and our follies and we will not serve your God, neither fear Him!”? Shall I tell Him such a message as that? Must I be driven to go back to His palace with such a fearful story? I beseech you, send me not back so, lest my Master’s wrath wax hot and He says—

***“They that despised My promised rest,***

***Shall have no portion there.”***  
But oh, may I not go back to court today and tell the Monarch on my knees, “There are some, my Lord, who have been great rebels but when they saw themselves rebels, they threw themselves at the foot of the Cross and asked for pardon! They had strangely revolted, but I heard them say, ‘If He will forgive me, I will turn from my evil ways, if He will enable me!’ They were gross transgressors and they confessed it. But I heard them say, ‘Jesus, Your blood and righteousness are my only trust.’” Happy ambassador! I will go back to my Master with a gladsome countenance and tell Him that peace is made between many a soul and the great God! But miserable ambassador who has to go back and say, “There is no peace made.” How shall it be? The Lord decide it! May many hearts give way to Omnipotent Grace and may enemies of Grace be changed into friends that God’s elect may be gathered in and His eternal purpose accomplished!

**III.**And now, I close up by noticing the SWEET ENJOYMENT which this Doctrine brings to a Believer. Mourning Christian! Dry your tears! Are you weeping on account of sin? Why do you weep? Weep because of your sin, but weep not through any fear of punishment! Has the Evil One told you that you shall be condemned? Tell him to his face that he lies! Ah, poor distressed Believer, are you mourning over your own corruptions? Look to your perfect Lord and remember—you are complete in Him—you are in God’s sight as perfect as if you had never sinned! No, more than that—the Lord our Righteousness has put a Divine Garment upon you, so that you have more than the righteousness of man—you have the righteousness of *God!* Oh, you who are mourning by reason of in-bred sin and depravity—remember, none of your sins can condemn you! You have learned to hate sin. But you have learned to know that sin is not yours—it is put on Christ’s head. Come, be of good cheer—your standing is not in yourself—it is in Christ! Your acceptance is not in yourself, but in your Lord. With all your sin, you are as much accepted today as in your sanctification! You are as much accepted of God, today, with all your iniquities, as you will be when you stand before His Throne, rendered free from all corruption.

Oh, I beseech you, lay hold on this precious thought—perfection in Christ—for you are perfect in Christ Jesus! With your Savior’s garment on, you are holy as the holy ones. You are now justified by faith. You have now peace with God. Be of good cheer. Do not fear to die! Death has nothing terrible in it for you. Christ has extracted all the gall from the sting of death. Tremble not at judgment—judgment will not bring you another acquittal to add to the acquittal already given in your cause—

***“Bold shall you stand at that great day,  
For who anything to your charge can lay? Fully absolved by Christ you are,  
From sin’s tremendous guilt.”***

Ah, when you come to die, you shall challenge God, for you shall say, “My God, You can not condemn me for You have condemned Christ for me. You have punished Christ in my place!” “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather, who is risen again, who also sits at the right hand of God and makes intercession for us.” Christian, be glad! Let your head lack no oil and your face no ointment. “Go your way. Eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has accepted your works.” Do as Solomon bids us do—live happily all the days of your life. For you are accepted in the Beloved—you are pardoned through the blood and justified through the righteousness of Christ! What have you to fear? Let your face always wear a smile. Let your eyes sparkle with gladness. Live near your Master. Live in the suburbs of the Celestial City as, by-and-by, when your time has come you shall borrow better wings than angels ever wore and outsoar the cherubim and rise up where your Jesus sits—sit at His right hand, even as He has overcome and has sat down at His Father’s right hand! And all this because the Divine Lord “was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #310 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

CHRIST—OUR SUBSTITUTE  
NO. 310

***~~DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, APRIL 15, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.~~***

SOME TIME ago an excellent lady sought an interview with me with the object, as she said, of enlisting my sympathy upon the question of “AntiCapital Punishment.” I heard the excellent reasons she urged against hanging men who had committed murder, and though they did not convince me, I did not seek to answer them. She proposed that when a man committed murder he should be confined for life. My remark was, that a great many men who had been confined half their lives were not a bit the better for it and as for her belief that they would necessarily be brought to repentance, I was afraid it was but a dream.

“Ah,” she said, good soul as she was, “that is because we have been all wrong about punishments. We punish people because we think they deserve to be punished. Now we ought to show them,” said she, “that we love them. That we only punish them to make them better.” “Indeed, Madam,” I said, “I have heard that theory a great many times and I have seen much fine writing upon the matter but I am no believer in it. The design of punishment should be rehabilitation, but the ground of punishment lies in the positive guilt of the offender. I believe that when a man does wrong he ought to be punished for it and that there is a guilt in sin which justly merits punishment.”

“Oh no.” She could not see that. “Sin was a very wrong thing, but punishment was not a proper idea.” She thought that people were treated too cruelly in prison and that they ought to be taught that we love them. If they were treated kindly in prison and tenderly dealt with, they would grow so much better, she was sure. With a view of interpreting her own theory, I said, “I suppose, then, you would give criminals all sorts of indulgences in prison. Some great vagabond who has committed burglary dozens of times—I suppose you would let him sit in an easy chair in the evening before a nice fire and mix him a glass of spirits and water and give him his pipe and make him happy, to show him how much we love him.”

Well, no, she would not give him the spirits, but, still, all the rest would do him good. I thought that was a delightful picture, certainly. It seemed to me to be the most prolific method of cultivating rogues which ingenuity could invent. I imagine that you could grow any number of thieves in that way. For it would be a special means of propagating all manner of roguery and wickedness. These very delightful theories to such a simple mind as mine were the source of much amusement—the idea of appeasing villains and treating their crimes as if they were the tumbles and falls of children—made me laugh heartily.

I fancied I saw the government resigning its functions to these excellent persons and the grand results of their marvelously kind experiments. The sword of the magistrate transformed into a soup spoon and the jail a sweet retreat for injured reputations. Little however, did I think I should live to see this kind of stuff taught in pulpits. I doubt not that from it would come out a divinity which would bring down God’s moral government from the solemn aspect in which Scripture reveals it, to a nambypamby sentimentalism, which adores a Deity destitute of every masculine virtue. But we never know today what may occur tomorrow.

We have lived to see a certain sort of men—thank God they are not Baptists—though I am sorry to say there are a great many Baptists who are beginning to follow in their trail—who seek to teach nowadays that God is a universal Father and that our ideas of His dealing with the impenitent as a Judge and not as a Father, are remnants of antiquated error. Sin, according to these men, is a disorder rather than an offense—an error rather than a crime. Love is the only attribute they can discern and the full-orbed Deity they have not known.

Some of these men push their way very far into the bogs and mire of falsehood, until they inform us that eternal punishment is ridiculed as a dream. In fact, books now appear which teach us that there is no such thing as the vicarious Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, They use the word Atonement, it is true, but in regard to its meaning, they have removed the ancient landmark. They acknowledge that the Father has shown His great love to poor sinful man by sending His Son, but not that God was inflexibly just in the exhibition of His mercy—not that He punished Christ on the behalf of His people—nor that, indeed, God ever will punish anybody in His wrath, or that there is such a thing as justice apart from discipline.

Even sin and Hell are but old words employed henceforth in a new and altered sense. Those are old-fashioned notions, and we poor souls who go on talking about election and imputed righteousness are belied by our time. Yes, and the gentlemen who bring out books on this subject applaud Mr. Maurice and Professor Scott and the like, but are too cowardly to follow them and boldly propound these sentiments. These are the new men whom God has sent down from Heaven, to tell us that the Apostle Paul was all wrong—that our faith is vain, that we have been quite mistaken— that there was no need for propitiating blood to wash away our sins. They tell us our sins needed discipline, but penal vengeance and righteous wrath are quite out of the question.

When I thus speak, I am free to confess that such ideas are not boldly taught by a certain individual whose volume excites these remarks, but as he puffs the books of gross perverters of the Truth of God, I am compelled to believe that he endorses such theology.

Well, Brethren, I am happy to say that sort of stuff has not gained entrance into this pulpit. I dare say the worms will eat the wood before there will be anything of that sort sounded in this place. And may these bones be picked by vultures and this desk be rent in sunder by lions and may every nerve in this body suffer pangs and tortures, before these lips shall give utterance to any such doctrines or sentiments. We are content to remain among the vulgar souls who believe the old Doctrines of Grace. We are willing still to be behind in the great march of intellect and stand by that unmoving Cross. Which, like the pole star, never advances, because it never stirs—but always abides in its place—the guide of the soul to Heaven. It is the one foundation other than which no man can lay and without building upon which, no man shall ever see the face of God and live.

Thus much have I said upon a matter which just now is exciting controversy. It has been my high privilege to be associated with six of our ablest Brethren in the ministry in a letter of protest against the countenance which a certain newspaper seemed willing to lend to this modern heresy. We trust it may be the means, in the hands of God, of helping to check that downward march—that wandering from which seems by some singular infatuation to have unsettled the minds of some Brethren in our denomination.

Now I come to address you upon the topic which is most continually assailed by those who preach “another Gospel” which is not another—but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the “Gospel of Christ,” namely, the doctrine of the substitution of Christ on our behalf—His actual atonement for our sins—and our positive and actual justification through His sufferings and righteousness.

It seems to me that until language can mean the very reverse of what it says—until by some strange logic God’s Word can be contradicted and can be made to belie itself—the doctrine of substitution can never be rooted out of the words which I have selected for my text, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness

of God in Him.”

First, then, the sinlessness of the Substitute. Secondly, the reality of the imputation of sin to Him. And thirdly, the glorious reality of the imputation of righteousness to us.

**I.**First, THE SINLESSNESS OF THE SUBSTITUTE. The doctrine of Holy Scripture is this, that inasmuch as man could not keep God’s Law— having fallen in Adam—Christ came and fulfilled the Law on the behalf of His people. And that inasmuch as man had already broken the Divine Law and incurred the penalty of the wrath of God, Christ came and *suffered* in the place of His elect ones, that so by His enduring the full vials of wrath, they might be emptied out and not a drop might ever fall upon the heads of His blood-bought people.

Now, you will readily perceive that if one is to be a substitute for another before God, either to work out a righteousness or to suffer a penalty, that substitute must himself be free from sin. If he has sin of his own, all that he can suffer will be but the due reward of his own iniquity. If he has *himself* transgressed, he cannot suffer for another, because all his sufferings are already due on his own personal account. On the other hand, it is quite clear that none but a perfect man could ever work out a spotless righteousness for us and keep the Law in our place, for if he has dishonored the Commandment in his thought, there must be a corresponding flaw in his service.

If the warp and woof be speckled, how shall he bring forth the robe of milk-white purity and wrap it about our loins? He must be a spotless one who shall become the representative of his people, either to give them a passive or active righteousness—either to offer a satisfaction as the penalty of their sins, or a righteousness as the fulfillment of God’s demand.

It is satisfactory for us to know and to believe beyond a doubt, that our Lord Jesus was without sin. Of course, in His Divine nature He could not know iniquity. And as for His human nature, it never knew the original taint of depravity. He was of the seed of the woman, but not of the tainted and infected seed of Adam. Overshadowed as was the Virgin by the Holy Spirit, no corruption entered into his nativity. That holy Thing which was born of her was neither conceived in sin nor shaped in iniquity. He was brought into this world immaculate. He was immaculately conceived and immaculately born. In Him that natural black blood which we have inherited from Adam never dwelt.

His heart was upright within Him. His soul was without any bias to evil—His imagination had never been darkened. He had no infatuated mind. There was no tendency whatever in Him but to do that which was good, holy and honorable. And as He did not share in the original depravity, so He did not share in the imputed sin of Adam which we have inherited—not, I mean, in Himself personally, though He took the consequences of that, as He stood as our representative. The sin of Adam had never passed over the head of the second Adam. All that were in the loins of Adam sinned in him when he touched the fruit.

But Jesus was not in the loins of Adam. Though He might be conceived of as being in the womb of the woman—“a new thing which the Lord created in the earth”—He lay not in Adam when he sinned and consequently no guilt from Adam, either of depravity of nature, or of distance from God, ever fell upon Jesus as the result of anything that Adam did. I mean upon Jesus as considered in Himself though He certainly took the sin of Adam as He was the representative of His people.

Again—as in His nature He was free from the corruption and condemnation of the sin of Adam, so also in His life no sin ever corrupted His way. His eyes never flashed with unhallowed anger. His lips never uttered a treacherous or deceitful word. His heart never harbored an evil imagination. Never did He wander after lust. No covetousness ever so much as glanced into His soul. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” From the beginning of His life to the end you cannot put your finger even upon a mistake, much less upon a willful error. So perfect was He, that no virtue seems to be greater than any other, or by an opposing quality give a bias to the scale of absolute righteousness.

John is distinguished for his love. Peter for his courage. But Jesus Christ is distinguished for neither one above another. Because He possesses all in such sublime unison, such heavenly harmony, that no one virtue stands out above the rest. He is meek, but He is courageous. He is loving, but He is decided. He is bold as a lion, yet He is quiet and peaceful as a lamb. He was like that fine flour which was offered before God in the burnt offering. A flour without grit, so smooth, that when you rubbed it, it was soft and pure—no particles could be discerned—so was His character fully ground, fully compounded.

There was not one feature in His moral countenance which had undue preponderance above the other. But He was replete in everything that was virtuous and good. Tempted He was, it is true, but sin He never did. The whirlwind came from the wilderness and smote upon the four corners of that house, but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. The rains descended, Heaven afflicted Him. The winds blew, the mysterious agency of Hell assailed Him. The floods came, all earth was in arms against Him, but yet He stood firm in the midst of all. Never once did He even seem to bend before the tempest—but buffeting the fury of the blast, bearing all the temptations that could ever happen to man, which summed themselves up and consummated their fury on Him—He stood to the end—

without a single flaw in His life, or a stain upon His spotless robe.

Let us rejoice, then, in this, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, that we have such a Substitute—One who is fit and proper to stand in our place and to suffer in our place, seeing He has no need to offer a sacrifice for Himself—no need to cry for Himself—“Father, I have sinned”—no need to bend the knee of the penitent and confess His own iniquities, for He is without spot or blemish, the perfect lamb of God’s Passover.

I would have you carefully notice the particular expression of the text, for it struck me as being very beautiful and significant—“who knew no sin.” It does not merely say did none, but knew none. Sin was no acquaintance of His. He was acquainted with *grief*, but no acquaintance of *sin*. He had to walk in the midst of its most frequented haunts, but did not know it. Not that He was ignorant of its nature, or did not know its penalty, but He did not know it. He was a stranger to it, He never gave it the wink or nod of familiar recognition.

Of course He knew what sin was, for He was very God—but with sin He had no communion, no fellowship, no brotherhood. He was a perfect stranger in the presence of sin. He was a foreigner. He was not an inhabitant of that land where sin is acknowledged. He passed through the wilderness of suffering, but into the wilderness of sin he could never go. “He knew no sin.” Mark that expression and treasure it up and when you are thinking of your Substitute and see Him hang bleeding upon the Cross, think that you see written in those lines of blood, written along His blessed body, “He knew no sin.” Mingled with the redness of His blood— that Rose of Sharon—behold the purity of His nature, the Lily of the Valley—“He knew no sin.”

**II.**Let us pass on to notice the second and most important point; THE ACTUAL SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST and THE REAL IMPUTATION OF SIN TO HIM. “He made Him to be sin for us.”

Here be careful to observe who transferred the sin. God the Father laid on Jesus the iniquities of us all. Man could not make Christ sin. Man could not transfer his guilt to another. It is not for us to say whether Christ could or could not have made Himself sin for us. But certain it is, He did not take this priesthood upon Himself, but He was called of God, as was Aaron. The Redeemer’s vicarious position is warranted, no, ordained by Divine authority. “He has made Him to be sin for us.”

I must now beg you to notice how very explicit the term is. Some of our expositors will have it that the word here used must mean “sin-offering.” “He made Him to be a sin-offering for us.” I thought it well to look to my Greek Testament to see whether it could be so. Of course we all know that the word here translated “sin,” is very often translated “sin-offering,” but it is always useful, when you have a disputed passage, to look it through and see whether in this case the word would bear such a meaning. These commentators say it means a sin-offering—well, I will read it—“He has made Him to be a sin-offering for us who knew no sin-offering.” Does not that strike you as being ridiculous? They are precisely the same words— and if it is fair to translate it “sin-offering” in one place, it must, in all reason, be fair to translate it so in the other.

The fact is, while in some passages it may be rendered “sin-offering,” in this passage it cannot be so, because it would be to run counter to all honesty to translate the same word in the same sentence two different ways. No. We must take them as they stand. “He has made Him to be sin for us,” not merely an offering, but *sin* for us.

My predecessor, Dr. Gill, edited the works of Tobias Crisp, but Tobias Crisp went further than Dr. Gill or any of us can approve. For in one place Crisp calls Christ a sinner, though he does not mean that He ever sinned himself. He actually calls Christ a transgressor and justifies himself by that passage, “He was numbered with the transgressors.” Martin Luther is reputed to have broadly said that, although Jesus Christ was sinless, yet He was the greatest sinner that ever lived, because all the sins of His people lay upon Him.

Now, such expressions, I think, to be unguarded, if not profane. Certainly Christian men should take care that they use not language which, by the ignorant and uninstructed, may be translated to mean what they never intended too teach. The fact is, Brethren, that in no sense whatever—take that as I say it—in no sense whatever—can Jesus Christ ever be conceived of as having been guilty. “He knew no sin.” Not only was He not guilty of sinning, but He was not guilty of *our* sins. No *guilt* can possibly be ascribed to a man who has not been guilty. He must have had complicity in the deed itself, or else no guilt can possibly be laid on him.

Jesus Christ stands in the midst of all the Divine thunders and suffers all the punishment, but not a drop of sin ever stained Him. In no sense is He ever a guilty man, but always is He an accepted and a holy One. What, then, is the meaning of that very forcible expression of my text? We must interpret Scriptural modes of expression by the verbiage of the speakers. We know that our Master once said, Himself, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood.” He did not mean that the cup was the covenant. He said, “Take, eat, this is My body”—no one of us conceives that the bread is the literal flesh and blood of Christ. We take that bread as if it were the body but it only represents it.

Now, we are to read a passage like this—according to the analogy of faith Jesus Christ was made by His Father sin for us, that is, He was treated as if He had Himself been sin. He was not sin—He was not sinful.

He was not guilty. But, He was *treated* by His Father, as if He had not only been sinful, but as if He had been *sin itself*. That is a strong expression used here.

Not only has He made Him to be the substitute for sin, but to be *sin*. God looked on Christ as if Christ had been sin. Not as if He had taken up the sins of His people, or as if they were laid on Him, though that were true, but as if He Himself had positively been that noxious—that Godhating—that soul-damning thing, called *sin*. When the Judge of all the earth said, “Where is Sin?” Christ presented Himself. He stood before His Father as if He had been the accumulation of all human guilt of the elect. As if He Himself were that thing which God cannot endure, but which He must drive from His presence forever.

And now see how this making of Jesus to be sin was enacted to the fullest extent. The righteous Lord looked on Christ as being sin and therefore Christ must be taken without the camp. Sin cannot be borne in God’s Zion—cannot be allowed to dwell in God’s Jerusalem. It must be taken without the camp—it is a leprous thing—put it away. Cast out from fellowship, from love, from pity—sin must ever be. Take Him away, take Him away, you crowd! Hurry Him through the streets and bear Him to Calvary. Take Him without the camp—as was the beast which was offered for sin without the camp—so must Christ be, who was made sin for us.

And now, God looks on Him as being sin, and sin must bear punishment. Christ is punished. The most fearful of deaths is exacted at His hands and God has no pity on Him. How could He have pity on sin? God hates it. No tongue can tell, no soul can discern the terrible hatred of God to that which is evil and He treats Christ as if He were sin. Jesus prays— but Heaven shuts out His prayer. He cries for water, but Heaven and earth refuse to wet His lips except with vinegar. He turns His eyes to Heaven, He sees nothing there. How could He? God cannot look on sin and sin can have no claim on God—“My God, My God,” Jesus cries, “Why have You forsaken Me?”

O solemn necessity, how could God do anything with sin but forsake it? How could iniquity have fellowship with God? Shall Divine smiles rest on sin? No, no, it must not be. Therefore is it that He who is made sin must bemoan desertion and terror. God cannot touch Him, cannot dwell with Him, cannot come near Him. He is abhorred, cast away. It has pleased the Father to bruise him. He has put Him to grief. At last He dies. God will not keep Him in life—how could He? Is it not the most necessary thing in the world that sin should be buried? “Bury it out of My sight, hide this corruption,” and lo! Jesus, as if He were sin, is put away out of the sight of God and man as a thing obnoxious.

I do not know whether I have clearly uttered what I wanted to state, but what a grim picture that is, to conceive of sin gathered up into one mass—murder, lust and rapine and adultery and all manner of crime—all piled together in one hideous heap. We ourselves, Brethren, impure though we are, could not bear this—how much less should God with His pure and holy eyes bear with that mass of sin and yet there it is. God looked upon Christ as if He were that mass of sin. He was not sin, but He looked upon Him as made sin for us. He stands in our place, assumes our guilt, takes on Him our iniquity and God treats Him as if He had been sin.

Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, let us just lift up our hearts with gratitude for a few moments. Here we are tonight. We know that we are guilty, but our sins have all been punished years ago. Before my soul believed in Christ, the punishment of my sins had all been endured. We are not to think that Christ’s blood derives its efficacy from our faith. Fact *precedes* faith. Christ has redeemed us—faith discovers this—but it was a fact long before we knew it and an undisputed fact, too.

Today we are secure because of that finished sacrifice. Though still defiled by sin, yet who can lay anything to the charge of the man whose guilt is gone, lifted bodily from off him and put upon Christ? How can any punishment fall on that man who ceases to possess sins, because his sin has eighteen hundred years ago been cast upon Christ and Christ has suffered in his place? Oh, glorious triumph of faith to be able to say, whenever I feel the guilt of sin, whenever conscience pricks me, “Yes. it is true, but my Lord is answerable for it all, for He has taken it all upon Himself and suffered in my place.”

How precious when I see my debts, to be able to say, “Yes, but the blood of Christ, God’s dear Son, has cleansed me from all sin!” How precious, not only to see my sin dying when I believe, but to know that it was dead, it was gone, it ceased to be, eighteen hundred years ago. All the sins that you and I have ever committed, or ever shall commit, if we are heirs of mercy and children of God, are all dead things—

***“Our Jesus nailed them to His Cross,***

***And sung the triumph when He rose.”***  
These cannot rise in judgment to condemn—they have all been slain, shrouded, buried. They are removed from us as far as the east is from the west, because “He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin”

**III.**You see, then, the reality of the imputation of sin to Christ from the amazing doctrine that Christ is made sin for us. But now notice the concluding thought, upon which I must dwell a moment, but it must be very briefly, for two reasons—my time has gone and my strength has gone, too.

“THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.”

Now, here, I beg you to notice, that it does not simply say that we might be made righteous, but “that we might be made *the righteousness* of God in Him.” As if righteousness, that lovely, glorious, God-honoring, Goddelighting thing—as if we were actually made *that*. God looks on His people as being abstract righteousness, not only righteous, but righteousness. To be righteous, is as if a man should have a box covered with gold, the box would then be golden. But to be righteousness is to have a box of solid gold. To be a righteous man is to have righteousness cast over me. But to be made *righteousness*, that is to be made solid essential righteousness in the sight of God.

Well now, this is a glorious fact and a most wonderful privilege, that we poor sinners are made “the righteousness of God in Him.” God sees no sin in any one of His people, no iniquity in Jacob when he looks upon them in Christ. In themselves He sees nothing but filth and abomination—in Christ nothing but purity and *righteousness*. Is it not, and must it not ever be to the Christian, one of his most delightful privileges to know that altogether apart from anything that we have ever done, or can do, God looks upon His people as being righteous? No, as being *righteousness—* and that despite all the sins they have ever committed—they are accepted in Him as if they had been Christ, while Christ was punished for them as if *He* had been sin.

Why, when I stand in my own place, I am lost and ruined. My place is the place where Judas stood, the place where the devil lies in everlasting shame. But when I stand in Christ’s place—and I fail to stand where faith has put me till I stand there—when I stand in Christ’s place, the Father’s everlastingly Beloved One, the Father’s Accepted One, Him whom the Father delights to honor—when I stand there, I stand where faith has a right to put me and I am in the most joyous spot that a creature of God can occupy. Oh, Christian, get up, get up into the high mountain and stand where your Savior stands, for that is your place.

Lie not there on the dunghill of fallen humanity—that is not your place. Christ has once taken it on your behalf. “He made Him to be sin for us.” Your place is yonder there, above the starry hosts, where He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Him. Not there, at the Day of Judgment, where the wicked shriek for shelter and beg for the hills to cover them. But there, where Jesus sits upon His Throne—*there* is your place, my Soul. He will make you to sit upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and has sat down with His Father upon *His* Throne.

Oh, that I could mount to the heights of this argument tonight—it needs a seraphic preacher to picture the saint in Christ, robed in Christ’s righteousness, wearing Christ’s nature, bearing Christ’s palm of victory, sitting on Christ’s Throne, wearing Christ’s crown. And yet this is our privilege! He wore my crown of thorns. I wear His crown, the crown of glory. He wore my dress, no, rather, he wore my nakedness when He died upon the Cross—I wear His robes, the royal robes of the King of kings. He bore my shame. I bear His honor. He endured my sufferings to this end that my joy may be full and that His joy may be fulfilled in me. He laid in the grave that I might rise from the dead and that I may dwell in Him. And all this He comes again to give me, to make it sure to me and to all that love His appearing, to show that all His people shall enter into their inheritance.

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, Mr. Maurice, McLeod Campbell and their great admirer, Mr. Brown, may go on with their preaching as long as they like—but they will never make a convert of a man who knows what the vitality of religion is. For he who knows what substitution means, he who knows what it is to stand where Christ stands—will never care to occupy the ground on which Mr. Maurice stands. He who has ever been made to sit together with Christ and once to enjoy the real preciousness of a transfer of Christ’s righteousness to him and his sin to Christ—that man has eaten the bread of Heaven and will never renounce it for husks.

No, my Brethren, we could lay down our lives for this Truth of God rather than give it up. No, we cannot by any means turn aside from this glorious stability of faith and for this good reason—there is nothing for us in the doctrine which these men teach. It may suit intellectual gentlefolk, I dare say it does. But it will not suit us. We are poor sinners and nothing at all, and if Christ is not our All in All, there is nothing for us. I have often thought the best answer for all these new ideas is that the true Gospel was always preached to the poor—“The poor have the Gospel preached to them.” I am sure that the poor will never learn the Gospel of these new divines, for they cannot make heads or tails of it, nor the rich, either.

After you have read through one of their volumes, you have not the least idea of what the book is about, until you have read it through eight or nine times. And then you begin to think you are a very stupid being for ever having read such inflated heresy, for it sours your temper and makes you feel angry to see the precious Truths of God trod under foot. Some of us must stand out against these attacks on the Truth of God, although we love not controversy. We rejoice in the liberty of our fellow men and would have them proclaim their convictions. But if they touch these precious things, they touch the apple of our eye.

We can allow a thousand opinions in the world, but that which infringes upon the precious doctrine of a covenant salvation, through the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ—against that we must and will—enter our hearty and solemn protest as long as God spares us. Take away once from us those glorious doctrines and where are we,

Brethren? We may lay down and die for nothing remains that is worth living for. We have come to the valley of the shadow of death when we find these doctrines to be untrue. If these things which I speak to you tonight are not the Truths of Christ, if they are not true, there is no comfort left for any poor man under God’s sky and it were better for us never to have been born.

I may say what Jonathan Edwards says at the end of his book, “If any man could disprove the doctrines of the Gospel, he should then sit down and weep to think they were not true, for,” says he, “it would be the most dreadful calamity that could happen to the world, to have a glimpse of such truths and then for them to melt away in the thin air of fiction, as having no substantiality in them.”

Stand up for the Truth of Christ. I would not have you be bigoted, but I would have you be decided. Do not give countenance to any of this trash and error which is going abroad, but stand firm. Be not turned away from your steadfastness by any pretense at intellectuality and high philosophy, but earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard of us and have been taught, even as you have read in this sacred Book, which is the way of everlasting life.

Thus, Beloved, without gathering up my strength for the fray, or attempting to analyze the subtleties of those who would pervert the simple Gospel, I speak out my mind and utter the kindling of my heart among you. Little enough will you reckon over whom the Holy Spirit has given me the oversight, what the grievous wolves may design if you keep within the fold. Break not the sacred bounds wherein God has enclosed His Church. He has encircled us in the arms of covenant love. He has united us in indissoluble bonds to the Lord Jesus. He has fortified us with the assurance that the Holy Spirit shall guide us into all truth. God grant that those beyond the pale of visible fellowship with us in this eternal Gospel may see their danger and escape from the fowler’s snare!

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CHRIST MADE SIN  
NO. 3203

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

***~~“For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”  
2 Corinthians 5:21.~~***

***~~I DARESAY I have preached from this text several times in your~~***

hearing. [See Sermons #141-142, Volume 3—SUBSTITUTION; #310, Volume 6—CHRIST—OUR SUBSTITUTE; #1124, Volume 19—GOD BESEECHING SINNERS BY HIS MINISTERS and #1910, Volume 32—THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If my life is spared, I hope to preach from it twice as many more! The Doctrine it teaches, like salt upon the table, must never be left out—or, like bread, which is the staff of life—it is proper at every meal.

See you here the foundation Truth of Christianity, the Rock on which our hopes are built! It is the only hope of a sinner, and the only true joy of the Christian—the great transaction, the great Substitution, the great lifting of sin from the sinner to the sinner’s Surety—the punishment of the Surety instead of the sinner—the pouring out of the vials of wrath which were due to the transgressor, upon the head of his Substitute! It is the most grand transaction which ever took place on earth! It is the most wonderful sight that even Hell ever beheld and the most stupendous marvel that Heaven, itself, ever executed—Jesus Christ, made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

You scarcely need that I should explain the words when the sense is so plain. A spotless Savior stands in the place of guilty sinners. God lays upon the spotless Savior, the sin of the guilty, so that He becomes, in the expressive language of the text, *sin*. Then He takes off from the innocent Savior His righteousness and puts that to the account of the once-guilty sinners, so that the sinners become *righteousness*—righteousness of the highest and most Divine source—*the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.*

Of this transaction I would have you think tonight. Think of it adoringly! Think of it lovingly! Think of it joyfully!  
**I.**When you look at the great Doctrine of Substitution, you especially who are concerned in it and can see your sins laid upon Christ, I want you to LOOK AT IT WITH DEVOUT ADORATION.  
Lowly and reverently *adore the Justice of God*. God set His heart upon saving your souls, but He would not be unjust, even to indulge His favorite attribute of Mercy. He had purposed that you should be His—He had set His love upon you, unworthy as you are, before the foundation of the world! Yet to save you, He would not tarnish His Justice. He had said, “The soul that sins, it shall die,” and He would not recall the word because it was not too severe, but simply a just and righteous threat. Sooner than He would tarnish His Justice, He bound His only-begotten Son to the pillar and scourged and bruised Him! Sooner than sin should go unpunished, He put that sin upon Christ and punished Him—oh, how tremendously and with what terrific strokes! Christ can tell you, but probably if He did tell you, you could not understand all that God thinks about sin, for God hates it, loathes it and must and will punish it! And upon His Son He laid a tremendous, incomprehensible weight, till the griefs of the dying Redeemer utterly surpassed all our imagination or comprehension! Adore, then, the Justice of God, and think how you might have had to adore it, not at the foot of the Cross, but in the depths of Hell! O my Soul, if you had had your deserts, you would have been driven from the Presence of God! Instead of looking into those languid eyes which wept for you, you would have had to look into His face whose eyes are as a flame of fire! Instead of hearing Him say, “I have blotted out your sins,” you might have heard Him say, “Depart, you cursed one, into everlasting fire.” Will you not pay as much reverence to the Justice of God exhibited on the Cross as exhibited in Hell? Let your reverence be deeper! It will not be that of a slave, or even of a servant, but let it be quite as humble. Bow low, bless the Justice of God, marvel at its severity, adore its unlimited holiness, join with seraphs who surely at the foot of the Cross may sing, as well as before the Throne of God, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.”  
While you admire the Justice, also admire *the Wisdom of God*. We ought to adore God’s Wisdom in everything we see in Creation. The physician with his scalpel should adore the Wisdom of God in the anatomical skill by which the human body is formed and fashioned. The traveler, as he passes through the wonders of Nature, should adore the Wisdom of God in the creation of the world, with its towering mountains and with its unknown depths. Every student of the works of God should account the universe as a temple in which the gorgeous outline does not excel the beauty and the holiness of all its fittings, for in the Temple everything speaks of Jehovah’s Glory. But, ah, at the foot of the Cross, Wisdom is concentrated—all its rays are concentrated there as with a magnifying glass. We see God there reconciling contrary attributes as they appear to us. We see God there “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,” and yet “forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” He smites as though He were cruel. He forgives as though He were not just. He is as generous in passing by sin as if He were not the Judge of all the earth. He is as severe to punish sin as if He were not the tender Father who can press the prodigal to His bosom. Here you see Love and Justice embrace each other in such a wondrous way that I ask you to imitate the seraphs who now that they see what they once desired to look into, veil their faces with their wings, adoring the only wise God!  
Further, Beloved, when you have thus thought of His Justice and of His Wisdom, bow your head again in reverence as you contemplate *the Grace of God.*For what reason did God give His only-begotten Son to bleed instead of us? We were worms of insignificance, we were vipers of iniquity—if He saved us, were we worth the saving? We were such infamous traitors that if He doomed us to the eternal fire, we might have been terrible examples of His Wrath, but Heaven’s Darling bleeds that earth’s traitors may not bleed! Shout it! Shout it in Heaven and publish it in all the golden streets every hour of every glorious day, that such is the Grace of God, “that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”  
And here, while I ask you to adore, I feel inclined to close the sermon and to bow myself in silence before the Grace of God in Christ Jesus. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!” Behold it in the sweat of blood which stained Gethsemane! Behold it in the scourging which has made the name of Gabbatha a terror! Behold it in “the pains, and groans, and dying strife” of Calvary! Bow, did I say? Prostrate your spirits! Lift up your sweetest music, but let your soul feel the deepest abasement as you see this super abounding Grace of God in the Person of the Only-Begotten of the Father, making Him to be sin for us— He who knew no sin!  
When you have thus thought of His Justice, His wisdom and His Grace, like a silver thread running through the whole, I want you once more to adore *His Sovereignty*. What Sovereignty is this, that angels who fell should have no Redeemer, but that man, *insignificant man*, being fallen, should find a Savior in Heaven’s Only-Begotten! See this Sovereignty, too, that this precious blood should come to some of us and not to others! Millions in this world have never heard of it. Tens of thousands who have heard of it, have rejected it. Yes, and in this little section of the world’s population encompassed now within these walls, how many there are who have had that precious blood preached in their hearing and presented to them with loving invitations, only to reject it and despise it? And if you and I have felt the power of it, and can see the blood cleansing us from sin, shall we not admire that discriminating, distinguishing Grace which has made us to differ? But the part of Sovereignty which astonishes me most is that God should have been pleased to make *Him* who knew no sin to be sin for us,” that God should be pleased to ordain salvation by *Christ* as our Substitute!  
A great many persons rail at this plan of salvation, but if God has determined it, you and I ought to accept it with delight. “Behold,” says God, “I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious.” The Sovereignty of God has determined that no man can be saved except by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ. If any man would be clean, Jehovah declares that he must wash in the fountain which Jesus filled from His veins. If God should put away sin and accept the sinner, He declares that it should only be through that sinner putting his trust in the Sacrifice offered once and for all by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Admire this Sovereignty and adore it by yielding to it! Cavil not at it. Down, rebellious will! Hush, you naughty reason that would ask, “Why?” and, “Why is there no other method?” Yield, my heart! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Oh, magnificent love! A way as splendid as the end! A plan as glorious as its design! The design to save is not more resplendent than the method by which men are saved. Justice is magnified, Wisdom extolled, Grace resplendent, and every attribute of God glorified! Oh, let us, at the very mention of a dying Savior, bow down and adore!  
**II.**Not to change the topic, but to vary the line of thought, let us endeavor to LOOK LOVINGLY at Jesus Christ made sin for His people.  
Every word here may help our love. That word, *“Him,”*may *remind us of His Person—*“He has made *Him* to be sin for us”—Him—the Son of God, coequal and co-eternal with the Father! Him—the son of Mary, born at Bethlehem—the spotless “Son of Man.” “He has made *Him* to be sin.” I am not going to enlarge. I only want to bring His blessed Person clearly before your mind. He who trod the waves. He who healed the sick He who had compassion upon the multitudes and fed them. He who always lives to make intercession for us—“He has made *Him* to be sin for us.” Oh, love Him, Sinner, and let your heart join in the words—  
***“His Person fixes all my love.”***  
I delight to have you get a hold of Him as being verily a Person. Do not think of Him as a fiction—never do so! Do not regard Him as a mere historical person who walked the stage of history and now is gone. He is very near to you right now! He is still living! We often sing— ***“Crown Him Lord of all.”***  
Well, this is that same Glorious One! “He has made *Him* to be sin for us.” Think of Him and let your love flow out towards Him!  
Would you further excite your love? *Think of His Character*. He knew no sin—there was none within Him—for He had none of our sinful desires and evil propensities. “Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” Think of that, and then read, “He has made *Him to be sin for us*.” Do not fritter that away by putting in the word, “offering,” and saying “sin-offering.” The word stands in apposition—what if I say opposition?—to the word, “righteousness,” in the other part of the text. He made Him to be as much sin as He makes us to be righteousness! That is to say He makes Him to be sin by *imputation*, as He makes us to be righteousness by imputation! On Him who was never a sinner—who never could be a sinner—our sin was laid! Consider how His holy soul must have shrunk back from being made sin, and yet, I pray you, do not fritter away the words of the Prophet Isaiah, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” He bore our transgressions and carried our sins in His own body on the Cross. There was before the bar of Justice an absolute transfer made of guilt from His elect to Himself! There He was made sin for us, though He personally knew no sin, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” As you think of His pure, immaculate Nature and perfect life—love Him as you see Him bearing the burden of sins not His own, for which He came to atone!  
Will not your love be excited when *you think of the difficulty of this imputation*? “He has made Him to be sin.” None but God could have put sin upon Christ. It is well said that there is no lifting of sin from one person to another. There is no such thing, as far as we are concerned, but things which are impossible with man are possible with God. Do you know what it means for Christ to be made sin? You do not, but you can form some guess of what it involves, for when He was made sin, God treated Him as if He had been a sinner—which He never was and never could be. God left Him as He would have left a sinner, till He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” God smote Him as He would have smitten a sinner, till His Soul was “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” That which was due from His people for sin, or an equivalent to that, was literally exacted at the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! He was made a debtor for our debts and He paid them. You may guess what it was to be a debtor for us by the smart which it cost to discharge our liabilities. He that is a surety shall smart for it—and Jesus found that proverb true. When Justice came to smite the sinner, it found Him in the sinner’s place and smote Him without relenting, laying to the full the whole weight upon Him which had otherwise crushed all mankind forever into the lowermost Hell! Let us love Jesus as we think that He endured all this.  
Beloved in the Lord, there is one more string of your harp I would like to touch, and it is *the thought of what you now are*, which the text speaks of. You are made the righteousness of God in Christ! God sees no sin in you, Believer! He has put your sin, or that which was yours, to the account of Christ—and you are innocent before Him. Moreover, He sees you to be righteous. You are not perfectly righteous—the work of His Spirit in you is incomplete as yet—but He looks upon you, not as you are in yourselves, but as you are in Christ Jesus and you are “accepted in the Beloved.” You are, in His sight, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! What Jesus did is set to your account. He sees His Son in you and then He loves you as He loves His Son. He has put you into union with His Son and you are now hid with Christ in God. I trust you will endeavor to realize this position of yourselves as made the righteousness of God in Christ, and when you do, surely you will love the Savior who has done all this for you—undeserving, helpless, dying, guilty mortals! Oh, that the Lord Jesus would now send fire into all your souls and make you love Him, for surely, if you have but the sense of what He has done and how He did it, and what it cost Him to do it, and who He is that has done it— and who you were for whom He has done it—you will surely say, “Oh, for a thousand hearts that I may love You as I should, and a thousand tongues that I may praise You as I should!”  
**III.**And now, let us JOYFULLY VIEW THE GLORIOUS FACT OF SUBSTITUTION.  
And here I will commence with the observation that *till your sin as a Believer is gone, and till, as a Believer, Christ’s righteousness is at present your glorious dress, your salvation is in no sense realized by yourselves*. It is not dependent upon your frames and feelings. Your sins are not put away through your repentance. That repentance becomes to you the token of the pardon of sin, but the true cleansing is found, not in the eyes of the penitent, but in the wounds of Jesus! Your sins were virtually discharged upon the accursed Cross. You stand this day accepted, not for anything you are, or can be, or shall be, but entirely and wholly through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We cannot state this Truth of God, it seems to me, too boldly. This is the very Doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by Faith, or rather the basis Doctrine upon which it rests. And I am persuaded the more plainly it is preached, the better, for it is the Gospel of salvation to a lost and ruined world!  
Beloved, your case is something similar to this. You are in debt and, according to the old laws, you must be cast into prison. You are brought up before the court. You cannot plead that you are not in debt—you are compelled to stand there and say, “Each one of these charges I must admit. These liabilities I have incurred and I have not a single penny with which to meet them.” A friend in court, wealthy and generous, pays the debt. Now, the only reason why you go out of court clear, lies in the payment made by your friend. You do not leave the court because you never incurred the debt—no, you *did* incur the debt. And you must admit that you did not leave the court because you pleaded not guilty, or because you promised never to get into debt again. Not so—all that would not have answered your purpose. Your creditor would still have cast you into prison. You did not leave the court because your character is excellent, or you hope to make it so. The only ground of your liberation from your liabilities is found in the fact that *another person has discharged them for you* and that will not be affected by any act you may have committed or shall commit. You may have felt ill today. You might have labored under 20 diseases, but those diseases will not imprison you, neither will they help to set you free. Your freedom hinges upon the fact that the debt was paid for you by another!  
Now, Christian, your hope and comfort hang here! This is the diamond rivet which rivets your salvation firmly! Jesus died for you—and those for whom Jesus died, in the sense in which we now use the language—are and must be saved! Unless Eternal Justice can punish two persons for one offense. Unless Eternal Justice can demand payment twice for the same debt—first from the bleeding Surety, and then from those for whom the Surety stood—they must be clear for whom Jesus died! This is the Gospel which we preach! Oh, happy they who have received it, for it is their joy to know it, sinners though they have been, guilty and ruined— and sinners though they are still—yet, since they have believed, Christ is theirs! Christ took their sins and paid their debts! And God Himself can bring no charge against the man who is justified by Christ! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”  
Now, Christian, I want you to come, tonight, and enjoy this. Why, Man, *it ought to make your soul dance for joy within you to think that sin is pardoned and righteousness is imputed to you!* This is an unchanging fact, that Christ has saved you. If it was ever a fact, it is always a fact. If it was ever true, it is always true and always alike true—as true now that you are depressed, as yesterday when you were rejoicing. Jesus’ blood does not change like your poor heart. It does not go up and down in value, like the markets, and fluctuate like your faith. If you are saved, you are saved! If you are resting in the blood, you are as safe, today, as you were yesterday—and you are as safe forever! Remember that this is true of all the saints. It is true to great saints, but equally so to little ones. They all stand under this crimson canopy and are alike protected by its blessed shadow from the beams of Divine Justice. It is true to you now. O Beloved, try to live up to it! Say, “Away, my doubts! Away, my fears! I trust a Savior slain and I am saved! Away, my questions! Away, my carnal reasonings! I hate my sins, but I cannot doubt my Savior! It is true I have not lived as a Christian should live, but I will still cast myself into His arms.” It is not faith to trust God as a saint when you feel you are a saint. Faith is to trust Christ as a sinner—while you are conscious that you are a sinner. To come to Jesus and to think yourselves pure, is a sorry coming to Him—but to come with all your impurity—this is true coming!  
I say to you, Sinner. I say to you, Saint. I say to you all this one thing, and I have done. When your souls are at the blackest, seek for nothing but the blood! When your souls are at the darkest, seek no light anywhere but in the Cross! Do not cling to preparations, to humbling, to repentings. All these things are good in their way, but they cannot be a balsam to a wounded conscience! Christ and Christ Crucified is what you need. Do not look within—look without. I say, when you repent, it is a base repentance that will not let you trust Christ, for while repentance should have one eye on sin, it should have the other upon the Cross. While repentance should make you lie low, yet it is not repentance, but unbelief, that makes you doubt the power of Christ to save you! Christ never came to save the righteous—He came to save sinners. I would have you magnify the Grace of God by believing that when your sin stares you most in the face, when you are most conscious of it and it seems to be worse than ever, Christ is the same to you and for you, your glorious Surety and your blessed satisfaction! Still believe and still trust, and do not let go your confidence that Christ is able to save sinners, even the chief, and will save you without help from your doings or your feelings! His own right arm will get Himself the victory and, having trod the winepress of Divine Wrath alone, He will save you solely by the merit of His life and of His death! Oh, for Grace to rest in the Savior and to know the truth of this text—“He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ROMANS 5:1-10; 2 CORINTHIANS 4; 5.***

**Romans 5:1-3** . *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.* Faith has such wondrous power that it makes us rejoice even in trial! It helps Christians to be glad even in the midst of sorrow.

**3.***Knowing that tribulation works patience*. The more trial you have, the more spiritual education you receive. You cannot learn the virtue of patience without tribulation any more than a man can learn to be a sailor if he stays on shore! “Tribulation works patience.”

**4.***And patience, experience.* If you bear the trial patiently, it leaves the mark of its engraving tool upon your spirit, and you thus become fashioned into an experienced Christian.

**4.***And experience, hope*. What God has once done, He may do again. And as He has shown us so much favor, we may reasonably hope that He will show us some more, and that He who has given us Grace, will give us glory.

**5.***And hope makes us not ashamed.*Our hope brings us courage—no longer are we trembling and diffident, but we feel like children do towards a loving father—we are happily, restfully at home with our God. “Hope makes us not ashamed.”

**5.***Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy*

*Spirit which is given unto us* . [See Sermons #829, Volume 14—THE PERFUMING OF THE HEART and #1904, Volume 32—THE PERSONAL PENTECOST AND THE GLORIOUS HOPE— Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] When Mary,

the sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus with the very costly ointment of spikenard, “the house was filled with the odor” of it—and in a similar fashion the love of God perfumes every part of our nature.

**6.***For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for  
the ungodly.”*[See Sermons #1191, Volume 20—FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE? and #1345, Volume 23—FOR WHOM IS THE GOSPEL MEANT?—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a wonderful statement! “Christ died for the ungodly.” Yet it was no slip of the pen, for the Apostle takes up his own expression and preaches the following little sermon upon it—

**7.***For scarcely for a righteous man will one die.*If a man is known to be sternly just, like Aristides, nobody would care enough for him to die for him.

**7.***Yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die*. For a benevolent man, a true philanthropist, a lover of his race, there are some who might say that they would die for him. Yet the Apostle only says, “Perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die.” It is not very likely, but it is possible.

**8.***But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet  
sinners, Christ died for us*. [See Sermon #104, Volume 2—LOVE’S COMMENDATION— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Certainly

we were not “good” men, we were not even “just” men, but we are included in this black description, “sinners.” And “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” He died for us as sinners—He did not come to save saints, but to save sinners—and it was for sinners that He died.

**9.***Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*. This is a fine piece of argument and strictly logical. If, when we were sinners, Christ died for us, will He let us be condemned, now that He has washed us in His precious blood? Is it possible that after dying for us, He will let us fall from Grace and perish? That will never be! Notice the same kind of argument again—

**10.***For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His  
life.* [See Sermon #2587, Volume 44—“MUCH MORE”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There is a threefold argument here. If Christ died for us when we were His enemies, will He not save us, now that we are His friends? If He died to reconcile us to God, will He not completely save us, now that this great work has been accomplished? And as we were reconciled to God by Christ’s death, shall we not much more be saved by His life? There are three arguments and each one is sound and conclusive. The Believer in Jesus must be eternally saved! If Christ died for sinners, what will He *not* do for Believers, who are no longer enemies, but are reconciled unto God by the death of His Son?

**2 Corinthians 4:1.***Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.* Stern was the labor of the Apostles, but they felt that their work was so all-important, so Divine , that they must not grow weary of it, though they were, doubtless, often weary *in* it.

**2.***But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*It is no part of the business of Christ’s ministers to modify the Truth of God which He has entrusted to them, or to put new meanings into it which God never meant, draining away the very life-blood of the Gospel and leaving it dead and useless! But it *is* both our duty and our privilege to state it just as we find it and to proclaim it in as plain a language as possible so that everybody may understand what the teaching of God really is.

**3.***But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost*. [See Sermon #1663,  
Volume 28—THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It was not hidden under fine language and oratorical flourishes on the part of the Apostles—there was a far more terrible barrier in the way of its entrance into the hearts of some who heard it.

**4-7.***In whom the god of the world has blinded the mind of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* There is nothing remarkable in us. We are, in ourselves, poor, frail, fragile creatures, like earthen vessels of no particular value! Yet this we do not regret, for there is a good reason for it—

**7-10.***That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.* He who wishes for an easy time of it must not become a minister of the Gospel! If he is determined to preach it faithfully, fully, simply, straight from his heart, he will often find himself in such circumstances as the Apostle describes in these verses.

**11.***For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh*. The Apostles were always to the front where the shots were flying the thickest and with the deadliest aim! There they stood, the officers of the army of Christ—and Paul rejoiced that, for one, he was able thus to make himself to be *nothing* that Christ might be the great All-in-All!

**12.***So, then, death works in us, but life in you*. So long as Paul could be the means of the salvation of the souls of men, he did not mind what became of himself. Though it should be death to him, he would count it as nothing so long as it should bring life to them!

**13, 14.***We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed and, therefore, have I spoken; we also believe and, therefore, speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us, also, by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*Note the assurance of Apostolic preaching and writing. There is no, “if,” here, no hesitation, no doubt. The Apostles knew what they believed and knew why they believed it—and they spoke with conviction—nobody was led into doubt by their hesitancy.

**15, 16.***For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not.* Paul had said before that they did not faint, and now he reiterates it that though his ministry was enough to bear him down, and lay him prostrate in the dust, yet he did not faint.

**16, 18.***But though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*.

**2 Corinthians 5:1.***For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with  
hands, eternal in the heavens.* [See Sermon #1719, Volume 29—THE TENT DISSOLVED AND THE MANSION ENTERED—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Is not this grand courage on the part of the Apostle? With all the world against him and he “always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,” he looks at the new body, the new house that God is making for him and he reckons that to shuffle off this mortal coil will be no loss to him, since when he loses the tent in which he lives, here, he will go to “a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

**2-4.***For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed—*We are not impatient to enter the disembodied state—

**4-6.***But clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident.* Note the ground of the Apostle’s confidence. He is quite sure that, inasmuch as Christ rose from the dead, so all His followers must. And though they die in the Lord’s service, yet they shall not be losers thereby, but they shall the more speedily ascend to their reward! “We are always confident”—

**6-9.***Knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be ac*

*cepted of Him.*[See Sermons #413, Volume 7—TO DIE OR NOT TO DIE! and #1303, Volume 22— THE BELIEVER IN THE BODY AND OUT OF THE BODY—Read/download both sermons, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] To be well-pleasing to God everywhere, in everything that we do, should be the one aim of a Christian, whether he is in the body or out of the body.

**10-13.***For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad, knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust, also, are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have something to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we are beside ourselves.*And men said that these Apostles had gone out of their minds. Festus said to Paul, “you are beside yourself, much learning does make you mad.” So Paul says, “Whether we are beside ourselves”—

**13.***It is to God: or whether we are sober, it is for your cause.* “In either case, we have but one objective and that is to glorify God through your salvation.”

**14-15.***For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.* The life of the saved man must never be lived for himself! He is false to his profession if it is so. He must henceforth live as earnestly for God as, aforetime in his unregeneracy, he lived for himself, for he now has a new life which is not his own to do with it as he pleases, but it belongs entirely to Him who purchased it with His own most precious blood.

**16.***Therefore, from now on, we regard no man after the flesh. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.*We do not see Christ with our natural eyes. We do not hear His voice with our natural ears. He is now to us a spiritual Person who communicates with our spirit through His own ever-blessed Spirit.

**17.***Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.* There could not be a greater change than that which is worked by regeneration! It is a new creation, the passing away of the old, and the making of all things new.

[See Sermons #881, Volume 15—THE BELIEVER A NEW CREATURE and #1328, Volume 22—CHRIST THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS NEW—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

**18-21.***And all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead be you reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1394 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE DAY OF SALVATION  
NO. 1394

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 13, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Behold, now is the day of salvation.”  
2 Corinthians 6:2.~~***

NONE can change the outward features of a day. The kings of the earth cannot command for themselves bright days nor inflict upon their enemies days of tempest. It belongs to a higher than they to command the morning and cause the daystar to know its place. It is little they can do in reference to the light, the sun, the clouds or the rain. They cannot bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades nor loose the bands of Orion. Still, rulers and governors and kings have accomplished much in shaping the social character of the days of their subjects. Sometimes, like the king of Nineveh, they have proclaimed days of fasting and their subjects have been clothed in sackcloth. On other occasions they have exercised the prerogative to ordain days of feasting, as Ahasuerus did at the palace of Shushan, when for 180 days, “He showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty,” by filling the capital with feasting.

Kings of the older stamp were more able to affect the days of their people than they are now. In former times, when men had less wit and more faith in the fable of divine right than they have now, despots could cause a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. They made war according to their own fancy or frenzy—and what is that but moral midnight? What does war mean but crime, suffering, death, poverty? Is it not usually the sum of all villainies? Everything that is evil either marches with it or follows in its train! The very thought of war for our beloved country darkens our heavens. Alas, with what a light heart have despots drawn the sword and sought to wade through slaughter to imaginary glory, shutting the gates of Mercy on mankind that they might seize a province or avenge a jest.

Kings can also brighten men’s days when they have a mind to be quiet—they make peace and then the nations bask in the sun and earth covers her battlefields with verdure. Peace gives the poor world respite to bind up her gaping wounds and remedy a little of the mischief of the bloody fight. Hard labor and stern self-denial are not grudged by the suffering peasants if they may but have breathing time and the land may enjoy her Sabbaths. But why should such toil and suffering have been demanded? Simply because kings quarrel and their subjects must die to end the strife!

Princes have also, on occasion, exercised their prerogative by proclaiming days of amnesty and oblivion—a long rebellion has been crushed out and there has been no fear of its return—and so the monarch has thought it best to refrain from undue severity and overlook the evil which he has

subdued. Accordingly, he proclaims that the past shall be blotted out if, by a certain time, rebellious ones will surrender, yield up their arms and promise loyalty. Such days are calm and clear and bring light to despairing rebels who saw no end but the gallows tree. Thus, for humiliation or rejoicing, for war, for peace, or for pardon, monarchs can set their seal upon a day and mark it with their signature in history.

If earthly monarchs can somewhat affect the days of men, what, then, can be done by the King of kings? The Creator of day and night can surely order all our lights and shades! The Ancient of Days is He who can give us “mornings without clouds” or make the day dark with gloom! How often has He made the sun of prosperity to gladden us and how suddenly has He shrouded us beneath the thick clouds of adversity! Our days are in His hands and He is Lord of all! You and I, looking back, may well bow before the power and majesty of the Eternal who has such infinite power over us that none of us can stop His hand nor say unto Him, “What are *you* doing?”

The Lord has had His days of vengeance—are they not written in the book of the wars of the Lord? How terrible was the hour when He opened the sluices of the firmament that the rain might descend in torrents and bade the fountains of the great deep rise to meet the descending floods! How dreadful were the 40 days wherein the floods above the firmament, in tumultuous mirth, leaped downward to embrace their brethren of the ocean till the whole earth was covered with one all-devouring deluge and sea monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of kings! That was the decree of Justice and the day of vengeance of our God.

Such days have been at other times, as, for instance, when He poured Hell out of Heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah! When He overthrew Pharaoh and all his host in the midst of the Red Sea. And when His sword stayed not from blood till Hivite and Perizzite and all the Canaanites fell before the hand of Joshua because the iniquity of the people was full and the hour of execution had arrived. Those were the “dies irae,” and there is another far more terrible yet to come, when Heaven and earth shall flee away before the face of Him that shall sit upon the Great White Throne. Blessed be God, we are not, at this time, living under the rod of vengeance, but our text tells us that “now is the day of salvation”!

When it is a day of vengeance, the Lord does His strange but necessary work thoroughly, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord.” The Prophet said of Him, “The Lord revenges and is furious.” Well did Miriam sing, “The Lord is a man of war, Jehovah is His name.” But when He puts on the silken robes of mercy and proclaims with a silver trumpet the day of salvation, “blessed are the people that know the joyful sound.” I trust that we are among that happy company and have heard with the inner ear the note of Divine Grace! At any rate, the Lord has set a period of salvation, even from the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus to this present hour. The day of salvation has not been suspended—it lasts on and it shall last till the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout— then shall come the judgment and strict Justice shall sit upon the throne.

The Apostle, when he was writing this very wonderful sentence, dreaded lest men should not avail themselves of its great Truth. Read the first verse of the chapter—“We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you, also, that you receive not the Grace of God in vain.” The day of salvation is a great favor from God and it would be a fearful thing if we should live in it and miss its privilege! Dear Hearers, it is only of Divine favor that we enjoy this day of amnesty, oblivion and forgiveness and, therefore, we beseech you not to let its golden hours pass over you in vain! This is the great anxiety of my heart at this time in addressing you. I have great fear lest some of you should live in the day of salvation and yet die without being saved!

I fear some of you should live in the midst of light with blinded eyes, should dwell with deaf ears where the silver trumpet sounds and so the Kingdom of God should come very near to you and yet you should not enter it. It will be sad, indeed, if you should see strangers from afar brought into the Kingdom of Heaven and yourselves, who live on its borders, should be utterly thrust out! May the Holy Spirit bless the words which shall now be spoken so that the evil which we fear may not come upon you, but that you may receive this Grace or favor of God to your eternal good! That you may not receive this Grace in vain I shall try, first, to show the grand reason for this day of salvation. Secondly, I shall speak of the glorious day itself. And thirdly, for a minute or two I shall dwell upon the dark shade which may close that day if the Spirit does not lead us into salvation.

**I.**First, then, THE GRAND REASON FOR THIS DAY—“Now is the day of salvation.” Will you kindly read the context in order to understand why there is a present day of salvation? I will take you a little away from the text to the 20th verse of the preceding chapter and ask you to bear in mind that the division into chapters is purely arbitrary and we need take no notice of it whatever. The Apostle says, “Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God. For He has made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Here, then, is the secret of the whole matter. This day is the day of salvation because, “He has made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” There could have been no day of salvation if a Savior had not appeared! And if that Savior had not become our Substitute and Surety, salvation would have been denied us by the stern voice of Justice. But now Christ has come into the world and died for sin—and because He has finished all the works which He undertook, the Lord our God proclaims for us the day of salvation. Notice that, according to the context, this is the day of salvation because we may now be reconciled to God.

“We pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.” The Lord would not set His ministers to pray men to be reconciled to Him if peace were out of the question. He would not send us upon an impossible errand! God is already reconciled to every sinner who has an interest in the blood of Jesus. Towards those the Lord is full of peace. Nothing is needed to reconcile God to the believing man. The great thing that is required is

to bring men to believe in Jesus Christ that they may be reconciled to God! The feud between you and God, poor prodigal child, need not be continued! You quarreled with your Father and you went into the far country. And now you have spent your substance, but your Father sends you this message, “Be reconciled. Come home, a loving reception awaits you. Return at once.”

Because Jesus has died, the partition wall is broken down—the great gulf between a holy God and unholy man is bridged by the atoning blood! You may be reconciled. There is no reason why the terrible quarrel should continue and, therefore, because reconciliation is possible, it is a day of salvation! As long as a man remains an enemy to God he cannot, of course, be saved, for enmity to God is the very essence of his ruin and the sting of his condemnation. While a man lives in enmity to God he is and must be under the power of an evil spirit which curses him! Therefore reconciliation to God is absolutely necessary to the enjoyment of salvation. I repeat, because reconciliation is possible, this day of salvation has come!

Next, lest anyone should exclaim, “But how is it and why is it that so great a gift is conferred? I cannot understand it and therefore I am plunged in doubt”—the plain statement of the 21st verse explains it all— “He has made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.” Here is the grand doctrine of Substitution! Oh Soul, if you believe in Christ Jesus you shall be saved because He stood in your place! He took your sin and the Lord made *Him* to be sin on your account and exacted at His hand satisfaction for your iniquity! He bruised Him and put Him to grief so that He was made a curse for us and bore in our place the wrath of Heaven. Now, therefore, the righteous God will not, cannot, need to vindicate His Law a second time! If He has made the Lord Jesus to be sin for us, then He need not visit us for sin nor punish the same offense a second time. No, it would be injustice to lay sin once upon the Substitute and afterwards upon the sinner—therefore well may there be a day of salvation proclaimed since Christ has finished transgression and made an end of sin!

To help us to understand Mercy’s great expedient, still better, the Holy Spirit tells us that the Divine design in Christ Jesus is to make us the “righteousness of God” in Christ. Wonderful expression! I shall not attempt to enter into its fullness, but I will content myself with saying that the two expressions of the verse set forth the *imputation* of *sin* to Christ and of *righteousness* to us—the substitution of Christ in our place and the standing of our souls in Christ’s place—in terms so forcible that he must be determined not to believe the doctrine who does not see it in the words before us.

Our Lord is not merely made a Sin Offering, but He is made SIN—and we are not merely made righteous in Christ, but we are made RIGHTEOUSNESS, itself—yes, and the righteousness of *God*, too—which is the very highest conceivable righteousness! I never wish to strain expressions, nor push them one inch beyond their proper meaning, but I think it is difficult to do here, since the language is so very forcible and explicit. If the doctrine which I have explained were intended to be taught, I do not see how it could be more clearly stated.

Now, Soul, if you desire salvation, see how God can give it to you! As He takes your sin and lays it upon Christ, so He takes Christ’s righteousness and lays it upon you! He looks at you as if you were as righteous as His Son who represents you! He treats you as if you had been obedient to all His Laws. He looks upon the model Man, Christ Jesus, the perfect humanity, and He sees in Christ all His people and treats them accordingly. He looks upon His people as if they, themselves, had magnified the Law and made it honorable by a sinless life. Wondrous doctrine, this, and he that believes it shall find rest in his soul! And it is because of it that we are authorized to come forth this day and declare the day of salvation! The guilt of the believing sinner is put away, for Christ has carried it—and now righteousness belongs to the sinner, for God imputes it to him without works—therefore this is the day of salvation!

Still keeping to the context and illustrating the grand reason for the day of salvation in another way—will you kindly read the verse, itself, which contains our text? “ ‘For He says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped you.’ Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.” It is a quotation! Paul says, “He says.” Where does God say that? We have no difficulty in discovering—it is in the 49th of Isaiah, which passage should be carefully read by you and heartily pondered. I wish to call your special attention to it as opening up the glorious reason for the famous proclamation of which we are preaching.

That chapter, from the 6th to the 12th verse eminently applies to the Messiah, that is, to our Lord Jesus Christ. Of whom else could the Prophet have spoken as in the 7th verse, “Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servant of rulers”? Who is this but our Lord as He stood before Herod and Pilate? To this very day He is abhorred of the Jews—they mention Him ordinarily by the name of, “the Crucified,” and to them that term is the embodiment of the utmost scorn! We glory in that word, but to them it is the essence of contempt. “He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

We are sure that Isaiah spoke concerning Him, the Crucified, whom we adore1 And our next enquiry is, what did he say of Him? Read the 5th and 6th verses: “And now, says the Lord who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, though Israel is not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength. And He said, It is a light thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give You for a light to the Gentiles, that You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.”

Beloved, are you not glad to hear these words? If you are not curious to hear me, but eager to hear my Master’s Truth of God, your heart will be rejoiced at this blessed news—that Christ has come to be the salvation of the Gentiles! We were out in the cold. We were the younger branch of the family and the heir despised us! We had not yet come into our portion—

we were left in darkness and in sin! But now our turn has come and we are favored. From the day when Jesus said, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” our privileges began! From the day when Paul said, “Seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles,” ours has been a day of favor and the portion which once belonged only to the seed of Abraham we have obtained! Only we have obtained it to a far larger extent and we see more clearly its deep spiritual meaning and wealth of blessing!

What was veiled under types and shadows is evidently set forth before our eyes. Beloved, tell it all over the world that today salvation has come to the Gentiles and especially to the dwellers in the islands! How remarkable it is that islands are so often alluded to in the Scriptures and that they receive the Gospel so much more readily than any other parts of the world. As for the ends of the earth, surely we are intended by that term, for our forefathers dwelt where Phoenicians made distant and dangerous journeys to find tin and other metals—and our land was thought to be upon creation’s verge, inhabited by a barbarous people of uncouth tongue and yet to us, even to us, has the Gospel come, and now***—***

***“The British islands are the Lord’s,  
Here Abraham’s God is known  
While powers and princes, shields and swords, Submit before His Throne.”***

Jehovah, the God of the whole earth is our God at this day! In this let us exult, for it proves that to the Gentiles the day of salvation has come!

Further, Isaiah goes on to say in the 8th verse, “Thus says the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard You.” Mark this well. God saves us because He heard the Lord Jesus! There is the secret of all the answers of Divine Grace to the prayers of penitents! He says, “I have heard You in an accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation.” In the lonely watches of the night our great Intercessor prayed for His own. He lived a life of supplication and He prayed not in vain, for He once said to the Father, “I know that You hear Me always,” and indeed it was always so. His prayers may be said to have reached their highest point when He offered the marvelous intercession recorded in John 17 and followed it up by His strong cries and tears in the Garden when He poured out His soul in agony, where, while prostrate among the olives He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Mysterious was that bloody sweat! Oh you precious drops, you fell not by chance! What did you write on the soil of Gethsemane in crimson hieroglyphs? You wrote upon the earth the reversal of the *curse* which fell upon the ground and the ending of the day of wrath in the day of salvation! That sacred sweat bedewed a garden which henceforth yields the oil of joy, by which Believers may anoint their faces with gladness! Jesus was heard in that He feared and, therefore, to the chief of sinners it is a Gospel of good cheer! “In an acceptable time have I heard You.” Is it not wonderful that Jesus made intercession for transgressors in the Garden who as yet had not learned to pray for themselves?

I trust that among those who hear me there are persons unconverted as yet who, nevertheless, are special objects of the Redeemer’s intercession and who shall find salvation because their great Substitute was heard on their account. We were all heard when our Great High Priest was heard! The Father’s answer to Him was an answer of peace to all His people. It is added, “In the day of salvation have I helped You.” Help came to the Man, Christ Jesus, in His hour of agony. The Father helped Him and there appeared unto Him an angel strengthening Him. How must that angel have marveled as he saw the face of the Incarnate God red with a sweat of blood! The whole scene is beyond conception—the prostrate Savior in agonizing pangs utters strong cries and is helped of His God—

***“His earnest prayer, His deepening groans, Were heard before angelic thrones!  
Amazement wrapped the sky—  
‘Go, strengthen Christ!’ The Father said!  
The astonished seraph bowed his head,  
And left the realms on high.”***

The angel came to *strengthen* our Champion, not to join in the fight. None could share the conflict. Jesus must tread the winepress alone. But the angel was empowered to communicate strength to the Manhood of Christ and he did so. Then it was that being helped in His hour of need, our Master took the appointed cup full of woe and drank it to its utmost dregs and said, “It is finished!” ‘Twas then that by one dreadful draught He pledged the Justice of God and gave this day of salvation to the sons of men! You see, then, that our present day of privilege has come to us through the Lord’s hearing and helping our Daysman and Redeemer.

But, Beloved, salvation comes to us, also, because according to the 8th verse it is written, “I will preserve You, and give You for a Covenant of the people, to establish the earth.” Jesus is now God’s Covenant with man and that Covenant is one of peace and favor. The Lord says to each believing man, “Your sins will I remember no more. A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you. You shall be Mine. I will sanctify you and glorify you with My Son. Behold, in token of My faithfulness I have given My Son to be the Seal, the Surety, and the sum of My Covenant. Behold, I have given Him for a Covenant to the people, a Leader and Commander for the people.” Brothers and Sisters, you are not under the Covenant of Moses today—you are under the Covenant of Jesus! You are not under Law, but under Grace! And because of this, *today* is the day of salvation!

I cannot at this time enlarge upon the other blessed verses which make up the 49th of Isaiah, but let me say it is because Christ is now anointed to give liberty to all captives and say to them, “Go forth.” It is because He brings the darkened ones out of death-shade and says, “show yourselves,” that, therefore, this is a day of salvation. And, furthermore, when we are delivered from bondage and darkness, then, because Christ is a Shepherd and leads His flock. And because He makes them to feed in the ways and finds pasture for them in high places. Because He protects them from hunger and thirst and gives them springs of water to drink of—it is because of all this that *now* is the day of salvation!  
I will not further enlarge, but only say as I now preach the day of salvation, as I have tried to do with the utmost boldness and fullness, if any of you enquire, “How is it? How is it? Why is Grace so free at this day?” I shall tell you that the cause is quite as marvelous as the fact—that the day of salvation is as surprising as salvation itself—and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has done and is doing it all, is the most wonderful of all! In His eyes I see the stars which can shine away the midnight of despair! In His hands I see the majestic might which can break the fetters of Satanic bondage! And in His face I see the sacred guidance which shall bring the sacramental host of His elect safely Home, in unbroken ranks, to the land of the tearless eyes!

**II.**Now, kindly leave Isaiah and turn back to the text. Under the second head we have to speak upon THE GLORIOUS DAY ITSELF, for the day of salvation is rich with blessing. First, I would commend that day because of its fourfold excellence. Read again the verse in which our text stands. Although the words must be regarded as spoken, in the first place, to our Lord, the best expositors say that they are also addressed to His Church in Him. The word came to Him as the Head and Representative of His people and so to His chosen as one with Him.

So then, Beloved, in this day of salvation our prayer will be heard—“I have heard You in a time accepted.” Dear Hearer, if you will sincerely pray in the name of Jesus, you will be heard! Are you very guilty? Ask for mercy and you will be heard. “I have heard You in an accepted time.” Have you condemned yourself? Have you written your own death warrant? Are you bowed down with a sense of guilt? Pray and pray, and pray again! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, pray, I beseech you! If you are between the jaws of Hell, still pray, for now is the day of salvation—and it is a day in which he that asks, receives, he that seeks, finds and to him that knocks it shall be opened!

Secondly, we are further told that this day help will be given. What does it say? “In the day of salvation have I helped You.” Are you helpless, are you hopeless? This is a day in which God will come to your relief! Do you need strength to break the chains of habit? Do you need power, even, to repent? Do you need help to feel your helplessness? Do you need anything and everything? “Behold,” He says, “in the day of salvation have I helped You.” He will help you, only ask Him, only trust Him. When there was a great straitness of business in the Manchester district during the American war, and many were out of work and starving, many instances occurred in which persons were found near to death’s door, “clamming” as they called it, or dying of starvation.

When they were kindly visited and asked why they did not apply for relief, they answered that they could not ask. British *independence*, as we call it. And a very noble spirit it is within proper bounds! It was strong within them and many a man said, “I could not bring myself to ask.” I admire that spirit between man and man, but I do not admire it when it touches the matter of the soul and lies between a poor worthless sinner and the great and ever-blessed God! Do not be proud and say, “I cannot bring myself to ask,” for behold, your prayer will be answered now and whatever help you require will be freely given you! Does not that one fact show that we live in the day of salvation?

And then it is added, “Behold, now is the accepted time,” so that the third blessing is that coming sinners will be accepted. If you will come to God, He will not reject you, whoever you may be! However poor your repentance and weak your faith, it is a gracious time and the Lord will freely accept your sincere desires for His Son’s sake. Does not this fact encourage you to come? The door of Mercy is open and no man can shut it! The Lord Jesus has never yet rejected a coming sinner and He never will, for it is written, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” It is a season of acceptance, not of rejection—come and partake in the blessing!

And then the fourth excellence is that it is a time of salvation, of which we will speak at greater length. You need saving? Be glad, then, that it is salvation’s own day. All that can be needed to secure the salvation of a sinner has been fully prepared by Christ and is now freely presented in the preaching of the Word of God to every soul that is willing to receive it. Jesus was born to save! He died to save! And He lives to save! Now, let me point out that this ought to be peculiarly pleasant news to those who are heavily laden with guilt. I have known the day when, if I had heard such words as these I try to speak, I think I should have leaped at them at once as a hungry dog does at a bone!

Sinners, this is the day of salvation, not a day of justice! Come and confess your sin—you shall not be accused, condemned and punished—but freely forgiven! It is a day in which you may mourn to think you have sinned, but need not despair nor indulge a single unbelieving thought, for that would be unsuitable to the time which is a day of good tidings. From now till the day when you shall pass out of this mortal state it is one long and blessed day of Divine Grace! There was a week of creation and the Lord God performed great wonders of creating power and put not forth His left hand to destroy—so now there is a day of salvation and all around, angels of love are hovering, still singing—“Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men.”

God is saving all that come to Him by Jesus Christ. Everything proclaims salvation! The air is full of gentle voices. In fact, your very existence, continued by long-suffering, is a message of Grace. Your being found in a house of prayer this morning has an eye towards your being saved! Your eager attention gives me hope it shall be so. Shall it not be accomplished *now* by your believing in Jesus? The fountain to wash your guilt away is filled! The “best robe” to cover you is prepared! The finger ring of everlasting love is ready to be put on your finger and the shoes of gladness and of peace are waiting you. Oh, poor Soul, today I have nothing to preach but salvation—salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ! “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel,” said our Lord Jesus. And that Gospel is salvation, *free* salvation to the sons of men!

The Truth of our text should also be very encouraging to those who are fighting against inward sin. I know some who can trust Christ for pardon, but their chief difficulty is how they can be made holy. I greatly delight in seekers in whom this is the main thought—not so much to escape punishment as to avoid *future* sin. Well, if you are fighting against evil in the

name of Jesus Christ, do not be discouraged—you will master it because it is the day of salvation and it is written, “They shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Do I address a drunk? Has the intoxicating cup a strange fascination for you and have you gone back to drinking, after having often loathed yourself for it?

You need not be a slave to it any longer, for this is the day of salvation from that sin! By faith in Christ you shall be delivered out of that deadly snare! Or have you been tempted to some other gross iniquity which holds you spellbound? Does a certain vice fix its serpent eyes upon you and enchant you till you can no longer restrain yourself? Rejoice, then, for this is the day of salvation from sin! Neither saint nor sinner need sit down under the power of*any* sin, for in Christ Jesus’ name we can overcome the power of evil. Do not excuse yourselves by talking of besetting sins—you must thrust away *all* sin—you must overcome temptation, for if any sin shall totally vanquish you, you will be lost forever since it is only to “him that overcomes” that the crown is given.

How, then, can you overcome? Why, only by the power of Christ, who bids us this day lay hold upon salvation from sin! Come to Him and trust Him—and He will destroy the works of the devil within you. While this is very encouraging to penitents and to those who are fighting with sin, it should be equally cheering to tried Believers. Beloved, are you in deep trouble just now? Is your spirit overwhelmed within you? Be of good cheer, for this is the day of salvation! It is not a time for saints to die in—it is not a day in which the enemy shall triumph over Believers—it is for us the day of salvation! Be glad, then, O you who are assailed by the enemy. Though your foe may put his foot upon your neck, yet he cannot crush your life out, but you may boldly cry, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise again!” It is the day in which Believers must be saved!

Did not Christian, in “Pilgrim’s Progress,” find it so from the very day in which he left the City of Destruction to the time when he passed through the river and said, “I feel the bottom, and it is good”? He had days of conflict, days of weariness and days of deep distress of mind—but all along he was saved—saved from the lions, saved from Giant Despair, from the flatterer’s net and saved from the last river with its chill floods. We also live in the day of salvation. “Ah,” said a Popish bishop once to one of our martyrs, “You are a heretic and you will be damned.” “My lord,” said the heroic man, “there I am at a pass with you. I may be burned, but I never shall be damned.” “Why so?” said his adversary. The man replied by quoting that passage in the old translation, “There is therefore now no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

Who shall condemn those for whom Christ has died? It is the day of salvation, not of accusation! It is the day of victory, not of defeat, not of captivity, much less the day of destruction to the true people of God! Let us, then, as is most right, hang out the streamers of joy and with glad music set our souls in fit trim to keep the feast of salvation! And do you not think this Truth of God should encourage all who are at work to win souls for Jesus? Brothers, if I had my pick of days, I should like to go forth and preach the Gospel when it was a day of salvation, wouldn’t you? One likes to go down the river with the tide—and if you can have a fair wind, as well, it is grand sailing! But surely, now, whenever you seek souls you have wind and tide with you, for it is the day of salvation! *God* is saving men! It is*His* daily business and His crowning glory and He has set His heart on it!

Just as I remarked that Ahasuerus ordained a season of feasting and banqueted the people and there is no doubt that they did feast at a royal rate, so when the infinite Jehovah proclaims a day of salvation the people shall be saved and there shall be no question about it! Thousands upon thousands of erring ones shall repent and believe and so shall be saved to the glory of His Grace. Do not tell me that London is very wicked—I know it is. But the Lord has many people in this city and He will redeem them from all iniquity. Our rural population may also be, in many places, perishing in gross darkness, but “the Lord knows them that are His.” He has jewels in yonder cottages and He will make them to be His own. His chosen are hidden away in the dark mines of iniquity, but He will find out His gold and purify it. His everlasting purpose shall not fail and His infinite pity shall not be stopped!

Glory be to His blessed name! He will accomplish all His purposes, for this is the day of salvation and His people shall be called to Him by some means, by any means, by every means! They shall be brought up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay. And they shall know that the Lord saves not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit! I think I have worked out this point sufficiently. “Now is the day of salvation.” I wonder whether anybody misunderstands me? Dear Friends, you know we commonly call this year, 1878, a year of Divine Grace. We are quite right, for it is so. We say Anno Domini, the year of our Lord, and so it is—it is Jesus Christ’s year!

Any time between the first of January and the last of December in which you seek Him, He will be found of you. Suppose you try it now? There cannot be a better hour! Here, where many have found Him, consecrate that seat on which you sit. Dear Brothers and Sisters, may the Holy Spirit help you to do so by now saying, “I would be reconciled to You, my God, by the great Mediator. I would accept this salvation which you have freely set before me.” I pray you do so!

**III.**To some of you I have spoken these many years, getting, now, into the 25th year, and shall I speak in vain? Our last word was to be something about A DARK CLOUD WHICH MAY DARKEN THE CLOSE OF THIS DAY OF SALVATION. I pray it may not, yet I fear it. My dread is lest you receive this great favor in vain, lest you live in this day of salvation and yet are lost. That will be for me a calamity, for I shall lose my labor and more—there will be your mother’s tears all lost, your father’s prayers all lost—and your Sunday school teacher’s earnest instructions all lost and other ministers’ frequent invitations all gone for nothing!

May it not be so, for that is unprofitable for you as well as for us. You will have lost all those Sabbaths, all those Bible readings, all those pricks of conscience. I know some of you are very attentive hearers and yet you have not found Grace in this day of salvation. Salvation is all round you, yet you have it not! You have wasted golden opportunities. Ah, there will come a day when you will wish for another Sabbath but it will be denied you! Your last sermon shall have been heard and your last warning shall have been received. Do not lose, I pray you, the privileges you enjoy of being born in a Christian land, of having an open Bible and of listening to an earnest ministry! Do not let those who never enjoyed such privileges have, in the eternal world, the advantage over you!

Do not let Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre and Sidon have to tell you that it is more tolerable for them in Hell than for you! The Lord Jesus assures us that it will be so if you have been hearers of the Gospel and lived in the day of salvation and refused this Divine Grace. The text says it is a day—and a day comes to an end! These are not words of mine, but the words of Scripture. Again, He limits a certain day, saying in David, “Today if you will hear His voice.” Do you not see that the day of salvation, though it has lasted 1,800 years and more, is still a *day* and will surely end? The opportunity of mercy will not last forever—let none deceive you as to that matter! The hope of Divine Grace will end with the day of Divine Grace. Let not the smooth-tongued ministers of the devil who enter the pulpits of Christ now-a-days delude you as to any vain hope that another day of Grace will come!

I have no such flattering message to speak to you, but I speak as this Book teaches. If you let this day of salvation pass and if you glide into another world unsaved, you are lost forever. I know no more, but I know that this Bible so declares it. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal.” Do not indulge vain dreams! If the Lord speaks of a day, be sure that He has limited the day—and if He declares this to be the day of salvation, you are not authorized to expect that another such period will ever come. “If He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (listen to that!)—“of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trod under foot the Son of God?”

Oh, yield to the Lord Jesus! Accept His salvation and trust Him at once! I pray you, in Christ’s place, be reconciled to God. Amen.  
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***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 4, 1864, BY C, H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“For He says, I have heard You in a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succored You: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2.~~***

WE frequently hear the question discussed as to which are the best times. Some are perpetually singing the praises of the “good old times,” though, if one reads the pages of history it does not appear that the old times deserve any very special praise—unless oppression, ignorance, persecution and abundant suffering deserve to be the theme of song! It is the common habit of the fathers, with tears in their eyes, to say, “The former days were better than these.” But we have the wisdom of Solomon on our side when we tell them they do not enquire wisely concerning this. “Do not say, Why were the former days better than these? For you do not enquire wisely concerning this” (Eccl. 7:10).

There are others who are always boasting of the present eventful period. There was none like it—this is the era of invention and of progress, the age of liberty and of light—when slavery must cast away her fetters and superstition must hide herself among her congenial associates—the moles and bats. But I cannot perceive that this century is so much the age of gold as to need very enthusiastic praises. Its greatest virtues are counterbalanced by greater sins. And the progress which has been made towards liberty has scarcely kept pace with its advance towards licentiousness—the barriers have been broken down, it is true—but in some places the bulwarks have fallen, too.

Many there are with bright eyes looking forward to the future and their declaration is that the “good time is coming,” if we but “wait a little longer”—if we will but look ahead, till this beast shall have been slain, that vial shall have been poured out and the other seal shall have been broken—*then* it is that we shall arrive at halcyon times! We agree with these watchful waiters—the age of gold is yet to come. The Advent is the world’s best and brightest hope, insomuch that every lover of his kind may importunately cry out, “Come quickly! Yes, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

But there is one thought which should not leave us when talking about times and seasons, namely, that now, now, just now, this present flying moment—that second which is being recorded by the ticking of yonder clock—is the only time which we have to work with! I can do nothing with the days that are past. I can do nothing with the days future—though I reach out towards them—I cannot improve them. The past and present

are fields far beyond the reach of my culture. I can neither plow nor sow the future, nor can I prune and correct the past. For practical purposes, the only time I have is that which is just now passing.

Did I say I had it? While I said I had it, it is gone like the meteor which dashes adown the sky, or the eagle which flies afar, or the swift ships which disappear beyond the horizon! Time present is the only time I may ever have. Before any future shall have become present, I may be merged in eternity. As far as I know, this day may be the end of my life’s career and when yonder sun sinks to his rest, I may sink to my rest also, so far as time is concerned. If there is more time allotted to me, yet it will never come to me in any other guise and form than as time *present*. I call it future now, but when I get, say, to 1866, or 1880, it will be just like these moments—it will be to me present *then—*and consequently, for practical purposes, however much we may speculate upon the past or the future, the present moment is the only time we have, may have, or ever can have!

And it becomes important that all our thoughts should be centered upon it if we would make our calling and election sure. Our text directs us to that solemn employment and it does so by a very telling argument. You perceive that our text is a quotation. How ought we to value the Old Testament! If inspired men of God, who spoke by the Holy Spirit quoted the Old Testament, how valuable must its bejeweled sentences be! The Apostle here quotes from the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, the eighth verse. In that passage the Lord God is speaking to the Messiah, speaking to our Lord Jesus Christ and He says to Him, “In an acceptable time have I heard You and in a day of salvation have I helped You.”

The first part, then, of this verse is a quotation from Isaiah. The second part of the verse is Paul’s commentary upon the passage—“Behold, now is the accepted time.” He takes his text from the Old Testament, but he gives us a New Testament sermon upon it. Let us try, if we can, to catch the Apostle’s meaning. When Paul was reading in Isaiah, he perceived that the Lord Jehovah had expressly said to him, “Whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors (and who is this but the Lord Jesus?) in an acceptable time have I heard You.”

Jesus’ sighs and tears and bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane did not fall unheeded. Like the blood of Abel, they cried from the ground and were heard acceptably above. An answer was given—this was plainly proved by the descent of the angel to strengthen the Savior. So the prophetic words add, “In a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succored You.” The Apostle infers from this that inasmuch as God has accepted Christ, the representative of His people, He has thereby ushered in an era of acceptance. Acceptance given to the Savior is, in the Apostle’s view, acceptance given to sinners.

Inasmuch as Christ is heard—He prayed not for Himself, but for us— there is, therefore, an accepted time for us begun and commenced from the day when Christ went up to the tree, stretched His hands to the nails, bowed His head to death and said, “It is finished.” Paraphrase the text thus—“I have heard Jesus, the Surety, in an acceptable time. In the day of salvation have I succored Him, the mighty Savior. And therefore to you, My people, to you, poor lost and wandering sinners, to you, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.”

If Christ had not died, there had never been a day of salvation. If Christ had not been heard and accepted, an accepted time could never have come to us! But since He, man’s representative, has obtained favor in the eyes of God and through His complete work has forever settled that favor upon Himself, there is favor in the heart of God to those whom Christ represented—even to those transgressors for whom He makes intercession!

We shall now take the text, as God may help us, using it, first, to look at the now of *Believers*. Then, at the now of *sinners*. And after this taking wing from the text, we shall offer a few reflections upon now in Heaven. And close with a few solemn thoughts upon now in Hell.

**I.**First, then, NOW, WITH THE BELIEVER. With him, “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” As a Believer, it is well for the Christian to live in the present. I say, as a Believer, for, alas, there is a temptation to make our faith a thing of the *past*. It is nearly sixteen years since I first looked to the Crucified Redeemer and was lightened and my face was not ashamed. Is there a temptation in me to say the faith which I exercised in Christ in my youthful days has saved me, and therefore I am now in a different position from what I was then and need not feel now as I did at first?

If there is such a temptation, let me shake it off as a man would shake off the deadly sleep of frozen climates. Let me, this morning, feel myself to be still just what I was—a loathsome sinner, undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving. And what then? Why, let me, then, this morning stand where I stood in the first moment of my salvation—at the foot of the Savior’s Cross and look up and view the flowing of His soul-redeeming blood, with Divine assurance, knowing He has made my peace with God. At this moment, my dear Brothers and Sisters, your proper standing is as a sinner saved by blood, looking up to those dear wounds from which your pardon streamed.

Have you had many virtues since then? Has the Grace of God led you on to add to your faith, courage? And to your courage, experience? And to your experience, brotherly kindness? And to brotherly kindness, charity? Yet, for all this, your safest, happiest, holiest, best position is at the foot of the Cross—with none of these things in your hand as the price of your salvation, but looking to your Redeemer—who alone has found a ransom for you. Since the day of your espousals you have committed many sins— dare you look at them without trembling? How often have we grieved our Lord? Our love to Him? Shall we dare call it love? Our faith in Him, how mixed with unbelief! Our zeal, how dashed with selfishness! Our humility, how stained with pride! Our patience, how spoiled with murmuring!

Our every good thing is marred and rendered worthless! What a crop of weeds the soil of our heart has produced! When we look within we see, “The spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy,” and every unclean bird seeks a lodging place in our hearts as in a grove of vanities—what shall we do?

Why, come just now with all these sins and wash once more in that fountain which has lost none of its fullness! And feel the power of that precious blood which has not diminished one whit in its efficacy! I know the temptation is to climb to some higher room, but let us be warned by the nonsuccess of the boasting Pharisee and taught by the justification of the humble publican, still to cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Beware of trying to live before God as a minister. Brother minister, this is poor living—to live officially, to go to the closet or come into God’s House merely as holding a certain profession! Oh, this is starving work! If your tendency is to live as Church members, if not altogether as worldly men, rouse yourselves from it, I pray you, and confess with Paul, “And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

The proper place of a Christian is never to get one inch beyond this—a monument of Grace—a sinner saved by blood. I live *in* Jesus, *on* Jesus, *for* Jesus, *with* Jesus and hope soon to be perfectly conformed to His likeness. Let me remember that if there could be a moment in which my soul might stand out of Christ—no longer leaning upon Him and no longer covered with His righteousness—that very moment I must be condemned! For there is no condemnation *only* to them that are in Christ Jesus. But there is a terrible condemnation against every soul that is out of Him.

Have you climbed so high that you have towered above the place of the poor thief? Come back again, Brother, for you have climbed to a dangerous altitude and maybe you shall find it a gallows where Haman was hanged and you shall hang with him. Or have you dived so deep in a sense of your own depravity, that you have forgotten to rest on Jesus Christ as able, still, to save you? My Brother, look up from the hole of the pit, for in it there is no water and you will perish there with a grievous famine.

O, then, away with all but Jesus! None but Jesus—this must be our watchword at the gates of death and we must enter Heaven with it! As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so must we walk in Him—He must be Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, Author and Finisher, First and Last. As Believers, let us by God the Holy Spirit’s Grace keep our trust just where it was at first—in Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for our sins!

Take the word “now,” again, and look at the Christian as a professor. Now you are in the House of God, my dear Friends and you remember that you profess to be followers of Christ. Now, therefore, you sing in holy hymns of praise and join in solemn prayers to God as Christians should do in the worship of God. Tomorrow morning, some of you, perhaps, will be at Copenhagen Fields’ Market, some of you at Newgate Market, others of you will be lighting the fire in your master’s house, others seeing to your numerous families, others taking down the shop shutters—will you then remember, dear Friends, that now, where you are then —you are a Christian?

You are not to say, “I was a Christian yesterday,” but “now, now I am not a Christian.” A customer will come in. The temptation will be, perhaps, to take more than you ought to do. Will you please remember, “Now I am a child of God”? not, “yesterday, when I was listening to Mr. Spurgeon at the Tabernacle,” but now! When you are in the market, there will be much to plague and vex you and perhaps you will think, “I cannot enjoy the Presence of God here.” Oh, but my dear Brothers and Sisters, “now is the accepted time.” Buying sheep, selling bullocks, using the hammer, snipping with the scissors, working at the plow, tending your sheep—now, *now*, NOW is the day of salvation—you are still a Christian— therefore act as a Christian!

But you are much plagued and vexed. Somebody teases you, things go wrong—what could be a better stop to that little rising passion, what could keep the naughty spirit under control better than to remember— “Now, now I am a Christian—even now.” A true Christian cannot shake off his character. He is really what he is—he always must be a Christian. I heard the other day of a certain Scotch moderate minister, who being much provoked by a person in his parish, said, “If I were not a minister, I would give you a sound thrashing, Sir.” And when he was further irritated, he took off his coat and said, “There is the minister—there he lies.” He was then in his shirt sleeves—“There is the minister and I am only Soand-So and will give you your due.” And he proceeded at once to give the man a sound thrashing.

It is just possible the man may have deserved it. That is not my point. But if a man can say, “There lies the minister,” or, when you take off your coat tonight, if you can say, “There lies the member of the Church.” If you, good women, when you take off your gowns, can say, as you hang up your best attire in the wardrobe, “There goes the Christian,” then you have no religion at all, you have none whatever worth having! You have the faith of devils that will damn you, but not the faith of Christians that will save you!

It is not a *religious coat*, but a *renewed heart*—I pray you keep this at all times on your mind—“Now I am accepted. Now I am saved—how can such a man as I do such a thing? How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Mordecai once wore the king’s robe, but he soon took it off because he was not really a king. And thus do many act who wear the garb of religion in the House of God, but cast it off when they go home. When Lord Burleigh, Queen Elizabeth’s counselor, reached his home he was so little pleased with the cares of State, that taking off his robe, he threw it down, saying, “Lay there, Lord Chancellor.” Ah, how irksome must some men’s religion be to them and how cheerfully would they lay aside its restraints! But you who are really the Lord’s, will, I trust, feel your faith to be your constant help and your profession your perpetual honor. You will not, you *cannot* sin, because you are born of God.

Suppose a Brother has his pen in his hand and is going to write what we sometimes call a nasty letter—now suppose an angel should whisper in his ear as he is writing, “Now, now, you are one of God’s chosen. You have been washed in the precious blood of Christ and now you profess to

be a member of His body, a king and a priest unto God.” Why, I think he would throw the pen away and tear the paper up. Or, just when you are about to proceed to extremities with some poor soul who asks your mercy, if you could remember that you are now, even now, an heir of Heaven, I think you would say, “Lord, give me Grace to act according to my profession and not to stain the character I have assumed.” Let “now” stay upon your mind with regard to your profession and the duty which it brings.

Dear Friends, let me comfort your hearts by the remembrance that now, as a child of God, you are a possessor of present privileges. I do not know what your frame of mind may be this morning. You may have been very much tempted, you may feel, through some sickness of body, anything but cheerful. But if you believe in Christ, remember now you are a son of God and though it does not yet appear what you shall be, yet when He shall appear, you shall be like He, for you shall see Him as He is.

At this very moment, I, a Believer in Christ, am completely pardoned— no spot of sin remains on me if I believe in Jesus. White as the newlyfallen snow is every soul that has been washed in the precious blood. Think of this delightful Truth of God, desponding Christian, and let your countenance be sad no more! Your eye of faith is dim, your evidences are very slender, your graces are at a low ebb, but you are completely forgiven, absolved and acquitted at this moment, if your soul rests upon the Rock of Ages! You are completely justified at this moment, despite your sins. Wearing your Savior’s righteousness, you stand all beauteous in the eyes of God at this very moment—the words of Solomon to the spouse are the words of Christ to you though you are vexed with a thousand cares— “You are all fair My love: there is no spot in you.”

Covered with His righteousness and washed in His blood, even the pure and holy eyes of God can find no fault in you, and, as a consequence of this, you are this moment accepted! “He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has He seen perverseness in Israel.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” God does not look upon you with any anger. Though your heart may be struggling and tormented with sin, yet if you are resting upon God’s Son, the love of God is flowing out to you in a stream which never can be stopped. Think of this sweet thought and let your soul be filled with the perfume of it! Loved of God *now*, the object of the almighty affection of the Blessed One are you NOW.

No, more than this, you are not only accepted—you are in union with Christ now. Beloved Believer, can you realize it? You are a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones! There is a vital union at this instant between you and the Lord of Glory! The life-blood flows from Him, the Head, to you. And at this moment, whether in your worst state of feeling or your best, you are now one with Jesus, by eternal union—ONE! I would to God we realized our present privileges! We are thinking about the Heaven that is to come and forgetting the Heaven below. The first we should do—but the second we should not leave undone. The men of Divine Grace find that the fruits of Paradise hang over the wall and they begin to pluck and eat them before they pass the gates of pearl. Come, Christian, “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Since Jesus is accepted, so you are even now. Live upon your present privileges and be glad!

Remember that wherever there is present privilege there is also a present *duty* to be performed and so I touch a string which I made to sound just now. Since “now is the accepted time” with sinners, now is the accepted time for you to work, O Christian. I know what you intend to do— you have vast plans and machinery. My Brother, I do not care what you mean to do tomorrow, but I do care about what you intend to do *today*. Oh, those daydreams of ours! We are always intending in a year or two’s time to be such valorous defenders of the faith, such good soldiers of Christ, such good winners of souls!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, what are you doing *now*? There flies that moment! What does it bear upon its wings? Another drop of the stream of time is passed away—what action of yours is reflected on its crystal surface? Are you doing anything now? “I do not know,” says one, “I do not know that I can do anything just now. When the service is broken up, I may get home and then try to do something.” I would pray you remember that, “*now* is the accepted time,” and therefore seek now to get your heart warm. And when the service is over, think you hear the *now*, and begin to speak to those in the pew, or on the way home talk to any person you may meet with. And then, tomorrow, do not say, “Sunday is over and I cannot do any good on the week-day,” but think you hear the clarion sound of this word now!

You have a sister unsaved, pray for her *now.* You have a brother unconverted, write to him if you cannot speak to him and do it now. There is a court, a blind alley, which needs visiting. A dying man who needs instruction—do it now. Do you feel you have a talent? Use it now. You think you will have a better sphere in ten years’ time? I pray you get a sphere *now*, for *now* is the day of salvation! I say again, I do not care what you do with your tomorrow. If you will but give God your *now*, your tomorrows will be all right. For duty, then, let the Christian prize the “now.”

One more thought. The Christian remembers that now he may die. What is his prospect now? Let him take courage. If his Lord should come now, he has his loins girt about and his lamp well trimmed and he is ready to enter into the supper. He will not be overtaken as by a thief, but his Lord, when He comes, shall find him watching—and should death come before the Advent, then he can say, “Now shall I enter into my rest. Now shall I see the face of my Lord Jesus without a veil to hide Him and I shall be with Him supremely blest.”

The glorious Advent or the bliss of Heaven is your prospect now! Not that you will go to Heaven if you die in twenty years’ time—but if you die *now*—if the hand of death should take you in the street, or you should feel its numbing influence while you are in the pew! Now the celestial band shall bear you to the sublimities of Glory and introduce you to the Presence of Him whom you love! Now, Christian, rejoice, now labor, now live

at the foot of the Savior’s Cross!

**II.**May the Master give us power on the second point to deal with “NOW” AS IT RESPECTS THE SINNER. The great mischief of most men is that they procrastinate. It is not that they resolve to be damned, but that they resolve to be saved *tomorrow*. It is not that they reject Christ forever, but that they reject Christ today. And truly they might as well reject Him forever, as continue perpetually to reject Him “now.”

Sinner, let me put your “now” before you as a man. You must soon pass away and be forgotten, like the flowers that withered in autumn and the insects which flitted through the summer hours. Now, then, is your time to think about eternity and to prepare yourself to meet your God. “See to your business first, James,” said a careful father—“get a good trade and after that, look to your religion.” There spoke a FOOL who knew not that infinite Wisdom has commanded, “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you.” Would you give God the tail end of your life? Take care lest you have no old age at all! For many candles are blown out as soon as lit.

Would you, as a lamb, be Satan’s? And when you are withered and worn out, shall the lean skeleton of tottering weakness be brought and laid upon the altar? Be it not so! Let your flower be plucked in the bud and put into the hand of Jesus. God grant you Grace to seek Him in the days of your youth, for the promise is, “They that seek Me early shall find Me.” As a man, I charge you, since there is only a “day of salvation” before the sun goes down and the black night of eternal ruin shall come upon you, lay hold upon the hope that is set before you!

As a sinner, I also address you concerning *this* “now.” Now is the day of salvation—you need it now. God is angry with you now. You are condemned already! It is not only the torment of Hell you have to dread, but if you have your senses, you would tremble at your present state. Now without God. Now without hope. Now an alien from the commonwealth of Israel! Now dead in trespasses and sins. Now in danger of the wrath to come! You need a Savior this morning, young man! Young woman, I do not charge you to store up medicine against the maladies of twenty years from now—it is the sickness of *today* of which I would gladly have you cured this very morning! It is not to look after a danger which shall press upon you when you grow old that I exhort you, but *now* you are on the brink of the precipice!

Now, therefore, you need to be saved! And here comes the beauty of my text—as a sinner under the Gospel, I pray you to remember—“Now is the accepted time”! The most of my unconverted hearers do not believe this. I know what you are saying. You say, “I have had a great many thoughts about religion.” But why do you not believe in Christ now? “Well,” you say, “I will endeavor to think seriously of it.” But what will be the result of your thinking? After you have thought ever so much, do you imagine you will *think* yourself into salvation? If the Gospel command were, “Think and be saved,” I would cheerfully allow you a month’s thinking. But the command is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” and, “Now is the accepted time.”

“But, Sir, I do not think such things should be done in a hurry.” A hurry? What does David say? “I made haste and delayed not to keep Your commandments.” A hurry? When a man is on the edge of damnation and on the borders of the grave? Do not talk of hurry, Sir—when it is a case of life and death. Let us fly swift as a flash of lightning. “Well, but I do not feel prepared.” Do you think that disobeying God will make you more prepared? If you have lived a month without believing, you have lived a month in sin! Do you think when you have sinned more, you will be better prepared to obey the command which comes to you, “Believe now in the Lord Jesus Christ”? “Yes, but my heart feels so hard.”

Dear Friend, do you think you will be able to soften it between this and next week, or next month, or next year? Is there anything in the Word of God which leads you to believe that you can, in any way, soften your own heart? Is not this a mighty work of Grace? And when the text says, “Now is the accepted time,” does not this suppose that even if you have a hard heart, still it is true that NOW is the accepted time? “Well, but,” says one, “I do not feel convicted enough.” That is to say, dear Friend, you do not think that “now is the accepted time.” You think that another time when you get more convicted will be the accepted time.

Here is a quarrel between God and you. He says “Now,” you say, “No, no, it cannot be true! When I am more convicted, then will be the time.” My dear Friend, are you not altogether mistaken? The likelihoods are that you never will be more convicted than now, if you are brought now to think upon these things. Your heart will certainly grow harder in the course of time—softer, never! I never heard the case of a man whose heart was made softer by delay. “Yes, but I should like to get home and pray.” My text does not say it will be the accepted time when you get home and pray. It says, “Now!” And as I find you are “now” in this pew, “now” is the accepted time. If you trust Christ*now*, you will be accepted—if *now* you are enabled to throw yourself simply into the hands of Christ—*now* is the accepted time between God and you.

“Well,” says another, “it does seem strange to think that I shall be saved this morning—there must be a little time occupied in it, surely?” The text says, “Now is the accepted time,” it does not say, “There is an accepted time lasting through a period of weeks or months in which we pump ourselves up into a state of Grace.” No! “Now,” in a moment, acceptance is given. “But do you really mean it” says one, “that I, as I am, trusting Christ this morning, without any previous preparation whatever, shall be accepted?” My dear Friend, it is not what *I* mean—it is what the *Scripture* means. “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” The moment a sinner trusts in Christ, he is saved and if you trust Him now, it is the day of salvation to you!

Will you kindly look at that text—just open your Bibles now and look at it—you especially who are unconverted—whether my hearers or readers! It has two fingerposts to point to it—two beholds. “Behold, now is the accepted time.” Now, stop and look at that. Do you believe it? Say, “Yes,” or

“No.” There is another “Behold.” “Behold, now is the day of salvation.” Do you believe *that*? I have asked you to look at the text, because I want you to look in its face and, if you dare, say, “That is a lie”—no, you do not dare say that! Then if you do not dare to say so, away must go, in a single moment, all those excuses which you make about a hard heart, not being convicted enough, praying, reading, preparing, and so on.

Now, just as the clock ticks, not as an event to take place during a quarter of an hour, but in a moment the whole thing is done—“Now is the day of salvation.” And what do you say to this? Does God the Holy Spirit now lead your soul to say, “Gracious Lord, I trust my soul with You now”? Oh, it is all done! Fly up to Heaven, angels! Bear the tidings! Tell the spirits who look down, anxiously watching for the spreading kingdom of the Savior, that another heir of Glory is born, another prodigal has returned to his Father’s house! Now! Now! Now! O God, let conquering Grace get the victory!

How my soul has longed over this text! And now when I get at it, I cannot handle it as I would. But, if I might, I would gladly take some of you by the hand—think that I have your hand now—and I would put this to you! I may never have another opportunity of preaching this text in your ears, for you may be gone before there is another season to hear. “Will you be made whole?” “Can you believe?” “If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.” Old Nabal said to David, “There are many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master.” A bad old fellow, but he spoke a good sentence there without knowing it. Are there not some here who will break away from their old master?

Are there not some who would gladly be servants of Christ and no longer servants of Satan? O Souls, if God has made you willing to break with Satan, to lay hold on Christ, this is not a day in which Christ will deny you, for He has expressly said He will accept you now, for, “Now is the accepted time.” But, Sir, I am a harlot steeped up to the throat in vice.” Still, “Now is the accepted time.” Ah, but I have grown gray, Sir. I am seventy or eighty and have lived in sin all these years.” Yes, but. “Now is the accepted time.” Do you believe it or not? “Oh, I have refused the invitation a thousand times over.” Yes, but still, still the abundant Grace of God says, “Now, is the accepted time.” I would to God some of you would decide this very morning, this very morning in your pew where you are now sitting. Now, O Spirit of the living God, waken those whom You have chosen and set apart unto eternal life.

I have not time now to dwell on the other two points. We will merely, therefore, hint at them.  
**III.**Now IN HEAVEN! Can you think of it? NOW in Heaven! They now delight in the society of Christ. They are now blest with communion with all the glorified spirits. They are now resting from their labors, their toils, their sufferings. They are now full of joys, while with their golden harps they sing. They are just now satisfied with the favor and full of the goodness of the Lord. They are now knowing what they knew not here, knowing even as they are known.  
They are now more than conquerors, waving their palm branches. They are now safely shut in from all fear of danger. They are now perfect, without taint of sin or remnant of corruption. They are now supremely blest. I merely point the finger where my wing cannot carry me and where my eyes cannot see. Such are your friends who have departed. Your wife is there now. Your little infant children are there. Your brother is there, your grandsire is there and we, if we should now die, blessed be the name of God, many of us should know what they know and taste what they enjoy in an instant!  
**IV.**But**t**his is a dreary thought—Now IN HELL! Some of my hearers who listened to me last year and in the years that are past, are now— NOW—in Hell! Now, where no hope can come! Now, where no Gospel shall ever be preached! Now, where they bitterly regret their wasted Sabbaths and despised opportunities! Now, where memory holds a dreadful reign, reminding them of all their sins! Now, “Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched”—where they gnaw their fire-tormented tongues in vain! Now, where God’s fury is manifested to the full in Tophet’s hideous fire!  
Now, where devils, once their tempters, become their tormentors! Now, where sinners who kept jovial company, help to increase the doleful misery of sighs and groans and weeping and gnashing of teeth! Now, accursed of God, accursed forever and ever! And within a moment, that may be the lot of every sinner here! Within the twinkling of an eye, there is not a man or woman among us out of Christ who may not know this. One drop of blood goes wrong—a thousand chances, as we say—may cause it and Hell is your portion.  
Every anatomist knows that hundreds of times in an hour, through the internal economy of the human frame, our life is in danger. No, there is not a second in which it is not so. “Great God! On what a feeble thread hang everlasting things!”—  
***“Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And dies if one is gone.  
Strange that a harp of a thousand strings Should keep in tune so long.”***  
While we are in this danger, we are passing on to our doom— ***“We nightly pitch our moving tent  
A day’s march nearer home.”***  
But where is that home to be with you unconverted ones?  
When the express trains first began to run to Scotland there was seen at the station, one evening, a gentleman tall and thin, whose cheek had the consumptive mark upon it. The porters asked him several questions about his luggage, of which there was a good deal. And when he had been asked several times by different persons, another came up and said, “Where are you going, Sir?” Being of short temper and in great haste, he said, “To Hell!” A servant of Christ passed by that moment and heard the answer. He sought to get in the same carriage and did so, but at the other end of it.  
Now this gentleman was talking very freely to different persons upon common topics and the man thought, “I will get a word in if I can.” So he joined in the general tenor of the conversation till they alighted at a refreshment station, when, taking the opportunity, he said to the gentleman, “When do you expect to get to the end of your journey?” “Oh,” said he, “I am going to cross at such-and-such a town by the boat tonight and hope to get to my journey’s end about twelve o’clock tomorrow morning.”  
The man said, “I think you misunderstand my question. You said when the porter asked you just now where you were going, that you were going to a very different place.” “Ah, yes, I remember I did,” said the gentleman, “but I am sometimes very hasty.” The other said to him, “Was it true? Are you going to Hell? If so, when do you expect to get there?” And he began to talk to him about that sickness which he could see so certainly in his cheeks and warned him that unless he sought another road and fled to Christ, the only Refuge, he would certainly reach that dreadful end.  
There are some in this place, who if they were labeled this morning as to where they are going, would have to be directed “to Hell.” You know that this is the case! And when will you get to your journey’s end? Some here may live another fifty years. I pray God that that question of mine may haunt you and if it is never blessed to you before, may it be then— “When will you yet to your journey’s end? When will you arrive in Hell?”  
This morning some of you may, in your hearts, say, “I am journeying there, but, by the Grace of God, I have come to a dead halt and not another inch will I go! Lord, make me ready to go to Heaven! Give me Grace now to trust the Savior that I may live.” May God bless these feeble words of mine to His glory and your profit. Amen.

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OUR POSITION AND OUR PURPOSE  
NO. 3245

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1911.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.  
2 Corinthians 7:1.~~***

KINDLING with strong emotion, constrained by the love of Christ and animated by the fellowship of all spiritual blessing, the Apostle here strikes out an exhortation in which he appeals to the noblest passions of the children of God—to their sense of a Divine lineage and a present endowment—as well as of an exalted destiny for an incentive to purity of character and holiness of life.

**I.**The first thought which he gives to stir up in us this godly ambition is that THE CHRISTIAN IS POSSESSED OF MOST GLORIOUS PRIVILEGES.

By such words—“Having therefore these promises,” I understand not merely having the promises in reversion, as they belonged to the Jews, but having them in possession, having received them, having obtained them, having gotten them, having grasped them and being seized of them, as lawyers express it, so that the promises are no longer mere promises, but things which we have actually in our possession! I understand, by Paul’s language here, that Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have a thousand blessed promises in the enjoyment of which they daily live.

The promises he especially refers to are mentioned in the previous Chapter. They appear to be these—first, *Divine indwelling—*“I will dwell in them.” Now, this is no light or inferior privilege of the Christian Church. God has been pleased to make the bodies of His people to be the temples of the Holy Spirit. At this very moment, in every one of you who have put your trust in the Lord Jesus, Deity resides! He dwells not in houses made with hands, that is to say, of man’s building, but yet He dwells within these houses of clay, tabernacling in us—this is a promise which we have actually obtained and are now positively enjoying.

The next is *Divine communion—*“I will dwell in them and walk in them.”As God talked with Abraham, so He does with every Believer. God is not to us afar off, but He is our near and dear Friend, our close acquaintance—

***“With Him high converse I maintain;***

***Bold as He is I dare to be.”***  
If I can tell Him my heart, He will also tell me His heart, for, “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” Communion is not merely a matter of promise to you and me, Beloved, but we enjoy it now! I hope it has become habitual with us to abide with Jesus Christ. At morning break, we can frequently say, “When I awake, I am still with You.” And when the sun has gone down and we toss upon the bed, and cannot sleep, in the night watches our soul talks with Him whose eyes never slumber. Blessed is His name, this walking of Christ with His people is one of the daily privileges of the heir of Heaven!

Another promise we have obtained is that of *Divine covenanting—*“and I will be their God and they shall be My people.” God gives Himself to His people to be theirs, and they, by the purchase of His own Son, and by the effectual conquest of the arm of His Grace, are His. He has chosen us for His inheritance and granted to us that He should become our portion and our inheritance. “I will be their God and they shall be My people.” Yes, God has entered into Covenant relations with us, bound Himself by promise and yet further by another immutable thing in which it is impossible for Him to lie, namely, by His oath. There are between us and our God bonds which cannot be snapped, links that can never be severed. Let us thank God, tonight, and summon every faculty of our souls to praise His name. This is one of the blessings which was communicated to some of the past saints, though they did not perfectly understand and comprehend it. Cannot you and I basking in sunlight—light compared with which theirs was but twilight—say that we have obtained this promise?

In addition to all this, we have *Divine adoption—*“I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Is not this our blessed state? He loves us with a father’s love, guides us with a father’s care, protects us with a father’s watchfulness, instructs us with a father’s wisdom, bears with us with a father’s patience, longs for us with a father’s longing! We are His tender children and He is our loving Parent. These are not things which are yet to come, like the Second Advent of our Lord in millennia splendor—they are promises which we have obtained! These are things common to the worshippers at that altar of which we have a right to eat, and familiar at that table where we daily feed.

How unspeakably great is the dignity of a Christian if we look at it in the light of these blessings! Before we understood it, how we thirsted after it! We thought, when under conviction of sin, could we dare hope be among God’s people? It would be enough joy for us if we never had an earthly joy beside! I am afraid that since their blessings have become ours, we have not prized them as we should. Perhaps for this cause we are sometimes brought into the prison of doubt and our faith fails us. Just as we do not know the value of health till we are sick, so some of these blessed privileges are not valued by us until we have to walk in the dark and sigh and cry after unbroken fellowship amidst intermittent snatches of sweet assurance! The Lord give His people to know the value of these heavenly realities that in an abiding sense of their calling and their standing, they may act in a way that is worthy of such great dignities!

Now you perceive that it is necessary for us to get a good clear view of the possessions of the Christian because it is from then Paul draws his argument—“Having therefore these promises.” He uses not the logic of the Law, nor the logic of threats, but the logic of love—“we have these mercies; we are so unspeakably favored; we are living in the daily enjoyment of Divine indwelling, Divine communion, Divine covenanting and Divine adoption.” Therefore he takes a step in advance and says, “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” It is clear, then, that the Doctrines of Grace, fragrant as they are of the privileges of the Christian, do not logically and spontaneously lead to licentiousness as some have profanely said, but they naturally and instinctively, lawfully and reasonably, lead to holiness of life! The fact that we are absolutely and unconditionally saved by God’s Grace, that our standing is secure and that we have become the children of God, is not an incentive to careless walking and to unholy living! Such an argument is the weak invention of malice—unworthy, I had almost said, of the Father of Lies—for Satan is known to palm off his offspring with a plausible appearance. But the argument is to gratitude in the heart and obedience in the life. What is obedience to God but holiness? True obedience would be holiness in perfection!

**II.**We now proceed to an appropriate inference. THE CHRISTIAN, BEING POSSESSED OF GLORIOUS PRIVILEGES, IS THEREFORE LABORING TO BE RID OF OBNOXIOUS EVILS.

“Let us cleanse ourselves,” says the Apostle. What then? Do they need cleansing? Are they such originally and by nature that they must be cleansed? God’s blood-bought, quickened people—and yet need cleansing? Ah, yes, Brothers and Sisters, every one of them, even the Apostle Paul, himself! Where will you find a warmer spirit, a more zealous heart, a more consecrated man than the Apostle Paul? And yet *he*says, “Let us cleanse ourselves.” It surely would not be presumptuous on my part, if there should be in this assembly some venerable saint who has been for many years kept in the faith with unblemished garments and engaged above many in the service of the Master in winning souls—it would not be presumptuous if I should say to him—“Let us cleanse ourselves.” I suppose that the nearer we get to Heaven, the more conscious we shall be of our imperfections. The more Light of God we get, the more we discover our own darkness. That which is scarcely accounted sin by some men, will be a grievous defilement to a tender conscience. It is not that we are greater sinners as we grow older, but that we have a finer sensibility of sin and see that to be sin which we winked at in the days of our ignorance. Yes, we may say to those whose gray hairs show that they are getting near Home, “Let us cleanse ourselves.” And if it is thus to the holiest and most eminent of the people of God, much more is it to us, Beloved—common saints, scarcely worthy to be called saints at all—only that we trust we are washed in the precious blood and are saved through the righteousness of Jesus Christ! “Let *us* cleanse ourselves.”

How pointedly the Apostle puts it! I want you to notice the points. The work is *personal—*“Let us cleanse *ourselves*.” It were more in accordance with our tastes to cleanse other people and attempt a moral reformation among our neighbors. Oh, it is easy to find other men’s faults and to bring the whole force of our mind against then! It is delightful to expose vice and lampoon the follies of the age with a dash of wit to enliven it, or to preach virtue with a little of the sugar of scandal to sweeten a painful tale! It highly gratifies some people when they can find a fault in some highly-respected Brother—they pull him to pieces with about the same zest that might be displayed by a crow or an ape. That is their forte, the strength of their genius—detraction—pulling to pieces what they could not put together and attempting to raise themselves by lowering others! But notice the Apostle says, “Let us cleanse ourselves.” Oh, that we would all look at home! Oh, that we did more indoor work in this department! Yes, it is certainly our business to tell our Brother of his faults—this ought we to have done, but certainly we ought not to have left the *other undone*, for that is our first business! “Let us cleanse ourselves.” It is all very well to drag the Church of God up to the altar, like some bleeding victim, and there to stab her with the sharpest knife of our criticism, and to say of the modern Church that she is not this, and she is not that. One might rather ask, “How far do I help to make her what she is? If she is degenerate, how far is that degeneracy consequent upon my having fallen from the high standing which I ought to have occupied?” We shall all have contributed our quota to the reform of the Church when we are, ourselves, reformed. There can be no better way of promoting general holiness than by increasing in personal holiness. “Let us cleanse ourselves.”

*There is activity needed,*however, in discharging this personal duty. “Let us cleanse ourselves.” It seems to imply that the Christian, while he is acted upon by Divine influence and is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, is also an active agent of his own sanctification. He is not like the vessels and the pots of which the Apostle speaks that were cleansed under the Law—but man is a free agent and the holiness which God works in him is not the pretended holiness of candlesticks and altars, but it is the holiness of a responsible being—a holiness which is not forced upon him, but which his whole soul gives consent to! He purges himself. Depend upon it, you and I do not grow holy by going to sleep. People are not made to grow in Grace as plants grow, of which it is said, “They grow you know not how.” The Christian is developed by actively seeking growth, by earnestly striving after holiness and resolutely endeavoring to obtain it.

The utmost of our activity ought to be put forth in cleansing ourselves. Your bad temper—you will not overcome that by saying, “Well, you know I am quick-tempered. I cannot help it.” But you *must* help it! You must if you are a Christian. You have no more right to shake hands with a bad temper than you have to fraternize with the devil! You have got to overcome it and, in the name of God, you must! Or if you happens to be of a slothful disposition, you must not say, “Ah, well, you know I am naturally so.” Yes, what you are *naturally* we know—you are naturally as bad as you can be! But surely that is not the point we are concerned with—what you are to become by Divine Grace. Albeit sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, yet it is equally true and this we must always bear in mind, that the Holy Spirit makes us active agents in our own sanctification! In the first work of regeneration, doubtless the soul is passive because it is dead—and the dead cannot contribute to their own quickening—but being quickened, He “works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” He does not work in us to sleep and to slumber—His good pleasure is answered by us when we are constrained to will and to do! Hence the Apostle’s argument, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works it in you. He works it in—you work it out. You have to bring out in the outward life what He works in the inner springs of your spiritual being. You are to work it out because He works it in.” Sin is to be driven out of us as the Canaanites were driven out of Canaan by the edge of the sword. Jericho’s walls will come down, but not without being compassed about seven days. Weary may be your march, but march you must if you would conquer! How does the Apostle put it? “We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” and so on, but he represented the conquest as being a conquest gained by wrestling. He declares that he had to fight with his old nature and the conflict was stern. Although saved by Grace, gracious souls make marvelous efforts— efforts beyond their natural powers—to enter into a state of rest from sin.

Nor must we stop short of *universality* in our purgations and cleansing—“Let us cleanse ourselves *from all filthiness*.” Your eyes must not spare, your heart must not pity one pet sin. Most man would gladly be holy if it were not for some *one* sin that they vainly flatter themselves to be harmless. “From all filthiness let us cleanse ourselves.” O Christian, you may very well doubt your right to that name unless all sin is obnoxious to you! You have no right to say, “I will give up pride and vanity,” if you excuse yourself for being covetous. If covetousness is the leak in your vessel, it will sink it quite as surely as pride! If neither pride nor covetousness should be there, yet if you have an unforgiving temper and cannot be heartily reconciled to those who offend you, you shall just as soon prove yourself to be reprobate that way by any other! It must be an interesting sight to be the father of a Jewish family purging out the leaven before the Passover. He lights a candle, you know, and goes to the cupboard under the stairs, or wherever the bread may be kept, and takes care that every bit is put away. He then has every cupboard unlocked and rummages with a brush in his hand—himself personally—and with a candle, too, to see lest there should be even a crumb of leaven—for he cannot keep the Passover if there is a crumb of leaven in the house! Such should be our earnest searching after all filthiness to get it all out! But search as best we may, I am afraid something will still be left. There will be some beloved idol hidden away somewhere in the recesses of the mind. The heart will cling to its idols in such a style that we cannot find them all with one investigation! There is always the need to search again and again—they must be searched after—and we must, each one, be prepared to say—

***“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate’er that idol may be,  
Help me to tear it from Your Throne,  
And worship only Thee.”***

The Apostle shows *the thoroughness of this work*by saying, “Let us cleanse ourselves *from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.*” “Filthiness of to flesh.” We may reckon this to include all the outside sins so well known and so easily distinguishable—those degrading sins which even morality condemns. Possibly, Christian, although you may guard yourself against these, yet you will be in danger from the next class, namely, sins of the spirit. These are the mothers of the sins of the flesh! Someone killed a wasp in the early spring and it was said that he had killed a thousand wasps, for that wasp was full of eggs. Sins of the spirit are full of that spawn which, when matured, issues in shameful delinquencies. If you can cleanse yourself from these, you will save yourself from dangers you little reckon—the outward life will be right enough when the inward life is right. I wish we were more concerned about cleansing ourselves from the filthiness of the spirit. I am inclined to think that some men heedlessly pollute their spirits—I mean that they do it willfully. I am not sure that when there is a divorce case in the papers, I have any business to read it—yet a great many very good Christian people who often pray to be delivered from temptation, take pretty good care that they master all its details! When there is a bad story afloat about anybody, I do not know that I should listen to it, yet that curiosity of ours often tempts the devil to tempt us! If there is any ditch-water, or any dirty puddle of water, I do not know that I am bound to get a drink out of it. True, I may be an officer appointed to taste the water, but if I am not, I would rather avoid the noxious sip—it were better to leave it alone. We may all do a great deal of that kind of thing and, nowadays, when the press ventilates everything and it is published all over the world, I am sure that Christians pollute their spirits a great deal more than they have any occasion to do! And besides that, we can turn over a sin in our mind, you know, till we become so accustomed to it that we do not think it to be a sin. I know that some Christians have managed at last to trick their conscience into the idea that what they do is not sin in *them*, but would be sin in other people—that they are so constituted that they require to be tolerated in this point, and to take a little liberty in the other point so that, generally speaking, although it would be very, very wrong for other people to do the same—they have got a sort of spiritual indulgence such as used to be issued by Rome, and they never doubt that they can sin with impunity! Ah, dear Friends, this will not do! “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”

The drift of the argument is this—if God dwells in us, let us make the house clean for so pure a God. What? Indwelling Deity and unclean lusts? Indwelling Godhead and yet a spirit defiled with evil thoughts? God forbid! Let us cry aloud unto the Most High that in this thing we may be cleansed and that the temple may be fit for the habitation of the Master. What? Does God walk in us, and hold communion with us, and shall we let Belial come in? What concord can we have with Christ? Shall we give ourselves up to be the servants of Mammon when God has become our Friend, our Companion? It must not be! Divine indwelling and Divine communion both require from us personal holiness. Has the Lord entered into a Covenant with us that we shall be His people? Than does not this involve a call upon us to live like His people, as becomes godliness? Favored and privileged above other men to be a peculiar people. Separated unto God’s own Self—shall there be nothing peculiar about our lives? Shall we not be zealous for good works?

Divinely adopted into the family of the Most High and made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, what need is there of further argument to constrain us to holiness? You see the, “therefore.” It means just this—because we have attained to such choice and special privileges, “therefore”—for this reason, “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”

**III.**The text goes on to DESCRIBE THE CHRISTIAN AS AIMING AT A MOST EXALTED POSITION—“Perfecting holiness.”  
There was a bitter discussion, at one time, about the possibility of perfection in the flesh. It was a most unhappy thing that this controversy arose at all. Between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Toplady fierce altercations were carried on. Between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield I believe the dispute was conducted in a temper honorable to both sides. One admires the Christian love of the two Brothers, who both of them stood to advocate what they believed to be the Truth of God and did maintain, I believe, their own views of Truth in a very proper spirit. But, as the dispute was carried on between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Toplady, I do not think it was creditable to the Christianity of either—they both of them seemed to have lost their temper and to have forgotten that “the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.” Hence this Doctrine of Christian Perfection never seems to me to have had fair consideration at all. It has been made an arena for controversy then rather a subject for deliberate thought.

“ *Can a Christian be perfect in this life?*” When this question was put to me, the other night, I answered, “No.” “Well, but is not the Christian perfect when he gets to Heaven ?” “Yes.” “Well, then, he was perfect when he died, was he not?” I thought he must be—I do not understand any change taking place in the solemn article of death—between the moment of departure from this world and the moment of entrance into Heaven. “Very well!” was the answer, “but he was in the flesh, then, you know.” The question thus turned on being in the flesh—and the answer is obvious. The flesh is inherently sinful and all its carnal desires are at enmity against God. Perfection at present does not aim at regenerating the old nature—such perfection will be effected at the resurrection of the just. But as many as are perfect must control and keep the flesh and its motions completely under dominion. That is our present duty. If the death of the body looses us from sin, the mortification of our members which are upon the earth must be our continual aim till we are delivered from the bondage of corruption. An illustration may explain my meaning. I can imagine a room in your house being perfectly clean, but I cannot imagine it being kept perfectly clean unless the process by which it was first cleansed is frequently repeated. Whether that room is in constant use, or whether it is shut up after a monastic fashion, it will require to be swept and dusted every day or it will not be perfectly clean very long.

I remember hearing a man say that he had lived for six years without having sinned in either thought, or word, or deed. I apprehend that he committed a sin, then, if he never had done so before, in uttering such a proud, boastful speech! It seemed to me that if he had known anything about his own heart, he would not have dared to speak thus! Were it true of me, I think I would be like a man who had diamonds about him and dared not tell anybody, for fear the mention of it should prompt someone to rob him of his treasure! I would keep it all to myself. If such a priceless pearl as perfection can belong to any of the saints—and I were the happy possessor—I would be very jealous of it, lest anyone should know it and seek to deprive me of it! No, no—I cannot believe that the flesh can be perfect, nor, consequently, that a man can be perfect in this flesh! I cannot believe that we shall ever live to see people walking up and down in this world without sin. But I can believe that it is our duty to be perfect, that this Law of God means perfection and that the Law as it is in Christ—for there it is, you know—is binding on the Christian! It is not, as in the hands of Moses, armed with power to justify or to condemn him, for he is not under the Law, but under Grace. But it is binding upon him as it is in the hands of Christ! The Law, as it is in the hands of Christ, is just as glorious, just as perfect, just as complete as when it was in the hands of Moses. Christ did not come to destroy the Law, or to cast it down, but to establish it! And therefore, notwithstanding every point where I fall short of perfection as a creature, I am complete in Christ Jesus. That which God requires of me is that I should be perfect.

That I can understand. And the next thing I should know is that *for such perfection I ought to pray*. I should not like to pray for anything short of that. I should not like, at the Prayer Meeting, to hear any of you say, “Lord, bring us half-way toward perfection.” No, no, no! Our prayer must be, “Lord, put away all my sin—deliver me from it altogether.” And God would not teach you to pray for what He did not mean to give. Your perfection is God’s design, for He has chosen you to be conformed to the image of His Son—and what is that? Surely the image of His Son is perfection! There were no faults in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be made like He and as this is the work and design of Grace, then perfection is the center of the target at which God’s Grace is always aiming. All that He works in us is with this great ultimate end and aim—that He may sanctify us wholly—spirit, soul and body, and that He may release us from sin and make us perfect even as our Father who is in Heaven is perfect. Oh, when will it be? When will it be? Why, the very thought of it makes me feel as if I could sing—

***“Oh, happy hour, oh, blest abode,***

***I shall be near and like my God.”***  
What a joy it will be to be just like He—to have no more corruption of the flesh and no more temptations to sin to destroy the soul’s delight and pleasure in her God! May the Lord hasten on the day! “Perfecting holiness.”

Although a young artist, when he starts in his work, dares not hope that he shall came up to Praxiteles in sculpture, or to Apelles in painting, yet were he to set before himself anything short of the highest standard, he would not be likely to attain honor as an academician. When he begins to work, he studies not imperfect pictures, but the most perfect models he can find. He studies Raphael. He wants to see what Michael Angelo could do. “Oh,” says one, “what are you trying to paint? Are you trying to be a Raphael? Will you ever paint like Raphael or Michael Angelo? Never.” What do your sneers and jibes mean? Would you have him go and buy some worthless printing at a pawnshop and copy that? What sort of an artist would he make, then? The only possibility of his being a good artist is his taking perfect models. So with you, Christian, your model has to be the perfect Savior—and this is to be what you are to aim at every day, “perfecting holiness.” And for all you may say, “Ah, I shall never come up to that. Many failures have proved to me that I shall not reach it.” Yet you will do better with that as your ambition than you could have done if you had selected some imperfect model and had said, “Well, if I am as good as that man, that will suit me.” Nothing but perfection must content you! Beloved, press forward towards it and God speed you in the race!

**IV.**Follow me one step further and observe how THE CHRISTIAN IS PROMPTED BY THE MOST SACRED OF MOTIVES—“Perfecting holiness *in the fear of God*.”

An abiding sense of God’s Presence, a perpetual feeling of our obligations to our Creator produces a reverent fear of God—not the slavish, servile fear which brings torment—but the fear which bows the tall archangel in adoration before the Throne of God, the fear which makes the cherub veil his face with his wings while he adores the Lord. Such a constant fear as this is the mainspring of Christian holiness! Not the fear of man, though many people are kept moral by that. Not the fear of some Christian whom you respect, lest he should upbraid you—that fear may be very helpful, in some cases, to keep men from certain sins, but it is a fitter motive for an infant than for a man! No, your great motive is to be the fear of God. Not the fear of the public eye. This is a very marvelous thing. Have you not often noticed that the very thing which the world calls, “bad, shameful, horrible, detestable,” if it does not succeed—would be thought clever, creditable, to be admired if it succeeded? I believe that there have been scores of venturesome traders who have acquired wealth and gained a reputation for brilliant shrewdness by the very means which we see so much and so properly reprobated in certain other large traders nowadays—the only difference being that one man was fortunate enough to jump over the ditch, while the other man jumped in—but both were equally reckless! The world only appreciates success—that is the measure of the world’s morality. The true Christian has a higher system of ethics. He perfects holiness in the fear of God—and if he should be successful, and the world should say, “Well done! Well done!”—yet, if he felt he had done a wrong thing or an unholy thing, his conscience would prick him. He would be as uneasy as though everybody pointed the finger of scorn at him! I think he would he as restless as Zacchaeus was until he had made a just disposition of his unholy gains.

I cannot speak to you as I would wish tonight. But ah, were the hour of my departure come, were I allowed but to utter one sentence and then must die, I would say to you members of this Church, “Be holy!” Whatever you are, seek to be holy. And if you will not be holy—if you have a mind to keep your sins—do us the favor to lay down your profession! If you *will*have your sins and go to Hell, you can do it so much better outside the Church than you can inside. I cannot see why you need do Christ the double ill-turn to be His enemy, and yet profess to be His friend. Get out of the Church, you that are hypocrites! What profit can you get? There are no loaves and fishes that I know of to be had here. If you want them, there are some places where you can have them in abundance. There is no particular honor that I know of in being associated with*this* Church—we are generally held in little enough esteem by the world. Why should you come unless you intend to be true followers of the Crucified? Why, why, Deacon, if you love the world, do you pretend to love the Church? Judas, Judas, go sell somebody else! What need do you have to sell Christ and to be a son of perdition? O you who are unholy, you who cheat in business, you who can lie in your daily lives—there is scope enough for you outside of God’s Church—why do you need to come with your filthiness where you are not asked to come, nor wanted? The Word of God calls His saints to come out and be separate from such, but when once they thrust themselves into the Church, what shall we say? We feel like the servants who would gladly root up the tares, but that we must not do. They must both grow together until the harvest! Yet we would not sleep, but be watchful to prevent the enemy sowing more tares among the wheat. Be holy, be holy, be holy! You that are servants, be holy in the family! You that are masters, show holiness among your employees. Mothers and fathers, let your children see your piety! Children, may the Holy Spirit make you to be the holiest of children like the holy Child Jesus! And may it be a point with one and all of us that if we live, we will live unto Christ, so that when we die, we may be found in Him, made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light!

The Lord bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus sake! Amen.  
**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 PETER 1:1-8.***

**Verse 1.***Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.*Peter was pleased to be able to write those words. There was a time when he had thrice denied his Master, but now he is glad to call himself, “a servant of Jesus Christ.” Once he had said, “I know not the Man,” but now he claims that he has been sent out by that glorious Lord to be His Apostle—a sent one—“a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” Probably he had ringing in his ears at that moment, those blessed words, “Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs.” And he was going to do that work again in this, his second general Epistle.

**1.***To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.* These Epistles are not written to everybody. Some readers do not seem to remember this fact. This one is written, says the Apostle, “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us.” The faith of the weakest Believer in Jesus is the same kind of faith as that which was found in Simon Peter—who stands among the very first of the worthies in the College of Apostles. “Like precious faith with us.” Only think of it, you whose faith is of a very trembling sort, which might be well described as, “little faith.” Yet yours is “like precious faith” with that of Peter and the rest of the Apostles. The tiniest diamond is as truly a diamond as the Koh-I-Noor, and the smallest faith, if it is really the work of the Spirit of God, is “like precious faith” with that of the Apostles.

**2.***Grace and peace be multiplied unto you—*You have some measure of these choice blessings—may you have a great many times as much! When we go to the multiplication table, we not only multiply by two and by three, but we can multiply by a hundred—we can multiply by ten thousand. Oh, that God would thus multiply to us the Grace and the peace that He has already given us! “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you—

**2.***Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.*The more we know of God, the more grounds and reasons shall we have for enjoying Grace and peace. And the more we know of God and of Jesus, our Lord, the more will our enjoyment of Grace and peace be multiplied.

**3.***According as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to Glory and virtue.*It is through knowing God that we realize that “His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” for all these things are in Him—and as we know Him, trust Him, love Him and become like He—we also come to possess all these precious things in Him.

**4.***Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* [See Sermon #551, Volume 10—

FAITH AND LIFE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See what is God’s great objective in giving us these “exceeding great and precious promises.” It is that we may become morally and spiritually like Himself—just and true and holy and righteous, even as God Himself is. O Brothers and Sisters, we fall far short of the high example that we find set before us in our gracious God! Nevertheless, we press forward towards the goal, strengthened by God Himself, who, having begun to make us like Himself, will never cease that blessed work until He has fully accomplished it.

**5.***And beside this, giving all diligence—*For we cannot expect to go to Heaven asleep. We are not taken there against our wills. It is not our will that accomplishes our salvation, but still, it is not accomplished without our will. “Giving diligence,” yes, but more than that, “giving *all*diligence”—

**5, 6.***Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance.*It is ignorance that is intemperate and rash.  
**6-8.***And to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things are in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* What Christian ever wishes to be barren or unfruitful? Is it not the aspiration of every branch in the true vine to bring forth much fruit?

[The conclusion of this exposition is after Sermon #3248, Volume 57— GATHERING WITHOUT PLANTING—  
Read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org. ]

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2691 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SORROW *AND* SORROW  
NO. 2691

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1900.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 31, 1881.~~***

***~~“For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world works death.” 2 Corinthians 7:10.~~***

MANY years ago and, indeed, in some measure to a later date, preachers of the Word seemed mainly to dwell upon the inner experience of men. They both preached sermons and wrote books in which they set forth the condition of convinced sinners, describing what they usually felt before they found peace with God. They were very strict in their search for the genuine tokens of true repentance and the internal evidences of regeneration. They preached continually upon the work of the Spirit of God in convincing sinners of their lost condition, but they were not accustomed to say to them so baldly and so boldly as we do now, “Believe, and live.” And the consequence was that a large number of truly awakened persons were kept in bondage and did not come into the liberty wherewith Christ makes Believers free—at least, not so soon as they do nowadays. I believe that under God’s blessing, those experimental preachers were the means of producing very sturdy Christians. They did a great deal of deep plowing with a very sharp plowshare before they began to sow the good Seed of the Kingdom of God. They took care to use the pointed needle of the Law of God to make a way for the silken thread of the Gospel, so that what they did sew was well sewn—and the garments which they made did not tear quite so easily as much of the spiritual raiment does which is made in these days of more showy, but less substantial, labor.

Still, there was this defect about that style of preaching—it led men to look too much within instead of looking away from self to Christ. No matter how faithfully they proclaimed the Grace of God, they preached some sort of preparation for the reception of that Grace and, therefore, sinners often looked to themselves to see whether they had that preparation rather than to the Grace of God which it was most desirable that they should seek. I believe you may say so much about the disease of sin, that instead of leading the sinner in despair to turn his gaze to Christ, as the bitten Israelites looked to the brazen serpent as the only remedy—you may merely make him sit down and study the disease—and look, and look, and look again for the various symptoms you have described. And though he will be well acquainted with the disease, he will not, in that way, find a cure for it. You may dive as far as you like into the sea, but you will not find any fire there. You may rake as long as you please in the burning fiery furnace, but you will never reach any cooling blocks of ice. You may hunt, for many a day, in the human heart’s natural death, but you will not there discover any signs of life. And, within the morgue of man’s corruption, you shall never be able to discern any remedy for a sin-sick soul. It was in that particular that the experimental preaching lacked an important element.

But now, times have changed and many of us who are ministers of the Gospel, do very plainly proclaim to sinners the message, “Believe, and live.” This plain declaration rings out from almost every part of our land—not yet quite in every place—I would that it were so—but still, there is a large company of Evangelical preachers continually repeating the Apostolic message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” I am sure that much good must result from this proclamation of the Truth of God, for this is God’s ordained way of blessing the souls of men. And yet—and yet—I sometimes fear lest there should be all sowing and no plowing—lest there should be the preaching only of the remedy, with almost an entire ignoring of the disease—and lest the message, “Believe, and live,” should take the place of that other great Truth of God, “You must be born again.”

It will never do for men to be led to think that they are healed before they know that they are sick unto death, or to imagine that they are clothed before they see themselves to be naked, or to be taught to trust Christ before they are aware that they have anything for which they have need to trust Him! It would be a happy circumstance if, in our preaching, we could have a blending of these two elements so that we could have somewhat of our forefathers’ deep experimental teaching and, with it, and growing out of it a plain, unfettered delivery of the Gospel declaration, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

“How are the two things to be reconciled?” someone asks. My dear Brother, I have long ago given up trying to reconcile friends who never fell out. These two Truths of God are both taught in Scripture and, therefore, they cannot be at variance with one another. You would be as much puzzled to prove where they differ as I would be to show that they agree. I am confident that they do agree because I find them both in the Book. Therefore, let them both be preached. Somehow, we are constantly coming across Truths that lie side by side, like the metals on which the railway carriages run. If we only preach one of them, it will be like trying to run the train on a single rail. You know that there are often two Truths, if not three, closely connected with one another. I am frequently led to see that there is a trinity of Truths as there is a Trinity in the Godhead— and if they are all preached, in due proportion, they will balance one another and prevent any one Truth of God from being too prominent. Luther, with his free justification by faith, is apt to go too far unless there shall come in Calvin and Zwingli, with their balancing Truths, to set him right. Even Paul’s Inspired Words might have been the means of leading some men astray unless James had also been inspired to write on the practical side of the Truth of God so that Paul’s meaning could be the better understood. There is nothing wrong in the teaching of either Paul or James—they are both right—the two together bring out both aspects of Truth.

I am going to preach tonight about sorrow for sin. I hope it has not yet quite gone out of the world. I trust that sorrowful penitence still exists, though I have not heard much about it lately. People seem to jump into faith very quickly nowadays. I do not disapprove of that happy leap, but still, I hope my old friend, Repentance, is not dead! I am desperately in love with repentance—it seems to me to be the twin sister to faith. I do not, myself, understand much about dry-eyed faith—I know that I came to Christ by the way of Weeping-Cross. I did not come to shelter beneath His blood immediately when I heard of it, as I now wish that I had done, but when I did come to Calvary, by faith, it was with great weeping and supplication, confessing my transgressions and desiring to find salvation in Jesus, and in Jesus only.

Now, concerning this sorrow for sin, I want, first, *to remove certain erroneous ideas with regard to it.* Secondly,*to distinguish between the two sorrows mentioned in the text—*the godly sorrow which works repentance to salvation, and the sorrow of the world which works death. And then, thirdly, we will *indulge ourselves in sorrow for sin.* We will finish up with some happy sorrow, that blessed, godly sorrow which is never to be repented of or regretted!

**I.**First, then, I want to try to REMOVE CERTAIN ERRONEOUS IDEAS WITH REGARD TO SORROW FOR SIN.  
Some persons seem to think *that mere sorrow of mind in reference to sin is repentance,*but it is not. Read the text, and you will at once see that it is not. “Godly sorrow works repentance.” Therefore, it is not, *itself*, repentance. It is an agent employed in *producing* repentance, but it is not, itself, repentance. There is, in the world, a great deal of sorrow on account of sin which is certainly not repentance and never leads to it. Some transgressors are sorry for sin for a time—they are convicted of guilt with a transitory conviction which soon passes away. Many are sorry for sin because of its temporal consequences—and many more because of its *eternal* consequences. They are afraid of Hell. If there were no Hell, they would like to continue to live in sin. They would be delighted if it could be proved that there is no God. Nothing would please them better than to have the Law of the Lord and all its penal consequences abolished. They are as fond of sin as ever they were, but they sorrow because they see that it is bringing them down to the gulf of Perdition. Now, that kind of sorrow is not repentance! A moth may burn its wings in the candle and then, full of pain, fly back to the flame. There is no repentance in the moth, though there is pain—and so, there is no repentance in some men, though there is in them a measure of sorrow on account of their sin. Do not, therefore, make a mistake in this matter, and think that sorrow for sin is, or even necessarily *leads* to, repentance.  
Next, do not fall into the other mistake, and imagine *that there can be such a thing as repentance without sorrow for sin,* for there can never be such a thing! I heard a person say, and, as I thought, say very flippantly, that it was a great thing to know the Greek language because, in that way, you found out that repentance “simply meant a change of mind.” The Brother who said that did not appear to me to know much about the *English* language, and I was quite certain that he did not know *alpha*from *beta* in the Greek language—but that is what he said, “it simply meant a change of mind.” Ah, it *does* mean a change of mind, but what a change of mind! In my opinion, such a translation of the Greek as that would not imply that repentance was anything less than it is commonly understood to be, but a far greater thing. It is an entire and total change of mind, a turning of the mind right round, so that it hates what once it loved and loves what once it hated—it forms different judgments from what it always did before—and no longer puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness. It judges righteous judgment, for the change of mind is thorough and complete! And therefore I say that there is no repentance that is worth anything which is not accompanied by sorrow for sin.  
Just think for a moment. Here is a man who says, “I repent.” But are you really sorry that you sinned? “No,” he replies. Then, my dear Sir, you cannot have truly repented, for a man who has not got so far as repentance is often sorry for having done wrong. When a man is convinced that he has transgressed against God, he ought to be sorry—and if you tell me that there can be such a thing as spiritual repentance and yet no sorrow for having broken the Law of God, I tell you that you do not know what you are talking about! The thing is clearly, on the very face of it, impossible! There must be a deep hatred of the sin that you have committed and even of the *thought* of ever committing that sin again. There must be sincere sorrow that you should have ever transgressed against God and that you should be liable to transgress again. If there is no such sorrow as that in your heart, one of the things which are necessary to a genuine repentance is absent.  
I have tried, thus, to correct two mistakes, but there is a third which I must point out to you. There are some persons who seem to think*that we must reach a certain point of wretchedness or else we are not truly penitent.*They imagine that we must grieve up to a certain point of temperature or we cannot be saved. And they watch the convicted sinner to see when he gets near to what they consider to be a sufficient measure of brokenness of heart. But there are different methods of measuring this state of the spirit. I believe that some of our Hyper-Calvinistic brethren rigidly apply a very long measure, indeed, to all cases of this kind. I remember that one young friend, before whom I had set the Gospel very simply, said to me, “But is that all I have to do? Have I only to believe in Christ in order that I may be saved? Why, my father was six months in trouble of soul before he could find the Savior. And part of the time he was so bad that he had to be put in a lunatic asylum.” Yes, that is the kind of notion some people have—that there is a certain amount of alarm, distress, apprehension and fear which a man has to *feel* before he is up to the mark in this respect. But there is *nothing* at all in the Word of God to support that idea!  
I will not waste time by dwelling upon it because it is altogether a baseless supposition. We admit that many who come to Christ have passed through very great terror and agony before doing so, but a large part of their suffering was the work of the devil—not the work of the Spirit of God at all! A great part of it might have been spared if they had not been so ignorant. And a still larger part of it they might never have suffered if they had heard the Gospel preached with greater simplicity and had not been muddled and handled so roughly by some who put their own *experience* into the place of the Savior! After all, we are not saved by any feelings or alarms that we may have. The source of eternal life is yonder, on that Cross, and he who looks there, be he*who* he may or *what* he may, shall find salvation in the glance that spies out the wounded God! Not *our* wounds, but *His* wounds—not *our* griefs, but *His* griefs—not our *tears*, but *His blood* saves us! Away, therefore, forever, with the notion that there is a certain point of grief that has to be reached to qualify us for coming to the Savior!  
Then, again, there is another mistake made by many—*that this sorrow for sin only happens once—*as a sort of squall, or a hurricane, or thunderstorm that breaks over a man once, and then he is converted and he talks about that experience all the rest of his life, but he has nothing more to do with it. Why, dear Friends, there is nothing more erroneous than that! For myself, I freely confess that I have a very much greater sorrow for sin, today, than I had when I came to the Savior more than 30 years ago. I hate sin much more intensely, now, than I did when I was under conviction. I am sure I do. There are some things that I did not know to be sin, then, that I do know to be sin, now, and therefore I strive to be rid of them. I have a much keener sense of the vileness of my own heart, now, than I had when first I came to Christ, and I think that many other Believers here will say that it is the same with them. Sorrow for sin is a perpetual rain—a sweet, soft shower which, to a truly gracious man, lasts all his life! He is always sorrowful that he has sinned. He is continually grieved that there should still be any sin remaining in him and he will never leave off grieving till all that sin has gone.  
I could almost wish that in Heaven, itself, the Lord would let me mourn that I ever sinned. Good old Rowland Hill used to say that the only thing about Heaven that he did not quite like was that he should leave off repenting there. He supposed that no tear of sorrow for sin could be ever allowed to fall there. It is a sweet thing to be sorrowful for sin, to be sorrowful for impurity, to be sorrowful for anything that made Jesus sorrow—it is not a thing that happens once and then is done with—the godly sorrow of a Believer lasts throughout his life.  
I want to also correct another mistake, namely, *that sorrow for sin is a miserable feeling.*The moment the word, “sorrow,” is mentioned, many people suppose that it must necessarily be grief of a bitter kind. Ah, but there is a *sweet* sorrow, a *healthy* sorrow. In honey, there is a sweetness that cloys after awhile. We may eat too much of it and make ourselves ill. But in repentance there is a bitter sweetness, or a sweet bitterness— which shall I call it?—of which, the more you have, the better it is for you! I can truly say that I hardly know a sweeter joy than to lay my head in my Heavenly Father’s bosom and say, “Father, I have sinned, but You have forgiven me and, oh, I do love You!” It is such bliss, whenever you are troubled in heart, to go to God, again, just as you went to Him at the first, as a poor sinner and to say, “Lord, I mourn to think that I should have been what I have been—that I should have fallen so far short even of my own ideal of what I meant to have been. But I know that You love me and the more sure I am of the fact, and the more glad I am because of it, the more grieved I am to think that I do not live as such love as Yours deserves that I should live.”  
What have you been doing that is wrong, Brother, Sister? Are the consolations of God small with you? Is there any secret sin that is keeping you sad and sorrowful? Shall I help you find out the source of the evil? Have you been neglecting the reading of the Word? Have you been lax in private prayer of late? Have you been getting covetous? As you have grown richer, have you grown tighter in the fist? Have you been getting more worldly? Do you speak less about Christ than you used to and more about vanity? Have you been mixing with bad company? Have you been entangled by a so-called friend who is no help to you, but who really hinders you greatly in spiritual things? Have you been forming some associations that you know Christ does not approve of? Have you been letting things go a little amiss in your business—only a little amiss? Still, you know that things are not straight and that you could not face a thorough examination of your affairs. Have you fallen out with your brother and can you not forgive him? Have you had a quarrel, you two sisters, and will you not love each other? Yet you call yourselves Christians!  
So I might go on to mention 50 other things and any one of those things would be quite sufficient to take from you the joy of the Lord and to bring you into a lean state, spiritually. You know that you were once like the land of Egypt during her seven years of plenty, when all went well with you. I pray God that you may not have seven years of famine, as they had in Egypt, for it is amazing how the lean cows will eat up the fat cows, and yet never be any the fatter themselves. One would have thought that if the seven lean beasts ate up the seven fat ones, they would get fat, themselves—but they did not! And you may have a sad time of declension that will eat up all your years of zeal and holy joy, yet those years may not be one whit the better because of the strange feast!  
Come, Brother! Come, Sister! You and I cannot afford to live at a distance from Christ! We cannot afford to live in a state of misery. A Christian who is not glad—why, what sort of a Christian is he? I cannot bear to see religion served up with vinegar. No, Brothers and Sisters, it ought to be sweet in itself—so sweet that if you poured a bottle of vinegar in it, you would not make it sour! A Christian ought to be a happy person. He is not true to his colors—he is not true to his Master—he is not true to himself—unless he is happy! Let us have a good drink of the “wines on the lees, well refined,” till we forget our misery and remember it no more in the ecstatic joy and intense delight which the love of Christ and communion with God shall give us again! If you have backslidden, come back this very hour! Confess your sin in backsliding from God, and Christ will soon give you back your old joy and gladness.  
It does not spoil your happiness, my Brother or Sister, to confess your sin. The unhappiness is in *not* making the confession. If you are a child and you have done something wrong towards your father, you are unhappy as long as you try to conceal it. You old folks can remember that when you were boys at home and you had been doing wrong, you sometimes said, “I shall not acknowledge it.” But all the while that you hardened yourself, you were miserable—you know that you were! You missed your father’s good-night kiss and your mother’s smile. And although, as long as you stubbornly held out, you thought yourself very brave, yet you were very miserable. But did you not also know what it was, afterwards, to go and say, “Father,” or, “Mother, I was very wrong to do what I did and I am truly sorry”? Then, as you received the kiss of full forgiveness, I do not suppose you ever felt more happy than that in all your life! That is the way for God’s child always to do. Whenever you have done wrong, go at once to your Heavenly Father with godly sorrow for that sin—and get the sweet kiss of His forgiving love all over again! That is not wretchedness, it is happiness of the highest kind! It is the safest and surest way to maintain communion with God that I know of—unless, indeed, it is true, as some of our friends say, that they live without sinning altogether—about which I will say no more just now.  
There are some who also erroneously think *that sorrow for sin must be mixed with unbelief.*They suppose that if a man is sorrowful for sin, he must be afraid that he will be lost, he must fear that his sin can never be forgiven him. Permit me, however, to explain that no such black cloud as that need follow upon the heels of our repentance! The best sorrow for sin is that which never doubts Christ’s ability to wash it out—that cries out in grief for having sinned—and yet says, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” It is not right, on the part of your child, if he comes and says, “Father, I have done wrong and I do not believe you will ever forgive me.” Why, he is wrong all over, then, is he not? You can see the evil that is in his heart boiling over in such talk as that! But there is no need for it to be so with you, my Brother or Sister! Rather say, “My Father, I have sinned, and I mourn that I have done so, but, at the same time, I not only know that You will forgive, but I know that You have already forgiven me for Christ’s sake. I have laid my hands upon the head of the great Sacrifice and Substitute and I know that, ere I was born, in His own Person, He carried my sin away, even as of old the scapegoat

carried the sin of Israel into the wilderness, and it is gone forever, for You have said, ‘The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.’ Lord, I trust to the substitutionary Sacrifice offered by Your dear Son, and I feel at perfect peace with You. And, for that very reason, I hate sin more than I ever did, and I grieve more than I ever did in my life, to think I should ever have been guilty of it.”  
Thus have I tried to remove a few erroneous ideas out of the way. Yet I fear that they will continue to deceive many as long as the world stands.  
**II.**Now, secondly, I want to help you to DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE TWO SORROWS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT. First, there is a godly sorrow which, “works repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” If you have marginal notes in your Bibles, you will see that in the preceding verse, where we read, “you were made sorry after a godly manner,” in the margin it reads, “you were made sorry according to God.” And that rendering lets a great deal of light into the meaning of our text—“sorrow according to God.”  
Now, mark, the true sorrow which we ought to have and which saves men instrumentally, is sorrow on account of sin because it is *sin against God*. That is the very pith of godly sorrow, as penitent David cried, “Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.” And as the prodigal said, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight.” O my dear Hearers, ask yourselves whether you have sorrowed for sin because it is sin against God—for any hypocrite is sorry for sin which injures himself, or which may damage his reputation among men—but the essential thing is to be sorry because the evil is a wrong done to *God*. You know that men do not generally trouble much about wrong done to God. A crime is usually a wrong done to*man*, so we think it is a horrible thing. But a sin, inasmuch as it is against God, many people do not care at all about that.  
If I were to personally address any man or woman in this place, and say, “You are a sinner,” each one would reply, “Yes, that is true.” But if I were to say to a man, “You are a criminal,” he would be ready to knock me down! So, you see, a criminal is one who offends against men and that is, in our view, a very horrible thing. But a sinner being only one who offends against *God*—that is not, according to most people’s notion, anything in particular—so they do not care much about it. Oh, but when a man is really awakened, he sees that the wickedness of the offense is that it is an offense against God! That is the worst part of the offense, as he rightly judges, and he therefore sorrows over it. This is a sorrow which is to be cultivated by us—the mourning over sin because it is committed against God.  
Then, notice, that it is also a sorrow which is associated with a believing faith, for a godly sorrow must be one that makes the heart that feels it yield itself to Christ. Yielding itself to Christ, it must believe in Christ, for, if I do not believe in Christ, it is certain that I have not yielded myself to Him. Therefore, the only sorrow for sin that is worth having is that which brings me to yield myself up to the Lord Jesus Christ and to accept God’s mercy in God’s own way. If you have any sort of sorrow for sin which does not lead you to believe in Christ, away with it! Away with it! A repentance that does not repent at the Cross is a repentance which will have to be repented of—true sorrow for sin must be blended with a childlike submission to God and consequent confidence in Christ—otherwise it is not “godly sorrow.”  
“Godly sorrow” is, next, known by its leading to repentance. It “works repentance”—“a change of mind” about everything and especially about sin. A man is so sorry for having done wrong that he now thinks differently of all wrong-doing. He thinks differently of his entire life and his mind is made up, God helping him, to live just the opposite way to that in which he has formerly lived. When sorrow for sin leads to that result, we may be quite sure that it is the work of the Spirit of God and that it is acceptable in His sight.  
It also leads on to deliverance from sin, for the text says, “Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation.” Now, what is salvation? Some people think that it means being saved from going down to Hell. That is the *result* of salvation, but salvation means being saved from the power of sin and being saved from the tendency to sin, as well as being saved from the punishment of sin. That is a blessed sorrow which leads us to such a change of mind that the bonds of sin are snapped and we become free men in Christ Jesus, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation from the bondage and the power of sin and Satan!  
That is the kind of sorrow to cultivate, for it leads to perpetual perseverance in the ways of God. Notice that the text says it is a salvation not to be repented of, or, if you like, a repentance not to be repented of. I have known men repent after a fashion, and they have been very sorry for it afterwards. I knew a wild sort of fellow who was brought to his knees at the penitent-form and he did cry away at a fine rate—but you could never get him inside that place again. He was always ashamed of himself, for it was a repentance that needed to be repented of, and he did repent of it. There is many a dog that gets back to his vomit as soon as he can, and there is many a sow that is sorry for being washed, and glad enough to get back to wallow in the mire. But that is not the kind of change that the Apostle mentions here. True godly sorrow is that which leads to repentance never to be repented of, for the man says, “No, I left my sin, and if I wanted to go back to it, I have plenty of opportunity to do so. But I cannot go back to it, I hate it. There,” he says, “I have been tempted over and over again and my feet had well-nigh slipped, but the eternal life within me, kept there by the Spirit of God, has driven me back to Christ! I could not do this great wickedness and sin against God. I have already smarted too much to put my hand again into the fire. I grieved my God too much and brought too much grief upon my own heart, for me to play the fool, again, and once more to go into the purlieus of iniquity.”  
Happy is that man who has had enough of the smart of sin to make it sour and bitter to him all the rest of his days, so that now, with changed heart and renewed spirit, he perseveres in the ways of God, never thinking of going back, but resolved “through floods or flames” to force his way to Heaven, to be, by Divine Grace, master over every sin that assails him! That is the kind of sorrow which I pray that God may work in everyone here who has never yet felt it.  
**III.**Now, to close, let us pray God the Holy Spirit to enable us to INDULGE OURSELVES IN GODLY SORROW FOR SIN.  
I will not say anything about the sorrow of the world that works death, but leave that sad subject in order that we may devote this little space that remains to the enjoyment of godly sorrow for sin.  
Remember, Beloved, that *it is now all forgiven.*Our sin is all gone. It will never be mentioned against us anymore forever! The depths of the ocean of oblivion have covered the Egyptians of our sins, there is not one of them left. Therefore, “sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” The Red Sea waves of the Redeemer’s blood have rolled over all our sins and they sank to the bottom like a stone. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” That is, they are removed to an infinite distance from which they can never be brought back! They are gone—they are all gone, and gone forever!  
And now, Beloved, let us ask ourselves—*how could we have sinned against such a forgiving God?*If we had known how readily He would forgive us, surely we could not have offended Him as we have done. Such a God as He is—was there ever any like He? Well might the Prophet Micah exclaim, “Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?” O God, how could I ever have offended You? Having done so, how could I continue to rebel against You all those long years? How could I resist the yearnings of Your love and the entreaties of Your Spirit? Oh, why did I linger so long before coming back to such a Father, who clasped me to his heart and kissed away all my transgressions, and said, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.” Burst forth into tears, O eyes that have so long been dry! O hearts that have been like the rock in the desert, let the sweet love of God strike you, like the rod of Moses, and let the waters leap forth! The thought that we have sinned against such a God may well cause us godly sorrow.  
And, then, we should further sorrow as we remember that *our pardon has come to us through Jesus Christ.*Yet it was against Him that we sinned—against Him who, for our sakes, left the Throne and royalties of Heaven, and was born a Babe at Bethlehem—against Him who sat weary on the well at Sychar and said, “Give Me to drink,” yet to whom we refused to give the water of our heart’s love. Think, Brothers and Sisters, that you and I have sinned against Him who said, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” We have sinned against Him who never did us any wrong, never did us an ill turn, or said a hard word to us, but who, blessed be His infinite love, went up to the Cross for us and gave His hands to the cruel nails, and His whole body to death, that He might redeem us from our sins, and save us forever. O Jesus, my Savior, against You have I offended! O strong Son of God, Incarnate Deity, whom, though we have not seen, we do by faith unceasingly adore, it is against You we have offended! We have sinned against Him to whom we are married forever— against Him who is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—against Him, the kisses of whose mouth are sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. O my Heart, you might well break, though you were made of cast steel, to think that you have rebelled against Him who is all goodness and all love to you!  
I tell you, dear Friends, one thing that always makes me grieve to think that I have sinned, is *my election.* Oh, when I first knew that God had chosen me to be His from before the foundation of the world, I could not make out how I could have been so mad as to have lived without Him—to have lived in opposition to Him. And then, when I found that Christ had engraved me, even me, upon the palms of His hands, and written my name upon His heart, then I smote upon my breast and said, “Woe is me that I, a man so much loved, should, nevertheless, have been such a transgressor and have sinned so grievously against my God!”  
Come, Brothers and Sisters, plunge with me into this pool of holy sorrow! Well you may, for think how some of you have been favored by Sovereign Grace! Think how God called you out of the depths of sin—how long and how patiently He bore with you! Some of you were converted when you were 60 or 70 years old—can you ever love Him enough, and can you ever grieve enough because you lived so long in sin? And you who were converted when you were but boys and girls—can you ever bless Him enough for calling you so early? Can you ever blame yourself enough for not loving Him more, and not serving Him better? As for me, I am the worst and the lowest among you all because I owe more to God’s Grace than anyone else in this place. To have this sweet privilege of talking about His love, why, I would not change places with Gabriel, himself, for he, at any rate, has never had the privilege of telling such a story of redeeming Grace and dying love as I have to tell! Yet I am ashamed of myself for speaking so coldly and so feebly concerning my blessed Savior. I could almost flee from my pulpit because I cannot speak better of Him and move your hearts more earnestly to hate your sin.  
But so it is—the more mercy we have received, the more sorrow for sin should we feel. The more love, the more delight and rapture we have experienced, the more lamentation should we make that we should ever have sinned, and that we should be so prone to sin again even after we have been forgiven! I often have to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Some people tell me that Paul wrote that lament before he was converted, or when he was just converted, and they talk about rising above all such experiences as that. But I find that the nearer I get to God, the more is my experience just like that of the Apostle when he wrote those words. And whereas I only knew that I had so much sin when I had a clear view of God and a strong sense of being His, yet it is then that I have learned how terrible it is that there should still be the possibility of sin hanging about me, and I have cried, “Oh, that I were delivered from this body of death that still drags me down to the dust!”  
I am sure it will be the same with you, Beloved. The more your joy in the Lord and the nearer you come to perfection, the deeper will be your lamentation—the bitterer, yet in some senses the sweeter will be your sorrow that there should be any sin still remaining within you. I say again, this is sweet sorrowing—sweet, sweet sorrow and, till you get to Heaven, I could scarcely wish you any better joy than this—to go home and creep to the foot of the Cross and lie there, sorrowing over your sin against such a Savior, yet rejoicing that it is all forgiven—  
***“He that is down needs fear no fall,  
He that is low no pride”—***  
so, as you lie there, look up—  
***“And view the flowing  
Of the Savior’s precious blood,  
With Divine assurance knowing  
He has made your peace with God.”***  
And then say—  
***“My sins, my sins, my Savior,  
Their guilt I never knew”—***  
“till I knew what they cost You—till I knew Your great love to me—till I knew my sins were all forgiven! But now they are forgiven, they torture me with a sweet grief of which I would gladly die.”—  
***“Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin,  
And after none but Thee;  
And then I would—oh, that I might!  
A constant weeper be.”***  
This is joy, rest, patience, bliss—just to lie there and weep, and wash with tears the feet that came upon that errand of love and mercy for us! And still look, and love, and long, and weep, and look, and love, and long, and weep again, and kiss again and again the blessed feet of Him who has redeemed us unto God by His blood!  
The Lord keep us there, dear Friends! Amen. Amen.

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***~~A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, DECEMBER 13, 1891,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 5, 1891.~~***

***~~“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.”  
2 Corinthians 8:5.~~***

HERE we see the Apostle Paul disappointed, though he was never discontented. God had taught him how to abound and how to suffer need. In the School of Grace he had learned contentment, but at this time he had met with disappointment. Things had not happened as he thought they should have done and now he tells the Corinthians how the Churches of Macedonia have disappointed him. “This they did, not as we hoped.”

Paul’s disappointment, too, was concerning money, although that was a thing the Apostle never cared about at all. He never lived with any idea of gain—he held it almost in contempt. Yet here he is disappointed about money matters and he is writing of his disappointment. But do not run away with a mistaken idea of what Paul meant. Though this is one of the many unexpected things which happened to him, it is different in its character from most of his other disappointments. His expectations were not realized on this occasion because they were *exceeded*! He was disappointed with the Churches of Macedonia because they did a great deal *more* than he ever expected them to do. “This they did,” he says, “not as we hoped.” He had only hoped that they would give a little, for they were not rich people—and a little would show their generosity to the poor saints in Jerusalem. And he was ready to make much of that little and thank God that they were willing to remember those who were more in need than themselves. But they went far beyond anything he expected of them. Paul bore record that their liberality was up to the utmost limit of their power, “yes, and beyond their power.” A little from them would have been more than a much larger sum from richer people. Our gifts are not to be measured by the amount we contribute, but by the surplus kept in our own hands. The two mites of the widow were, in Christ’s eyes, worth more than all the other money cast into the treasury, for, “she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

Not only did those Macedonian Believers give much, but they gave it willingly. “They were willing of themselves.” This added fragrance to their gift. They needed no pressing or urging—the Apostle did not have to organize a “Fancy Fair” to wheedle the money out of them, nor even to preach loud and long to awaken them to their duty. “They were willing of themselves.” I thank God that you, my people, have always abounded in “the same Grace, also.” Still, what we have done is nothing compared to the need which lies before us. May those who have, up to now, been ready to bestow their goods, be found even more willing now to contribute to the cause of God and generously give towards the spread of the Gospel, the education of ministers and the needs of the orphans! Let there be no necessity laid upon you except the sweet compulsion of love, remembering that “God loves a cheerful giver.”

But these Macedonians gave more than money—they gave themselves. Paul writes, “They first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” This was the best donation—better, even, than the two mites of the poor widow. She gave her living, but they gave their *lives*, their very being! They also gave the best donation in the best way. They did not stop with giving themselves to the Lord, they also gave themselves to the Lord’s *people*. This is the will of God, that those who yield themselves up to Him should join those who are already His.

In speaking to you concerning these Churches of Macedonia, I would say, first, that *these people are an example to us* in several particulars. And when I have spoken a little upon that subject, I will say, in the second place, *Let us follow their example*.

**I.**First, then, THESE PEOPLE ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US. The Grace of God seems to have been so largely bestowed upon them that they, of whom but little was expected, sprang at once into the chief place of honor. Sometimes we see this in Churches today—poor and despised communities suddenly excel all their Brothers and Sisters. “The lame take the prey.” The great works of the world are not done by the great people of the world, but as the tiny coral insects, patiently working unseen, produce large results, it often happens that the weakest Brothers and Sisters bestow a large legacy of blessing upon us! This was the case in Macedonia— “The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” As an ounce of example is worth a pound of precept, let us study the conduct of those early Christians very carefully.

First, they are an example because *they followed the right order*. They did the first thing, first. Paul says, concerning them, “This they did, not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord.” You know that it spoils even good things when you reverse the right order in which they should be done and, as we commonly say, put the cart before the horse. Did you ever hear of the servant who was told to go and sweep a room and then dust it, who went and dusted the room and *then* swept it? She did not obey her orders because she did not observe the right order. Her work might as well have been left undone! Great mischief always comes of departing from God’s method in spiritual things. When the Lord tells you to believe and be baptized, if you are baptized, first, and believe afterwards, you have upset the Scriptural order and have practically disobeyed it! You have not kept to God’s Word at all. There is nothing like doing the right thing in the right order. Do *what* Christ tells you and do it *as* Christ tells you. These Macedonian Believers put the first thing, first. They first gave themselves to the Lord and afterwards they gave themselves to the Church of God!

This is the first thing, because it is of the first importance. If you are Christ’s, join Christ’s people. But the first thing is, see to it that you are Christ’s! Yield yourself unto Him. Trust in Him. This is the first thing and everything else is a poor second in comparison with it. Dear Friend, have you given yourself to the Lord? Can you truly say, “I am my Lord’s, and He is mine. I have, by His Grace, made sure of that”? Especially you young people who are just starting out in life—let this be your prime care. May God give you Grace to yield yourself to Christ even now, before you meet the fiercer temptations of the world! Stand still and consider the matter, and say, “I will now unreservedly yield myself to Him who died for me—

***‘Now that my journey’s just begun,  
My course so little trod;  
I’ll stay before I further run,  
And give myself to God.”***

Yielding ourselves to the Lord comes first and thus makes the second thing valid. If it does not come first, the second is good for nothing! If a man gives himself to the Church, he must not, therefore, suppose that he has given himself to God. To give himself to the *people* of God, before giving himself, first, to *God*, will do the man no good. It will, indeed, do him a positive injury. The man who acts in this way is either self-deceived, or else a deceiver—he does wrong to God, to the Church, to himself and is thus a threefold offender! You have no right to either of the ordinances of Christ if you do not belong to Him—they are only for Believers—and until you first give yourself to the Lord, you have no right to be reckoned among the people of God! If you come to the Lord’s Table as an unbeliever, so far from getting any good there, you will eat and drink condemnation to yourself, for you cannot discern the Lord’s body and, therefore, you cannot rightly use the bread and cup which are the emblems of His broken body and poured out blood. Dear Friend, do that first thing, first! First give yourself to the Lord and *then* give yourself to us by the will of God!

This is the first thing, again, because it leads to the second. I do not think that those Macedonians would ever have thought of giving themselves up to the Church if they had not first given themselves up to God, for in those days, you know, to join the Christian Church meant enduring shame, persecution and frequently death! They had to steal away by night to the private assemblies of the saints—and if they joined the Church and it was once known—there would probably soon be the cry, “Christians to the lions!” And they would be taken to the amphitheatre, first to be exhibited, and then to be devoured by wild beasts!

Men did not care about joining Christian Churches in those days unless they first gave themselves to the Lord. The persecution of the early Christians was a wonderful means of keeping the Churches pure. Church officers, then, did not need to examine those who sought fellowship with them as we are obliged to do, for not many were likely to present themselves unless they loved their Lord and His Gospel better than life, itself. But even then some hypocrites did profess to be the Lord’s people, though their heart was far from Him. In these soft and silken days I would be the more earnest in saying to you—Do not give yourselves to us. Do not think of joining any Christian Church, until, first of all, you have given yourselves to the Lord. Make a very searching enquiry into your own spiritual state before you offer yourself as a candidate for Church fellowship. Many of you do this. I have been struck, again and again, with the fact that the results of our special services in this place are not garnered quickly. Sometimes people come in numbers to join us who trace their first impulse to some special effort put forth here a year or two before. I fear that many wait too long, but there should be no undue haste in the matter. Make sure that, first, you are the Lord’s—then come and be baptized, confessing your faith. Now, do you trust Christ? Have you become Christ’s servant? Have you taken His Cross upon your shoulders to bear it after Him? Then come and welcome, and join with His people! But you must not do it until, first, you are the Lord’s.

These Macedonians are examples, next, because *they were free in what they did*. They “first *gave* themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” They did not come to God by compulsion. There was a gentle pressure put upon them by the Holy Spirit, which made them willing in the day of God’s power—and they willingly and cheerfully gave themselves up to God. Are you doing so, dear Friend? Is your religion a thing which has been impressed upon you by your surroundings, by your Christian friends, or by the demands of society? Such a religion is not worth having! To be truly the Lord’s, there must be a voluntary giving up of yourself to Him and to His service. You must be able to say—

***“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done;  
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine;  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.”***

Then you will be able to sing the chorus at the end of it—  
***“Happy day! Happy day,”***  
and you will not feel it to be a misery to have given yourself up to God, but  
your soul’s greatest delight! And so be like those who gave themselves to  
the Lord and did it cheerfully and freely.  
They gave themselves, also, wholly and unreservedly. This is proved by  
the fact that their money followed the gift of themselves. The dedication of  
their persons was followed by the consecration of their purses. It was no  
half-hearted offering of a languid devotion, but a real and practical yielding up of every bit of their being to be entirely and forever the Lord’s. Now,  
this is the sort of conversion that delights both God and His people—when  
the whole man is all aflame with love to Christ—when there is no attempt  
to compromise matters, or to keep back any part of that which is the  
Lord’s. When we are able truthfully to sing—

***“Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Always, only, all for Thee.”***

These Macedonians were so eager to be out-and-out for Christ that they, without any constraint, gave themselves to His people. I delight to see young Believers coming forward promptly and cheerfully, feeling, “Yes, I belong to Christ, and I should like to join those who also belong to Him.” To have it pressed upon you by one and another and to be urged to do it almost spoils it. I think that it is with our *gift of ourselves* to Christ and His people as it is with plucking a peach—if it is handled much, or pulled off the tree by a rough grasp of the hand—the beautiful bloom is quickly gone from it. Christ loves to have our hearts with the bloom on them! He delights to see us willingly yielding ourselves!

I remember the difficulty that I had, when I was converted and wished to join the Christian Church in the place where I lived. I called upon the minister four successive days before I could see him. Each time there was some obstacle in the way of an interview and, as I could not see him at all, I wrote and told him that I would go down to the Church Meeting and propose myself as a member. He looked upon me as a strange character, but I meant what I said, for I felt that I could not be happy without fellowship with the people of God. I needed to be wherever they were and if anybody ridiculed them, I wished to be ridiculed with them. And if people had an ugly name for them, I wanted to be called by that ugly name, for I felt that unless I suffered with Christ in His humiliation, I could not expect to reign with Him in His Glory. Beloved Friends, give yourselves, first, to God and afterwards to His Church, as these people did, cheerfully and promptly, without pressure or excitement. They came forward, not even as the Apostle hoped, but they went beyond all that!

In the third place, these people are good examples, not only in following the right order and doing it willingly, but because *they had a sense of obedience in both*. What they did, they did because they found that it was “the will of God.” It was the calm decision of hearts made sensitive by the Holy Spirit. Their faith was a living one and produced these good fruits. They were not carried away by emotion, but led by reason and conscience to give all to Him who deserved more than all they could give.

They felt that it was right to give themselves first to the Lord. They said, “How can we do otherwise? Christ has bought us with His blood—we must give ourselves to Him. God has chosen us from before the foundation of the world—we must choose Him. The Holy Spirit has renewed us. This new nature of ours must belong to Him. We are God’s by election, by creation, by Providence, by redemption, by new creation, by adoption—and His we will be forever and ever.” They felt that they could not do otherwise, but must be wholly the Lord’s because of what the Lord had done for them. This is the Apostle’s argument when He says, “For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” I wish that, under the sweet constraint of Divine Love, many of you might be led at once to give yourselves to the Lord!

Well, then, they felt the same thing about giving themselves to the Apostle and giving themselves to the Church! They said, “We will give ourselves up to this Apostle who has brought the Word of the Lord to us. He shall lead us. He has been a messenger from God to us—we will let him be our captain. What he bids us do, we will do, for we are persuaded that he is a man of God and he seeks not himself, nor ours, but us! He seeks to glorify God by leading us to nobler deeds of Grace and to greater heights of excellence. We will give ourselves to him and to the Church.” Surely, dear Friend, if a man of God has been used to bring you out of darkness into Christ’s marvelous light, you may well feel that such a man shall still lead you on! As long as he is faithful to his Master, you may very naturally and gladly be faithful to him. “They first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto *us* by the will of God.”

They also had a sense of obedience in helping the poor, especially the poor saints, and, most of all, the poor saints at Jerusalem. Perhaps, mindful of that ancient promise, “Blessed is he that considers the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble,” they recognized that the care of those in poverty and distress was specially pleasing to Him to whom they had given themselves. For that reason they would gladly make their contribution to the utmost limit of their power. Doubtless, they had heard the word that the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples, “You have the poor with you always, and whenever you will, you may do them good: but Me you have not always,” and as they could not directly bestow their goods on Christ, they willingly bestowed them, out of love to Him, upon the poor who knew His name! If we cannot give gold and silver to the Head of the Church in Heaven, we may help His poor members on earth. The reception of Christ into the heart and the yielding of the life to His sway has always been fruitful of beneficence to the poor.

Zacchaeus has not been the only one who, when he received Christ, has said, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.” Some men, today, in their zeal for the poor, deliberately shut their eyes to this fact that before the time of Christ the poor were left to their hard lot—and that any alleviation which has come to them has come from disciples of the lowly Jesus who was so poor that He had not where to lay His head. Christ is the poor man’s truest Friend—and those who give themselves to Christ must always see to it that they also give of their substance to the poor and thus lay up “treasure in Heaven.”

Paul distinctly states that these Macedonian Christians gave themselves to the Church “by the will of God.” Beloved, it is the will of God that you who love Him should be numbered with His people. It is for your comfort. It is for your growth. It is for your preservation. If you belong to Christ, you should belong to Christ’s Church. You already owe something to the Church. By its means, the preaching of the Gospel has been kept alive in the world. Through its preaching you have been converted. Through someone of its members you were brought to Jesus’ feet. It is your duty and the Church’s due that you should give yourself to the Church by the will of God! Think it over and see if it is not so. I say not that you should join *this* Church. You may be quite a stranger to us, but there is a place where God has fed your soul. There is a company of people somewhere, among whom you have often been taken up to Heaven’s gate. There is an assembly where you first of all found the Savior. Go, I pray you, and, by the will of God, give yourself to that Church, as you have given yourself to Christ.

You cannot tell the joy I have had today in visiting one who is lying grievously ill. My dear friend, in talking with me just now, as I sat by his bedside, said to me, “Pastor, do you remember what you said to me when you baptized me?” I said, “No, I do not.” “Well,” he said, it was 35 years ago, and when I was stepping into the water, you said, ‘Let us praise God for this, Brother. I hope He will make you a gift, a precious gift, to this Church.’ And then you stopped before you baptized me, and said, ‘Lord, make him useful, grant him Grace to serve You for many years to come!’ It was 35 years ago,” he said, “and yet I remember it as if it were but yesterday, how you prayed for me, and how you finished up by saying, ‘And, when your feet shall touch the cold waters of the river of death, may you find it firm beneath you!’ Oh, dear Pastor,” he said, “it IS firm beneath my feet! I was never so happy or so joyful as I am now, in the expectation of soon beholding the face of Him I love.”

Our Brother also added, “How little does modern theology supply to a man on the brink of eternity! I want no theories about Inspiration, or about the Atonement. The Word of God is true to me from beginning to end and the precious blood of Jesus is my only hope.” I said to him, “My brother said to me, the other day, what John Wesley said to Charles. He said, ‘Brother, our people die well.’” “Yes,” my friend who is ill answered, “they do, for as an elder of the Church, I have visited very many, and they always die with sure and confident faith.” I never see a doubt in any of our friends when they come to die! I have more doubts than they seem to have. Alas, that it should be so! But I expect to play the man when I die, as they do, resting in that same Savior! But, Brothers and Sisters, we would have been great losers if that Brother had not, 35 years ago, having given himself to the Lord, also given himself to me and to the Church over which the Lord had made me overseer. Blessed be God, who has kept him and us even to this day!

Thus you see that these people of Macedonia are an example to us. **II.**Secondly—and this I will urge very strongly on you all—LET US FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE. What use can we make of that example if we do not follow it? Let us make those Philippians, who are now citizens of a better city, glad when they hear that some, even in this 19th Century, were fired by their example to yield self and substance to their Lord and ours— to give all to Him who is the King of the country where they now have their blessed abode and where every man who now gives himself to Christ shall also reign with Him! Do you think that, if they came back to earth, they would behave differently? Do you think that they would give less, now, that they know their Lord more? No! Had they a chance of living here, again, they would even more willingly yield themselves and more ungrudgingly give of their substance to their dear Lord and Master!  
First, imitate their example in this particular—*give yourself to the Lord*. You who have done it, do it again! And you who have, up till this moment, kept back that which He claims, make a full surrender right now! Do not wait to make yourself better, or to feel better, but, just as you are, determine to be His and to be His forever! Say, “I do *now*, first of all give myself to You. I trust in the death of Christ as my only hope of eternal life and I give myself up to Him, believing that He will save me. There are many reasons why I should do this, but the chief reason is that Jesus gave Himself for me—shall I not, then, give myself to Him ‘who loved me, and gave Himself for me’? What is there that I should like to keep back? I know of nothing. No, let Him take all.”—  
***“Savior! Your dying love  
You gave me—  
Nor should I anything withhold,  
My Lord, from You.  
In love my soul would bow,  
My heart fulfill its vow,  
Some offering bring You now,  
Something for You.”***  
The best offering you can bring to Christ is yourself, for until you have given yourself to Him, He cannot accept any other offering at your hands. Unless you are really Christ’s, you cannot be truly happy. Surely, this is a motive that will appeal to you! You wish to live a happy life, do you not? There is no happiness without holiness—and no holiness without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Give yourself to Him and He will make you holy and happy, too. True joy will never be yours until “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” To abide in Christ is Heaven begun below. “Blessed are they that dwell in Your house: they will be still praising You.” Those who know the Lord best, praise Him the most! Therefore would I urge you to give yourself to Him at this good hour.  
Furthermore, we are only safe as we are given up to Christ’s keeping. Only His power can save us from our adversary the devil, who, “as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.” If you give yourself to the Lord, you will be “safe in the arms of Jesus.” He will hold you despite all the assaults of your foes and none shall pluck you out of His hands, so that you may exultingly say with Paul, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”  
Some of us gave ourselves to Christ 40 years ago. Oh, how thankful I am that I can say, “Forty years ago”! Some of you came 30 years ago; some 20; some ten. Some of you only gave yourselves to Christ quite lately, when my dear Brothers Fullerton and Smith were at the Tabernacle. Well, do you wish to run back? If any of you do, I know one who does not, but who says, “Lord, I come again, as if I never had come before, and my heart’s desire is to be fully Yours, more entirely Yours than I have ever been! Take heart, and hands, and feet, and eyes, and ears, and tongue— take life, and will, and all my powers of body, mind, and soul! Take all I am, and all I have, and all I ever shall have—take it all, for it is all Yours!” Will you not say so? While I am speaking, say it in your own souls! These Macedonians, “first gave themselves to the Lord.” May some do this for the first time, even now! Each one of them shall then be able to sing— ***“Oh, I am my Beloved’s,  
And my Beloved’s mine!  
He brings a poor vile sinner  
Into His ‘house of wine.’  
I stand upon His merit—  
I know no other stand—  
Not even where Glory dwells  
In Immanuel’s land.”***  
In the next place, follow this example and *give yourself to the Church*. You that are members of the Church have not found it perfect and I hope that you feel almost glad that you have not. If I had never joined a Church till I had found one that was perfect, I would never have joined one at all! And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect Church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us— ***“My soul shall pray for Zion still,  
While life or breath remains;  
There my best friends, my kindred dwell,  
There God my Savior reigns.”***  
All who have first given themselves to the Lord, should, as speedily as possible, also give themselves to the Lord’s people. How else is there to be a Church on the earth? If it is right for anyone to refrain from membership in the Church, it is right for *everyone*, and then the testimony for God would be lost to the world! As I have already said, the Church is faulty, but that is no excuse for your not joining it, if you are the Lord’s. Nor need your own faults keep you back, for the Church is not an institution for perfect people, but a sanctuary for sinners saved by Grace, who, though they are saved, are still sinners and need all the help they can derive from the sympathy and guidance of their fellow Believers. The Church is the nursery for God’s weak children where they are nourished and grow strong. It is the fold for Christ’s sheep—the home for Christ’s family.  
It is due to the minister that you should join some Christian Church. If the Lord has blessed you under our ministry, tell us. I think that I once told you the story, which I know to be accurate, of a Church clergyman, a sincere, earnest Brother, who had preached for years and, to the best of his knowledge, had never seen a conversion and, therefore, concluded that his ministry had been useless. On the day he was buried, a gentleman was observed to stand and weep much at his grave, and someone asked him why he did so. He said, “Nobody can tell what that man was to me. He led me from darkness into the Light of God and his word has been my comfort for years.” Yet that gentleman had never told the minister! He had never spoken to him of the blessing he had received under his ministry and he had let the good man die under the impression that he had been useless! When someone told him how the clergyman had grieved over his apparent failure, he said, “Oh, I did not know that he felt like that! I wish that I had told him what a blessing his sermons were to me.”  
Now, if we say anything foolish, or if we are reported to have said something silly which probably we never did say, we have plenty of friends to write and correct us, to whom we are greatly obliged, of course! But there are some who are so afraid that we might be puffed up that they will not tell us even though they get a blessing from us. At any rate, be just, be grateful and let the servant of God know that his Master has blessed his message to your soul.  
If it is not due to the minister that you should join the Church and help in its work, I think it is due to our fellow workers. Some of them are working for Christ with all their might and in the schools and elsewhere they are fainting for lack of helpers. Let me tell you what you are like. It is a hot autumn day and a man is reaping. The sweat pours from his face as he bonds to his task, and he fears that he will never get to the end of the field. And all the time you are pleasantly occupied leaning over a gate and saying to yourself, “That is an uncommonly good laborer.” Or, perhaps, instead of doing that, you are saying, “Why, he does not handle the sickle properly! I could show him a better way of reaping.” But as you never attempt to show us, we have only your own word to go by—and you must excuse us for being a little skeptical on the subject! The work of the Church is generally left to a few earnest folk. Is that right? Is it right that a *few* should do all the work, while many others, who profess to belong to Christ, are doing nothing at all? Let that not be *your* case—if you have given yourselves to the Lord, give yourselves to His Church—according to His will.  
Think again, what a lack of fellowship there will be if those who have given themselves to the Lord do not also give themselves to His people. Possibly you ask, “What should I gain by joining the Church?” That is a miserable question to ask! I will answer it by asking another—Do you know how much you will lose by *not* joining the Church? You will lose the satisfaction of having done your Lord’s will. You will lose the joy of fellowship with your Brothers and Sisters in Christ. You will lose the opportunity of helping, by your example, the weak ones of the flock. Your question should not be, “What should I gain for myself?” but, “What can I do for others?” And the answer should be, “I will join the Church because this is the will of God and there I shall be of benefit to my fellow Christians.”  
In the third place, you should follow the example of these Macedonian Believers and *give yourself both to the Lord and to His Church*. Put the two together and thus begin to place yourself wholly in the line of God’s will. Joining the Church without being the Lord’s, no matter from whatever motive it is done, is a course of action fraught with great danger to the soul, for none are more dead than those who only have a name to live. On the other hand, much blessing is missed if those who are the Lord’s do not unite themselves with His people.  
If you have given yourself to the Lord, give yourself, next, to His people, that you may, with them, bear witness for Christ. Here is a certain number of people who, with all their faults, are the true followers of Christ. Join them and say, “I, too, am a follower of Christ.” That is what membership with the Church means. It is as if you should say, “If the world is divided into two camps, I am on the side of King Jesus, and under His banner I will fight as one of those who bear witness to the Truths of God that He has revealed.”  
Do it, next, to spread the Gospel. Everybody is needed in this service, today, for the clear light of the Gospel is sadly obscured in many places. We cannot all be preachers, for if all were preachers, where would be the hearers? But we need everybody to be talking about Christ, by lips and life, by the printed and the spoken word—telling about salvation by the precious blood for all who believe, forgiveness through the Grace of God for the guilty, renovation by the Holy Spirit for the depraved. Come, then, and give yourselves to the Lord, and then to His Church in order that you may spread the Gospel!  
Do this, again, to maintain the Church. Nothing in the world is dearer to God’s heart than His Church. Therefore, being His, let us also belong to it that by our prayers, our gifts and our labors, we may support and strengthen it. If those who are Christ’s refrained, even for a generation, from numbering themselves with His people, there would be no visible Church, no ordinances maintained and, I fear, very little preaching of the Gospel. Therefore follow the Macedonian example for the sake of the Church.  
And finally, do it that you may grow in love and continue to prove your love to your Lord and His Church. And also that you may continue to live unto the Lord and increase your life by mingling with others who are alive unto God. My dear friend, who is now lying so ill, of whom I have told you, does not regret that he joined the Church, for, being a commercial traveler, he had opportunities of preaching Christ in different places. And that he might render the best possible service to his Lord, he always lived wherever his pastor told him to live, seeing that his business interests did not tie him down to any particular place. If there was no Church in a town, he went and lived there till he had raised one! Then he moved off to another spot and founded another Church. And so he continued to spread the knowledge of his Lord and Master! He is now lying between life and death and if he is raised up, again, it will be a miracle—yet perhaps the Lord will do that work of healing if He has yet further service for our Brother on earth. [The Brother referred to has been raised up, as by a miracle. His recovery was a great encouragement to many as they prayed for their Pastor’s restoration.] Though he is so ill, he does not regret anything that he has done, but only wishes that it had been in his power, as it was in his will, to do still more for his Master! Those who are about to be welcomed into the Church, as we gather around the Communion Table, may regret it if they are not good men and true, but if they have first given themselves to the Lord, they will never regret the step they are now taking in identifying themselves with His Church.  
The sum of all that I have said is this—let all who are not the Lord’s come and, first of all, give themselves to Him and then give themselves to His people and to His service. And let those of us who are already Christ’s, keep together and fulfill our vows more than ever we have done—and so prove continually that we have given ourselves to the Lord and to His people, according to His will. Thus shall God be magnified, Christ glorified, His Church increased and the world blessed. God grant it, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 8.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—427, 661, 944.**

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:**  
MY DEAR FRIENDS—The last month of the year is upon us, and mercy, like a river, continues to flow side by side with the pathway of our lives. It is for us to abide faithful to our Lord and to His Truth since He is always faithful to His promise and to His Covenant. We should be foolish, indeed, if we sought for other comfort or confidence than that which we daily find in Jehovah, our God. In HIM let us remain steadfast and immovable while life remains.

I hope I am climbing the hill of returning strength. As yet I have hardly crept upward enough to be quite sure that I am, on the whole, a little above where I was when I left home. My publishers wished to begin the year with a portrait, but I submitted to be taken off—the result is too painful. I do not think that any of my friends would wish to see the picture twice. To those who meet me I do not appear to be much the worse for wear, but when I sit down before the camera, the unflattering sun puts down details of countenance which it would not be pleasing to remember. So the publishers must wait a little, as they will, right cheerfully.

I mention this that I may ask a continuance of the prayers of the sermon readers. I am anxious to be soon in my place, or at least to be making progress toward fitness for it. Meanwhile, may our Lord use these printed sermons for the good of His Church and cause!  
Yours very truly,  
***C. H. Spurgeon***,  
Mentone, December 5, 1891.

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JOINING THE CHURCH  
NO. 3411

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1914.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING OCTOBER 24, 1869.~~***

***~~“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own Selves unto the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.” 2 Corinthians 8:5.~~***

SOME persons are always trying to prove what is customary in the Christian Church. They are always seeking after instances and precedents. The worst of it is that many of these people look for old things that are not old enough—the old things of the Church of Rome, for instance, and mediaeval customs and observances which are nothing but authentic trumpery! If they want the real old solid things, they should go back to the Apostolic times. The best book of Church history from which to gather ritual, true ritual, is the Acts of the Apostles! And when the Christian Church shall go back to that, instead of enquiring about what the primitive Christians did in the second or third century, she will come much nearer to the knowledge of what she ought to do!

Now, our text tells us of one old custom in the Apostles’ days. Those who became Christians first gave themselves to the Lord and then they gave themselves to the Church, according to God’s will. Let us ponder these things in their order. Of course we shall think of the main and most important point first—that action which gives value and beauty to all that follows and is its fruit—

**I.**THE SOUL’S SUPREME GIFT  
The first thing that the original Christians, the Christians of the old and Holy Spirit times did was, “they gave themselves unto the Lord.” This is vital, the one all-important bestowal. Have all of us who are professors that we are Christ’s disciples really given ourselves to the Lord? Are there not in this House of Prayer some who have never thought of doing so, and even some who would reject with contempt the idea of doing so? Oh, my Hearers, the day will come when you will look at these matters in a very different light! And in the next world it will be seen that it would have been your highest wisdom to have given yourselves to the Lord— and your supreme folly to have lived unto self!  
When these early Christians gave themselves to the Lord, the first thing manifestly was *that the giving and the gift were sincere*. Should any here present have given themselves to the Lord, let them ask themselves whether their gift was sincere. These primitive Believers meant what they said. There was a deep reality about their consecration—they gave themselves over to Jesus Christ to be entirely His. Remember that in those times this meant very much more than we are ever made to suffer now. A man who gave himself to Christ in those days was put out of the synagogue if he was a Jew. He was cast out of society if he happened to be a heathen. He was dragged up before the tribunals. He was frequently cast in prison—as frequently beaten with many stripes—and very often he was put to death by fire, or by the sword. But these early Christians knew what was to happen and, knowing it, yet deliberately they gave themselves up to the Lord. Oh, dear professors here present, has your gift of yourselves to Christ been as sincere as that, or did you merely come and make a profession because others did? And have you stuck to that profession, lie though it was, because you did not like the shame of confessing that you had made a mistake? Oh, is it sincere or not? If it is not, God make it so, for it is only that which is of the heart that will stand the trial of the Last Great Day! Lord, deliver us from having any religion in which the heart is not found!  
Their gift of themselves to the Lord was, in the next place, *a willing gift*. All the soldiers of Christ are volunteers and yet they are all pressed men. The Grace of God constrains men to become Christians, but yet only constrains them consistently with the laws of their mind! The freedom of the will is as great a truth as is the Predestination of God. The Grace of God, without violating our wills, makes men willing in the day of God’s power—and they give themselves to Jesus Christ. You cannot be a Christian against your will! How could it be? A servant of God against his will? A child of God against his will? No, it never was so and it never shall be so! Here and now, you Christians, I shall ask you whether you are not cheerfully, gladly, unreservedly the servants of God! I know you are and that bond you made years ago is not irksome to you now, but if you are genuine saints, you repeat it again tonight and you hope to repeat it in life and in death, for you are willingly and exultantly the Lord’s own!  
The gift that these early Christians made was, in the next place, *an intelligent one*. They did not receive into the Church in Paul’s days unintelligent people. They knew that no sponsorship could avail here. They knew, as one would think all rational people ought to know, that the religion of Jesus Christ cannot exist where there is no clear apprehension of the saving Truth of God.  
Only where the understanding was able to grasp the Saviorship of Jesus could there be spiritual life and true conversion. No religious rite, or ceremony, or ordinance could confer this. I have heard ministers tell their congregations, “You were made Christians in your infancy and you ought to stand to the vows then made for you.” Surely every man’s conscience tells him there is not a shadow of ground for such reasoning! What have I to do with, or what do I care about vows that were made for me when I was a child? Were they bad or were they good—they never consulted me and I have nothing to do with them, nor will I have! Whether they promised that I would serve God, or that I would serve the devil, I equally reject their responsibility and their sponsorship! As an intelligent being, I speak for myself before God and none shall speak for me! If I had been dedicated to Moloch, should I in my manhood accept the dedication? God forbid! And even if I were dedicated to Christ, I will not accept a dedication which I know Christ never accepted because He never asked for it. He asks my *personal* dedication. He asks only for intelligent love, intelligent service—and I trust that many of you came to Christ knowing what you did, knowing what repentance meant, knowing what faith meant, having counted the cost of what a life of holiness would be and then deliberately, as men and women of judgment and understanding, said, “O Prince, we enlist beneath Your banner! O Immanuel, write our names in Your muster-roll, for we will be Your servants from now on and forever!” It was a sincere gift, it was a willing gift and it was an intelligent gift that these first Christians made of themselves to the Lord!  
My Brothers and Sisters, it was, moreover, *a complete surrender which they made*. No Christian in the olden times gave himself in part to the Lord and in part reserved himself for idols, or for himself—and had any attempted to have done so, they would have been spurned, for it is of Christ’s rule in the Church that He will have all or none. You must, as a Christian, be all a Christian, or nothing of a Christian! There is no such thing as dividing between God and the devil, between righteousness and sin. The surrender must be without reserve and without limit. If you have truly given yourselves to the Lord, you have given Him your body— no more to be polluted with sin, but to be a Temple of the Holy Spirit. You have given Him your mind—no more to be a free thinker after the boasted free thought of the slaves of skepticism. You have given up your faculties—to sit with them at the feet of Christ to learn of Him, to take His teaching for the Truth of God and His Word the one court of appeal for all questions. You take Him to be your Teacher beyond all dispute and His Doctrine to be unsullied truth for you. You have also given up to Him your tongue to speak for Him, your hands to work for Him, your feet to walk or run for Him—your every faculty of body and mind in beautiful partnership for His service!  
As for your newborn, angelic, spiritual nature—that must emphatically be the Lord’s—and will always be the royal and reigning power within. You are today in the trinity of your nature—body, soul and spirit— altogether Christ’s! And this includes, if you are a sincere Christian, all that you have—all of talents, all of time, all of property, all of influence, all of relationship, all of opportunity. You count nothing to be your own from this time forth, but you say with the spouse, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.”  
Again, the surrender which every true Christian makes is*a surrender to the Lord*. That, my Brothers and Sisters, is where it must begin—with the Lord! We ought not to give ourselves up to the Church until we have given ourselves up to the Lord. And it must never be a giving of ourselves up to priests. Oh, scorn that! Of all the wretches that live, the worst are priests! Of all the curses that ever fell upon earth—I will not except even the devil—the worst is priestcraft! I care not whether it wears the garb of the dissenting minister, or the clergyman of the Established Church, or the Roman Catholic, the Muslim or the heathen—no man can do your religion for you! If any man pretends that he can, or that he can pardon your sin, or do anything for you before God, put him aside—he is a base impostor! Never surrender your thoughts or your mind to any man. Pin your opinions to no man’s coat sleeves. To the Lord make the surrender complete and ample—to His Truth, to His Law, to His Gospel make your surrender as complete as if you made yourselves slaves, or a stone to be carved by His hands! You shall rise in dignity as you sink in selfhood. You shall become free in proportion as you wear God’s bonds. You shall become great as you become little in yourselves. Give yourselves wholly up to God. Mind it is to Him—not to any man, not to any creed, not to any sect—but wholly and entirely to the Lord who loved you from before the foundation of the world! To the Lord who bought you with His heart’s blood! To the Lord whose Spirit sealed your adoption within your souls!  
Mind this, then! Mark it as the first step in all public acts of religion— you must give yourselves first to the Lord! You have no right to talk about joining a Christian Church until you have done that—“first to the Lord.” You have no right to be baptized until you have done that—“first to the Lord.” You have no right to sit at the Communion Table until you have done that—“first to the Lord.” Give yourselves first to the Lord with unfeigned repentance for sin and simple and hearty confidence in Jesus! And then, as a complete giving-up of yourselves to the Lord—you may come to every hallowed act of service, to every privilege-feast of love—but not until then! Oh, Sirs, your sacraments and your ceremonies—God abhors them until first you have given Him your hearts! Vain are your oblations! Your incense is an abomination to Him! It is an evil, and worse than an evil—it is a mockery of God, an insult to Him—until first your heart surrenders itself to Jesus and your manhood becomes the rightful property of God by your willing yielding of it to Him!  
I cannot press this matter by way of questioning everyone present, but still I would like to ask of every conscience, especially of every professing Christian, to answer this question, “My Soul, have you given yourself up, through the Grace of God, to belong to the Lord?” Do you mean that, or is it a farce? Have you made it real, or is it all a sham? Do you feel within your soul tonight a desire to make it more complete a gift? Do you pray for Grace to make it perfect in the future? Do you rest alone upon the precious blood of Jesus? Then do you desire to glorify God so long as you are in this body? Oh, then ‘tis well with you and you may go the next step with me. If not, hands off all ordinances, hands off all promises! There is nothing in the Bible and there is nothing in the Church for you until you first are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus Christ1 And now let us turn to consider briefly the second giving of the soul—  
**II.**THE GIFT THAT FOLLOWS THE SUPREME ONE.  
I want to know this passage aright. I think I do. “They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us”—that is, they gave “their own selves” unto us—by the will of God. After a true Christian has given himself or herself to the Lord, the very next act should be to give themselves to the Christian Church. They should at once assay, as Paul did, to be united to the Brethren of Christ. Somewhere in the district where he lives, if there is a Christian Church, the newborn Believer should at once seek fellowship with others who love his Lord, because saved by His Grace. The right way to do this is to give *himself*. Not his name, his money, not his mere presence, his sympathy, his active labors—all these are part of the gift—but the soul of it all is to give *himself*. In the whole force and weight of his influence, personality and ability, as far as God shall help him, he is to give up to the Church.  
What is involved in this giving up of ourselves to the Christian Church? I will repeat it, so as to refresh the memories of many members here who have forgotten it. It is your *duty* to be united to the Christian Church. What does that mean? What duties spring out of it? There is, first, *consistency of character*. If you make no profession of religion and live as you like—you shall answer for that at the Last Great Day. But if you join a Christian Church, take heed how you live, for your actions may become doubly watched—and will be doubly sinful if you fall into inconsistency! You are a servant in the family and a member of a Christian Church—there must be in you no eye-service! There must be about you nothing which would dishonor a good servant of Jesus Christ! You are a husband—you have no business to be a bad-tempered, domineering tyrant to your wife! If you are, you ought not to be a member of a Christian Church at all! You are a wife—you ought not to be an untidy, idle, novel-reading woman, neglecting your family duties! If so, I do not care what classes you attend, or what Prayer Meetings—you have no business to act like that and profess to be a Christian! You are a Christian, you say, and have joined the Church—then in your trade you have no business to fall into the tricks and knavery that are common on all sides! If you cannot live without being a rogue, do not be a professor of religion! It will be quite as well for you to go to Hell at once, as you are, as to go there with a millstone about your neck through having made a profession, a base and wicked profession, of godliness which you did not carry out. No, Sirs, if you will not, in the strength and spirit of God’s Grace, strive after consistency of moral conduct, you have no right to talk about giving yourselves to the Church, which you will disgrace! You will only sin yourselves into a deeper condemnation. Therefore, stay away from it!  
The next thing that is required of every member of Christ’s Church is *attendance upon the means of Grace*. I do not mean merely Sunday attendance. Any hypocrite comes on a Sunday, but they do not, to my knowledge, all of them, come on Monday to the Prayer Meeting, nor all to the weeknight service on a Thursday. I am pretty certain of this, though some of them may. Weeknight meetings and services are a powerful test. Many cannot come, I know, and I do not ask that domestic duties be sacrificed, even for public worship. But there are some who ought to be present who are not and, indeed, all of you, so far as opportunity will permit, and if you reside within reasonable distance, should come. Take care that you do not become lax in that respect.  
Another duty of all Church members is *to aid and comfort one another*. Just as among Freemasons—give the grip and you get a kindly word and a brotherly recognition—so should it be among Christians, only in a higher sense. You must comfort those that mourn, help those who are poor and, in general, we ought to watch out for each other’s interests, seeing that in the Church we are all members of one family. You are to “do good unto all men, especially unto such as are of the household of faith.” Let your crumbs be given to the sparrows out of doors, but let your Brothers and Sisters have the most and best of what you can give! This is the plain duty of every Christian.  
Every Church member, too, is to try to give himself to the Church in the sense of *doing his share in all Church work*. Shame on the Church member who has no post that he can occupy, who is neither generous with his purse, nor diligent with his hands, nor earnest with his heart, nor speaking with his tongue! You cannot all do all, but each must take his place and niche, for everyone who is doing nothing—what is he but a drone in the hive who will surely be expelled before long? I hope, my dear Friends, I can say that I did this when I joined the Church of Christ. I well remember how I joined it, for I forced myself into the Church of God by telling the minister—who was lax and slow—after I had called four or five times and could not see him, that I had done my duty and if he did not see me, I would call a Church Meeting, myself, and tell them I believed in Christ and ask them if they would have me! I know when I did it, I meant it! I know there was not one among them all who more intensely meant it, then, and I mean it now! I give myself up to Christ and to Christ’s religion. I do not mind speaking upon politics when they touch upon Christianity. I do not mind helping on the common cause of philanthropy, or any work for the good of my follow men—but to no work do I give myself with my whole heart and spirit but to that of spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ’s name! This, I think, ought to be to the Christian the first and last thing. Does your religion cover your drapery, or your drapery your Christianity—which, Sir? You are a politician—right enough—I am glad that there should be an honest man in such a place. Does your religion, however, cover your politics, or do your politics devour your religion? You are a working man. Well, it is an honorable position and all honor to the hard-working man—but does your religion permeate and give quality to your hard work? Do you love Christ with it all? Do you feel all the while that, most of all, you must be a Christian? Then I do not care what you are, whether you are a blacksmith or a chimneysweep, a king or a crossing-sweeper—it is of small account! First and foremost, must you be a Christian and all else must be subordinated to that—for this the Christian Church has a right to expect.  
Now I know there are some who say, “Well, I hope I have given myself to the Lord, but I do not intend to give myself to any *church*, because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Now, why not? “*Because I can be a Christian without it*.”

Now, are you quite clear about that? You can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord’s commands as by being obedient? Well, suppose everybody else did the same? Suppose all Christians in the world said, “I shall not join the Church.” Why there would be no visible Church! There would be no ordinances! That would be a very bad thing and yet, *one* doing it—what is right for one is right for all—why should not all of us do it? Then you believe that if you were to do an act which has a tendency to destroy the visible Church of God, you would be as good a Christian as if you did your best to build up that Church? I do not believe it, Sir! Nor do you, either. You have not any such a belief—it is only a trumpery excuse for something else. There is a brick—a very good one. What is the brick made for? To help to build a house with. It is of no use for that brick to tell you that it is just as good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as it would be in the house. It is a good-fornothing brick! Until it is built into the wall, it is no good! So you rollingstone Christians, I do not believe that you are answering your purpose— you are living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live—and you are much to blame for the injury you do! “Oh,” says one, “though I hope I love the Lord, yet if I were to join the Church, *I would feel it such a bond upon me*.” Just what you ought to feel! Ought you not to feel that you are bound to holiness, now, and bound to Christ, now? Oh, those blessed bonds! If there is anything that could make me feel more bound to holiness than I am, I should like to feel that fetter, for it is only liberty to feel bound to godliness, uprightness and carefulness of living!

“Oh,” says another, “if I were to join the Church, *I am afraid that I would not be able to hold on*.” You expect to hold on, I suppose, *out of the Church*—that is to say, you feel safer in disobeying Christ than in obeying Him! Strange feeling, that! Oh, you had better come and say, “My Master, I know Your saints ought to be united together in Church fellowship, for Churches were instituted by Your Apostles—and I trust I have Grace to carry out the obligation. I have no strength of my own, my Master, but my strength lies in resting upon You—I will follow where You lead and leave the rest to You.”

“Ah, but,” says another, “ *I cannot join the Church—it is so imperfect*.” You then, are perfect, of course! If so, I advise you to go to Heaven and join the Church, there, for certainly you are not fit to join it on earth and would be quite out of place!

“Yes,” says another, “but I see so much that is wrong about Christians.” There is nothing wrong in yourself, I suppose? I can only say, my Brother, that if the Church of God is not better than I am, I am sorry for it. I felt, when I joined the Church, that I would be getting a deal more good than I should be likely to bring into it. And with all the faults I have seen in living these 20 years or more in the Christian Church, I can say, as an honest man, that the members of the Church are the excellent of the earth in whom is all my delight—though they are not perfect, but a long way from it! If, out of Heaven, there are to be found any who really live near to God, it is the members of the Church of Christ.

“Ah,” says another, “ *but there are a rare lot of hypocrites*.” You are very sound and sincere yourself, I suppose? I trust you are so, but then you ought to come and join the Church to add to its soundness by your own. I am sure, my dear Friends, none of you will shut up your shops tomorrow morning, or refuse to take a sovereign when a customer comes in because there happen to be some smashers about who are dealing with bad coins! No, not you! And you do not believe the theory of some, that because some professing Christians are hypocrites, therefore all are, for that would be as though you would say that because some sovereigns are bad, therefore all are bad—which would be clearly wrong, for if all sovereigns were counterfeits, it would never pay for the counterfeiter to try to pass his counterfeits! It is the quantity of good metal that passes off the bad. There is a fine good quantity of respectable golden Christians still in the world and still in the Church—rest assured of that!

“Well,” says one, “I do not think—though I *hope* I am a servant of God—that I can join the Church. You see,*it is so looked down upon*.” Oh, what a blessed look-down that is! I do think, Brothers and Sisters, there is no honor in the world equal to that of being looked down upon by that which is called, “Society,” in this country! The most of people are slaves to what they call, “respectability.” Respectability? When a man puts on a coat on Sunday that he has paid for. When he worships God by night or by day. Whether men see him or not—when he is an honest, straightforward man—I do not care how small his earnings are, he is a respectable man! And he need never bend his neck to the idea of Society or its artificial respectability!

These various kinds of humbug, for they are no other, keep many from joining the Christian Church because they are afraid of being looked down upon by respectable people in Society. I read in a paper only yesterday that it would be no use to create Nonconformist peers, because in the next generation they would cease to be Nonconformist and become respectable in their religion—*and I am afraid it is true*! It is outrageous that as soon as some persons rise in social position they renounce the Church to which they gave themselves when they gave themselves to the Lord! The day will come when the poorest Christian will be exalted above the proudest peer that did not fear God—when God will take out of the hovels and cottages of England a peerage of an Imperial race that will put to the blush all the kings and princes of the world! And these He will set above the seraphim when others will be cast from His Presence!

I say to any of you who will not join this Church because doing so would lower your respectability—neither I or Jesus Christ asks you to join it! If these are the gods you worship—Society and Respectability—go to your beggarly gods and worship them, but God will require it of your hands in the Day of Account. There is nothing better than the service of Christ! For my own part, to be despised, pointed at, hooted in the streets, called by all manner of evil names—I would accept it all, sooner than all the stars of knighthoods and peerages if the service of Christ necessitated it, for this is the true honor of the Christian when he truly serves his Master! The day is coming when the Lord will divide between those that love Him and those that love Him not—and every day is getting ready for that last division. This very night the division is being made! In the preaching of the Gospel it is being carried out. Let each man take his stand and ask himself the question—Are you with Christ or with Belial? Are you with God, with Christ, with the precious blood, or do you still rank with sinful pleasures and their delights? As you will have to answer for it when the skies are on a blaze and the earth reels, and the Judgment trumpet summons you before the Great White Throne, so answer it now! And you brave spirits who have loved your Savior—if you have never yet joined His army, come and enlist now! And you loving spirits who are tender and who have shrunk back awhile, come forward now—

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

Today stand up for Jesus! Today be willing to be the off-scouring of all things for His name’s sake. And then, when He comes in His Glory, yours shall be the reward, a reward that shall far outweigh any losses that you can sustain today! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession shall be saved.” Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and may His blessing rest upon you! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2 CORINTHIANS 8.***

The Apostle is writing concerning a certain collection which was being made for the poor saints of Jerusalem. It was from Jerusalem that the Gospel had spread into Greece and, therefore, those who had received spiritual things from the poor Jews at Jerusalem were bound by every tie of holy brotherhood to remember their benefactors in the time of famine. The Apostle stirs up the Corinthian Church about this contribution.

**Verse 1.** *Moreover, brethren, we make known to you.*Or, “we make you to know.”  
**1, 2.***Of the Grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia. How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their generosity.*It is good to stir one Christian up by the example of another and Paul excites those at Corinth by the example of the Churches in Macedonia—especially, no doubt, the Church at Philippi. He says that they were in great affliction and they were very poor, but yet they had been so filled with the Grace of God that their very poverty had enabled them to “abound to the riches of their generosity,” for what they gave became more in proportion because they were so poor.

**3.***For to their power, I bear record, yes, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.* Without any pressure! Without even a hint— spontaneously!

**4.***Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*“Take upon us the communion,” for that blessed word “*Koinonia*,” communion, is applied not only to the Lord’s Supper and to such fellowship as that, but to communion with poor saints—fellowship with them by helping their necessities. And Paul says that the Macedonian Churches pressed it upon him that he should take their money and go with it to Jerusalem and distribute it. He appears to have been very reluctant to do this, but they pressed it upon him.

**5.***And this they did, not as we hoped.* That is, “according to our hopes.”  
**6.***But first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.*They first gave of themselves to God and then asked Paul to take it that he might use it for God in the distribution of Christian charity among the poor saints at Jerusalem.  
**6, 7.***So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same Grace also. Therefore, as you abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound in this Grace also.* They were a famous Church—this Church at Corinth, having gifted men in abundance more than other Churches—to the extent that they did not have one man for a pastor because they so abounded in brethren able to edify. And he urges them, as they were forward in all things, not to be backward in their generosity.  
**8.***I speak not by commandment.* “I do not wish to put it upon you as a law. I want it to be spontaneous on your part.”  
**8, 9.***But by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.*What a touching argument! How could he find a better? Help your Brothers and Sisters in Jerusalem that are in need, even though that help should pinch you, for you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and what He did, and what He gave that you might be rich!  
**10.***And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.* They had begun last year—perhaps not a year ago, but some months ago in the previous year—to talk the matter over and to make promises. And they had been among the first to undertake the work, but as yet they had not done it.  
**11.***Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance, also, out of that which you have.*They had not a minister, you see, and what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business—and so the contribution was not carried out. And in general, the Church at Corinth is about the worst in the New Testament, and that for this very reason—that it had not any oversight. It is the pattern Church of certain Brothers whom we have among us this day—in the very example of them! And they quote this as an example, whereas it is put here as a beacon, and a very excellent beacon, too, to warn us against any such thing! Everything was sixes and sevens, good people as they were. Seeing that they had no order and no discipline, nothing got done, and they wearied the Apostle’s life because of that. God would have things done decently and in order—and He gives to His Churches, pastors after His own heart! And when He does, then is the Church able to carry out her desires and her activities with something like practical common-sense. But here a year ago, months ago, they had talked the matter over and made a promise—and now Paul has to say to them, “Now, therefore, perform the doing of it.” They had no deacons to look them up, I will be bound to say.  
**12-14.***For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not. For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened, but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their need—that their abundance may also be a supply for your need—that there may be equality.* It is in the Christian Church, alone, that we shall ever find liberty, equality and fraternity thoroughly represented. There, by the life of Christ within His people spiritually, that shall be realized, and the Apostle backs up this thought of his, which Bengel has beautifully put when he says, “We ought to minister of our luxuries to the comfort of others, and of our comforts to the necessities of others.” So we should, to keep up a balance that when one suffers needs and another abounds, there may be an equality made.  
**15.***As it is written, he that had gathered much.*Much manna  
**15-17.***Had nothing left over: and he that had gathered little had no lack. But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For, indeed, he accepted the exhortation, but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.* Or, “he is coming to you,” for he bore this letter to them.  
**18.***And we have sent with him the Brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches:* And what Brother was that? Nobody knows. And a Brother who has praise in all the Churches may be well content to have his name forgotten! Oh, it would be a sweet thing to have praise in all the Churches anonymously, so that it all might go up to God. It may have been Luke. Probably it was. It may not have been Luke. Probably it was not. We do not know who it was. But it is not important. What does it matter? As Mr. Whitfield used to say, “Let my name perish, but let Christ’s name last forever.” “And we have sent with him the Brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches.”  
**19.***And not that only, but who was also chosen of the Churches to travel with us with this Grace,*Or “with this gift.”  
**19, 20.***Which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind. Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us.*He had other brethren associated with him lest anybody should even hint that Paul was benefited thereby. And, oh, in the distribution of the Lord’s money, it becomes us to be exceedingly careful! Paul adds this.  
**21.***Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.* That the thing might be so clear and transparent that while God knew that Paul was honest, everybody else might know it, too, for others had been associated with him.  
**22, 23.***And we have sent with them our Brother whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ.* How beautiful to see Paul so praising his brethren—very humble, commonplace persons as compared with himself, but he admires the Grace of God in them. How very different from the general spirit of depreciation that you find even among Christians—afraid to praise anybody lest they should be exalted above measure. You might leave that to the devil! He will take care that they are not exalted above measure but you need not be as particular about that. Often the best thing that can be done for God’s servant is to encourage him, for, though you may not know it, he may have a multitude of depressions, heavy toil and earnest care and much watching which may bring him down. Paul speaks well of the Brotherhood—let us try to do the same. But what does he call these simple-minded men who are going with him to distribute this money? Does he call them the *Glory of Christ*? Yes! Christ is the Glory of God and His people are the Glory of Christ! He glories whenever He is glorified by them! They are the result of the travail of His soul and in that sense they are His Glory.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2232 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST’S MOTIVE AND OURS  
NO. 2232

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

***~~“For your sakes.”  
2 Corinthians 8:9.  
“For His sake.”  
Philippians 1:29.~~***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST  
NO. 151

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.~~***

***~~“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9.~~***

The Apostle, in this chapter, was endeavoring to stir up the Corinthians to liberality. He desired them to contribute something for those who were the poor in the flock, that he might be able to minister to their necessities. He tells them that the Churches of Macedonia, though very much poorer than the Church at Corinth, had done even beyond their means for the relief of the Lord’s family and he exhorts the Corinthians to do the same.

But suddenly recollecting that examples taken from inferiors seldom have a powerful effect, he lays aside his argument drawn from the Church of Macedonia and he holds before them a reason for liberality which the hardest heart can scarcely resist, if once that reason be applied by the Spirit. “My Brethren,” said he, “there is One above, by whom you hope you have been saved, One whom you call Master and Lord. Now if you will but imitate Him you cannot be ungenerous or illiberal. For, my Brethren, I tell you a thing which is an old thing with you and an undisputed truth—‘For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.’ Let this constrain you to benevolence.”

O Christian, whenever you are inclined to an avaricious withholding from the Church of God, think of your Savior giving up all that He had to serve you and can you then, when you behold self-denial so noble—can you then be selfish and regard yourself? When the claims of the poor of the flock are pressed upon you remember Jesus. Imagine you see Him look you in the face and say to you, “I gave Myself for you and do you withhold yourself from Me? If you do so, you know not My love in all its heights and depths and lengths and breadths.”

And now, dear Friends, the argument of the Apostle shall be our subject today. It divides itself in an extremely simple manner. We have first, the pristine condition of our Savior—“*He was rich*.” We have next, *His condescension—*“He became poor.” And then we have *the effect and result of His poverty—*“That we might be made rich.” We shall then close by giving you a doctrine, a question and an exhortation. May God bless all these and help us to tell them aright.

**I.**First, then, our text tells us THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS RICH. Think not that our Savior began to live when He was born of the Virgin Mary.

Imagine not that He dates His existence from the manger at Bethlehem. Remember He is the Eternal. He is before all things and by Him all things consist. There was never a time in which there was not God. And just so, there was never a period in which there was not Christ Jesus our Lord. He is self-existent, has no beginning of days, neither end of years. He is the immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Savior.

Now, in the past eternity which had elapsed before His mission to this world, we are told that Jesus Christ was rich and to those of us who believe His glories and trust in His divinity, it is not hard to see how He was so. Jesus was rich in possessions. Lift up your eye, Believer, and for a moment review the riches of my Lord Jesus before He condescended to become poor for you. Behold Him sitting upon His Throne and declaring His own all-sufficiency. “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. Mine are the hidden treasures of gold. Mine are the pearls that the diver cannot reach. Mine every precious thing that earth has seen.”

The Lord Jesus might have said, “I can stretch My scepter from the east even to the west and all is Mine, the whole of this world and yonder worlds that glitter in far off space, all are Mine. The illimitable expanse of unmeasured space, filled as it is with worlds that I have made—all this is Mine. Fly upward and you cannot reach the summit of the hill of My dominions. Dive downwards and you can not enter into the innermost depths of My sway. From the highest Throne in glory to the lowest pit of Hell, all, all is mine without exception. I can put the broad arrow of My kingdom upon everything that I have made.”

But He had more—which makes men richer still. We have heard of kings in olden times who were fabulously rich and when their riches were summed up we read in the old romances, “And this man was possessed of the philosopher’s stone, whereby he turned all things into gold.” Surely all the treasures that he had before were as nothing compared with this precious stone that brought up the rear. Now, whatever might be the wealth of Christ in things created, He has the *power of creation* and therein lies His boundless wealth. If He had pleased He could have spoken worlds into existence.

He had but to lift His finger and a new universe as boundless as the present would have leaped into existence. At the will of His mind, millions of angels would have stood before Him. Legions of bright spirits would have flashed into being. He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. He who said “Light, be,” and light was had power to say to all things, “Be,” and they should be. Herein, then, lies His riches. This creating power is one of the brightest jewels of His crown.

We call men rich, too, who have *honor* and though men have ever so much wealth, yet if they be in disgrace and shame they must not reckon themselves among the rich. But our Lord Jesus has honor—honor such as none but a Divine Being could receive. When He sat upon His Throne, before He relinquished the glorious mantle of His sovereignty to become a man, all earth was filled with His glory. He could look both beneath and all around Him and the inscription, “Glory be unto God,” was written over all space. Day and night the smoking incense of praise ascended before Him from golden vials held by spirits who bowed in reverence.

The harps of myriads of cherubim and seraphim continually thrilled with His praise and the voices of all those mighty hosts were ever eloquent in adoration. It may be that on set days the princes from the far-off realms, the kings, the mighty ones of His boundless realms came to the court of Christ and brought each His annual revenue. Oh, who can tell but that in the vast eternity at certain grand eras, the great bell was rung and all the mighty hosts that were created gathered together in solemn review before His Throne? Who can tell the high holiday that was kept in the court of Heaven when these bright spirits bowed before His Throne in joy and gladness and, all united, raised their voices in shouts and hallelujahs such as mortal ear has never heard?

Oh, can you tell the depths of the rivers of praise that flowed hard by the city of God? Can you imagine to yourselves the sweetness of that harmony that perpetually poured into the ear of Jesus, Messiah, King, Eternal, equal with God His Father? No. At the thought of the glory of His kingdom and the riches and majesty of His power our souls are spent within us, our words fail, we cannot utter the tithe of His glories.

Nor was He poor in any other sense. He that has wealth on earth and honor, too, is poor if he has not *love*. I would rather be the pauper, dependent upon charity and have love, than I would be the prince, despised and hated, whose death is looked for as a benefit. Without love, man—give him all the diamonds and pearls and gold that mortal has conceived—is poor. But Jesus was not poor in love. When He came to earth, He did not come to get our love because His soul was solitary. Oh no, His Father had a full delight in Him from all eternity. The heart of Jehovah, the first Person of the Sacred Trinity, was divinely, immutably linked to Him. He was Beloved of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.

The three Persons took a sacred complacency and delight in each other. And besides that, how was He loved by those bright spirits who had not fallen! I cannot tell what countless orders and creatures there are created who still stand fast in obedience to God. It is not possible for us to know whether there are, or not, as many races of created beings as we know there are created men on earth. We cannot tell but that in the boundless regions of space, there are worlds inhabited by beings infinitely superior to us—but certain it is there were the holy angels and they loved our Savior. They stood day and night with wings outstretched, waiting for His commands, hearkening to the voice of His word and when He bade them fly, there was love in their countenance and joy in their hearts.

They loved to serve Him and it is not all fiction that when there was war in Heaven and when God cast out the devil and his legions, then the elect angels showed their love to Him, being valiant in fight and strong in power. He wanted not our love to make Him happy, He was rich enough in love without us.

Now, though a spirit from the upper world should come to tell you of the riches of Jesus he could not do it. Gabriel, in your flights you have mounted higher than my imagination dares to follow you but you have never gained the summit of the Throne of God—

***“Dark with insufferable light your skirts appear.”***Jesus, who is he that could look upon the brow of Your Majesty, who is he that could comprehend the strength of the arm of Your might? You are God, You are infinite and we poor finite things are lost in You. The insect of an hour cannot comprehend Yourself. We bow before You, we adore You. You are God over all, blessed forever. But as for the comprehension of Your boundless riches, as for being able to tell Your treasures, or to reckon up Your wealth—that is impossible. All we know is that the wealth of God, that the treasures of the infinite, that the riches of eternity, were all Your own—You were rich beyond all thought.

**II.**The Lord Jesus Christ, then, was rich. We all believe that, though none of us can truly speak it forth. Oh how surprised angels were when they were first informed that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Light and Majesty, intended to shroud Himself in clay and become a babe and live and die! We know not how it was first mentioned to the angels but when the rumor first began to get afloat among the sacred hosts you may imagine what strange wonderment there was. What? Is it true that He whose crown was all arrayed with stars, would lay that crown aside? What? Is it certain that He about whose shoulders was cast the purple of the universe, would become a man, dressed in a peasant’s garment?

Could it be true that He who is everlasting and immortal would one day be nailed to a Cross? Oh, how their wonderment increased! They desired to look into it. And when He descended from on high, they followed Him, for Jesus was “seen of angels,” and seen in a special sense. They looked upon Him in rapturous amazement wondering what it all could mean. “He for our sakes became poor.” Do you see Him as on that day of Heaven’s eclipse He did ungird His majesty? Oh, can you conceive the yet increasing wonder of the Heavenly hosts when the deed was actually done? When they saw the tiara taken off, when they saw Him unbind His girdle of stars and cast away His sandals of gold?

Can you conceive it, when He said to them, “I do not disdain the womb of the virgin, I am going down to earth to become a man”? Can you picture them as they declared they would follow Him! Yes, they followed Him as near as He would permit them. And when they came to earth, they began to sing, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.” Nor would they go away till they had made the shepherds wonder and till Heaven had hung out new stars in honor of the new-born King. And now wonder, you angels, the Infinite has become an infant. He, upon whose shoulders the universe does hang, hangs at His mother’s breast.

He who created all things and bears up the pillars of creation has now become so weak that He must be carried by a woman! And oh, wonder you that knew Him in His riches, while you admire His poverty! Where sleeps the new-born king? Had He the best room in Caesar’s palace? Has a cradle of gold been prepared for Him and pillows of down, on which to rest His head? No, where the ox fed, in the dilapidated stable, in the manger—there the Savior lies, swathed in the swaddling bands of the children of poverty. Nor there does He rest long—on a sudden His mother must carry him to Egypt—He goes there and becomes a stranger in a strange land.

When He comes back, see Him that made the worlds handle the hammer and the nails, assisting His father in the trade of a carpenter! Mark Him who has put the star on high and made them glisten in the night! Mark Him without one star of glory upon His brow—a simple child as other children. Yet leave for awhile the scenes of His childhood and His earlier life. See Him when He becomes a man and now you may say, indeed, that for our sakes He did become poor. Never was there a poorer man than Christ. He was the prince of poverty. He was the reverse of Crisus—*he*might be on the top of the hill of riches, *Christ* stood in the lowest vale of poverty.

Look at His garment, it is woven from the top throughout, the garment of the poor! As for His food, He oftentimes did hunger and always was dependent upon the charity of others for the relief of His wants! He who scattered the harvest over the broad acres of the world, had not sometimes anything to stay the pangs of hunger. He who dug the springs of the ocean, sat upon a well and said to a Samaritan woman, “Give me to drink!” He rode in no chariot, He walked His weary way, foot sore, over the flints of Galilee. He had not where to lay His head.

He looked upon the fox as it hurried to its burrow and the fowl as it went to its resting place and He said, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head.” He who had once been waited on by angels, becomes the servant of servants, takes a towel, girds Himself and washes His disciples’ feet. He who was once honored with the hallelujahs of ages, is now spit upon and despised! He who was loved by His Father and had abundance of the wealth of affection, could say, “He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.”

Oh for words to picture the humiliation of Christ! What leagues of distance between Him that sat upon the Throne and Him that died upon the Cross! Oh, who can tell the mighty chasm between yonder heights of glory and the Cross of deepest woe! Trace Him, Christian, He has left you His manger, to show you how God came down to man. He has bequeathed you His Cross, to show you how man can ascend to God. Follow Him, follow Him all His journey through. Begin with Him in the wilderness of

temptation. See Him fasting there and hungering, with the wild beasts around Him.

Trace Him along His weary way, as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief—He is the bye-word of the drunkard, He is the song of the scorner and He is hooted at by the malicious. Look at Him as they point their finger at Him and call Him, “drunken man and wine-bibber!” Follow Him along His *via* dolorosa, until at last you meet Him among the olives of Gethsemane. Look at Him sweating great drops of blood! Follow Him to the pavement of Gabbatha. See Him pouring out rivers of gore beneath the cruel whips of Roman soldiers! With weeping eye follow Him to the Cross of Calvary. See Him nailed there! Mark His poverty, so poor, that they have stripped Him naked from head to foot and exposed Him to the face of the sun!

So poor, that when He asked them for water they gave Him vinegar to drink! So poor, that His unpillowed head is girt with thorns in death! Oh, Lion of Man, I know not which to admire most—Your height of glory, or Your depths of misery! Oh, Man slain for us, shall we not exalt You? God, over all, blessed forever, shall we not give You the loudest song? “He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.” If I had a tale to tell you this day of some king, who, out of love to some fair maiden, left his kingdom and became a peasant like herself, you would stand and wonder and would listen to the charming tale.

But when I tell of God concealing His dignity to become our Savior, your hearts are scarcely touched. Ah, my Friends, we know the tale so well, we have heard it so often! And, alas, some of us tell it so badly that we cannot expect that you would be as interested in it as the subject does demand. But surely, as it is said of some great works of architecture, that though they be seen every morning there is always something fresh to wonder at—so we might say of Christ—that though we saw Him every day, we should always see fresh reason to love and wonder and adore. “He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.”

I have thought that there is one peculiarity about the poverty of Christ that ought not to be forgotten by us. Those who were nursed upon the lap of want feel less the woes of their condition. But I have met with others whose poverty I could pity. They were once rich. Their very dress which now hangs about them in tatters tells you that they once stood foremost in the ranks of life. You meet them among the poorest of the poor. You pity them more than those who have been born and bred to poverty because they have known something better. Among all those who are poor, I have always found the greatest amount of suffering in those who had seen better days.

I can remember, even now, the look of some who have said to me when they have received assistance—and I have given it as delicately as I could, lest it should look like charity—“Ah, Sir, I have known better days.” And the tear stood in the eye and the heart was smitten at bitter recollections. The least slight to such a person, or even too unmasked a kindness, becomes like a knife cutting the heart. “I have known better days,” sounds like a knell over their joys. And verily our Lord Jesus might have said in all His sorrows, “I have known better days than these.”

Methinks when He was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, it must have been hard for Him to have restrained Himself from dashing the devil into pieces. If I had been the Son of God, methinks feeling as I do now, if that devil had tempted me I should have dashed him into the nethermost Hell in the twinkling of an eye! And then conceive the patience our Lord must have had, standing on the pinnacle of the temple, when the devil said, “Fall down and worship me.” He would not touch him, the vile deceiver, but let him do what he pleased. Oh, what might of misery and love there must have been in the Savior’s heart when He was spit upon by the men He had created!

When the eyes He Himself had filled with vision, looked on Him with scorn and when the tongues, to which He Himself had given utterance, hissed and blasphemed Him! Oh, my Friends, if the Savior had felt as we do, and I doubt not He did feel in some measure as we do—only by great patience He curbed Himself—methinks He might have swept them all away. And, as they said, He might have come down from the Cross and delivered Himself and destroyed them utterly. It was mighty patience that could bear to tread this world beneath His feet and not to crush it, when it so ill-treated its Redeemer. Marvel at the patience which restrained Him. Marvel also at the poverty He must have felt, the poverty of spirit, when they rebuked Him and He reviled them not again—when they scoffed Him and yet He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He had seen brighter days. That made His misery more bitter and His poverty more poor.

**III.**Well, now we come to the third point—WHY DID THE SAVIOR COME TO DIE AND BE POOR? Hear this, you sons of Adam—the Scripture says, “For your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich.” For *your*sakes. Now, when I address you as a great congregation, you will not feel the beauty of this expression, “For your sake.” Husband and wife, walking in the fear of God, let me take you by the hand and look you in the face—let me repeat those words “for your sakes He became poor.” Young man, let a Brother of your own age look on you and repeat these words—“Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor.” Gray-headed Believer, let me look on you and say the same—“For your sake He became poor.”

Brethren, take the word home and see if it does not melt you—“Though He was rich, yet for *my* sake He became poor.” Beg for the influences of the Spirit upon that truth and it will make your heart devout and your spirit loving—“I am the chief of sinners, yet for *my* sake He died.” Come let me hear you speak, let us bring the sinner here and let him soliloquize—“I cursed Him, I blasphemed Him and yet for *my* sake He was made poor. I

scoffed at His minister, I broke His Sabbath, yet for my sake was He made poor. What? Jesus, would You die for one who was not worth Your having? Would You shed Your blood for one who would have shed Your blood, if it had been in his power?

What? Would You die for one so worthless, so vile?” “Yes, yes,” says Jesus, “I shed that blood for *you*.” Now let the saint speak—“I,” he may say, “have professed to love Him but how cold my love! How little have I served Him! How far have I lived from Him! I have not had sweet communion with Him as I ought to have had. When have I been spending and spent in His service? And yet, my Lord, You do say, “for *your* sake I was made poor.” “Yes,” says Jesus, “see Me in My miseries. See Me in My agonies. See Me in My death—all these I suffered for *your* sake.” Will you not love Him who loved you to *your*great excess and became poor for your sake?

That, however, is not the point to which we wish to bring you, just now. The point is this, *the reason why Christ died* was “that we through His poverty might be rich.” He became poor from His riches, that our poverty might become rich out of His poverty. Brethren, we have now a joyful theme before us—those who are partakers of the Savior’s blood are rich. All those for whom the Savior died, having believed in His name and given themselves to Him, are this day rich. And yet I have some of you here who cannot call a foot of land your own. You have nothing to call your own today—you know not how you will be supported through another week.

You are poor and yet if you are a child of God I know that Christ’s end is answered in you. You are *rich*. No, I did not mock you when I said you were rich. I did not taunt you—you are. You are really rich—you are *rich in possession*s. You have in your possession now things more costly than gems, more valuable than gold and silver. Silver and gold have I none, you may say. But if you can say afterwards, “Christ is All,” you have outspoken all that the man can say who had piles of gold and silver.

“But,” you say, “I have nothing.” Man, you have all things! Know you not what Paul said? He declares that “things present and things to come and this world and life and death, all are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” The great machinery of Providence has no wheel which does not revolve for you. The great economy of Grace with all its fullness is yours. Remember that adoption, justification, sanctification—are all yours. You have everything that heart can wish in spiritual things and you have everything that is necessary for this life. For you know who has said, “having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.”

You are rich—rich with true riches and not with the riches of a dream. There are times when men by night do scrape gold and silver together, like shells upon the sea shore. But when they wake in the morning they find themselves penniless. But yours are everlasting treasures. Yours are solid riches. When the sun of eternity shall have melted the rich man’s gold away, yours shall endure. A rich man has a *cistern* full of riches. But a poor saint has got a *fountain* of mercy. And he is the richer who has a fountain.

Now if my neighbor is a rich man, he may have as much wealth as ever he pleases—it is only a cistern full—it will soon be exhausted. But a Christian has a fountain that ever flows and let him draw, draw on forever—the fountain will still keep on flowing. However large may be the stagnant pool if it is stagnant, it is but of little worth. But the flowing stream, though it seem to be but small, needs but time and it will have produced an immense volume of precious water. You are never to have a great pool of riches, they are always to keep on flowing to you.

“Your bread shall be given you and your water shall be pure.” As old William Huntingdon says, “The Christian has a hand-basket portion. Many a man, when his daughter marries, does not give her much. But he says to her, ‘I shall send you a sack of flour one day and so-and-so the next day and now and then a sum of gold. And as long as I live I will always send you something.’ ” Says he, “She will get a great deal more than her Sister who has had a thousand pounds down. That is how my God deals with me. He gives to the rich man all at once but to me day by day.”

Ah, Egypt, you were rich when your granaries were full but those granaries might be emptied. Israel were far richer when they could not see their granaries but only saw the manna drop from Heaven, day by day. Now, Christian, that is your portion—the portion of the fountain always flowing and not of the cistern—full and soon to be emptied.

But remember, O saint, that your wealth does not all lie in your possessions just now. Remember you are rich in *promises*. Let a man be ever so poor as to the metal that he has—let him have in his possession promissory notes from rich and true men—and he says, “I have no gold in my purse but here is a note for such-and-such a sum—I know the signature, I can trust the firm—I am rich, though I have no metal in hand.” And so the Christian can say, “If I have no riches in possession, I have the promise of them—my God has said, ‘No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly’—that is a promise that makes me rich. He has told me, ‘My bread shall be given me and my water shall be sure.’ I cannot doubt His signature, I know His word to be authentic. And as for His faithfulness, I would not so dishonor Him as to think He would break His promise. No, the promise is as good as the thing itself. If it is God’s promise, it is just as sure that I shall have it, as if I had it.”

But then the Christian is very rich in *reversion*. When a certain old man dies that I know of, I believe that I shall be so immensely rich that I shall dwell in a place that is paved with gold—the walls of which are built with precious stones. But, my Friends, you have all got an old man to die and when he is dead if you are followers of Jesus, you will come in for your inheritance. You know who that man is, he is very often spoken of in Scripture—may the old man in you die daily and may the new man be strengthened in you. When that old man of corruption, your old nature,

shall totter into its grave, then you will come in for your property.

Christians are like heirs, they have not much in their minority and they are minors now—but when they come of age they shall have the whole of their estate. If I meet a minor, he says, “That is my property.” “You cannot sell it Sir, you cannot lay hold of it.” “No,” says he, “I know I cannot but it is mine when I am one-and-twenty. I shall then have complete control but at the same time it is as really mine now as it ever will be. I have a legal right to it and though my guardians take care of it for me it is mine, not theirs.”

And now, Christian, in Heaven there is a crown of gold which is yours today. It will be no more yours when you have it on your head than it is now. I remember to have heard it reported that I once spoke in metaphor and bade Christians look at all the crowns hanging in rows in Heaven— very likely I did say it—but if not, I will say it now. Up, Christian, see the crowns all ready and mark your own—stand and wonder at it—see with what pearls it is dressed and how heavy it is with gold! And that is for your head, your poor aching head. Your poor tortured brain shall yet have that crown for its arraying!

And see that garment! It is stiff with gems and white like snow. And that is for you! When your week-day garment shall be done with this shall be the raiment of your everlasting Sabbath. When you have worn out this poor body, there remains for you, “A house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.” Up to the summit, Christian! And survey your inheritance and when you have surveyed it all, when you have seen your present possessions, your promised possessions, your entailed possessions— then remember that all these were bought by the poverty of your Savior!

Look upon all you have and say, “Christ bought them for me.” Look on every promise and see the blood stains on it. Yes, look, too, on the harps and crowns of Heaven and read the bloody purchase! Remember, you could never have been anything but a damned sinner unless Christ had bought you! Remember if He had remained in Heaven you would forever have remained in Hell. Unless He had shrouded and eclipsed His own honor you would never have had a ray of light to shine upon you. Therefore bless His dear name, extol Him, trace every stream to the Fountain. And bless Him who is the source and the Fountain of everything you have. Brethren, “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich.”

**IV.**I have not done. I have three things now to say and I shall say them as briefly as possible.  
The first is a*doctrine*. The doctrine is this—If Christ in His poverty made us rich, what will He do now that He is glorified? If the Man of Sorrows saved my soul, will the Man now exalted suffer it to perish? If the dying Savior availed for our salvation, should not the living, interceding Savior, abundantly secure it?—  
***“He lived, He lives and sits above,  
Forever interceding there.  
What shall divide us from His love,  
Or what shall sink us in despair?”***  
If when the nail was in Your hand, O Jesus, You did rout all Hell, can You be defeated now that You have grasped the scepter? If, when the crown of thorns was put about Your brow You did prostrate the dragon, can You be overcome and conquered now that the acclamations of angels are ascending to You? No, my Brethren, we can trust the glorified Jesus— we can repose ourselves on His bosom. If He were so strong in poverty, what must He be in riches?  
The next thing is a *question*. That question is a simple one. My Hearer, have you been made rich by Christ’s poverty? You say, “I am good enough without Christ, I want no Savior.” Oh, you are like her of old who said, “I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, whereas, says the Lord, ‘You are naked and poor and miserable.’ ” O you that live by good works and think that you shall go to Heaven because you are as good as others—all the merits you can ever earn yourselves are good for nothing. All that human nature ever made turns to a blot and a curse. If those are your riches, you are no saints. But can you say this morning, my Hearers, “I am by nature without anything and God has by the power of His Spirit taught me my nothingness”?  
My Brother, my Sister, have you taken Christ to be your All in All? Can you say this day, with an unfaltering tongue, “My Lord, my God, I have nothing. But You are my all”? Come, I beseech you, do not shirk the question. You are careless, heedless, answer it, then, in the negative. But when you have answered it, I beseech you beware of what you have said. You are sinful, you feel it. Come, I beseech you, and lay hold on Jesus. Remember, Christ came to make those rich that have nothing of their own. My Savior is a Physician. If you can heal yourself, He will have nothing to do with you.  
Remember, my Savior came to clothe the naked. He will clothe you if you have not a rag of your own. But unless you let Him do it from head to foot, He will have nothing to do with you. Christ says He will never have a partner, He will do all or none. Come then, have you given up all to Christ? Have you no reliance and trust save in the Cross of Jesus? Then you have answered the question well. Be happy, be Joyous. If death should surprise you the next hour, you are secure. Go on your way and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.  
And now I close with the third thing, which is an *exhortation*. Sinner, do you this morning feel your poverty? Then look to Christ’s poverty. O you that are today troubled on account of sin—and there are many such here—God has not let you alone, He has been plowing your heart with the sharp plowshare of conviction. You are this day saying, “What must I do to be saved?” You would give all you have to have an interest in Jesus Christ. Your soul is this day sorely broken and tormented.  
O Sinner, if you would find salvation you must find it in the veins of Jesus. Now wipe that tear from your eye a moment and look here. Do you see Him high where the Cross rears its terrible form? There He is. Do you see Him? Mark His head. See the crown of thorns and the beaded drops still standing on His temples? Mark His eyes. They are just closing in death. Can you see the lines of agony, so desperate in woe? Do you see His hands? See the streamlets of blood flowing down them? Hark, He is about to speak. “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me!”  
Did you hear that, Sinner? Pause a moment longer, take another survey of His Person—how emaciated His body and how sick His spirit! Look at Him. But hark, He is about to speak again—“It is finished.” What does He mean by that? He means that He has finished your salvation. Look to Him and find salvation there. Remember, to be saved, all that God wants of a penitent is to look to Jesus. My life for this—if you will risk your all on Christ you shall be saved. I will be Christ’s bondsman today to be bound forever if He breaks His promise.  
He has said, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” It is not your hands that will save you. It must be your eyes. Look from those works whereby you hope to be saved. No longer strive to weave a garment that will not hide your sin. Throw away that shuttle. It is only filled with cobwebs. What garment can you weave with that? Look to Him and you are saved. Never sinner looked and was lost. Do you mark that eye there? One glance will save you, one glimpse will set you free. Do you say, “I am a guilty sinner?” Your guilt is the reason why I bid you look. Do you say “I cannot look”? Oh, may God help you to look now.  
Remember, Christ will not reject you. You may reject Him. Remember now, there is the cup of mercy put to your lips by the hand of Jesus. I know if you feel your need, Satan may tempt you not to drink but he will not prevail. You will put your lips, feebly and faintly, perhaps, to it. But oh, do but sip it and the first draught shall give you bliss and the deeper you shall drink, the more of Heaven shall you know. Sinner, believe on Jesus Christ. Hear the whole Gospel preached to you. It is written in God’s Word, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Hear me translate it—He that believes and is *immersed* shall be saved. Believe! Trust yourself on the Savior! Make a profession of your faith in Baptism and then you may rejoice in Jesus, that He has saved you.  
But remember not to make a profession till you have believed— remember, Baptism is nothing until you have faith. Remember, it is a farce and a falsehood until you have first believed. And afterwards it is nothing but the profession of your faith. Oh, believe that, cast yourself upon Christ and you are saved forever! The Lord add His blessing, for the Savior’s sake. Amen.

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POVERTY AND RICHES  
NO. 2364

***~~A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 10 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 22, 1888.~~***

***~~“For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich,”  
2 Corinthians 8:9.~~***

I AM very weary, tonight, having had day after day, almost without cessation, to make a supreme effort to address large assemblies. I felt, therefore, that the only subject that I could handle would be some theme that was restful and did not require any great thought on the part of the preacher or his hearers. I want to have a bath and rest myself while I am speaking to you, and, perhaps, it may not hurt you, either, for I doubt not that you often grow weary with daily cares. So we shall have no difficult problem, no mysterious doctrine to consider at this time, but shall only talk about things that we know.

The text begins, “For *you know* the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” You know this, for you believe it. You have no doubt, whatever, that there was a wondrous graciousness in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is an attribute of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—and you know that there was infinite Grace, favor, compassion, in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ—and it was *that* and*not* your merits, which constrained Him to lay aside the royalties of Heaven and endure the sufferings and the griefs of our mortality. “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

You know this Grace, too, because you have learned to perceive the outcome of it. You not only know it as a seed, but you know the blessed flowers that have grown out of it because, in His Grace, He became poor that you might be rich. And, in taking of those riches which He has procured for you, you have not only drunk of His bitter soup, but you have drunk of the spiced wine of His pomegranate, so that you now know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ by that which is the fruit and the outcome of it.

I think that the Apostle here meant that we also know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through what He has done for us. We might have known, as a matter of fact, that Jesus was gracious, but we could not have seen it so as practically to know it if He, having been rich, had *not become poor*, that we, through His poverty, might be rich. The way the Apostle shows that Truth of God is just this. He was urging the Corinthian Christians to liberality. They were a far richer community than the Church at Philippi, but He tells them that the Churches of Macedonia, out of their poverty, had often been generous to the poor and he persuades these Corinthians, who were better off, not to be behind the Philippians.

After Paul had quoted this example to them, he felt that he had a far stronger argument to fall back upon. He seemed to say, “How am I to know your Grace except by your works? How am I to know that you have Christ in your hearts except by what you give out of your gifts to help your poorer friends?” He then gives this as the proof that we must see Grace by the results it produces—“You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ by this fact, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.” The same Law of God, that the Grace within must be manifest by the action without, applies to Christ as well as to us. If He had not become poor to make us rich, how would we have fully known His Grace? And if you and I do not give of our substance, and of our talents, to the poor, and to the cause of Christ, how shall we know and how shall others know that there is any Grace at all within our hearts?

Beloved, as I have said before, I may say to you, again—you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ because you have not only*heard* it, but you have*seen* it—you have *tasted* and *handled* the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your hope of Heaven lies in that Grace! Your daily comfort lies there. If Christ were not gracious, you would be graceless. If you did not know His Grace, you would have no Grace of your own, for certain— for it is from Him, as from an ever-flowing fountain—that all the streams of Grace come to you. Happy men and happy women if, as I read this text, “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” you can each one say, “Yes, I do know it, glory be to God!”

There are two things for me to talk about tonight. They are both very simple and lie on the surface of the text. The first is, *the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ. A*nd the second is, *the riches of His saints.*

**I.**First, let us think of THE POVERTY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.”  
This poverty was voluntarily undertaken for our sakes. There was no need that Christ should be poor except for our sakes. Some persons are born poor and it seems as if, with all their struggles, they could never rise out of poverty. But of our Lord Jesus Christ it can truly be said, “He was rich.” Shall I take you back in thought to the glories of the eternity when, as very God of very God, He dwelt in the bosom of the Father? He was so rich that all He possessed was as nothing to Him. He was not dependent upon any of the angels He had created, nor did He rely for Glory upon any of the works of His hands. Truly, Heaven was His abode, but He could have made ten thousand heavens if He had willed to do so! All the greatest wonders He had ever made were but specimens of what He *could* make. He had all possibility of inconceivable and immeasurable wealth within His power, yet He laid aside all that, denied Himself the power to enrich Himself, and came down to earth that He might help us! His poverty was all voluntary—there was a necessity laid upon Him, but the sole necessity was *His own love*. There was no need, as far as He was concerned, that He should ever be poor—the only need was because *we were in need* and He loved us so that He would rescue us from poverty and make us eternally rich!  
Our Lord’s was also very emphatic poverty. I believe that it is quite true that no one knows the pinch of poverty like a person who has once been rich. It is your fallen emperor who has to beg his bread, who knows what beggary is! It is the man who once possessed broad acres who, at last, has to rent his lodging in a miserable attic, who knows what poverty is! So was it with the Savior—He was emphatically rich. You cannot press into the word, “rich,” all that Jesus was—you have to feel that it is a very poor word, even though it is rich, with which to describe His heavenly condition. He was emphatically rich and so, when He descended into poverty, it was poverty with an emphasis laid upon it, the contrast was so great. The difference between the richest and the poorest man is just nothing compared with the difference between Christ in the Glory of His Godhead and Christ in His humiliation—the stoop was altogether immeasurable! You cannot describe His riches and you cannot describe His poverty. You have never had any idea of how high He was as God and you can never imagine how low He stooped when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”  
His poverty, then, was voluntarily undertaken and it was emphasized by its contrast to the riches He had before. Now let us try to examine some of the details of this poverty.  
First, this poverty of Christ was seen *in His condition*. It was great poverty to Him to be a Man. Humanity is a poor thing when you set it in comparison with the Deity. What a narrow space does man fill—but God is Infinite. What little can man do—but God is Omnipotent. How little does man know—but God is Omniscient. How confined is man to a single spot—yet God is Omnipresent. I say not that Jesus ever ceased to be God, but we must remember that He became Man and, in becoming Man, He became poor in comparison with His condition as God. But then, as Man, He was also a poor Man. He might have been born in marble halls, swaying the scepter of an universal empire and, from His *birth*, receiving the homage of all mankind. But instead of that, you know, He was reputed to be the carpenter’s Son, His mother was but a humble Jewish maid and His birthplace was a stable—poor accommodation for the Prince of the kings of the earth!  
His early life was spent in a carpentry shop and afterwards His companions were mostly poor fishermen. You do not find Him consorting with the senators and philosophers, or great ones of the earth—He goes from one lowly home to another. And for His maintenance He is dependent upon the alms of His followers. Certain women ministered unto Him of their substance. He was, all His life, familiar with poverty, so that He could say, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” You remember that passage which is broken up by our translators so as to make a chapter begin where there should be no division? “Every man went unto His own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives,” for He had not a house— His only home was among the olive trees where He pleaded with His God!  
Then remember that Christ, while He was here, was a Servant. He was the Servant of the Father. Though He counted it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He took upon Himself the form of a Servant. He has been well called, by the Latins, “*Servus servorum*,” the Servant of servants. And you see Him in that character when He rises from supper, lays aside His garments, takes a towel and girds Himself—and pouring water into a basin, begins to wash His disciples’ feet. Well did He say, “I am among you as He that serves.” He, before whom the brightest seraph veils His face and lies low in humble adoration, yet washes His disciples’ feet! You can understand, then, how in His condition He is numbered among the poor.  
Perhaps the poverty of Christ is seen more clearly as to His condition, in His association, not only with poor disciples, but with the despised of mankind. The Pharisees truly said, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.” This was the occasion when Luke wrote, “Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.” He made Himself their companion for their good, for He had come to seek and to save that which was lost. He condescended to be among the very lowest, no, He did not *sometimes* stoop to them, but He seemed to be always in their midst, always raking in the mire to find the jewels that had been lost there! So, Beloved, you will see that as a Man, a *poor* Man, a Servant, and associating with the very lowest of men for their good, Christ had become, indeed, poor in His condition.  
The second point of His poverty was *in His reputation.*All Glory belonged to Christ, the praises of all the heavenly host were gladly given to Him, but He made Himself of no reputation. Often, while He was here, men treated Him with all the scorn and contempt that they could possibly display. Let me quote these words slowly, “Then did they spit in His face.” They blindfolded Him. They buffeted Him. They struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophesy unto us, Christ! Who is he that struck You?” They called Him, “a gluttonous Man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” They took His reputation from Him— some even went so far as to say that He worked His miracles through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils! It was not possible that they could degrade Him lower than they did! Their scorn went to the very uttermost against this blessed and adorable Son of God! Even those who were reputed to be good men, at times, thought little of Him. His mother and His brothers and sisters tried to entrap Him because they, evidently, judged that He was insane! And in the time of His direst need, all His disciples fled from Him and left Him alone. In His greatest extremity no man did Him homage, but everyone had an ill word for Him. In this respect He was poor—He made Himself of no reputation.  
I do not know whether any of you ever had to do what has fallen to the lot of some few—after standing in good repute among your brethren— deliberately knowing what you were doing, to do that which subjects you to misrepresentation and scorn, but to do it for the Lord’s sake and to suffer all the consequences without wincing. I can tell you that it is a poverty, indeed, to a tender spirit to be bereft of the respect which one has long enjoyed. Yet the Savior, out of love of us, stripped Himself of every single vestment of honor that He had a right to wear—and He became despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief! This was a part of His poverty—poverty of *reputation*.  
Then, thirdly, there was a poverty *in operation*, for the Lord Jesus Christ, in His own natural estate, was able to do anything that He pleased. There was nothing which He wished to do which He could not do. Did He but judge it right to create or to destroy, all was in His power. But when He came to this earth, for our sakes He became poor. It was necessary, then, for Him to put a restraint upon His own Omnipotence. He is hungry, but it is a temptation of the Evil One which suggests to Him that He should turn stones into bread. He is thirsty and at a word from Him, the water would have leaped from the well! But He has to beg from a woman of Samaria and say to her, “Give Me to drink.” He never works a miracle on His own behalf. He makes Himself as poor as to His operations, as unable to help Himself, as the most incapable among us! And this, mark you, by a continued determination of His will that He would remain poor, for had He so determined, He could, with but a wish, have summoned legions of angels to come from Heaven to His assistance! How can I sufficiently admire this voluntary poverty of operation? Our Lord Jesus Christ will restrict Himself to loss, suffering and even death, when, naturally, He possesses the power to deliver Himself from all these trials.  
The next kind of poverty that I see in Christ is poverty *in communion.* If a man were ever so poor, yet if he could always associate with persons of education and refinement, supposing him to be a man of that kind, poverty would be a small matter. “We cultivate,” said the Edinburgh students, “we cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal porridge,” and nobody seems to pity them! Nobody *needs* to pity them—they are quite willing to take the porridge if they can get the literature! If they can associate with men of thought and men of standing, they have a feast of reason and have a flow of soul—and they are content with a little oatmeal if that is their only fare. But our Savior never consorted with anybody who could, for a moment, be called His equal! He learned from no man. There was one disciple whom Jesus loved—we can all tell why He loved John— because John was the nearest to his Master. But what a long way down it was from Jesus to John! It makes a man feel himself in an awful solitude when he outgrows his fellows. You may pine for such a position, young man, and long to reach the very highest peak of the mountain, but it is cold up there and bleak, and lonely! I believe far greater enjoyment is to be had when you are the equal of your fellow men and can associate with them as such. But as for our Lord and Master, He seems always on the pinnacle of the Temple or the summit of the mountain. I know that in His *condescension* He is never there! He stoops to the people, but still it is a stoop and, stooping, you know, is back-aching work. I mean, it is heart-aching work to be always having to stoop and to have nobody who is your comrade and associate.  
Jesus shut Himself off from the grandest company that He might have had, from the senate of the skies, from the assemblies of the perfect, from the multitude of angels! The heavenly beings may come and go casually with errands from on high, but, for the most part, Jesus is here to associate with the sinful—His perfect mind to be in constant contact with the ignorant—His trained and cultured and holy spirit to be vexed by the frivolous and the fickle who cannot be depended upon. What a poverty must the faithful, the just, the true, the wise Savior have felt when even His disciples could not understand Him and when, as He unveiled some of the deeper Truths of God, He had come to reveal, “many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.” It was a greater poverty, still, when, in the Garden, rising from the agony and bloody sweat, He found the three that were nearest to Him, sleeping, and He said to them, “What, could you not watch with Me one hour?” Ah, then was He in the depths of poverty, indeed, as to the communion of His spirit!  
Still, I think that we have not reached the lowest deeps of the Savior’s poverty till we come to the fact of His *bearing sin*. A man may be very poor as to worldly goods and he may be able to bear it. He may have taken another’s debts upon himself and they may press heavily upon him, yet the load may not crush Him. But when he loses his character because of no wrong of his own, but because he wishes to deliver another, and when he has to come into contact with the sin of another and cannot help coming into contact with it—if his mind is pure and innocent—it is an awful poverty to him! Brothers and Sisters, it is the greatest miracle I ever heard of that the Lamb of God should bear the sin of men at all—and should so bear sin as to take it away, because, remember, there was in Christ no taint of sin of any kind!  
There was no inclination to sin in Him and yet, (hear these Inspired Words), “He has made

Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Of course, the Savior never could be sinful and we will use no words that might even *suggest* such a thought! We would, with indignation, repudiate such an idea, but yet He did occupy the sinner’s place. He did endure the sinner’s curse—“As it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” No, I will even dare to say that before the Lord God, He stood as the *one* Sinner, though He was no sinner! But the Lord made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all. Jesus stood to answer the summons of the Law of God and to appear there as the Substitute for His people, “the Just for the unjust.” But still, to appear there for the unjust—“who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Let me give you those words, again—“who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
He who was “God over all, blessed forever.” He without whom was not anything made that was made—for Him to whom the cherubim and seraphim continually cry, “Holy, holy, holy”—this must be abject poverty, indeed, that though He was rich in holiness, for our sakes He became poor in bearing our sin!  
The end of His poverty and the climax of it, was when *at last He died.* We have, perhaps, never realized the wonder that He “who only has immortality” did actually die! His spirit departed. He gave up the ghost, the ghost who had been a guest within His body. He gave up that guest and His body was tenantless—an empty house. What a sight is that, (I wonder not that great painters have tried to depict it), the taking of Christ down from the Cross, the wrapping of His mangled body in the fair white linen and the precious spices! Can this really be the Son of God, the Redeemer of men? Do they wrap Him up in a winding sheet and do the holy men and women actually bear Him to a tomb? Yes, and to a *borrowed tomb,* for as He had lain in a borrowed cradle, He now sleeps in a borrowed sepulcher! They put Him there, for He is dead. His eyes are as firmly closed as those of any other dead man and His hands are as cold and motionless, for Christ’s was no fancied death. The Lord of Life and Glory did actually die and there, in Joseph’s tomb, was He buried. And from there He rose the third day. As the earth quakes and the angel rolls away the stone from the sepulcher, say to yourselves, “You know, now, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,” so poor that He actually lay, awhile, dead in Joseph’s tomb!  
There I leave this first point. May God the Holy Spirit help us to understand the poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
**II.**But now, dear Friends, very rapidly, but yet I trust, deliberately, I want to show you THE RICHES OF BELIEVERS. They are exactly parallel with the poverty of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world to become poor with regard to money, or that you and I might become rich in worldly wealth, for many of the best of His people are still as poor as poverty, so far as this paltry pelf is concerned! He came to give us *true* riches as He came to endure *true* poverty. I have brought before your notice a poverty that did not lie so much in the scantiness of His apparel, or in the hardness of His fare, as in other matters. So the riches which Christ gives do not lie in our being clothed in scarlet and fine linen, or faring sumptuously every day—they are similar in character to the marks of our Lord’s poverty!  
First, then, He made His people rich *in condition*. Brothers and Sisters, we are servants, as Christ was. But that which was a lowering to Him is a lifting up for us! To us there is no greater honor than to be called the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ—and to wait upon the servants of God. To be *servus servorum* is a privilege that any one of us might covet. To wash the disciples’ feet is now an honor to us and we feel it to be so. If the servant is permitted to be as his Master, it is a great exaltation for him. By Christ’s poverty, we are made rich in our condition, so that, today, we are the sons of God! Today we have access to the Mercy Seat! Today God listens to the voice of a man! Today Jesus has made us kings and priests unto God and we shall reign forever and ever! The condition of the believing man is a highly exalted one in proportion as the condition of Christ was one of humiliation and poverty!  
So is it with regard to the Believer *in his reputation*. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a reputation Christ has given us! He has given us the reputation which He threw away, for now we are righteous in His righteousness! We are comely in the comeliness which He puts upon us! We have a name and a place, now, better than that of sons and daughters! We are not now reckoned among the guilty, but among the godly! We are not numbered among the rebellious strangers, but among the obedient children! Oh, blessed be the name of Jesus! He has clothed us with honor because He clothed Himself with shame!  
The same is true as to *our operation*. I showed you how Christ voluntarily narrowed and limited His power, but behold how He has *widened* our power! There is a text I often look at and admire. Jesus said, “He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall He do, also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.” He makes us to have an almost boundless power! We are nothing but poor feeble men and yet how wonderfully does God use men! Have you ever noticed, in Paul’s Epistles, how he represents the minister of Christ as being both father and mother to a new-born soul? Writing to Philemon, he says, “I beseech you for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.” And to the Galatians he writes, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth, again, until Christ is formed in you.” Is it not a very wonderful thing that we should be called, “workers, together with God”—our weakness working side by side with Omnipotence, itself?  
My Brothers and Sisters, perhaps you do not know how greatly Christ has enriched you. Have you ever proven how rich He has made you in the power of prayer? “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” We do not make enough use of the great name of Christ! If we did, we would work miracles—I mean not in the material world, but *spiritual miracles* would be at our beck and call! Our great Lord Jesus, by His poverty of operation, has made us rich in a wondrous power of Grace!  
I also said that He had become poor *in communion* and I showed you how narrow was the circle of men with whom He could associate. But He has wonderfully enriched us in communion, so that we have come, “to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven.” Behold, He has given us such fellowship with Himself that He says of us who believe, “These are My mother, and My sister, and My brothers.” We also have fellowship with God—“Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” What riches He has given us here!  
Next, you remember, I spoke about Christ’s bearing sin as being an awful instance of His poverty, but by His Substitution, we have *acceptance with God*. See how rich He has made us, for we are, “accepted in the Beloved.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” That is a wonderful passage in Jeremiah’s prophecy, “This is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord Our Righteousness.” What? The Church, itself, called, “The Lord Our Righteousness”? Yes, she takes her husband’s name! The Church has Christ’s own title bestowed upon her! Christ became poor, indeed, as He stood in our place, but He has fixed us in a large and wealthy place by giving us complete acceptance with the Father through His righteousness.  
Then, as I completed the story, I pictured our Lord Jesus as lying in the death sleep of the tomb. But think, O Beloved, that He has now, in consequence of that death, given us *eternal life*. His own words are, “He that believes on Me has everlasting life.” “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Because Christ died, we live. Because He died, we shall never die! The capital sentence has been executed upon our Substitute and can never be executed again. Punishment cannot be inflicted, first on the bleeding Surety, and then on those for whom that Surety stood! Therefore we live by His death and over us, the Second Death can have no power! Death is not annihilation. No thoughtful person ever fancies that it is. Death is the separation of the soul from the body. Death, in its highest sense, is the separation of the soul from God. We may know the first death, the rending of the soul from the body, but the Second Death, the separation of the soul from God—*that* we shall never know—for Jesus knew it on our behalf when He said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” But now, “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He died unto sin, once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.” Oh, how rich He has made us in the indestructible everlasting life which He has bestowed upon us through His atoning death and His glorious Resurrection!  
I close with just these two or three remarks which the subject suggests.  
First, if such is the result of Christ’s poverty, “that you, through His poverty, might be rich,” what will the result of His riches be? If by His death we live, what must be the outcome of His life? If by His humiliation we are so enriched, what will come of His Glory? If by His first coming, when He came as a Sin-Offering, all this is accomplished, what may *not* be expected when He shall come a second time without a Sin-Offering unto salvation? Try and work out that problem if you can!  
Here is another. If Christ’s poverty is such as I have tried to describe it, what must the riches of His people be? If our riches are proportionate to His poverty, what rich people we are! He was poor as poor can be and we, if we are believing in Him, are as rich as rich can be! So low as He went, so high do we rise! That is how the scales of the sanctuary act—as He sinks, we go up! Will you try to see how high you must be according to this standard? What riches must belong to you when you judge of them by Christ’s poverty!  
The next question is, if such are our riches, why do we complain of poverty? There stands a child of God who does not know whether he has any Grace. He is putting his hand into his soul’s pocket to see whether he can find a pennyworth of Grace. My Brother, all things are yours if you are Christ’s, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell! There is many a child of the King who is entitled to reign like a prince, who continues to live like a miser. He weighs every ounce he eats. He starves himself, spiritually, near unto death. What are you doing? Why shouldn’t you, to whom God has given Christ, that is to say, *everything*—be glad in the Lord and rejoice with unspeakable joy—and full of glory?  
I close with one more question. If such was His power, why shouldn’t we, also, for His Glory, be willing to be poor? If He would throw aside His honor, why shouldn’t we throw ours aside? If He gave up His ease, why shouldn’t we give up ours? If He was willing to be a Servant, why shouldn’t we be servants? If He made Himself of no reputation, why shouldn’t we do the same? That is very different from the action of my friend over there who said, “Well, you know, I shall not stand it. I do not think that I should be treated like that. I really feel that I ought to be more respected.” Ah, poor Soul, if you knew yourself, you would not talk so! Who among us deserves *any* respect? They call us, “Reverend.” It makes me sick to think that any mortal man should be considered a “reverend” person! What reverence can be due to us except that every wife is to “see that she reverences her husband”? That is Scriptural—but it is never said that every hearer is to reverence the preacher! Oh, what poor creatures we are at our best!  
If God were to permit us to be doormats to the Church, it would be too high an honor for us! I have seen a broom, sometimes, outside a door where farming men come to brush their boots. It is a grand thing for a man to be just like that. I think that I am getting very near to that honor and glory, so many are scraping their boots against me just now, and I am well content that it should be so if they get some of the mud off and do not go and spoil God’s floor inside. Let all of us feel that what becomes of us matters nothing at all! Let us be willing to die in a ditch so long as Jesus Christ sits on the Throne of God and His great Truth is established in the world.  
“You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” Go and imitate Him and be willing to be *nothing* at all, if only He may be All in All. God bless you! Amen.  
**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Psalm 22:1-21.***

This marvelous Psalm is a wonderful prophecy which might seem as if it had been composed*after* the suffering of our Lord. But it was written *many hundreds of years before* His Incarnation and death. It is “a Psalm of David,” and is dedicated, “To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar,” or, as the margin renders it, “the hind of the morning.” We know who that hunted Hind of the morning is. We seem to see Him panting, his flanks white with foam, pressed by the dogs, almost torn to pieces by the cruel enemy. The Psalm begins with words that, in all their fullness, belong to nobody else but our Well-Beloved.

**Verse 1.** *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* Every word is emphatic. You may put the stress where you please, upon every single word. “*My* God, My *God*.” With two hands He takes hold on God, crying, “My God, My God,” “Eloi, Eloi, My Strong One, why have*You* forsaken Me?” Or read it, “*Why* have You forsaken Me?” “Why have You *forsaken* Me?” “Why have You forsaken*Me*?” You get a different shade of meaning each time, but each meaning is true.

**1.***Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?* The Savior’s prayers had ceased to be articulate. They had become, in His own judgement, like the pained crying of a wounded beast. He calls them, “My roaring.” Oh, what prayers were those of our Lord on the Cross! Sometimes we, too, feel as if we could not pray—we can only sigh, and sob, and groan. Well, if it even came to *roaring*, we would have a fuller sympathy with Christ, for He could say, “Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?”

**2, 3.***O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But You are holy, O You that inhabit the praises of Israel.* Jesus will find no fault with God. Even if in His dire extremity, God forsakes Him, yet He will not utter even a whisper against Him— “You are holy, O You that inhabit the praises of Israel.”

**4-6.***Our fathers trusted in You: they trusted, and You did deliver them. They cried unto You, and were delivered: they trusted in You, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man.* The allusion here is to a little red worm which, when it is crushed, seems to be all blood and nothing else—the Savior compares Himself to that little red worm, “and no man.”

**6.***A reproach of men, and despised of the people.*They would not let Him be numbered with them. They accounted Him as an off cast and an outcast.

**7, 8.***All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.* Will you try to picture the Savior saying all these words as He hangs upon the Cross? That is the best commentary upon the Psalm. Hanging there, nailed to the cruel wood, in terrible bodily and mental anguish and deserted of God, He soliloquizes after this sad fashion. You will understand it all so well if you have Him in your mind’s eye as we are reading.

**9-10.***But You are He that took Me out of the womb: You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from the womb: You are My God from My mother’s belly.*We could not help ourselves then. At the moment of our birth, everything depended upon God and so it does in the moment of our death. It is well to remember those years of helpless infancy when we could not feed ourselves. We were taken care of, then, when we hung in absolute impotence upon our mother’s breast—then surely, if a second childhood should come, if all our powers should fail us, and we should be once more as weak as we were at our birth—He that helped us in the beginning will help us in the end! Thus the Savior comforted Himself as He went on praying—

**11.***Be not far from Me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*Oh, the bitterness of that cry, “None to help!” “They have all gone. The disciples have all fled. Judas has betrayed Me. Peter has denied Me. There is none to help. Be not far from Me.” There stand the Roman soldiers, the High Priest and the Scribes and Pharisees—and Jesus says—

**12-14.***Many bulls have compassed Me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint.* They were, no doubt, dislocated by the dreadful shaking and jarring that our Savior must have suffered when they dashed the Cross into the hole dug for it.

**14.***My heart is like wax; it Has melted in the midst of Me.* When the heart goes, everything goes. When the heart fails, and begins to melt, then it seems as if everything is loosening and the man is in the anguish of death.

**15.***My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaves to My jaws.*Our Lord was parched with the fever brought on by the terrible anguish and strain upon the hands and feet, which are full of nerves and very tender. A slight wound of the thumb has brought on lockjaw, but what the wounds of the Savior’s delicate and sensitive body must have been, we cannot possibly tell—“My tongue cleaves to My jaws.”

**16.***And You have brought Me into the dust of death.*He felt as if His very frame was all turning to the dust of which the body is made. So complete is the breaking up of the whole manhood when a strong fever is upon one.

**16.***For dogs have compassed Me.*There was the ribald crowd—not, this time, the bulls of Bashan, the great ones, but the mob—the masses of the common people hooting at Him. “Dogs have compassed Me.”

**16.***The assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they forced My hands and My feet.* Can anybody else be speaking here but Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, the King of the Jews? Now is this Hind of the morning hunted till the dogs and the hunters have made a circle round Him. “The assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me.” Here is Christ’s Crucifixion beyond all doubt—“They pierced My hands and My feet.”

**17.***I can count all My bones.* He is so emaciated that, as He looks down upon His body, He says, “I can count all My bones.”  
**17.***They look and stare upon Me.*The delicate modesty of the Savior is shocked. They have stripped Him and hung Him up—and there they stand and gloat—their cruel eyes upon His matchless body. “They look and stare upon Me.”  
**18.***They part My garment among them, and cast lots for My clothing.*How accurate is this description, even to the least detail! How wondrously was this Poet-Prophet inspired when he thus drew the portrait of the Crucified Christ! “They part My garments among them, and cast lots for My clothing.”  
**19-21.***But be not You far from Me, O LORD: O My strength, hasten You to help Me. Deliver My Soul from the sword: My darling life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth: for You have heard Me.* So far, You see, the Psalm describes the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer and then it changes. The light of the sun has broken out from the midday darkness! God has smiled on Him, once more, and the Psalm changes its tone altogether as the Savior congratulates Himself upon the result of His passion. The Psalm ends with these memorable words, “It is finished.” Our version puts it, “He has done this.” It might just as well be rendered, “It is finished,” for the sense is precisely the same. And when Jesus had said this, He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—282, 942, 278.**  
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CHRIST’S POVERTY, OUR RICHES NO. 2716

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 3, 1901.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 18, 1880.~~***

***~~“For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty might be rich.”  
2 Corinthians 8:9.~~***

IT is well to notice that Believers are to be constrained to Christian duty by Gospel motives rather than by legal arguments. It is poor work to try to stir up a Christian to perform an act of Grace by an argument fetched from a heathen moralist. And it is equally poor work to try and lead a child of God to perform a service of love by an argument which is applicable only to a slave. Hence you will find that the Apostle Paul, when he wants to urge the saints in Corinth to liberality, does not tell them what they are bound to do according to the requirements of the Law of God, for they are not under the Law—he uses arguments suitable for men who have come under the blessed Sovereignty of Divine Grace!

It is also noteworthy that with regard to Christian liberality, there are no rules laid down in the Word of God. I remember hearing somebody say, “I would like to know*exactly* what I ought to give.” Yes, dear Friend, no doubt you would. But you are not under a system similar to that by which the Jews were obliged to pay tithes to the priests. If there were any such rule laid down in the Gospel, it would destroy the beauty of spontaneous giving and take away all the bloom from the fruit of your liberality! There is no law to tell me what I should give my father on his birthday. There is no rule laid down in any law book to decide what present a husband should give to his wife, nor what token of affection we should bestow upon others whom we love. No, the gift must be a free one, or it has lost all its sweetness.

Yet this absence of law and rule does not mean that you are, therefore, to give less than the Jews did, but rather that you shall give more because, if I rightly understand what is implied in the term, Christian liberality, it is to be according to the example of Christ Himself! Our text really gives the Christian law of liberality—“*For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty might be rich.” That is to say, we should give as we love. You know how much our Lord Jesus Christ loved by knowing how much He gave. He gave Himself for us because He loved us with all the force and energy of His Nature. Why did that woman break the alabaster box and pour the precious ointment upon Christ’s head, when it might have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor, or when she might have kept her ointment for herself? She gave much because she loved much. I commend that rule to you —give as you love and measure your love by your gift!

Further, for this also seems to be the teaching of the text—give till you feel it—for the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was proven by the fact that, “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” He gave till He felt it, gave till He knew that He was giving all that He had. And I do verily believe that the great sweetness of giving to God begins when we feel the pinch, when we have to deny ourselves in order that we may give. Then it is that there is the true spirit of Christian liberality! Our Lord Jesus Christ gets from a good many people what they would not dare to keep back from Him, and what they can readily enough part with—it is sometimes about as much as their shoestrings cost them in a year— certainly not as much as they spend upon the smallest of their many luxuries. Yet the most of them consider that they have done all that they should when such insignificant offerings have been laid at their Lord’s feet! But, dear Friends, I hope that it will be your rule both to give as you love, and to give till you feel it.

And next, we should in some sense give all, for that is the meaning of the text—“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” He emptied Himself, He gave all that He had. And we, as Christians, are bound to confess that we belong to Christ and that all we possess is to be used by us as stewards under Him, not reckoning anything to be our own, but gladly admitting that He has entrusted it all to us to be used prudently, wisely and discreetly for His Glory. Oh, that we all came up to that standard! Then should we have the great pattern and model of Christian liberality reproduced in ourselves far more largely than it is at present!

I was obliged to say what I have in order to introduce the text to your notice, for we ought never to take a passage of Scripture out of its connection without first of all explaining its real meaning and purport. Still, Christian liberality is not to be my main subject at this time. I want, rather, to show you, first, how *Christ has enriched us by His poverty*, “that you, through His poverty might be rich.” When I have spoken about that, I purpose to spend a few minutes in speaking upon *our enjoyment of the riches which Christ’s poverty has bestowed upon us*.

**I.**First, then, I am to tell you about OUR ENRICHMENT BY CHRIST’S POVERTY. How is it that, by Christ’s poverty, we become rich?  
Firstly, *it was poverty in Christ’s part to become a Man at all*. God the Illimitable, the Infinite, veiled Himself in human flesh! God the Omnipotent, the Eternal, came here in the form of a Baby hanging in weakness at a woman’s breast. God, whom angels adore, before whom all Heaven bows with deepest solemnity of awe, was found where horned oxen fed— and in a manger was He laid. It was poverty for Him to take these rags of our poor humanity and clothe Himself with them, for His own robe was the light, His chariot was a flame of fire, His palace the Heaven of God! Yet was He found at Bethlehem, a Child born, a Son given, that He might redeem His people from all iniquity! We cannot comprehend the condescension of Christ half as much as the angels can—they have a far higher view of the Glory of God than we have and, therefore, they have a clearer apprehension of the wondrous steep which Jesus made when He became Man for our sakes. What poverty it was for Him—it was not so much for Joseph and for Mary as for Him—to be in the inn and to find that there was no room for Him! In fact, what poverty it was for Him to be a Baby at all!  
Yet it is by that poverty of His that we become rich, for now, every believing man may lift up his head and rejoice that there is One who sits upon the very Throne of God, who also is a Man even as he is. Neither Gabriel, nor any other angel, has ever been taken into union with God as we have been! “For unto which of the angels said He say at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You?” “He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham.” Well may we say, “Lord, what is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” Now the next Person to God is man, and Manhood and Godhead are, in Christ Jesus, joined in a wondrous unity which is indissoluble throughout eternity! O my Brothers and Sisters, at the very outset of our subject we see how the poverty of Christ Incarnate has enriched us!  
Being born, *our blessed Lord lived, for many years, a life of poverty at Nazareth*. He was a carpenter, the reputed son of the village carpenter. One is sometimes inclined to wonder what He did throughout those 30 years, and to wish that some authentic record of them had been presented. “Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” and, at times, we feel some regret that she was not Inspired to write down the sayings of the Holy Child, the wondrous speeches of the sanctified Youth as He grew up, the wise words that He uttered as He pushed the plane and drove the nails. Yet we are sure that it was not necessary for us to know all that, or it would have been revealed to us. Enough is recorded for us to see that He remained in poverty and obscurity at Nazareth for our sakes, because, dear Brothers and Sisters, during those 30 years He was preparing for His public work. It was necessary that He should bear that restraint which, for a time, He put upon Himself.  
I doubt not that some of us might have done more for our Lord if we had not begun so soon—if we had enjoyed, in seclusion like our Savior’s, more opportunities of growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man—we might, perhaps, have been made more fit for our work even if the term of our service had been somewhat shortened. However what might be with us, we know that our Master was hidden away in quietude, and His poverty was making us rich because He was preparing to achieve that wondrous life-work by which He has enriched all His people to all eternity! He was away there, at Nazareth, having sympathy with obscure people, sympathy with artisans, sympathy with those of whom we seldom hear much, sympathy with those who are shut up in workshops from morning till night, tempted in all points like as they are, yet without sin. And, at this moment, the wealth of His great heart, so rich as it is in intense sympathy with manhood, is making us rich because for those 30 years He was so poor and so obscure.  
He came out, at last, into public life, and *when He emerged from obscurity, it was to a life of poverty*. You remember His words concerning Himself—“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” He was dependent upon the gifts of His followers, or upon the godly women who ministered unto Him of their substance.  
He never made a will, for He had no real or personal property to leave. Yet He made that best of all wills when He said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” Jesus of Nazareth was most manifestly a poor Man and in His poverty He suffered hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and all the woes that are usually associated with poverty.  
I might summarize His whole life by quoting Paul’s words, “It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” That earthly life of His was every moment of it proving that “in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” “We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He knows your poverty, dear Friends, your needs, your woes. All that makes life bitter to you, He has tasted, only He drank to the very dregs from the cup of which you do but sip a little now and then. It is His poverty that makes you rich at the present moment—and you shall be forever full of comfort and joy because He was so poor while He was here below!  
But it was towards the close of His life here on each that our Master entered into the deepest poverty of all. And I want you who are believers in Jesus Christ, you who are really His followers, to have patience with me while I show Him to you in the extremity of His poverty and ask you to see how, *even in His deepest agony*, He has made you rich. See Him there, amid the olives in Gethsemane’s Garden, prostrate in prayer, and covered with a bloody sweat as He pleads with His Father on His people’s behalf. Do you see that cup, filled with wormwood and gall, of which He must drink if you are to be saved? Can you bear the sight? Are you not overwhelmed with penitent sorrow as you see the Lord of Life and Glory lying there covered with His own gore—and know that all His agony was on your account? It is that poverty of His which has made you rich, for He has taken from your hands the cup of His Father’s just wrath against sin and He has drained it Himself! And, instead thereof, He has set before you the cup of salvation from which He bids you to drink the new wine of the Kingdom of God full of joy and delight! So, drink and forget your poverty, and remember your misery no more! “Yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved!” Behold, your Savior gives you the love of God to drink—and better than the wine of angels is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! Yet you never could have had that cup of blessing in your hand if He had not first emptied that other cup which His Father gave Him to drink—that cup of awful bitterness which He resolved that you should never taste.  
See Him rising from prayer in Gethsemane and, behold, Judas comes and with a kiss betrays Him—and in that betrayal He was poor, indeed. But He has, through His poverty, made you rich, for you never shall be betrayed as He was! They bound Him and led Him away as their captive—and who is poorer than the man who has lost his liberty, and is taken off to prison and to judgment? Yet that captivity of His has made you a free man in Christ Jesus. When He was personally arrested, He said, concerning His disciples, “Let these go their way that the saying might be fulfilled, which He spoke, Of them which You gave Me have I lost none.” And it is the same with you if you believe in Him—no warrant from the Court of Heaven shall ever come to you, nor from Hell, either. If the Son has made you free, you are free, indeed, and you shall be free forever! Christ’s captivity has led your captivity captive, and thus again His poverty has made you rich.  
Next, they take Him away to Annas and Caiaphas. Picture the scene as best you can. He stands before a cruel high priest who insults and mocks Him. Note the depth of His poverty. He is brought so low that He receives no help from the one specially ordained to be the helper of the helpless! Then see how rich you are—for, inasmuch as He had to appear before an unkind and wicked high priest, you have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities! You have a tender and gentle High Priest to whom you may always come without hesitation or fear! But, had He not stood as a prisoner before Annas and Caiaphas, He would never have become what He now is as the merciful and gracious High Priest exactly adapted to your needs.  
Now the wicked men begin to accuse Him. He is brought so low that they even rob Him of His Character! Yet, to do that, they have to find false witnesses and these do not agree! But, still, they do find witnesses to accuse Him in order that they may take His life. Surely, a man is never poorer than when he is left in the hands of his enemies to be slandered in open court, and to have none to speak in His defense! But let your joy rise high while you remember that it was because Christ was falsely accused that you can now confidently say, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Therefore He will lay no iniquity upon those who are in Him. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” His name was put in the place of our names and, therefore, we are no longer numbered with the transgressors, for no one can now lay anything to our charge, for He has met every accusation on our behalf!  
While they had our gracious Master in their power, Herod, Pilate, the priests and the people mocked Him. Oh, it was shameful mockery! They ridiculed His royalty by putting a reed scepter into His hand, a soldier’s old purple coat over His shoulders and a thorny crown upon His blessed brow. They cast scorn upon His prophetic office by blinding His eyes and buffeting Him, and saying, “Prophesy unto us, Christ, Who is he that struck You?” They spat in His face. They struck Him with their hands. They treated Him as the vilest of the vile. Now, Beloved, see how you are enriched by His poverty. Because of all this shame which Christ endured, you shall not be put to shame nor be confounded, world without end! To each Believer, the ancient promise is true, “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.” Yes, just as low as your Savior stooped in

is humiliation, so high do you rise because of your union to Him! Just as much as He was mocked, so much are you honored! He was treated like a slave and felon, so you are made to be a son of the Highest—  
***“Behold what wondrous Grace  
The Father has bestowed  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God!”***  
Not only did those wicked men mock our Lord, but they also scourged Him with those cruel thongs which made deep furrows on His blessed back. Oh, what abject poverty was that when His very body was not reckoned as His own, but was allowed to be brutally beaten at the will of another! Yet see how rich He has made us by His poverty, for it is written, “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” There is no scourging for you, Believer, for the stripes have all fallen upon your Substitute! God’s sword of justice has been sheathed in the very heart of Christ, so, if you believe in Him, it can never touch you! Oh, how secure you are! Not a blow can fall upon you now—not the smallest drop of Divine wrath can ever be your bitter portion, for Jesus bore the blows for you and drank the cup of wrath quite dry. Your warfare is accomplished, your iniquity is pardoned, for, in the Person of your great Substitute, you received of the Lord’s hand, double for all your sins, and you are forever clear.  
After they had scourged the Savior, they condemned Him to death, even the death of the Cross, for they cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” “and Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.” Yet, while you mourn over that crowning act of infamy, let your hearts dance for very joy, for because Jesus was condemned, the Believer can never be! Here is the Scripture to prove my assertion—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” God has absolved you, O Believer, from all your guilt, and you are absolved forever! Christ has washed you in His precious blood and you are clean every whit—no speck, nor spot, nor stain of sin remains upon you, even in the sight of God Himself— therefore, go your way and sing for joy of heart!  
At last they hanged Him up on the Cross to die. He was made a curse for us, that the curse which was upon us might be taken away forever. They stripped Him naked, that we might be clothed with His righteousness. God forsook Him, so that He might never have to forsake us. His disciples all ran away from Him and left Him alone, that we might never be alone, but might always have the Father with us and, at last, come “to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.”  
See, now, the Lord of Life and Glory has bowed His head in death! He has yielded up the ghost. His poverty has reached its climax, for He is stripped of life itself. Yet therein is the greatest cause of joy for all Believers, for we died in Him and sin died in Him and, for us, death died in Him! So our greatest riches spring from His deepest poverty—we find eternal life in His death, a Heaven in His Cross—we ascend to Heaven through His grave!  
I want you, dear Friends, to keep this thought vividly and constantly before your minds, that it is Christ’s poverty that makes you rich. You must look on everything that relates to your Lord and yourselves by way of contrast—just so far as He goes down, you go up. Just is much as He is emptied, you are filled. Just as He is condemned, you are justified. Just as surely as He dies, so surely do you live beyond the fear of death. Here is a deep mine of unspeakably rich treasure for you—dig in it as much as you can, for you will never exhaust it!  
**II.**I will not detain you many minutes with the second part of our subject, but I want to give you a few practical lessons while I speak about our ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST’S RICHES.  
Think, dear child of God, that, as it is Christ’s poverty that has made you rich, *how poor you would be if you had not Christ*! Perhaps you are possessed of a great deal of worldly property, but it would be poor stuff— would it not—if you had not Christ with it? All our temporal mercies are like so many ciphers—they count for nothing by themselves—but when you have Christ, there is the great unit before the ciphers and He gives to them a value which they could not have without Him! All the gold of the Indies, all the silver of Potosi, all the treasures of the world cannot fill the heart of man. How poor is any man who is here with us now, who has not Christ as his Savior! You do not think so? But you will think so one of these days, and all Believers here pray that you may think so this very hour! Whatever your title-deeds may be, and however large your possessions—if you have not Christ, you are a poor man. Perhaps, on the other hand, you are in deep poverty and have not anything in this world to call your own. What a poor creature you must be if you have no treasure laid up in Heaven! To go home to a miserable hovel in this world. To earn next to nothing and then to go out of this world into the next, still poorer...O poor, poor Soul! Do try, I pray you, to obtain an inheritance in the world to come, for, if you are without God, and without Christ, you are indeed a poverty-stricken creature! God grant that you may not rest contented in your present wretched condition!  
The next observation is that if it is Christ’s poverty that has made His people rich, *how foolish are we to try and find our riches in the world*! It is our tendency to try, if we can, to find something that will satisfy us apart from Christ. That is not either wise or kind on our part. If the Lord gives you temporal mercies, take heed that you do not set your heart upon them. Say concerning them, “They are only toys lent me for a season, and they will have to be given up whenever they are claimed by Him who lent them.” Always beware of thinking that this world is your home—you are not to be here long enough to strike root. “Ah,” said one to a wealthy man, when he went over his estates, “these are the things that make it hard to die.” So they do. Therefore mind that you always feel like a plant that the gardener has loosely laid in the ground till he can find time to plant it. Suck up just enough nourishment to live upon, but say to yourself, “I am not to always live here, but in a garden where biting winds can never blow. Where—  
***“‘Everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers’—***  
“so I have but to live on here till the Gardener comes and puts me in my proper place.” Find not your riches, dear Friend, in a world where Christ had none, but look for your treasure in the land where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.  
The next remark I will make is, *how unbelieving it is of some of us to feel poor if we really have been made rich by the poverty of Christ*! Is all that I have been talking about only a matter of fancy, or a freak of the imagination? If it is so, we will throw it away and beg you not to accept it. But, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you really believe that Christ’s poverty has made you rich, what are those furrows doing on your brow? Why those carking cares, those anxious thoughts that so oft perplex you? You say that they come because you are so poor—but how is that? Christ’s poverty has made you rich! You have not many of this world’s poor three-penny pieces and cracked four-pennies, but you have that which is worth more than gold and diamonds—you have an eternal inheritance! So what are you fretting and worrying yourself about?  
Here is a young prince who has got down among the rough boys in the street, and he is crying because he has lost a piece of an old broken plate. You say to him, “Child, go home to the palace, for your father, the king, will give you royal playthings.” And when I see one who is a child of the King of Kings acting as if he were a worldling, I may well say to him, “Go home, child, to your Father, and begin to rejoice in the eternal possessions which He has laid up for you.” You know that we sometimes sing—  
***“He that has made my Heaven secure,  
Will here all good provide.  
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?  
What can I need beside?”***  
Good old John Ryland was right when he sang like that, and we shall be wise if we follow his example. You will have as much as you need, Friend, if you trust in the Lord, for “no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” You know that one cane is enough for a man to walk with, but some of our friends have a great bundle of canes and I know some of them who have cartloads of walking-sticks—yet they cannot use more than one at a time. King George III once met a stable-boy and said to him, “What do you get, Jack, for your work?” “I get nothing, Sir,” the boy replied, “only my food and drink, and a place to sleep in.” The king said, “Well, that is all they give me.” That is about all that a man really needs—you cannot eat 10 times as much as you now do, even if you have it—and you cannot wear a hundred suits of clothes at once if you have them! If you have more than you need, you cannot enjoy it, so be content with what you have and go through the world thanking God that He will take care of you for time and for eternity!  
Once again, *how ungrateful it must be in us if we ever flinch from any loss for Christ’s sake*, for He became absolutely poor, even unto death, that He might make us rich! Shall we ever hesitate to part with anything for His sake? What if following Him should involve us in losses, or if we cannot trade as some people do because the fear of God restrains us, or if we have to give up a situation because we cannot break the Sabbath, or because of some other conscientious difficulty? We ought to gladly take the spoiling of our goods, and rejoice even to suffer the loss of all things, if need be, for the sake of Him by whose poverty we have been made rich!  
And, finally, *how vast is the inheritance which Christ has given to His people*! If you are to judge of what He gave us by what He*gave up* for us, it must be something absolutely amazing! If our riches are really in proportion to His poverty, that poverty, even to bloody sweat and death upon the Cross, was so extreme that our riches must be extreme, too! Lift up your eyes, you sons of light, look beyond that narrow stream of death— over there is your heritage! Do you see that fair city smiling in everlasting light far brighter than the sun? Behold its jeweled courses, and its 12 foundations sparkling like a rainbow with divers hues of wealth! And do you hear, as you stand outside its gates of pearl, the matchless melody of the new song that goes up day and night? Do you see the white robes of the shining ones, in peerless bliss, as they traverse the pavements of gold and cast their crowns at the feet of the King, their Lord and Savior? All that is yours—and your Lord has given you a guarantee that you shall have it and all that is needed to bring you there in due time! And you may be there very soon for all you know.  
But suppose you should live to the extreme limit of human life? How soon those years will pass! Or suppose that Christ should come all of a sudden—and He may come at any moment. Or suppose that while you are sitting here, a convoy of angels should come and bear your spirit away? We are much nearer than we think—some of us are very much nearer than we think, to our eternal rest. It is only a week or two, a month or two, a year or two before we shall be there. Then, courage, my

Soul!— ***“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long, And I’ll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”***

I remember preaching, one summer’s afternoon, about the New Jerusalem. There was a sister sitting on my right hand downstairs—not in this building, but in a country place—and I noticed her eyes sparkling as I spoke. It seemed to stir my very soul as she looked at me with such an extraordinary gaze of joy, and I was stirred up to say something more, and something better about our happy Home above. When I saw her, apparently still looking at me, a minute or two later, I perceived the same fixed gaze, and I stopped and said, “I think that Sister is dead.” And she was. She had gone Home without a sigh, or a groan, or a moan. In the fullness of the prospect, the delight seemed to have swelled like a mighty wave and washed her on to the heavenly shore! Who knows how soon a similar experience may be ours? We may go to sleep tonight and awake in eternal Glory! We are not far from Home, so let us be of good cheer, and rejoice, and praise and bless our Divine Lord that He should ever have stooped so low to raise us so high!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PHILIPPIANS 1:12-30; 2:1-13.***

**Philippians 1:12-14.***But I want you to understand, brethren, that the things which happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.* Notice the beautiful self-forgetfulness of the Apostle Paul. So long as the Gospel could be more widely published, he did not mind where he was, or what he suffered. He was able to witness for Christ among the Praetorian guards who had the charge of the prison where he was confined and who, also, in their turn, were on duty in Caesar’s palace. So Paul says that through his being in bonds there, the particulars concerning his imprisonment were talked about even in the imperial palace—and by that means the Gospel was made known to many in Caesar’s household. Then, in addition, other brethren who, perhaps, might have felt compelled to be quiet in his presence, finding that their leader was removed from them, waxed confident to come out and “speak the Word without fear.” The same sort of thing has often happened since. You have sometimes seen a widely spreading oak tree cut down and you have missed its grateful shadow. Yet, afterwards, you have discovered that many little trees which would have been dwarfed beneath its shade, have grown more rapidly in its absence and, in like manner, the removal of some eminent servant of the Lord Jesus Christ has frequently made room for others to spring up and more than fill his place.

**15-19.***Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife; and some also of goodwill: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.*It is much to be desired that all who preach Christ should preach in a right spirit, but even if they do not, let us be glad that Christ is preached! Even though it is only a portion of the Gospel that is proclaimed, and there is much mixed with it from which we greatly differ, yet, if Christ is preached, His Gospel will win its own way and work out His great purposes of love and mercy. You have, perhaps, sometimes seen a little fire kindled among the dead autumn leaves which are damp. And you have noticed that despite all the smoke, the fire has continued to live and burn. So is it with the eternal Truth of God. Notwithstanding all the error with which it is often dampened, and almost smothered, it will live and the Truth of God will conquer the error which is piled upon it. So Paul says, “I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

**20, 21.***According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it is by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Again I bid you mark Paul’s devotion and self-forgetfulness. It seems to be a matter of no choice with him whether he serves God in life or glorifies Him in death. The emblem of the American Baptist Missionary Union is an ox standing between a plow and an altar, with the motto, “Ready for either”—Ready to spend and be spent in labor, or to be a sacrifice, whichever the Lord pleases.

**22-27.***But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I know not. For I am in a strait between the two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more necessary for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.*What a happy Church is that where the members all “stand fast in one spirit,” and where they are all, “with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel”—not striving with each other, but all fighting for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints!

**28.***And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*They give you up as lost because they cannot frighten you! They take it as a token of your perdition that you are not terrified by them and it is so to them. Yet, to you, the peacefulness with which you can endure slander and persecution should be a token of your salvation.

**29.***For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.* What an honor this is to be conferred upon any follower of Christ—“not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake”! It is not every Christian who receives this mark of honor. There are some Believers who have peculiarly tender places in their hearts and who are wounded and gashed by the unkind remarks of those who love them not because they love the Lord Jesus Christ. But to you, my Brother, my Sister, it is given—and you may well rejoice in such a gift—“not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

**30.***Having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*  
**Philippians 2:1-4.***If there is, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any heart and mercies, fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things.*Do not obey the world’s maxim, “Take care of Number One.” “Look not every man on his own things.”  
**4-7.***But every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation.*Observe that expression, “of no reputation.”  
**7.***And took upon Him the form of a Servant.* A slave.  
**7, 8.***And was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.* What a cruel and ignominious death for the Son of God to suffer! Did He lose anything by all this wondrous condescension? Will you lose anything by any dishonor that may come upon you for Christ’s sake, for the Truth of God’s sake? No! Listen to what followed our Savior’s humiliation—  
**9-11.***Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*Note how the Apostle, after writing on this high theme, again seeks the practical good of his friends at Philippi.  
**12, 13.***Therefore, my Beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

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KNOWING AND DOING  
NO. 3092

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 14, 1908.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 17, 1874.~~***

***~~“For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.”  
2 Corinthians 8:9.~~***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are as follows—#151, Volume 3—THE CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST; #2232, Volume 37—CHRIST’S MOTIVE AND OURS; #2364, Volume 40—POVERTY AND RICHES and #2716, Volume 47— CHRIST’S POVERTY, OUR RICHES—  
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

WE may, for once, dispense with a preface, and go straight to our subject. The text speaks, first, *of something that we know*. When we have, for a while, meditated upon that, we will speak of *some things that are due because of this something that we know.*

**I.**First, then, I am going to talk to you about SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW.  
I have heard that people like to be told, over and over again, what they already know. If you tell them what they do not know they may or may not listen to you, but if you tell them what they do know, they will be sure to be interested. If I were to speak about the town from which one of our friends from the country has come. If I were to mention something that occurred not long ago in the High Street of that town, I would be sure to have his eyes fixed upon me and his ears opened to my words. “Ah,” he would say, “I know that town well. I was there Saturday afternoon.” Well now, I am going to speak of something with which all Christians are so familiar that I may refer to it as something that they certainly know. Whatever else they know or do not know, I may address all of them who are here and say, “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Beloved Believers, you could not have been Believers in Christ it you had not known this! You could not have had faith if you had not had this knowledge—it would have been impossible for you to have been converted unless you had known Jesus Christ who has now your soul’s entire confidence! It is an essential part of your very profession that you should know this and, therefore, we assume that you do. Whatever else you do not know—and I suppose there are some Doctrines that are yet too high or too deep for you to comprehend, and some experiences to which you have not yet attained, and some Graces that are as yet not consciously enjoyed by you—you do “know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.”  
You know, first, that *“He was rich.”*We believe that He was infinitely rich and eternally rich, for He was “very God of very God,” and none can be compared for riches with God, who has boundless wealth. God was able to create the heavens and the earth at His own good pleasure and of Christ we are expressly told that “by Him were all things created.” “He was rich” in His essential Deity and rich in the homage of the holy beings that He had made. The hosts of blessed spirits adored Him, principalities and powers counted it their highest honor to be conformed to His will. Heaven is Heaven because He is there. “By Him all things consist” and, therefore, all things reflect His Glory. We are not among those who think that Jesus was a mere Man—blessed be God, we know better than that! We could not trust our salvation to the very best of men. But Christ is God—He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” He certainly was rich in happiness. We cannot conceive of His ever feeling a pang of pain or having a single thought of care while yet He dwelt in His Father’s bosom. He must have been as happy as He was holy! We say that “He was rich,” but that is a poor expression, after all, for human language utterly fails to express how rich He was. He was more than rich—He was more than great, He was GOD—all that that word can possibly mean! We know that we have no controversy about that, for “without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”  
We also know, dear Friends, that though He was rich,*“He became poor.”*I am only telling you something that you know full well, but let your minds be refreshed with the remembrance that Christ was so poor that He was wrapped with baby clothes just as any other infant was. Although He was The Infinite, He was so poor that He had to be sheltered in a stable because there was no room for Him in the inn. Afterwards, He was so poor that He was banished from His own country and had to flee into Egypt. He was so poor that He was the fit companion of a humble carpenter at Nazareth. So poor that when He came out into public life, His dress was the common garment of a laborer, woven from the top throughout without a seam. He had not where to lay His head, though foxes had their holes and birds their nests. He was so poor that He was indebted for His daily bread to the charity of gracious women who followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance. Though the cattle on a thousand hills were His, He sat upon a well at Sychar and said to a poor woman, “Give Me a drink.” Oftentimes, He knew what faintness and hunger meant—and the longer He lived, the more intense His poverty became, until, at last, He was left without a friend when He most needed sympathy—without one to speak a good word for Him when He was arraigned before the bar of those who had resolved to condemn Him to death! Then was He taken out to die without a rag to cover Him. And when He was dead, He was indebted for a tomb to one who lent it to Him out of love. Never was there anywhere else such poverty as the poverty of Christ, for it was not merely external, it was also internal. He became so poor, through bearing our sin, that He had to lose the light of His Father’s Countenance, emptying Himself of all the repute He had. He became a spectacle of scorn and shame because our shameful sin had been laid upon Him. See Him on yonder shameful Cross! Mark His many wounds, hear His expiring cry! And as you gaze upon that spectacle of majestic misery, remember that although He was rich, He became thus poor.  
I must remind you, yet further, of something else that you know— “that though He was rich, *yet for your sakes He became poor.”*I want everyone of you, if it is true, to say, “For my sake, out of love to me, Jesus Christ left His Throne in Heaven to die on the Cross of Calvary.” Forget that there is anybody else here now if you can, and just take this Truth of God to yourself—Jesus Christ loved you and gave Himself for you—as much as if nobody else had ever lived. For you were poured out those drops of gore which streamed from His blessed brow in the Gethsemane sweat. For you He endured that shameful kiss by which Judas betrayed Him. For you His blessed shoulders were bared to the cruel Roman scourge. For you His hands were bound with cords, His thorn-crowned head smitten by the soldiers and His marred Countenance became smeared with their abominable spittle! For you the Lord of Glory became “a worm and no man,” and was “despised and rejected of men.” Surely there was nothing in you that could have merited love mighty enough to suffer so! Yet it was all for you and for me!  
I seemed to be speaking to myself just now and I would gladly stop preaching and sit down and weep that Christ should have borne all this for me, as I am sure He did. But, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, will not you also remember that it was for your sakes that He became poor? Let each one of you, in imagination, stand at the foot of the Cross and say, “That suffering was all for me! That sacred head was wounded for me! Those dear eyes were red with weeping for me! Those lips that are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and those cheeks, so full of love and tenderness, were stained and marred for me! Those holy hands and those cruelly-fastened feet from which His life’s blood flowed, poured out that sacred flood for me! That throat all parched, those limbs all dislocated by the jarring of the Cross—above all else, His soul’s deep distress, the unknown anguish that made Him cry, *‘Lama Sabachthani?’*—all this was for me!” Ask God the Holy Spirit to write all this on your soul, dear Brother or sister in Christ, and to make you feel, “All this was for me.”  
Notice also that as Christ, for your sakes, became poor, it was *“that you, though His poverty, might be rich.”*It will be a change of thought for you if you now think that you are rich. I hope you felt like weeping, just now, when I spoke of how Christ became poor. Now feel like singing as I remind you how rich you are! You are rich through that which is imputed to you, for all that Jesus had and did is yours. His matchless Righteousness is yours—you have it on already if you are a Believer—and so you are arrayed in fair white linen, whiter than any fuller could make it! His Atonement is yours. His precious blood has washed all your guilt away and you are now whiter than snow, without spot even before the eyes of the All-Seeing One!  
You have also riches of another kind—riches within you. The life of Christ is in you by reason of His death. For you the Holy Spirit has so worked in you that the life of God is within you and you can never die! Because Christ lives, you must also live. You may be wearing very poor apparel tonight and have but few coins in your purse, but you are very rich—the Czar of all of Russia and all the emperors who have ever lived are not as rich as you are unless they also have a share in all that you possess, for “all things are yours,” and no one can have more than “all things.”—  
***“This world is yours, and worlds to come. Earth is your lodge, and Heaven your home!”***When the stars come out, count them if you can, for all the glories of Heaven are yours. And beyond the stars, the endless realms of bliss are all yours. It is not merely for today or for tomorrow that “all things are yours,” but they shall be yours throughout the eternal ages! When the sun’s lamp has burnt out and the moon has been turned into blood, still shall you live on as long as the unending life of God, and all the Glory of your God shall be yours. Does not your very heart sing as you try to realize how rich you are and how rich you shall be forever?  
Now come back to this point—you are rich through Christ’s poverty. You have been lifted up so high because He was dragged down so low! You have been filled because He was emptied. You live because He died. As you think of your innumerable mercies, remember that there is not one of them but has the blood mark upon it. All your possessions have come to you through the Well-Beloved who impoverished Himself that you might be enriched.  
This is the finishing stroke. The Apostle says “You know the *Grace*of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I have spoken to you about His being rich and becoming poor, and making you rich through His poverty. But the point that we must never forget is that it was Divine Grace that led Him to do this. He was under no compulsion, so far as His Father was concerned, to come from Heaven to redeem us from destruction and, as far as you and I were concerned, He was under no obligation to come and save us. Do you ask, “Why did He do it, then?” Ah, that is one of the things you will have to ask Him. I know of only one reason and that is, “His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.” That quotation naturally suggests the next question, “But why did He love *us*?” You must ask Him that, also, and when you do ask Him that question, you must look up at Him and then you will see that He loved us because He is all Love.  
**II.**You know His Grace, says the Apostle—His graciousness to us, His willingness to bless us, how He came, not by constraint, but entirely because of His own graciousness that He might save us. I am not going to enlarge further upon that topic, but to speak of SOME THINGS THAT ARE DUE BECAUSE OF WHAT WE KNOW. I want to use this knowledge as a hammer to strike home some nails.  
If you know the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, what then, Beloved? First, *it is due to Him that you trust Him.* “Why,” says someone, “I thought you were preaching to saints.” So I am. “But that is the exhortation which you give to sinners.” Yes, that is quite true, for that is what sinners are bid to do—to trust in Jesus that they may be saved. But I want to give the same exhortation to saints as to sinners. I know that we are trusting in Jesus if we are saved, but do we trust Him as He deserves to be trusted? He has given us the most convincing proof of His love that can possibly be conceived—how is it that we do not always rest in His love, feel quite confident about that love, lean our whole weight upon that love and live in the full conviction that that love is altogether our own? I mean this—do you not sometimes get into Doubting Castle? Have not some of you been fretting lately about some pecuniary trouble? Were you not worried, the other day, about some little domestic affair? Surely it is time that you fully trusted your Lord! If there is a wife who says to her husband, “I am afraid of this, and afraid of that,” he says to her, “But, my dear wife, can you not yet trust me? Have I not given you proofs enough of my love?”  
Now, no earthly husband has ever given such proofs of love to his spouse as Jesus has given to us, so we ought to trust Him wholly, fully, constantly, unwaveringly with everything! It ought to be our habit to “steal away to Jesus” whatever happens to us—never to carry a burden for a minute, but to take it to His feet—never

o worry, never to fret, never to mistrust, but since He was rich and for our sakes became poor, that He might make us rich, the very least we can do is to trust Him! It seems to me that not to do so is to insult Him—and He whispers to each dear child of His here, “After all that I have done for you, repose upon Me. Put your aching head upon My bosom. Exercise it no longer with a thousand anxious cares, but believe that I love you, died for you and that I will see you through it all and, therefore, leave it all to Me.” God help you to learn that first lesson—to trust in the Lord with all your heart!  
Next, “you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Therefore, secondly,*love Him.* “But I do love Him,” says one. Do you? “Yes,” you reply, “I do.” Well, suppose He were to come here at this moment and that He were to come to your pew and say to you, as He said to Peter, “Do you love Me?” would you answer, “Yes”? “Yes,” you reply, “I would say as Peter did, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’” Suppose He were then to say to you, “What have you done today to prove your love to Me?” What could you answer? Suppose He were to say, “I will take this day’s actions as a specimen of your love.” Would you be willing for Him to do so? If He said, “I will take yesterday’s actions,” I am afraid there are some here who would have to say, “Dear Master, do no such thing. We hope we do love You but, oh, give us Grace to love You more, for we cannot continue to live as we have done. Do help us, by Your Holy Spirit, to live after a different fashion.” Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I want your love for Jesus to be not merely in name, but to be as real as your love to your dearest ones! No, I want it to be a passion far more operative than the fondest love of a mother for her child or of a spouse for her husband! Do you so love Jesus? Why, compared with what Christ has done for you, what have you done for Christ? May we never cease to praise our mother’s love! Dear and blessed was the woman who bore us, nursed us and cared for us as no one else could have done! Yet this mortal life of ours would have been a curse to us if Jesus had not come to redeem us from eternal death and shown us a greater love even than our mother’s! Beloved, if you feel the love of your father and mother stirring in your heart—and I am sure you do if you are worthy of the name of a man—much more let the love of Jesus Christ fire and fill your soul! Some of you have children and for then you would willingly sacrifice everything. Well, we do not doubt your love to your wife and your child, but let your love to Jesus be quite as operative on your daily life as these loves and even more so! In the remembrance of Gethsemane and Golgotha, I claim your heart’s best love for Christ, and I pray that His blessed Spirit may compel you to gladly yield it to Him!  
But now, Beloved, I have to go a step further and say that if you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to you, I come to claim that in proof of your love, you *render to Him your daily service.* Paul was writing to tell the Corinthians that the poor Christians in Macedonia had made a very generous contribution towards the poor saints in Jerusalem. And He wanted the richer brethren in Corinth to give their share to help those in need. Instead of telling them that they ought to do this, he put it to them thus—“You know how freely Jesus Christ, though He was rich, became poor that you might be rich. Now, for His sake, act in the same spirit toward your needy Brothers and Sisters in Judea.”  
Let me explain how this principle affects me and every one of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ. It means this—praise Jesus for dying for you! Do not need anybody to urge you to be obedient to Jesus— spontaneous love deserves spontaneous love. Do not need to be *driven* to your duty and do not let it be *duty* so much as delight, even as Jesus said to His Father, “I delight to do Your will, O My God.” You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in all that He did—do all that you have to do with a like gracefulness of spontaneity, that is, do it without needing to be pressed to do it. No honey is so sweet as that which drops freely from the comb, and no service is so sweet to the Lord Jesus as that which a Believer spontaneously renders to Him.  
Think of what you would like to do for Jesus. He thought long ago about what He would do for you and it was a great joy to Him to think of it. Now think what you can do for Jesus. You know what you sometimes do for a dear friend when a birthday is coming on—you plot, you plan, you say to yourself, “What shall my present be? What surprise can I arrange?” I want you, in some such fashion as that, to turn over in your mind what you can do for the Lord Jesus. Have you an alabaster box of precious ointment at home? Then bring it as your love-gift to Him—you surely would not give Christ your odds and ends, would you? “No,” you say, “I will give Him the best that I have. I only wish it were a thousand times as good as it is.” When Jesus became poor for your sakes, it cost Him all that He had—now do something for Him which will be costly to you, for He well deserves it. O our blessed Savior, we are not going to give You kisses and tears and words only. No, we will pinch ourselves, we will deny ourselves, we will plan and toil so that we may give You something that costs us our heart’s deepest emotions, our mind’s best thoughts and our body’s sternest labor! Of all that we have on earth, we will choose the choicest and best for you, our dear Lord and Master.  
You see, I am almost beginning to press you to this blessed service, but that is not what I intend to do—I am aiming at the very reverse of that. I do believe that the Lord Jesus delights to see His people thinking what they can do for Him, without any minister urging them to do it, without any circular from a society, or a collector calling at the door for their half-guinea. Do not imagine that just because you belong to suchand-such a church, you must do something for Christ. It is true that there is such a necessity, but you should put the matter in quite a different form from that—“May I have the privilege of doing something for Him who for my sake became poor? And if there is anything to be done that is more lowly than other service, less seen and reckoned to be less honorable than other service, is that the post for me?” Those who truly love Christ will gladly wash His feet and wipe them with the hairs of their head. They will not covet the higher work of anointing His head, but will be satisfied to be allowed to anoint His feet. Anything for Jesus—that shall be our motto. We know how freely He became poor for our sakes. Let us, with just such freeness, render ourselves up as living sacrifices unto God, which is our reasonable service.  
I must add this one thing. “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.” Now *go and imitate Him as far as you can.* If you see anybody in need, be generous, for Christ was generous. If you meet a sinner, do not turn your back upon him, as a Pharisee might, but help him all you can, for Christ helped you all He could. If it should cost you a great deal of trouble to win that soul for Christ, gladly put yourself to that trouble because Christ took so much trouble to save you. A good Brother said to me, the other day, concerning a certain boy, that he was afraid we would never do much with him because he was of very corrupt origin. I said, “So were you.” “Ah,” he replied, “I do not quite mean it that way.” “No,” I said, “but I do mean it that way.” He or she who is a son or daughter of Adam had a corrupt origin—and as we all came from that source, we are all corrupt! Do not ever say of anybody, “That person is too bad for me to do anything with him.” It is the genius of Christianity to select the worst, first, and we should never regard any man as utterly hopeless until he is dead. As long as the breath is in his body, no matter though all the devils from Hell were also in him, there is enough power in the Lord Jesus Christ to make the whole troop of them flee—and it is for us to attack those devils in His name! Jesus Christ, having saved *us*, the salvation of other sinners *must* be possible.  
I want you, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, wherever you are, to tell others about Him. “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” but others do not know it! You have been made to know it in order that you may tell it to others. We have come nearly to the close of another Sabbath, so permit me to put a question or two by way of examination to you who profess to be Christ’s. Have you talked about Jesus Christ today? Have you spoken to anybody about His soul today? “I have been in the Bible class, Sir, studying the Word.” That is good, but did you, today, come to close grips with anybody about his soul? I believe that is the best way to be soul-winners for all who cannot exercise the public ministry—and even for ministers it is the best way! When God really stirs us up to get a hold of men, we shall soon see them saved. I try to talk straight home to my hearers as far as I can, but I am conscious that the man who gets a hold of his fellow men, talks to them individually, tells them of their danger and pleads with them to trust in Jesus, is the man who is sure to be blessed to them! Have you done that? Some of you have children—have you ever prayed with them, one by one? “Oh, yes,” you reply. I am glad you can say that, dear Brother. But I am afraid there are some who cannot say it. Perhaps you have a fellow servant who is utterly godless—did you ever speak to her tenderly and affectionately about her soul?  
We neglect the souls of others because we do not realize as we ought that Christ, though rich, for our sakes became poor. If we really knew this as we ought to know it, we would begin to care about other people for Christ’s sake. What a strange man was that Paul who wrote our text! After his conversion, he went all over the world, as far as he could, preaching Jesus Christ. They stoned him and put him in prison, but as soon as he got out of prison, he was preaching again! He had chains on his wrists and was taken as a prisoner to Rome, but he kept on preaching when he had the opportunity. Do you know why he did so? I believe it was because, one day, when he was riding to Damascus, something very extraordinary happened to him. Jesus Christ spoke to him out of Heaven and he fell to the ground. And when he got up, his whole being had received such a twist that he was very strange ever after!  
Brothers and Sisters, I should like you tonight, if you never before had it, to get such a realizing view of Christ’s coming down from Heaven, lying in the manger among the horned oxen, living for nearly 30 years in obscurity and then, after His brief but wonderful public ministry, bearing all your sins in His own body on the tree! I should like you to have such a view of Him that, like Paul, you would receive such a twist as you would never get over as long as you live! I have sometimes felt that twist, as I have recalled the day in which I first saw the Lord—and then I felt as if I could do some extraordinary thing for Christ that would make men say, “What a fanatical fool that fellow is!” I should like to be thought a fanatical fool by all those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ! And I am afraid, Brothers and Sisters, it is only because we love Christ so little that men treat us so well. I should like for us to feel that twist so strongly that, henceforth, we should know nothing “save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified,” and live for nothing else but Christ, so that people would say of us, “What strange men they are! They seem to be all on fire for Christ. The zeal of the Lord’s house seems to have eaten them right up.” That is the kind of man I want you to be and that is the sort of woman I want you to be—and if you really know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was consumed with zeal for your salvation—it would be only fair that you, also, should be utterly consumed with a passion for His Glory! God grant that all of us may be so, from this time forth and forever!  
If there is a sinner here who does not love this Jesus, who gave Himself for us, I will not say what Paul wrote, “Let Him be *anathema maranatha,”* that is, cursed at the coming of the Lord, but I will say this—remember, Sinner, that if the Grace of Jesus does not save you, the Justice of Jesus will destroy you! And if you are not saved by His first coming, you will be condemned at His second coming. And that may God forbid, for His mercy’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*2 CORINTHIANS 8.***

Although this is rather a practical than a spiritual chapter, I hope that we shall get profit out of it by the teaching of the Spirit of God who inspired Paul to write it. Paul was writing to the Church at Corinth to commend the Churches of Macedonia, that he might stir up the one Church by the example of the others. The saints at Jerusalem were starving because of a famine and it came into the mind of certain Gentile Churches to send help to the mother Church at Jerusalem. It was regarded as a very wonderful thing that Gentiles should be sending help to Jews. I hope it would not be thought wonderful now, but it was then. And Paul, who loved the saints at Corinth, and saw that they were a little backward in this matter, stirred them up to greater diligence. He did not like the Churches in Macedonia to go so far ahead of the Church in Corinth which was richer, more endowed with gifts and, therefore, he set to work to stimulate their generosity. Thus he begins—

**Verse 1.** *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the Grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.* That is a quaint old expression, “We do you to wit.” It means, “We would let you know, we would tell you, we would inform you of what the Macedonia saints have done.” And he does not at first say, “We would let you know of the liberality which the Macedonia Churches have shown,” but, “of the Grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia.” What we do for God, God’s Grace has first bestowed upon us! If there is any virtue, if there is any zeal, if there is any faith, if there is any love, it is the result of the Grace of God bestowed upon us! Always look upon things in that light, for then you will not grow proud. Give what you may, and do what you may—you may regard it as the effect of the Grace of God bestowed upon you.

**2.***How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of the joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*They were very poor people in Macedonia, but they loved God so much that they abounded in liberality. Considering how little they possessed, and how much they were tried and persecuted, they had been wonderfully generous.

**3.***For to their power, I bear record, yes, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves.* They were willing to give even beyond their power! They gave up to the full limit of what they could do and then wished that they could give even more. And notice that “they were willing of themselves.” Paul had not to stir them up to do this, nor even to mention the subject to them—“They were willing of themselves.” That is the best kind of service to God which a man ever does, that in which he is willing of himself. It is the slave who is flogged to his work—the child is willing of himself. Oh, that on the altar of God you and I may gladly place our offerings because we have been made willing of ourselves!

**4.***Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.*Paul did not have to beg them to give, but they begged him to take their gifts! And when the saints of God are in a right state, they come forward voluntarily, as Paul says that these Macedonian Christians did, “praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” by going to Jerusalem and giving away this money where it was needed.

**5, 6.***And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same Grace also.* Paul said, “Titus, do not let the Corinthians be behind the Macedonians in this matter. Go and show them how they may receive similar Grace.”

**7.***Therefore, as you abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound to this Grace also.* These Corinthians were an instructed people. They were so well taught that they were able to carry on an open meeting for years without a minister—and the natural consequences followed— they fell into sixes and seven, and there were divisions among them, so that Paul had to counsel them to have a minister. “I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that you submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helps with us, and labors.” They were a notable Church, people of standing among them. Paul admits all that, but he says, “Do not be behindhand in your liberality to the cause of God.”

**8.***I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.*And, Christian men and women, whenever you see other Christians excelling you in any Grace, seek to catch up with them! Why should you be in the rear rank? You are to run with patience the race that is set before you, so do not be outstripped by your fellow runners. If God has given to one Christian much of any Grace, He can, if He pleases, give as much to you.

**9.***For you know.*These are most precious words, worthy of being written in letters of gold—“You know.”  
**9.***The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.*“You know the wonderful story of how you are rich through Christ’s poverty. What a change it was for Him, from the riches of Heaven to the poverty of His Manhood here, and what a change it is for you from the poverty of your sin and ruin to the riches of His Grace! Now you know this—you do not need anybody to tell you about it, so imitate it— distribute to the poor and especially to the poor saints, as you have the power and the opportunity.”  
**10.***And herein give my advice: for this is expedient for you who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.* They had started a year ago, but the project had hung fire, as such things often do. Many a man is good at resolving and starting, but not so good at going on to the end.  
**11.***Now therefore perform the doing of it.*“Do not let your good resolves be buried, let them be turned into action! ‘Now therefore perform the doing of it.’” So I might say to who are here. “You have purposed, you have determined, you have resolved a great many times. ‘Now therefore perform the doing of it.’ If it is a good resolve, it will be best to carry it out at once.”  
**11, 12.***That as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has and not according to that he has not.* This is how we should always act—see what we can do and do it—not wait till we can do twice as much. There is a great waste of holy effort and of holy giving because so many people are ashamed to do a little and, therefore, do nothing because they cannot do much. That is not the way for God’s children to act. With your willing mind do what you can and God will help you to do more!  
**13, 14.***For I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality.*Paul would have the rich Church at Corinth give to the poor Church at Jerusalem for the Corinthians themselves might be in need some day, and then the Church at Jerusalem would in turn give to them. This is the Law of the Kingdom—if God prospers you, help another who is not being prospered just now—and then, one of these days, he may help you in your time of necessity.  
**15.***As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing left over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*That was the law of the manna in the wilderness. Some people brought in a good deal, for they had a great many children, and so it was all eaten up. Some brought in a little, but God multiplied it, so that there was no lack. So, if in Providence God gives you a large supply of good things, divide it among a large number of needy ones. And if He gives you only a small measure, be content and do your best with it.  
**16.***But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.* Titus thought of them as Paul did—they were likeminded in this as in many other matters.  
**17, 18.***For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the Brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches.*I do not know who “the Brother” was. There have been many guesses but perhaps none of them were right. You see that human praise, even in the Church, is not a very lasting thing. There was somebody whom all Christians praised, yet nobody knows him now. So, if you get to be esteemed among men, you may be unknown, even as this good man is! But if you have the praise of God, *He* will never forget you!  
**19.***And not that only, but who was also chosen of the Churches to travel with us with this Grace.*Paul did not like handling the money at all. They had to press him to do it and then he sent Titus and somebody else to take charge of it and to keep a strict account so that they should never be blamed in the matter of this distribution. So, Beloved, see that you so serve God that even the devil cannot find fault with you! Be so exact, especially with what is given to God’s cause, that no man shall ever even *think* that you have taken any of it to yourselves.  
**19-21.***Which is administered by us to the Glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.* The Apostle is very particular and careful, and herein he sets an example to all of you who have anything to do with any work for God. Do not let it rest on yourselves alone—have others associated with you to share the responsibility and help you to look after it.  
**22, 23.***And we have sent with them our Brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but not much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you.*“If anybody outside wants to know who Titus is, say that I have sent him to be the leader in this particular work. If you want to know who he is, he is ‘my partner and fellow helper concerning you.’” Well said, Paul!  
**23.***Or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the Glory of Christ.*This is the reply to any enquiry about the other brethren—they were probably poor men, humble men, plain preachers of the Word, yet Paul calls them “the Glory of Christ.” What a wonderful thing it is that any man should be the Glory of Christ! An honest, upright character. A holy gracious conversation brings Glory to Christ. Men say, “If that man is a follower of Christ, he does credit to his Master.” Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us think of this. And if we are not the messengers of the churches, we may be “the Glory of Christ.”  
**24.***Therefore show you to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.*

*—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307*  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3380 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

OUR LORD’S VOLUNTARY POVERTY  
NO. 3380

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1913.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 14, 1867.~~***

***~~“For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor; that you, through His poverty, might be rich.”  
2 Corinthians 8:9.~~***

THE Apostle was anxious to stir up the Corinthian Church to generosity. They were a Church of very great talents. They were an unusually gifted Church, so that they were able to maintain in their midst a form of worship which is not often maintained and could not conveniently become the general form in the Christian Church, namely, that a large proportion of the members spoke to edification, whereas in most other Churches there was no such abundance of spiritual gifts. They were in the midst of a city of polished inhabitants and it had pleased God to call in that city some of the ablest men. But they seem to have been far from taking the front rank in some respects. They needed to be exhorted to purge themselves from a sin which no Church had ever tolerated that had a ministry, and which only that Church would allow, because it was nobody’s business to look after it—and so it was not looked after. This sin *was a great lack of generosity in giving.*Now, in order to excite the Church at Corinth, the Apostle uses as an argument, first of all, the great generosity of the far poorer church in Macedonia. He says that in the midst of their poverty, they gave, not only up to their power, but generously beyond it. It is right for us to stimulate the zeal of one Christian by the example of another Christian—and it is the bounden duty of all Believers so to walk that they may be worthy to be examples to the rest of the flock.

But even this argument is a poor one compared with that which the Apostle was more constantly using, namely, the example of Christ, the Church’s great Head and Exemplar. He deals, indeed, an efficient blow at all selfishness when, leaving the Churches of Macedonia out of the question, he says, “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, that blessed Master of ours! Surely He is useful to us in ten thousand ways! There is not a single part of Him—there is no position He takes, no action He performs, no word that drops from His lips, no thought of His heart, no aspect of His matchless Character that is not serviceable to us, His people! Even in His poverty He becomes our Instructor, just as in His death He becomes our Savior. Without staying longer in the text, we shall, first of all, ask you to consider *the example presented to us,*contemplating it in its various phases. And then, secondly, let me, in few but earnest words, *urge you to follow His example*in acts of gratitude.

**I.**THE EXAMPLE PRESENTED TO US.  
It is that of our Lord, of whom Paul said, “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It seems, then, that Christ’s coming from Heaven to earth to suffer for us is here called, “Grace.” It was an act of Grace on His part—an act purely gratuitous! He was not bound to have done it. We did not deserve it at His hands. It was no foreseen merit of ours, or of any other kind which could have been potent to attract Him from the skies and drag Him to the manger and the tomb! But He came as an act of free mercy to undeserving sinners. It was Grace which was the source and fountain of His coming. That eternal Love of God, by which we were first chosen, was the same Love which sent the Savior to redeem the chosen. It was that Grace from which all Covenant mercies spring—the ancient wellhead of distinguishing Grace—which brought the Savior here! It was because He, being God, was Love. Because He, being God, was full of Grace and Truth, that He, therefore, left the realms above that He might lift us up to them by His coming down from them into the depths of our misery! *“You*know *the Grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We ought to perpetually gaze upon the Cross, I think, in the light of its being altogether an act of Grace on Christ’s part—and the result of Grace towards us on the part of the Divine Father. Oh, you see nothing there, Sinners, towards you but Grace—  
***“‘Tis mercy fills the Throne.  
While wrath stands silent by.”***  
The wrath falls upon the Savior, but all that you have to see in Christ, today, is Grace, pure Grace—Grace to take away the sin which made Him bleed—Grace to accept the sinner who was guilty of His death. The Cross reveals to us Grace on the Throne of God, Grace at its culminating point, Grace triumphant and resplendent in the uttermost degree! Who would see Grace, let him behold a bleeding Savior bearing the griefs of men upon Himself and suffering in their place. “You know the *Grace*of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the kindness, the bounty, the benevolence, the generosity, the compassion, the condescension, the tenderness, “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
And when Paul had thus named the deed which the Savior did and labeled it with the title of, “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he follows it up by mentioning the heights from which the Savior descended—“*who though He was rich.”*It has been well observed that this little sentence is a clear proof that our Savior had an existence *before* He was born into this world—that, in fact, He was Divine—for it is said that, “He was rich, and that He became poor.” Now, He never was rich *in this life*—never!  
If it should be said that He was rich at one time with the Holy Spirit, as Unitarians have said in order to get rid of the force of this verse, then He never did become poor in that sense. There was no period of the Savior’s life on earth in which it could be said that He was rich, but He became poor. It must, therefore, have been in a previous state of being that our Lord was rich—and I shall now ask your thoughts to go back to the time when Jesus Christ *was* rich. Poor are our words! They are but an accommodation of mortal speech to an immortal theme! *“He*was rich.” When we read the word, “rich,” it seems, somehow or other, to pall the description of what Jesus Christ was, for He was so infinitely more rich than anything the world knows by that description! His riches were vastly more wealthy than any of the gaudy wealth which the world can bring—which is but transient and corruptible wealth! He was rich. Yes, but He was something more than that. However, we will make such use of the term as we can.  
Jesus was rich *in possession.*As God over all, having made all things, all things were His. He could have said, *“*The cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. Mine, the mines of gold and the secret treasuries of silver. Mine, the places where the diamonds sparkle and where the pearl emits its gentle ray. All things are Mine! A thousand stars glisten as My lamps and all the width of space, so full of the wonders of creation—all this is Mine!” He was rich *in service.*A thousand angels waited at His gates. He had but to will it and the strong-winged messengers flew upon His errands! They adored Him ceaselessly. Day without night they circled His Throne, rejoicing. Even when on earth, He said He could pray to His Father and He would send Him twelve legions of angels. How much more was this the case when He sat in the state of Heaven—and all these were the courtiers that waited before His Throne? He was rich *in honor.* No pompous courts of Solomon could ever compare with the courts of the Son of God! All glory centered in Him. He was “God over all blessed forever,” co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. To Him the perpetual song. To Him the never ceasing incense. To Him the golden harps, to Him the swell of Heaven’s highest symphonies, for He was adored of all and exalted high above principalities and powers, and every name that is named! And He was rich *in love,*which is the best of all wealth! His Father loved Him. “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Eternally was that a Truth of God and, besides that, there were pure spirits of His own creating who loved Him with all the force of their being. He needed not our love to make Him rich! There was love enough in God for Him and if He had willed it, He could have made a thousand races of nobler creatures than ourselves, all of whom would have loved Him with the deepest love!  
He was rich, too, *in happiness.* We cannot conceive of the Savior knowing any sorrow, or grief, or need in Heaven. He had all that even He could wish for, if such language can be used towards the Infinite God. He was essentially and ineffably happiness, itself! Just as we believe, concerning the Most High God, that He is unruffled by a care and His soul undisturbed by a pang, so was it with the Glorious One who afterwards condescended to be crowned with thorns—and to be pierced with the spear for our sakes. “He was rich!” Oh, the word, as I have said before, is a poor miserable word! It is the best that Paul could find, but there is such a grandeur about Christ that if we say He was rich in all respects, rich in all conception and rich beyond imagination’s utmost stretch, rich beyond everything you and I will ever be able to conceive of—even when we got into the celestial state—so rich, so Infinite, so glorious, so Divine—this is what He was! “He was rich.”  
And yet He considered us! And yet He stooped to us! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, what an example for us to get the same Grace and generosity, so that if in any respect we, too, are made rich here, we, too, may be as willing to stoop as He was. But, alas, while our stoop is all so little, His stoop is all so great!  
Then the Apostle goes on to say, “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.” Not that He was *made poor.* It was not an act of Providence that made Him so. He did not become bankrupt. He was not a King expelled from His dominions. He was not a fallen Sovereign to whom we give shelter and pity, but He “became poor.” That is, it was His own voluntary act! It was His own cheerful will to become poor! And now I cannot help saying that that word, *“poor,”*does not seem to me to be strong enough. It is the best, I suppose, our language can afford, but still, there never was poverty like His poverty! It is a word which does but skim the surface of the Savior’s condescension. He was poor. Well, He was poor *in the ordinary sense.*He was born of humble parents, He was not the son of a prince or a mighty one. He was reputed to be the carpenter’s son. When His mother swaddled Him, she laid Him in the manger. He was not like those who are born in marble halls and are wrapped in scarlet—He was a plebeian and He took a lowly place even in His birth. He is sent to Egypt—He becomes an early exile. Scarcely any poverty in the world is like the poverty of the poor emigrant who leaves his country either from lack of bread or from fear of life—and Jesus Christ and His mother going down to Egypt are the very picture of poverty! We are thankful if we have only a little cottage in our own land where we may dwell, but in Egypt the Son of God must tabernacle for awhile. And when He came back, He sought not His acquaintance among even the tradesmen or the middle classes, much less among the lofty and the proud in spirit—He put upon Himself the smock frock of the country—“a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout”—and His intimate acquaintances were the fishermen of Galilee!  
Was it not said of Him by David, “He has exalted One chosen out of the people”? And Christ was emphatically chosen out of the people. He was with them in all their toils and all their woes—so with them that none of them were more poor than He. “Foxes have holes,” He said, “and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head.” He was so poor that I never read He left a will about His worldly goods and chattels. All that He had of personal estate was just the garments He wore and those the soldiers parted among them—and there He was, naked, dead and indebted to charity! For a tomb, He had not even a sepulcher of His own—not a sorry six feet of earth in which His sleeping body might have rested in its own freehold—it was a *borrowed tomb* that gave the Savior a refuge. He thus became poor outwardly, but what was His poverty inwardly? He was poor *as to His friends.* Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him. All the disciples forsook Him and fled! He was poor *in servants,* for although He washed His disciples’ feet, yet they washed not His! And when He came to the hour when human sympathy might have somewhat comforted Him, He had to say with melancholy pathos, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” Oh, so poor has He become that there is not an eye to watch with Him in His lonely grief! So poor was He that the comforts which are left to the most abject were taken away from Him! No promise beamed to shed its light upon His soul. At one time, at any rate, no Presence of God made Him glad. He was forsaken of His Father and His God! *“E1oi,* Eloi lama Sabachthani,” indicated a poverty of soul quite as deep as that naked and mangled body indicated outward poverty.  
He had lost all, or rather had given up all, laid aside everything—His crown of Glory exchanged for the thorns of shame. The imperial mantle of dominion cast aside that He might wear His own blood! No more adored, but spit upon! No longer reverenced, but despised and made the offscouring of men! No Throne, but a Cross! No golden cup, but a draught of wormwood and of gall! No light and brightness of excessive Glory, but the blackness of mid-day—midnight! No life and immortality, but, “It is finished,” and the giving up of the Ghost! “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.”  
I wish it were in my power to go farther into this depth tonight, but neither my ability nor my time will serve me just now. Let your own meditations assist you to peer into the poverty of the Savior—such poverty, indeed, as you and I can never know, but, prompted by His example, let us not be ashamed to be poor! No, let us not, at the thought of being poor, feel any kind of fear about it! Let us rather rejoice that in this we shall have fellowship with our Lord and if we serve Him we must be poor. If we are obedient to His will, we must make a sacrifice of worldly goods and prosperity. Let us take joyfully the spoiling of our goods. Let us, like the Master, count it all joy when we are thus stripped, for so shall we have fellowship with Him “who*,*though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor.”  
The Apostle next calls our attention to the *objectives* of this wonderful condescending stoop of our Lord, namely, *ourselves. “For your sakes* He became poor.” For the sake of the Corinthians. For the sake of us.  
And oh, where could there be found more unworthy beneficiaries of this amazing love than we have been? In contemplating the love which I personally received from my Savior, although I wonder at it in itself, I have often thought that I could far better understand it if it had been given to someone else than when it is shed abroad in my own soul. I do not know how it is, but somehow the salvation of the vilest sinner that lives does not one half as much surprise me as my own—and I find it far more easy to believe in the genuine salvation of any man than at times to believe in my own. Why should He love us? Oh, there is an amount of unworthiness about each one of us which we cannot see in our fellows that makes it amazing that we should have been chosen! Well said the Apostle, “His great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins!” It is by His great love He loves us now we are alive, but it is still more wondrous love that He should spend His life-blood to buy our humanity when it was in its former state! None shall praise God more for His Grace than I will if I get the privilege to see Him face to face, for none will be more indebted to His distinguishing mercy! I suppose you will feel the same and will, each one, resolve in the contest of humility that none of you will yield to his fellow, but will each one lie the lowest and sing the loudest to the praise of the matchless Lover, this Heavenly Bridegroom of our souls! *“For your sakes*became poor.” Not a thorn in that crown for Himself, but for your sakes! No spit on those cheeks, no hair plucked from them, for Himself—but all for you! For you, the cruel lash, as it pitilessly furrowed those holy shoulders! For you, those drops of crimson sweat as they stained the cold earth! For you, each of those cruel nails! For you, for you, the spear that pierced His side! Oh, let each Christian here really seek to lay a claim to have a personal interest in the griefs and groans of Jesus! Sweet possessions! Oh, to treasure them! Richer than all jewels! Those drops of blood—far more priceless than rubies! Those falling tears more sparkling than diamonds! Treasure up the love of Jesus! Put it into your souls. Make a heart in your heart in which to treasure it! Count it to be the richest and most precious thing you can have, or can desire to have—the love of Jesus with all its sweetness and everlasting delight! *“For your sakes* He became poor.”  
Well, now, if He did all this for the sake of us who are so unworthy, what ought you and I to do for His sake, who is so worthy? And if He emptied His great Self for us, who are as nothing, shall not we be ready to empty our little selves for Him, who is so great?  
If He gave all to us, what less than all can we give to Him? And even when we have given all, we shall think it all too little for such a Lord and such a Friend! Does Jesus give Jesus, and shall not we give all of ourselves?  
The Apostle tells us, however—to conclude the exposition of the verse and our contemplation of this great example—*that Christ had an objective in doing this,* and the objective was this—“That you, through His poverty, might be made rich.” I like the very phraseology, here, and think we should read it again...“That you, through His poverty, might be made rich.” A person joined this Church not long ago who had been a member of quite another denomination, in which the doctrine of the Second Advent, which we also hold

takes an infinitely more prominent place than we are ever likely to give to it, for it is the Gospel of their salvation. This woman, however, professed herself to have been converted to God, here, and she said, “I was always taught to trust in Christ Glorified, but now I come to see that my confidence must be in Christ Crucified.” This was what Paul preached and it is what we preach! I believe it is an error which is growing, that we are to be made rich through Christ Glorified. I grant you that we shall be, for we are made rich by Christ in *any* capacity, but the text says it is through His *poverty* that we shall be made rich. The brightest treasure that can come to the Christian comes to Him through Christ Crucified—we must take care in all our ideas of the Second Advent that we do not imagine the coming of a *temporal* Kingdom and a *temporal* Glory and go back to the beggarly elements of the Old Covenant—for if we do so we shall miss the true jewel, the *spiritual* treasure—the love of which is half dying out in the Christian Church! Christ in His poverty should be most commonly the object of our contemplation, for it is through that poverty that we shall be made rich.  
Now, I want to ask you whether you are rich tonight? If Jesus Christ died for you, I am sure He has not missed His intention in so dying and, therefore, you are rich! But you say you are poor and you were grumbling only an hour ago to think that you were so poor. Come, now! Come now! Jesus Christ, though He was rich, became poor—shall He miss the design of that great renunciation? Shall His plan fail? It is not for a moment to be supposed! Well, then, He has made you rich. You cannot count your treasures, Christian! A catalog of them would be too long for you ever to get through it! You have no estate. You have no barn in which to store away your harvest. Perhaps there may be some of you with little more belonging to you than the garments in which you have come into this sanctuary. But yet—you are rich! Think about this— ***“All things are yours, the gift of God,  
The purchase of a Savior’s blood!  
This world is yours, and worlds to come! Earth is your lodge and Heaven your home!”***You have angels to be your protectors. You have Christ to be your Intercessor and your Friend! You have the Holy Spirit, Himself, to be your Comforter! The everlasting arms are underneath you. The Divine wings are above you. The Divine Glory is within you! Oh, what more could you desire? You shall have all the provisions that you need, for you shall dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed. Yes, Christ has made us rich in the highest possible sense of richness. He does not please to make many of His people rich in the common sense. As Luther says, He gives the husks to the hogs—the proper place for them—they can relish them and can make the best use of them. I doubt not that he was also right in what he said of the whole Turkish Empire, which God had given to the grand Turk who was the leading monarch of his day. He said, “It is only a bone for a dog.” So it is. All the kingdoms of this world are but so many bones which the Householder throws out to the dogs and lets them devour them as they may. Perhaps all the time the child is kept waiting— and he may be kept waiting a little while for his food because the hour is not yet come—the dog can eat when it wills, but the child must eat at the set time which the Father has appointed. Let us be thankful if God does not give us our portion *here*. It is one of the things to be dreaded—the having your portion in this life! It is said of some that they have their portion in this life—and our Lord said of the Pharisees—“Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” Oh, let us pray God not to give us our reward here! If we have helped the poor and have only received ingratitude, let us be very thankful that it proves that our reward is not here! If we labor for Christ and are misrepresented, let us be thankful, for again it proves that our reward is not of men and in time, but is of God and for all eternity! To have our reward, here, and our portion from men is a thing to be deprecated with tears, cries and groans! God grant us to know our riches to be of a better sort than that which the worldling covets!  
Well, if it is so, that Christ has made us rich, I hope it is not fiction or fancy to any of you. You are rich in your soul—you know you are! You are wealthy and the argument from this is that you should be devoted to your Master. If He has made you rich, serve Him! If He has enabled you to be contented, at ease and happy—if you have blessed enjoyment in your soul, if you are at peace with God through Jesus Christ—who should serve God as *you* should? Highly favored as you are, the very stones would cry out against you if you were not generous in your Master’s service and praise!  
And this brings me to the last matter, which is, in a few words—  
**II.**TO EXHORT YOU TO PRACTICALLY CARRY OUT THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.  
There have been some advanced Christians—I say not this of all—but there have been some advanced Christians who literally have been made able to carry out the example of the Savior. How should we honor the memory of such men as John Wesley, for instance? He might have been a fellow—as he was, indeed, of the University—and have had excellent compensation. “The Church,” so called, was open to him and, no doubt, a bishopric would soon have rewarded his exertions and his eloquence. But he lived through life purely to serve his Master according to his knowledge and conviction. And when an inventory was to be made of his plate, he had but two spoons, one at Bristol and one in London. And when he died, what had he to leave? His treasure had all gone before him into Heaven and he died in poverty, having served his God with all he had, and making that the aim of his life—to live with all he had wholly to his Master’s service! And such have been the lives of some of our missionaries. They have cut themselves away from all the claims of kindred and have given themselves, like the old Roman heroes in battle, who stood upon the sword and consecrated themselves to God. They have given themselves up to live and to die with never a thought of gain in this world, no, never dreaming of possessing anything as long as they lived! Such was Apostolic life and such, I believe, would be more common in the Christian Church if a high degree of Divine Grace were granted. I do not think it is the duty of most of you, nor that it will ever fall to the lot of 99 out of a hundred of you, but there are some of you—and there ought to be more—who, being called of God to some special work, should feel that if you are rich, if you possess rank, if you possess standing in society, you will give up the most brilliant, earthly prospect for that yet more brilliant prospect of bearing the Cross and inheriting the crown!  
I look forward, if God should ever send a revival of religion in England, not only to the time when the poor and the middle-classes shall find in their midst consecrated ministers, but when, from the very highest spheres of society, there will come to us men who might have worn the coronet, but who would rather proclaim the Gospel! Men who might have piled up their wealth until it became like Babel’s tower, but who would rather become poor, that in their poverty they may make many rich! It is not given unto all thus to do, but this is the dictate of Christianity—and where it can be done absolutely and be carried out to the fullest extent, it brings much Glory to God!  
Well, but the principle seems to me to be binding upon us all. I will venture to say—and I should not wonder that some of you will not like it to be said, that *I believe it is anti-Christian and unholy for any Christian to live with the objective of accumulating wealth.*You will say, “Are we not to strive all we can and to get all the money we can?” You may do so. You should do so. I cannot doubt but what, in so doing, you may do good service to the cause of God. But what I said was this, that to live *with the objective of* accumulating wealth is anti-Christian. There are thousands of men and women with whom that is the only thing they are living for— to save, save, save—and make a fortune! And when they die, what then? Well, then it will be in the newspapers that So-and-So died worth so much, and some will say, “Guess what worth he died with? It will be talked of all over the city, “Why, they paid probate duty on so much!” Yes! Well, now, if you had a steward—I will ask you a question—if you had a steward and that steward were to die—and you should hear that he died worth £100,000, what would you say? You would say, “Ah, I know whose money that was! He was only a steward and yet he died worth £100,000? I know where that money came from.” You would not want to ask the question, but you would say, “Ah, he was a thief, an old rogue!” I am not certain whether every man is not who does that—at least, unless he happens to occupy a very high and prominent position. A man says he is a steward. That is what he says, himself. We do not tell him so, but he says he is. He stands up and thanks God that he is a steward, but the old fellow has got some uncommonly heavy bags about him—more than a steward would have if he had handled his master’s money properly!  
To say that the most of you ought to spend all you earn would be simply ridiculous. To come into the pulpit and say to those of you who are in business and so on, that you ought to give all that you have to the cause of God every year would be, I think, most intolerable stupidity on my part! I do not say that at all! Let your children, by all manner of means, have that which they can lawfully claim of you. Make a fair provision if you are able to make it. Let your children be liberally educated. Let there be no stint in the house so that there should be complaints of need there. God has put you into a position and you may spend according to your station. What I mean to say is this—if you make it your objective in this world to live simply to get together a certain amount of money, and die and leave it—you are living with an anti-Christian objective and your spirit is apart from the spirit of your Lord Jesus Christ!  
My Master did not make a fortune. There is none of you who will leave less than He left! We read some time ago of a bishop whose will was sworn to be under £150,000, and someone said, “He was a true successor of the Apostles, for he would be bound to say that if the Apostle Paul’s will could have been sworn to, it, too, would have been under £150,000.” And I think it is very likely that it would!  
Ah, but such an occurrence as that always provokes a sneer in the world. They say, “Oh, yes, yes, yes—this is a picture of making the best of both worlds!” But it is not the picture of the Savior, living wholly for the cause of God and the cause of truth, but quite the reverse! I would like to see you, my dear Friends who are poor, feeling that out of your poverty it is your privilege to give continually to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, not casting the burden of God’s work upon the few rich that may be among us, but every man honestly taking his share in the Church’s burden, which, indeed, is not her burden, but her privilege and her delight! I would like to see you bring in your gifts to God’s treasury, not because you are asked to do so, or prompted, or driven to it, but because you love to do it out of love to Him. Well, then, those of you who are prospered in business—and may there be more of you!—will always find that it will sweeten what is left to yourselves if the full and fair proportion is given to your Master. I am afraid you will not be likely to imperil yourselves, or bring yourselves to poverty by what you do for the cause of Christ. Sorry would I be if, by any extravagance or imprudence of that kind, such a thing would occur—but on the whole it is not a very likely thing—so that I need not guard you particularly much against it. But if you give to God, you shall find that if you give by shovelfuls, God will give it back to you in cartloads! And if you give cartloads, His wagons shall be driven to your door and He will bless you in proportion as you give to Him!  
I have thus applied the principle to wealth, but it should also be applied to everything the Christian has. I hope some of you have a good reputation. There was a time when I had one, but preaching the Gospel very frequently brings upon you all sorts of misrepresentations. I remember pretty well the first stinging article I read in a newspaper concerning myself—as full of lies as an egg is full of meat—and I could not help wincing somewhat under it! But I soon learned the lesson that I could not afford to keep a reputation if I were a Christian minister—that I must be prepared to serve God with all my heart, soul and strength—and let man or devils say whatever they liked. I take no notice whatever of them, but go on serving God! And I count it a sweet thing to sing— ***“If on my face for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame  
If You will remember me.”***  
Now, there is a young man over yonder who thinks he is a Christian, but he has been laughed at by the other young fellows in the shop and he has half a mind to give up. What? What? When Jesus Christ, who was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, are you ashamed to be laughed at by a few simpletons? And there is a young woman here who was placed, just now, in a family where they are very godless. She hardly likes to show her colors for Christ. Oh, my Sister, think of the Master and of the shame and the spitting that He endured for you—and let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Stoop, stoop, my Brother! Stoop, my Sister! The way to Heaven is downhill in a certain sense. The way to rise is to fall in your own esteem—and when you shall think yourself to be less than nothing, and your own reputation, and your own wealth, and everything you have to be all Christ’s property—and you freely give it up to Him, then will you realize what it really is to be a Christian—but not till then!  
Would to God some here were wholly devoted to the Master! I have been looking to see whether God would raise up among us some unusual spirits, some fiery souls, some consecrated men and women who have got the old heroic blood of ancient Christendom within their veins! May such yet arise and may each seek to follow where the Master leads the way to the praise and Glory of His Grace!  
Now, there are some of you who have heard all this, but I have not addressed myself to you—and yet I meant you all the while—I mean even you who are unconverted. Think of the love of Jesus in coming in the flesh and may that sweet love be a sort of latchkey to your hearts with which Christ shall open them and let Himself in! If He has knocked and you have not opened, I trust He will open the door, Himself, by His own love—and may you be His tonight! If you so become His, be really His! You have served the devil—now serve Him! If you must serve Christ, do not serve Him with half your hearts—serve Him and no mistake. Give Him your whole soul. If He is worth having, He is worth having altogether and worth giving your whole soul. So may you do—and the Master shall have the praise evermore! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1522 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EXPECTED PROOF OF PROFESSED LOVE  
NO. 1522

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“Show you the proof of your love.”  
2 Corinthians 8:24.*

IN every Believer’s heart there is love to God, otherwise he cannot be a child of God! In every Christian’s soul there is love to Jesus Christ. How could he be a Christian otherwise? As a consequence of this, in every Christian’s bosom there is a love to the brotherhood—“We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” In every Christian’s breast there is also a love to all mankind. He practices that second great Commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The spirit of God has cast out the demon of selfishness and, in proportion as that is the case, the man possesses the mind of Christ which is love. As all the Law is fulfilled in one word which is, “love,” so the outcome of our holy faith is also contained in that one word, “love.”

Oh that we were saturated with it! Where there is true love in the heart, it becomes a working principle. It does not lie dormant, but it *works*— works abundantly! It is a vital principle that where there is life there is movement and a measure of activity. It is a principle that grows and out of its growth there comes fruit. For these reasons and in these ways, true Believers give sure proofs of the love that is in their hearts. I wish to speak to you, at this time, by answering four questions.

**I.**First, WHAT IS THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS LOVE that we should be so anxious to prove it? This Christian love must have some great worth about it, or else we should not be exhorted by the Apostle once and again to prove that we have it. Remember, first, that true love to God and the saints in the Christian heart is Divine in its origin. We would never have loved God if He had not first loved us! And, unless His Holy Spirit had turned the stream of our affections in that direction, we would have run away from God and have hated God and we would neither have loved Him nor His people. It is the nature of the seed of the serpent to hate the Seed of the woman and as long as we are under condemnation and wrath and in our natural state, we are on the serpent’s side and we war against that which is good.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be.” If, therefore, we have even a *spark* of love to God, God must have given it to us! It is, therefore, a precious thing because it is of God and we ought to take heed that we assuredly possess it. And we also should endeavor to live so that others may be convinced that this Divine principle rules our spirits. As it is Divine in its origin, so it is surpassing in its energy, for true love to God exceeds all other love. Does not Christ tell us that a man must love Him better than father or mother, or the dearest relative he has, or else he does not love Him at all?

Christ will not be put off with the leftovers of our heart. He must have our whole heart. All human affections which are natural and proper are to be held in subservience to this grand and master passion which is to set our soul on a blaze—love to God in Christ Jesus. He loves not Christ at all who does not love Him first and last. This affection, like Aaron’s rod, must swallow up all others and our whole heart must belong to the Lord our God! We must take care that we give*proof* of an affection which is so surpassing in its energy, for surely, if it has such force, it must produce its own proof!

If it were some minor passion—some little narrow jet of flame that might light up a corner of our being—we might not be so particular about it. But if it is to fire our entire manhood, it must produce some effect or else we may well question whether we possess it. This love is absolutely vital in its necessity. If it can be proven that a man does *not* love God, love Christ and love His people, then the life of God does not dwell in him. Life and love are two words singularly alike and, when we get to the bottom and radical principle of the *spiritual* nature, we perceive that they are singularly bound up together insomuch that, “He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.”

These are some of the Apostle John’s great little words, which, in their miniature form, contain whole worlds of meaning. Beloved, we *must* love God, or else we are not in Christ! Hence the importance that the proofs of our love should be very distinct and unmistakable. We should make our *calling* and*election* sure—and those things can never be sure unless we have abundant proofs of our *love*. It is vital in its necessity. However great that love becomes and I have spoken of it as rising to a superlative degree, it is warranted by the facts of the case. Love to God—I will not spend a word in justifying it. Love to Christ—how can it be necessary to commend it to you?—

***“Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands our soul, our life, our all.”***  
And it shall have it, too!

Do you not say so, my Brothers and Sisters? Do you not yield to this soft, yet mighty bond—soft as silk, yet strong as iron? It holds us fast! We cannot escape from it. Not love Christ? Not love His people? Not love the world of lost sinners? Oh, Sirs, surely we were, of all creatures, the most brutish if we were to dispute the necessity of love! “You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty might be rich.” Go and love Jesus Christ till men call you a fanatic! Go and love Him till you give all your goods to feed the poor! Go and love Him till you lie in a prison and the moss grows on your eyelids! Go and love Him till you burn to ashes at the stake and you have not loved Him one whit more than He deserves!

O our best Beloved, You, Yourself, warrant us in permitting our zeal for You to eat us up and, eaten up, we would be for Your Glory’s sake! This love to Christ has been, in all ages, very eminent in its achievements. Wherever love reigns in a Christian, it makes him strong. Faith laughs at impossibilities and cries, “It must be done!” But *love* performs the deed, for, “faith works by love.” Love is the right hand of faith. What have not men done out of love to Christ? Truly, the time would fail me to tell of its exploits. What you shall do, dear Sister, if you become full of love to Jesus, will astonish you! And what you shall do, dear Brother, if the love of Christ burns through your soul, will far exceed what you have dreamed of as yet. Oh, for *more* love!

Let the martyrs tell you what poor suffering flesh and blood can do when love strengthens it! Let holy women that have debated and disputed and bled and died for Christ and in all their timidity and weakness made brave as lions for Christ tell what love has done! Let the walls of the Coliseum at Rome; let the arenas of hundreds of amphitheaters tell how bravely men have played the man—how bravely women have met death for Christ’s sake! All that the Church needs is the Holy Spirit to baptize her into the love of Christ and nothing will be impossible to her!

Thus have I tried to commend this love and surely we ought to be able to prove that we have it. If we have any question as to whether we have it or not, let us find no rest, day or night, till the grand debate is ended! We MUST love Christ or perish! Oh, by the certainty that His saints shall see Him face to face and be like He, let us rise to something nobler in the form of love to Him than we have ever reached as yet! This is the love which we are to give proof of.

**II.**Secondly, WHAT IS THIS PROOF? The text says, “Show you to them and before the churches, the proof of your love.” What proof shall we show? There are so many forms of action which would prove love to Christ that I cannot possibly go through them all, especially as each person, I believe, will give a different proof of his love. There is (to use a difficult word) an idiosyncrasy about each Believer. He is a man by himself and his love, if it is genuine, will take a form peculiar to himself in the proof which it gives. Certain proofs look towards God and the Lord Jesus. If you love Him, you will keep His Commandments and His Commandments are not grievous.

If you love Him, you will seek to honor Him—to spread the savor of His glorious name. If you love God in Christ Jesus, you will be anxious to extend His rule over the hearts of men. If you love God, you will long for communion with Him—you will not be satisfied to live for days without speaking with Him. If you love Him, you will grieve yourself when you grieve Him—your heart will smite you when you have gone astray. If you love God, you will long to be like He—you will strive after *holiness*. If you love God, He will reign over you—Christ will be your King. Your mind will be under subjection to Him. Your thoughts will be guided by Him. Your opinions will be taken from His Word. Your whole life will be seasoned by His Spirit which dwells in you. Do you not see that there are hundreds of ways in which you can show proof of your love towards God? Oh, that we may not be found lacking in any of these things!

We may show this love, in the next place, towards God’s ministers. I cannot help mentioning them because the Apostle so distinctly, in this chapter, speaks of himself and his Brothers. And one special way of showing it is this—if they speak well of you, do not let them have cause to retract their holy boasts and have to say with tears, “I was deceived in these people.” If any have brought you to Christ, be an honor to them and to the Gospel that they preach, because, dear Friends, the world turns round and however retired a minister may be, yet worldlings are sure to throw the inconsistencies of his people in his teeth. They say, “That is one of Soand-So’s people! Look how he acts!” And our ministry is hindered and our hearts are grieved whenever those who profess to have been brought to Christ walk unworthily. Show us a proof of the love you often express to us as your servants in Christ Jesus by endeavoring so to walk that when we give our account we may do it with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable to you.

Next, show proofs of your love in reference to God’s people. How can that be done? Some of you need to have this thing gone over with you because you have evidently forgotten it. If you are God’s servants, you love His *people* and the first proof you should give is to go and join with them. Say, “Where is the list of their names kept? I will count it an honor to have my name enrolled.” Certain of you say, “I should count it an honor, but I have hardly the courage to come forward.” What? Have I been sitting these various days to see the timid ones and have you not *all* come? We will have another time for you, then, and try if we cannot get you right, for really, we are not so frightful as you think we are and you need not be timid about telling to a poor servant of Jesus Christ that you really love the name of his Master! He will be glad and so will you.

No, but you say you are half afraid of *yourself*! I wish you were altogether afraid of yourself. The more afraid of yourself the better, for you are good for nothing in yourself! But do not be afraid of trusting yourself with Jesus and when you have done so, then the very next thing is to become identified with the visible Church of Christ! If you say, “I love the Brethren,” the Brethren may turn round and say, “Give us a proof of your love. Cast in your lot with us.” Do as she did who, though she had been a heathen, nevertheless clung to one who worshipped the true God and said, “Where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God.”

And when you have joined the Church, then surely you should show a proof of your love by a hearty fellowship with the saints. We do not need you to put your name in the book and to be a professor and then sit in one of those pews up in the corner and come in and go out and never speak to anybody! I meet, even now, with some who say, “I have been at the Tabernacle for months and nobody has ever spoken to me.” Well, I know that there are so many earnest Christians on the watch here to speak with strangers that if you have not been spoken to it must be your own fault! Perhaps you are some dreadfully stiff body and you have frightened them. I do not know, but it may be so. There are some who look as if they said, “Do not come near me. I do not need any questions asked me.”

We have some Brothers and Sisters who will break through your stiffness, though, I dare say. But if it is really so, I am very sorry for it and it need not be so any longer. Speak to somebody at this very service! I do not dislike to hear a low hum of godly conversation before service begins, though some people think it horrible. Neither do I deprecate a little lingering upon the steps and around the building—you are holding fellowship, one with another, and I like that it should be so, for we do not meet too often. It is no desecration of the Sabbath or of the place of worship for Christian people to speak with one another to edification.

When you join the Church, join it in earnest and converse much with the people of God! And by your hearty zeal show them a proof of your love. And then unite with them in all their service. The school needs Sunday school teachers. You love Christ, you say, and you love the young—show us a proof of your love! Come and help in that good work. There is something or other that you can do for Jesus and for His Church—do it and thus show us a proof of your love! Show the proof of your love by comforting the saints in affliction—by helping them, as much as you can, when they are in need—by defending their good name whenever you hear them railed at. Prove your love by suffering nobody to speak against them falsely when you are by. Stand up for them! Show them the proof of your love by bearing with their infirmities.

The Church is not perfect and if it were, it would not be perfect after you had joined it! You who have so many infirmities, yourself, should patiently bear with the infirmities of others. If the saints are not all you would like them to be, remember, nevertheless, that they are dear to the heart of Christ and He, perhaps, sees in them beauties which you would see, too, if you had more beauties yourself! Perhaps your power to find fault arises from your having so many faults yourself and if you were more sanctified and more like Christ, you would fix your eyes, as well, upon the beauties of their character as upon their defects. Show us the proof of your love! I am not speaking as though I did not see among you abundant proofs of your love—but I am speaking to some who, perhaps, as yet, have never realized their position of privilege in reference to Christ and to His people—and they have never let their hearts go out as they should go out towards those whom Christ has purchased with His precious blood.

Show us the proof of your love to the ungodly, too—to this great city of four millions! Show us the proof of your love by trying to snatch the firebrands from the flame. Be up and doing. Stand at the street corners, if you can, and preach Jesus Christ! Scatter the printed Gospel in every room to which you have access. Talk of Christ to your work people. Speak of Him to your companions. Endeavor to spread this potent all-heal—this cure for all manner of spiritual diseases—for otherwise, talk as you may, profess as you may—we shall have to say to you, “Show us the proof of your love.”

I have only given you a sort of charcoal sketch of what might be the proof of your love—I have not drawn the picture or laid on the colors. Think, dear Friends, how you can give such proof at once.

**III.**But now, in the third place, WHY IS THIS PROOF CALLED FOR? Somebody says, “Why am I called upon to prove my love?” Do not grieve, even if I press it very hard upon you, for your case will be something like that of Simon Peter when he, too, was pressed exceedingly. Peter was grieved when his Master said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” Now the Lord did not ask it because He doubted him, for He knew Peter’s heart. Peter’s appeal was a true one, “You know all things. You know that I love You.” Do not, therefore, resent it and say, “Why should I prove my love?” No, but just listen.

True love always longs to prove itself—it does not need a command to do it! It is waiting for an opportunity. It is so with your domestic life. You know that it is so! I need not give instances. What a pleasure it is to show love to those we love! In a far higher degree, what a delight it is to a Christian to do something for Jesus! If you have never done anything distinctly for Jesus, what sort of a child of God can you be? I love my Master’s service and I can truly say that I think that I would do *anything* for His people—but I am not quite so sure about that as I am about the feeling that I would do anything for *Him*. When I get a hold of something that is distinctly and undividedly for my Lord’s Glory, I am glad to do it!

To break an alabaster box of ointment upon His head is a rich delight— truly, it might have been given to the poor and have blessed the poor, but Jesus, Himself, is best! “It is a waste,” somebody murmurs. Yes, yes, but to be wasteful for Christ is the noblest economy! O hearts that love your Lord, never count the silver when you are spending for Jesus! Break the box! Pour out the ointment! The room will be filled with the perfume and it will not be wasted. Even if there were no nostrils to smell it, if only Jesus had the refreshment of it, it would be all the better!

I like to enter the glade of a forest where there are spots unseen by eyes of man and thickets of brush through which nobody but the red deer has ever passed! I delight to sit down by a little rippling brook upon a bank of thyme undesecrated by human foot and think, “This is God’s garden and every leaf waves for Him.” How dare the poet say that flowers which were born to blush unseen are wasting their fragrance on the desert air? Why, they are flowering for God and He delights in them and they are just the best used flowers in the world! Oh to be just such a flower as that at times and to feel that you have got away—away from the gardens where men may come and praise or offend and offer mercenary prizes for flowers and fruits—away where God sees you and delights in you! We should try to work for Jesus only. Proof is called for, not because Jesus doubts, but because He loves to please us by giving us opportunities of proving our love!

But one reason why we are called upon to prove our love is that it may become a blessing to other people. The Corinthians were to prove their love because the poor folks at Jerusalem were starving. It would be of no use for the Corinthians to sing a hymn about charity while the poor saints at Jerusalem had not a loaf to eat. No, they must prove their love that it might be a benefit to others and that the influence of that love might spread to others, because the Apostle said, “If you Corinthians do not discharge your promise, those people at Macedonia will throw it in my teeth and do nothing, themselves, and, therefore, for the sake of the Churches in Macedonia, you must be generous.”

So, Beloved, oftentimes one man, by serving his Master well, stirs up a whole regiment of other Christians who become ashamed to be doing so little! I may preach a great many sermons, Brothers and Sisters, but they will do very little good compared with what *your* sermons will do, if, as a Church, you live up to the mark as Christians! If, in holy love and concord and every Grace, you abound, other Churches will say, “Look at this Church!” Oh that you may be such saints that others may be encouraged in their work for Christ by you! *That* is why you are asked to prove your love!

You are asked to prove your love, for it is reasonable that you should do so. God did not love you and keep it to Himself and say, “My name is Love, but I will do nothing.” No! He gave His Son from His bosom, His only Son, and that Son He gave to *die*. God is practical. That which He feels, He does—that which He speaks is done. We have many idle words, but the word and mind of God come out in deeds of Grace. Is it not right, therefore, that we should give practical proof of our love?

**IV.**Time fails me, or I would have dwelt on the fourth point, namely, WHO IT IS THAT CALLS FOR THIS PROOF OF OUR LOVE? I will leave out everybody else but One and say it is your Lord—your own dying, living Savior who says, “Show Me the proof of your love.” I will tell you how He is saying it. Affliction has come into your house. There is a dear one dead and Jesus says, “Now will you kick against Me, or will you yield Me your treasure? Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these dear ones? If so, you will part with them and not complain.” “Mary, do you love Me better than mother, or sister, or friend? If so, you will bless Me when I take them away. Now is your time—show Me the proof of your love by bowing before My chastening and love Me still.”

Our Lord only takes from us what He gave to us! Let us, therefore, bless His name! Bereaved one, that may be the proof of love to which He is calling you. Perhaps you have had a difference lately with one to whom you ought to be united in friendship and now your conscience is saying, “Christians ought to live in peace and love.” But Satan is saying “*You* were not to blame. Do not humble yourself before such a proud person as your opponent.” But my Lord and Master says to you, “Show Me the proof of your love. Forgive him for My sake even to 70 times seven. And if you have wronged him, confess the wrong and humble yourself for My sake. Because I washed My disciples’ feet, show Me the proof of your love by washing one another’s feet.” Attend to that admonition, I pray you!

But possibly there are some here who have had in their minds the project of doing something unusual for Jesus, or the Church, or the poor, or for missions to the heathen. Satan has said, “You must not give as much as that.” Jesus says, “I have prospered you—when others have failed in business I have taken care of you. Show Me the proof of your love.” Will you not hear His call? Do not hold back your hand and do not need anybody to persuade you, because that will spoil it all. It must be spontaneous! It must come from your *heart*, moved only by the Spirit of God, if you wish it to be accepted.

Perhaps I am addressing a young man who has been, for years, a member of the Church and it is crossing his mind, “What shall I do to show my love?” And, perhaps, it is his ambition to be a missionary in a distant land. Keep not yourself back, my dear young Brother! Should it rend a fond connection, or cost you your life, give Jesus such proof of your love as His Spirit suggests to you! Or is it that you ought to speak to people about their souls? The Lord will throw somebody in your way. Give a proof of your love by a holy bravery and speak right out for Jesus Christ and do not be ashamed. The Lord invites you to a closer fellowship with Himself, to come higher up the mount of God and to be more thoroughly consecrated. Then show Him the proof of your love!

I leave this with you. If you love Him, show it! If you do not love Him, tremble! I will not repeat what the Scripture says, as though it came from myself, but I would have you remember it. Paul says, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha”—cursed with a curse at the coming of Christ. So it must be if you love not Christ. Oh, if you love Him, be inventive! Think of a new thing that nobody else ever did for Jesus! Strike out a fresh path. Deny yourselves comforts to have the comfort of proving your love, as His Spirit shall guide and help you. And to His name be praise evermore. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #835 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A CHEERFUL GIVER IS BELOVED OF GOD  
NO. 835

***~~DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 27, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“God loves a cheerful giver.”  
2 Corinthians 9:7.~~***

I AM most anxious, dear Friends, to make full proof of my ministry, and in this one respect, especially, that I may address you upon all parts of God’s Word and not be found guilty of confining myself to one set of topics, for certainly this, although it might be pleasant, would not be profitable to you. I would rather, if I had my choice, constantly preach upon the doctrine of God’s everlasting and unchanging love. I should delight to dilate each Sunday and, indeed, in every sermon, upon the simple doctrine of the justification of the sinner in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

But there are other things in Scripture beside these. All things in Scripture are not placed there for our comfort. All are not promises. All are not words of cheer for feeble minds and disconsolate spirits. There are other words beside those of consolation—words of direction, words of precept. If we should shun these—if these never entered into the course of our ministry at all—some solemn disease might break out among the Church because a part of the “food convenient” for them had been withheld.

Therefore I think it is meet to speak to you upon this subject tonight, and all the more so because there is no collection. You are not asked to give anything, and I shall therefore feel myself the more at liberty to press upon you the instruction of this text. You will see that my simple object is to bring out the teaching of the Word of God to you, not with any ulterior purpose, but purely to promote that result which God Himself may intend to work by the Words before us! Words, remember, of undoubted Inspiration and therefore as worthy of all acceptation as any other sentence from the Divine mouth.

Brothers and Sisters, in the Church of God there are various forms of service. There are some to whom the gift is given of edifying others—these are bound with diligence to instruct their hearers and expound the Scriptures. To others it is given to evangelize—to break up fresh ground, to win the unconverted. These are bound never to stay their hand, but to sow the Seed both at morning and evening. Many in the Lord’s family are not enabled either to be the teachers of the Church, or the winners of souls, but they are called by the duties of a humble, quiet life, to adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things. Such as these should see to it that their conversation is always such as becomes the Gospel of Christ and befits the household of faith. And it should be their earnest prayer that what is preached by some may be illustrated by themselves in their daily walk and conversation.

A considerable portion of the Church of God is called to yet harder service, namely, that of suffering. God gets glory, still, out of the fire of affliction when His people sing His high praises upon their beds. He receives as much honor from the sickbed as from the pulpit! And those of His servants who are called to lie in a hospital are as acceptable soldiers as those whom He commands to the front of the fray. We must all expect to take our turn in tribulation according to the purpose of God. When we are commanded to do so, we must take up our cross cheerfully and follow our Lord.

To all the Church, also, it is given, and to each member in his measure, to serve God by *giving*. Some are enabled, being made stewards of wealth, to give largely of their substance. They are bound to do so, but they should not give it merely as being bound, but feeling it to be their *privilege* to give whatever they can to Him who gave them their all, and who is their All. The poorest Christian is not exempted from this privilege. If he has but little, God accepts according to that which a man has, and not according to that which he has not.

And if he is so poor that he cannot even give the two mites which make a farthing, still he may give to God of his *time.* He may give to God of such ability as he has in the teaching of the young, in the distribution of the printed Word, or in some other form of service which shall come conveniently within his reach. But none must escape from being givers to God in *some* way, for we are all *receivers* and should be all dispensers. Give Him our prayers. Give Him our praises. Give Him such efforts as we can, but let us all be *givers—*and let us take heed to the text—and be *cheerful* givers, too.

You will notice that the Apostle Paul had been speaking about giving all through the chapter, but he now comes to speak of giving as it appears in the sight of God. And the great argument which he uses, the master-gun, is, “God *loves* a cheerful giver,” from which I learn that when we are speaking of Christian service, we ought always to view it in its aspect towards God. He had spoken of what the men at Achaia had thought of benevolence, and of what the members of other Churches might think of the Corinthians, since he had before boasted of them. But he recollects himself, and says that the true judgment of a good work is not what may be thought of it by the Church or by the world, but in what esteem *God* may hold it. “God,” he says, “loves a cheerful giver.” That is the point.

Beloved Hearer, you are a professed Christian. Do you serve in the Church after this model? You may ask what I mean. It is this. In coming up to the House of God do you come there that you may worship God? When you teach in the Sunday school, is it merely that you may take your share with your fellow Christians, or do you teach as unto God? You speak, my Brother, in God’s name—do you not sometimes find yourself preaching otherwise than as unto God? You engage in prayer in the Prayer Meeting, my dear Friend—do you ever raise the question in your mind, “I wonder whether my prayer is liked by those who listen to it?”

You forget that prayer is to be viewed as unto *God*, and that all the service of the Christian is not towards man, nor towards the Church, though it has its bearings in both of these directions—but its main bent and bearing is towards God, and to do everything as for the Most High is the most important of duties. To live in this world***—***

***“Careless, myself a dying man,  
Of dying men’s esteem.”***

To ask myself *never* what Mr. So-and-So thinks of me, “Shall I be commended, or shall I meet with censure?” but to say, “As I serve my God and not my fellow men, what will the great Master say to me? What will He say of this, my service? How will it appear in His sight? Will it be gold, silver, precious stones, or will it, like wood, hay and stubble, be consumed in the fire?”

This is the true way in which to work and live! Note, then, before I come to the text to enter fully into its teaching, that whether it is service, or teaching, or suffering, or giving—the main point is to perform it as unto the Lord—and if the Church would see to this she would find her strength. She would serve God after a nobler and more acceptable manner, for He is a Spirit, and they that serve Him, serving Him in spirit and in truth, would serve Him more boldly, more abundantly, and more acceptably through Jesus Christ.

This is, then, upon the outside of the text. “God loves a cheerful giver.” We learn that as giving is a part of Christian service, the right way to do it is the way which God will, Himself, accept, and that that way is the giving *cheerfully*. “God loves a cheerful giver.” I do not mean to be very long upon any one point, but first shall notice very briefly what a cheerful giver is. Secondly, why the Lord loves such. And then, thirdly, will it be necessary to say even a word or two upon why we who are His people should be such?

**I.**First, WHAT IS MEANT BY A CHEERFUL GIVER? The rest of the verse tells us what is *not* meant, and so helps us to see what *is* intended. “Not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.” “Not grudgingly,” not giving as though you wished you could avoid it and therefore giving as little as possible. Not counting the pennies and reckoning them to be as precious as drops of blood—but giving with ease, spontaneity, freeness, pleasure—this is a cheerful giver.

To be this, one must give *proportionately*, for cheerful givers reckon how much they should give—how much as good stewards they may be expected at their hands. He who has a large income gives grudgingly if he gives no more than one who has but a tenth as much. He who has but few expenses and lives at a small cost—if he gives no more than another man who has a large family and large expenses, cannot be said to give cheerfully. He evidently gives grudgingly if he does not give *proportionately*. Much has been said about giving a tenth of one’s income to the Lord. I think that is a Christian duty which none should, for a moment, question.

If it were a duty under the Jewish law, much more is it so, now, under the Christian dispensation. But it is a great mistake to suppose that the Jew only gave a tenth. He gave very, very, very much more than that! The tenth was the payment which he *must* make, but after that came all the free-will offerings, all the various gifts at different seasons of the year, so that, perhaps he gave a *third—*much more near that, certainly, than a tenth! And at this present day it is a strange thing that the followers of idols, such as the Hindus, give very nearly that proportion of their substance, and thus utterly shame the illiberality of many who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ!

I do not, however, like to lay down any rules for God’s people, for the Lord’s New Testament is not a great book of rules. It is not a book of the letter, for that kills. It is the book of the Spirit, which teaches us, rather, the soul of liberality than the body of it. And instead of writing laws upon stones or paper, it writes laws upon the *heart*. Give, dear Friends, as you have purposed in your heart. And give proportionately as the Lord has prospered you—and do not make your estimate of what you ought to give by what will appear *respectable*—or by what is *expected* from you by other people. Give as in the sight of the Lord, as He loves a cheerful giver. And as a cheerful giver is a proportionate giver, take care that you, like a good steward, keep just accounts towards the great King.

But I have said that a cheerful giver is also a *willing* giver, one who does not need to be “bled,” as we sometimes say. He does not need that the knife should be constantly used upon him. He is not like the young grape which must be pressed and squeezed to get the wine out because it is not ripe—but a cluster bursting with invigorating juice! We ought to be like the honeycomb, dropping spontaneously with virgin honey, all too glad if we may but be accepted in our gifts through Him who is the Altar and who renders both the offerer and the offering acceptable unto God! We ought not to need to be preached at, to be exhorted and to be pressed by public appeals and private solicitations! It should be said of us as of the Church at Corinth, “Touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you.” Be a proportionate giver, then, and a willing giver.

A man who gives to God cheerfully has got beyond the serf-like, slavish spirit. The slave brings his pittance, which he is obliged to pay, and puts it down at the task-master’s feet and goes his way in misery. But the dear child, so pleased to give its Father what it can, places its little offering into the Father’s treasury, as much as possible unobserved of men, beholds the Father smile and goes its way rejoicing. You are not under the Law but under Grace! You are not, therefore, to *give* or to *do* anything to God as of compulsion, as though you heard the old Mosaic whip cracking in your ears. You are not to crouch before the Lord as the child of Hagar the bondwoman, fresh from Arabia and from the trembling of Sinai!

You are to advance cheerfully as one who has come to Mount Zion, as the child of promise—as Isaac, whose name is laughter—rejoicing that you are enabled, and favored, and privileged to do anything for Him who loved you to the death. The cheerful giver is one who gives very earnestly, and there is a way of giving earnestly, especially when the gift is that of your time or of your service. Some give God their time on the Lord’s Day—but they are half asleep. Some give Him their efforts in the school, or the classes, or street-preaching—but they never seem to throw their souls into their engagements. What the Church needs, nowadays, is more of cheerful, whole-hearted service.

Does it not make the flesh crawl on your bones to hear some men preach? A word today and another word tomorrow—the chilly discourse is spoken so softly, (when they might speak loudly enough, if they would), that you can see they have not stirred their souls with the theme that they wish to put into your souls. Under such preachers, congregations become “small by degrees and beautifully less,” because they are under the conviction that the preacher cannot have anything to say that he thinks worth saying, or, otherwise, he would speak out in clear, earnest tones. Oh, if all the ministers of Christ, and all the deacons, and elders, and Sunday school teachers, and street-preachers, and city missionaries were all on fire—what different men they would be!

If the service were all cheerful service in the sense of being intense, full of force—the man’s whole manhood being thrown into it—what bright and happy seasons of revival we might expect—for in this sense, “God loves a cheerful giver” who comes not to worship service to do duty, or because it is a matter of routine or the clock has struck and the people need him— but comes because he loves to tell of Jesus’ love! He comes because he loves to try to win souls! He comes because he loves to declare the whole counsel of God! He comes because he loves to look those dear children in the face and pray with them! He comes because he loves to take those lads alone and teach them of the Savior who bled for sinners!

Where there is living soul-service there must be a blessing! But if we do not serve our Master cheerfully, and consequently do not do it *earnestly*, God will not love the service, and nothing will come of it. One thing I know, that a cheerful giver always wishes that he could give 10 times as much. A cheerful doer always wants to have more capacity for doing. A cheerful preacher always wishes that he had a thousand tongues, for not one should be silent. Beloved, do you ever remember wishing that for once you could get out of this dull common life and climb into the higher spiritual life? Did you ever of read Henry Martyn’s life? He was a polished scholar, a man of learning and repute and he gave up all for Christ to go to Persia and there to die without having seen a convert, perhaps, and yet content to live—content to die in far-off lands for his Master’s sake!

Did you ever read of Brainerd, far away among the Indians, toiling on— and in his old age teaching a poor black child its letters, and thanking God that when he could not preach, he could yet teach the child its letters, and so do something for his dear Lord who had done so much for him? Yes, did you ever read and think of even St. Francis Xavier, papist as he was? Yet what a man! How consecrated, how zealous! With all his errors, and all his mistakes, and all his faults, yet passing over sea and land—penetrating forests and daring death a thousand times that he might spread abroad the poor misguided doctrines which he believed. As much as I hate his teaching, I admire his all but miraculous zeal!

When I think of some such men—when I would gladly censure their mistakes, I can only censure myself that I cannot even so much as think, or cannot do *more* than think of living such a life as they lived! O that we could learn the secret of entire consecration! O that we could receive a vehement panting and longing after the perfect dedication of ourselves unto our Lord and Master! Then we should make our everyday toil to be lustrous with the glory of holiness! Then we should burn like seraphs while we toiled here below as common men!

Then we should teach, and preach, and pray, and work, and give with such a spirit and such a Divine unction that the world would wonder from where we came, and where we had learned these sacred arts! It is *this* cheerfulness, *this* heartiness, *this* whole-heartedness, *this* intenseness, *this* fire of the soul which God loves! O that we may have it! O may we get it, for such doers and such givers God loves!

II. Secondly, WHY DOES GOD LOVE A CHEERFUL GIVER? This is not a sentence spoken to all sorts of men, remember. This was addressed to the members of a Christian Church. God loves them all, but He has special complacency in those whom, by His Grace, He has taught to be cheerful givers. A cheerful giver who was not a Christian would not at all come under the statement here made. He would still be one with whom God is angry every day. It is of*saved* men, *Christian* men—men joined to the Christian Church—that it is said, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

Now observe, first, God loves a cheerful giver for He made the world on the plan of cheerful giving, and a great artist loves all that is consistent with his plan. I say God has made the whole world on this plan. I will show you. Look at the sun. What an orb of splendor! What a glorious creation of God! Why is it bright? Because it is giving away its light. Why is it glorious? Because it is scattering its beams on all sides. Imagine that it should say, “I will give no more light”—where would be its brightness? If it should say, “I will no more scatter my beams”—where would be its luster? It is in the magnificent generosity of that great father of the day that his glory consists! It is the grandest of orbs to us because it gives us so much of that vitalizing force which is heat, and light, and life.

Behold the moon, the fair queen of the night. Why do we rejoice in her? Because what light she receives from the sun she gives again to us! If she were not to give her light, who would speak of her? If she were a selfish orb, absorbing into herself all the sun’s rays. If she were an ungenerous circle bounding up and storing within herself every sunbeam, what would she be? We should not even know of her existence, probably, except when, as a black speck, she passed between us and some bright luminary. But it is because she scatters her beams over the poverty of midnight that we rejoice and thank God for her wealth of beauty! Even yonder twinkling stars which seem so small to us—do not their brightness and their radiance consist in their *giving*? “One star differs from another star in glory,” because one star differs from another star in what it is able to yield to *us*. So it is with the heavenly bodies.

Now let us turn, then, to terrestrial bodies. Look at this earth beneath our feet. What is its excellence but in that which it gives? There are parts of the earth sublimely solitary, such as the Great Sahara—such tracts of land give nothing, and what are they? Deserts. Who commends them? Go over that land once so blessed, Palestine, and tread the soil which yields so little—is it not thought to be accursed? And why? Because all the elements of fertility that are within it are unused and not brought forth for the good of man.

But where are the happy countries? Where are the countries where men rejoice to praise the fatherland? Are they not those fertile hills and plains which laugh with superabundant harvests given forth from earth’s stores that men may make merry and be glad? Which is the land most chosen of our race—the Beulah of the nations? Not the hoarding land! Not the thirsty land that will take in everything and give out nothing! Not the hungry soil which the farmer tills but which refuses the wheat sheaf and the barley mow!

Walk abroad in this world and think for a minute. Thousands of years ago, before our race was on this planet, it is probable that there were vast forests waving in the sunbeams—and what were they doing? Giving up themselves to fall and die, and why? Why, to form the vast stores which Mother Earth held in her cellars, till, at last, when man came he broke the lock and entered into possession of vast stores of coal which aid our arts and sciences! Coal makes us warm and happy in the depths of winter so that we rejoice to see how that which was stored by generous Nature one day is given up tomorrow freely for our use!

Why, there is not a tree that grows but is giving forth perpetually! There is not a flower that blooms but its very sweetness lies in its shedding its fragrance in the air! All the rivers run into the sea, the sea feeds the clouds, the clouds empty out their treasures, the earth gives back the rain in fertility and so it is an endless chain of giving generosity! Generosity reigns supreme in Nature! There is nothing in this world but lives by giving except a covetous man, and such a man is a piece of grit in the machinery. He is out of gear with the universe. Man is a wheel running in the opposite direction to the wheels of God’s great engine. He is a jibbing horse in the team. He is one that will not do what all the forces of the world are doing.

He is a monster! He is not fit for this world at all! He has not realized the motion of the spheres. He keeps not step with the march of the ages. He is out of date. He is out of place. He is out of God’s order altogether. But the cheerful giver is marching to the music of the spheres. He is in order with God’s great natural laws and God, therefore, loves him, since He sees His own work in him.

Observe, secondly, that God loves a cheerful giver because Divine Grace has placed such a man in order with the laws of redemption, as well as the laws of nature. And what are these? We who are called, “Calvinists,” delight in asserting that the whole economy of the Gospel is that of Divine Grace. It is all of free Grace from first to last, and not in any measure or degree a matter of debt and reward. Salvation is not a thing to be earned and to be won by men, but is the result and exercise of the free Grace of God. If there is election, it is *free* election springing never from any goodness in us. If there is redemption, “thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” If there is calling, if there is justification, if there is sanctification—everywhere we see the freeness of the work of the great Giver. Never is anything in God stinted, never churlish, never grudging. He gives liberally and withholds not in any good thing. God stands in the work of Grace as a wondrous Giver.

Now the Christian man, or the *professed* Christian man, who is no giver, or being a giver is not a cheerful giver, is out of order with the system which revolves around the Covenant of Grace and the Cross of Christ. He is out of tune with the blood and wounds of Jesus. He is out of order with the eternal purposes of the Most High. He is not running in the current of Divine Grace at all. He ought to be under the Law, though there, indeed, he comes not up to its letter—and as the spirit of the Gospel is all freeness, and Grace, and love, and bounty—the man is out of harmony with it and does not understand it at all. Because, then, the cheerful giver, made so by Divine Grace, keeps tune with redemption and nature after his own measure and calling, he is commended of the Lord.

Again, God loves a cheerful giver because He loves anything that makes His people happy. And well He understands that the spirit of self-denial— the spirit of love to others—is the surest source of happiness that can be found in the human breast! He who lives for himself must be wretched. He who can only rejoice in what he, himself, enjoys, has but narrow channels for his happiness. But he who delights to make *others* blessed, and who delights to glorify *God*—and who can deny his own flesh and his own wishes if he may but honor his Master and bless the world—*he* it is who is the happy man! And as God delights in the happiness which is the result, so He delights in the cheerful giving which is the cause.

God delights in a cheerful giver, again, because in such a Believer he sees the work of His Spirit. It takes a great deal of Grace to make some men cheerful givers. With some the last part of their nature that ever gets sanctified is their pockets! The Grace of God works its way into the morality of their trade, and into the actions of the house, but they do not appear to recognize that their substance is to be as much consecrated as their hearts.

Beloved, I know there are some of the Lord’s people who look upon all they have most sacredly as being not their own, and who, not as a theory, but as a matter of daily *practice*, make money for Christ and give money to Christ, and are never so happy as when they can do a little more than they were accustomed to do to advance His kingdom according to their ability. But, on the other hand, there are same of quite another temperament, in whom the Grace of God has to knock hard before it gets an answer! They know what they *ought* to do very well, but yet find the purse strings grow tight, and the fingers that are used for giving nearly paralyzed! And really, when they do give a shilling, it appears to be as great an effort of self-denial as when others, according to their proportion, have given pounds.

But the Lord loves not to see His people hugging this world so. He loves to see that they have outgrown the beggarly elements. That they are getting to love the *spiritual* above the carnal, to love *Him* above themselves, and to seek the treasures that are *above* and not the treasures which are on the earth. I am sure it grieves the Spirit of God when He sees the blood-bought as money-grasping as those who are of the world! It grieves the Spirit and He often withdraws His comforting influence when He sees His servants falling down to the dull, dead, brutish level of men of the world whose cry is, “What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and with what shall we be clothed?”

He would have His people seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness! He would have them delight themselves in the Lord, and not in the creatures which flesh and blood pine after. He would have them drink from purer streams than the muddy rivers of earth. He would have them covet after better riches than these Egyptian treasures which must perish in the using, and from which we must so soon be taken away.

But there is one reason why God loves a cheerful giver which I must dwell on at some length, namely, because He is a cheerful giver Himself. Man generally loves that which is like himself. We gratify ourselves in that way. Generally our affections go after an object that is somewhat congruous to our own character. Now the Lord is the most cheerful of all givers! I want you to think of that for a minute. “Who spared not His own Son”? Oh, what a Gift was that! Mothers, could you give your sons? Fathers, could you spare your children? Well, yes, perhaps you might for your country, but you could not for your *enemies*. But God, the cheerful Giver, spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, as says the Word.  
And since then, what a cheerful Giver He has been! He has given without our asking. We did not ask Him to make the Covenant of Grace. We did not ask Him to elect us. We did not ask Him to redeem us. These things were done before we were born! We did not ask Him to call us by His Grace, for, alas, we did not know the value of that call, and we were dead in trespasses and sins! But He gave to us freely of His unsought but boundless love. Preeminent Grace came to us, outrunning all our desires, and all our wills, and all our prayers. He first made us pray. He gave us the spirit of supplication, or else we had never prayed! He gave us the will to come to Him, or else we should have remained afar off.

He was a cheerful Giver to us, then. And when we went to Him with broken hearts, how cheerfully did He give us pardon! How did He run and have compassion upon us, and fall upon our neck and kiss us! How cheerfully did He bring us to the banquet with music and with dancing, because His son that was dead was alive again, and He that was lost was found!—

***“Many days have passed since then,  
Many changes have we seen,”***

but there has been no change in Him! He has been a cheerful Giver still! We have needed Grace every day, and He gives liberally and upbraids not. When we have been to Him and have asked for an egg, He has never given us a scorpion. We have asked for bread and He has never given us a stone, but He has given His Holy Spirit to us. Oh, the generosity of God in Providence to some of us! It is not long ago since we were poor enough, but He has been pleased to give us all we can desire.

There are some of you here who were on the bed of sickness and were wondering what would become of that little family of yours for which you were the only breadwinner. But God, the cheerful Giver, provided for you. He set you up again, and sent you once again in health and strength to your work. Others of you have passed through great straits, but still the everlasting arms have been underneath you. And though the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, yet you, having sought the Lord, have not needed any good thing. He is a cheerful Giver!

Ah, poor Sinners, you who are not saved, I wish you knew how glad God is to give His mercy! He is the most cheerful Giver in the universe! You must not think He will grudge you. If you come to Him for pardon of sin, God is ready abundantly to pardon you. If you seek His face you shall not have to clamor after Him as though He were deaf or unwilling to hear you. He will listen to the cries of the penitent! He will hearken to the desires of those who would forsake their sins and find Christ. If you will but trust the Lord Jesus, you shall find Him the most cheerful Giver and the kindest Friend that you have ever dreamed of.

Brothers and Sisters, we shall very soon find God to be a cheerful Giver. Some of our friends, this week, have found Him so. They asked, for they were very sick, that He would sustain them—and He made their bed in their sickness, and put underneath them His kind arms. And then they asked that He would give them an abundant entrance into the kingdom of His dear Son, and He did it. He helped them to bear their witness to His faithfulness. He set open before them the gates of pearl. He did not deny them the harps of gold, nor the Throne of Christ, Himself, but as a cheerful Giver He welcomed His poor weary people to His own eternal banquet, and He made them sit at His own right hand!

So will He do with us, for He is a cheerful Giver—and so He likes His people to be—for in those who are like He, He sees Himself in miniature— as the sun sees itself in every drop of dew—as the skies are mirrored in every pool. O that God would grant us Grace to be more cheerful givers in the future than we have been in the past!

**III.**I shall close with only a sentence or two as to WHY WE WHO LOVE THE LORD, IN THIS HOUSE ESPECIALLY, SHOULD SEEK TO BE CHEERFUL GIVERS WHOM GOD LOVES. There are many reasons, but tonight we need not urge them all. One is that all we have we owe to Him. I have heard of one who failed in business, who, in his better times had helped some of his workmen into business and they had prospered.

It was said, “Oh, they will help him. He did them such good turns in his day of prosperity, they will help him.” I know not whether they did or not, but this I do know—that He who took us up when we were naked, for so we came into this world—He who took us up when we were more than naked—filthy and defiled—for so we became through our sin and through our original depravity—He who took us from off the dunghill, yes, from out of the fire itself—and made us what we are and wrapped us about with His righteousness and gave us of His mercy—He deserves all and more than all that we can give Him.

Oh, what shall we do for our Savior to praise Him? What shall we *not* do? Lord, as everything is due to You, take everything and let us make no reserve. Remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, continually, that you are saved—*you*, when you might have been damned—*you*, when you had no will at anytime to be saved! You are saved! Your sins are blotted out! The righteousness of Christ is your royal apparel. You are not only saved—the Holy Spirit dwells *in* you! You are a priest, you are a king unto God! You are an heir of Heaven! The blood imperial runs in your veins! You are one of the peerage of the skies, a prince of the blood! Oh, will you not live above the lives of others? Will you not seek by these high dignities, these priceless gifts and these astounding favors, to consecrate yourselves— spirit, soul, and body—to Him who is your Father, your Heaven, your God?

Brethren, you may well be anxious to be cheerful givers when you remember that the time for giving will soon be over. There is no giving in yonder skies. At least, God’s choice treasury, which is the poor man’s pocket, will not be held out for you to fill. There will be none of the sons of need there—no little feet cold for need of shoes—no little hands weak for need of bread. There will be no starving women and no hungry men. No meeting houses that need building. No missionaries that need sending forth. No ships that need to be chartered to bear them beyond the seas. No ministers of Christ standing in need of your aid. You will be beyond all such calls, then, and if there could be a regret in Heaven it would be that in Heaven these duties must forever cease. O give, then, while you still can as cheerful givers!

And, last of all, we have need of a giving God, and therefore let us be cheerful givers. Remember that story which Mrs. Stowe has so well written? I am afraid I cannot tell it again, certainly not in her words, but it is something to this effect. There was a merchant, says she, who had prospered a great deal in business. He had built a house in the country, and he had enlarged it and had laid out his grounds at great expense. When he went to his office he was called upon by a collector for some society and he replied to his requests, “I really cannot afford to give anything. I have so many calls, I cannot do it.”

Well, he was a man who had usually been very generous, and it touched his conscience a little afterwards to think that he should begin to stint in what he gave to his Lord. At night, when the wife and family had retired to rest, he sat by the fireside meditating, and he said to himself, “I really do not know whether I was wise to build this house. It has brought a deal of expense. New furniture is needed. I have been introduced into a new rank of society. Expenses have increased, the girls need more for clothes—everything is on a more lavish scale, and yet I have been stinting the Lord. I fear I have done amiss. I do not feel easy about it at all.”

As he was so thinking it is supposed that he fell asleep, but if so it was well for him that he did so, for suddenly the door opened and there came into the room a very meek and lowly stranger. He advanced to him and said, “Sir, I have called upon you to ask your help for a society which sends the Gospel to the heathen. They are perishing, perishing for lack of knowledge. You are wealthy, will you give me help to send them the Word of Life?” He said, “You must excuse me, really. My expenses are so great and I must curtail. I am quite unable to give you anything. I must decline.”

The stranger looked at him with a mournful glance and said, “Perhaps you think that the work is too far away, and you do not give because the money is to be sent beyond the seas. I will then tell you that there is a ragged school down a part of the city, near your house of business, and it is about to be shut up for lack of funds. And there are the poor little ragged children, the Arabs of your streets, ignorant of the right way—will you give me a subscription to that object?” The merchant was a little vexed to be asked again, and he said, “Forbear to trouble me. I cannot afford it. I cannot give you anything.”

The stranger brushed a tear from his eyes, and he said, “Well, then, I must ask you at least for something for the Bible Society. That, you see, lies at the root of everything. It gives away the Word of God, and surely, if you cannot afford to give to the Missionary Society, or the Ragged School, you will give for the Word of God itself.” “No,” he said, “I have told you I cannot do it,” and then—and then the aspect of the Stranger seemed to change, and though He still was meek and lowly, yet His Countenance became majestic! There was a glory in His face, and yet there were lines of grief, and He said, softly and very sternly, “Five years ago that little daughter of yours, with the fair ringlets, lay sick of the fever and you prayed in the bitterness of your soul that the darling of your heart might not be taken from you, but that you might be spared that heavy stroke. Who heard that prayer, and gave you back your child?”

The merchant covered his face with his hands, and felt ashamed. “Ten years ago,” said the same voice, “you were in great difficulties. Bills were returned upon you. You were on the verge of bankruptcy. Your hair seemed as if it would turn gray with care. To whom did you apply in the hour of trouble, and who heard you, and who found you friends who tided you over your difficulties when other houses were crashing, and wealthier men than you were failing on every side? Who did that for you?”

“Once more,” said the stranger, “fifteen years ago you felt the burden of your sins. You went up and down the world wringing your hands with fear, and crying, ‘God have mercy upon me!’ Your heart was overwhelmed within you. Who, in that hour, spoke the forgiving words which cancelled all your sins? Who took all your iniquities upon Himself?” The merchant sobbed aloud and trembled much when the voice said, “If you will never ask anything of Me again, I will never ask anything of you.” The man fell on his face before the august Visitor, and said, “Take all!”

Whether it were a dream or not, it is certain that that merchant became one of the Christian princes of America and gave to the cause of Christ as few had ever done before. “God loves a cheerful giver,” and you see His claims upon you! Go your way, merchants, and give largely as God gives to you. Go your way, you trades people, and scatter as you can, for God first gives you the means. Go your way, you working men and toiling women, and give according to your ability. Give, you rich, because you are rich, and give, you poor, because you cannot afford to get poorer, and you are likely to do so unless you offer God His portion.

But have you first given Him your *heart*? Have you put your *trust* in Jesus? If not, this sermon is not for you. But if your heart belongs to my Lord, and has been washed in His precious blood, let my text sink deep into your ears, and deeper, still, into your hearts—“God loves a cheerful giver!”

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1550 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT  
NO. 1550

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 25, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” 2 Corinthians 9:15.~~***

PAUL had spoken of the liberality of the Corinthian Believers and he had endeavored to stir them up to a prudent preparation for displaying it. “Now, therefore,” he said, “perform the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance, also, out of that which you have.” He closes his exhortation by this remarkable sentence— “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”—intending, no doubt, to thereby give expression to his own hearty thankfulness and also to deliver a master stroke of argument for Christian liberality. Nothing can so excite God’s people as to give to Him, as the remembrance of what God has given to them. “Freely you have received, freely give,” is our Lord’s own argument. Gospel Graces are best stimulated by Gospel motives.

It is wrong to appeal to Believers by reasons drawn from the Law of Works, for they are not under it. Children are to be ruled as children, not as oxen. Appeal should be made to renewed hearts by arguments distilled from the Law of love under which they live! Seeing God has loved them with an infinite love, this love has become the most mighty of forces within them—“The love of Christ constrains us.” Nothing can move a man to complete consecration to God like the fact that He so loved us that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Gospel is founded upon giving and its spirit is giving. Buying and selling are unknown in spiritual things, unless we buy without money and without price. Payment is for the Law. Under the Gospel, everything is a gift. God gives us Jesus, gives us eternal life, gives us Grace and glory, gives us everything, in fact, and then, moved by love to Him, we give ourselves back to Him and to His people. As it is the glory of the sun that he gives light and heat to our world, so is it God’s Glory that He gives mercy and peace to the sons of men. And, moreover, as the sun is the author of reflected heat and is all the more valued because his beams can be reflected, so is God glorified by that part of His goodness which we are able to impart to others. God is glorified in the thanksgiving which is excited by the gifts of His people to the poor, as well as by their personal thanksgivings for His own gifts. He gives to us and we thank Him. We give to others and they thank God for the kindness which He has inspired in us. Thus a round of thanksgiving *to God* is created by the spirit of giving which first of all displayed itself in the unspeakable gift of God! We are as cups filled at the spring and from us the thirsty drink and praise the fountain!

Paul had been boasting of the liberality of the Corinthians and he somewhat feared that by their delay he might be made ashamed. He seemed almost alarmed lest he had said too much about their gifts. He could speak upon that subject and say all that should be said, but he felt that he could not describe the liberality of *God*. The gifts of the Corinthians were such as he could speak of, but when he thought of what God had given, he could only cry, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” You can readily put down in black and white and count up the largest contributions of the most self-sacrificing Believers—but you cannot estimate the gift of God. You cannot estimate the value of God’s own dear Son—you could certainly give no expression to any estimate you had formed if it were in the least degree worthy of the subject. The love which is seen in Jesus is indescribable, infinite, unspeakable.

During this meditation I desire to aid you, as the Holy Spirit shall aid me, for in my case the power to speak of this unspeakable gift must, itself, be a gift. I trust it shall be given me in the same hour in which I shall speak. We will first consider that Christ Jesus is the unspeakable gift — but we are not going to be silent because of this—for our second head is Christ Jesus is a gift to be very much spoken of! The unspeakable gift is to be forever spoken of by way of gratitude—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!”

**I.**First, then, the eternal Son of God given of God unto men, CHRIST JESUS IS THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT and He is so in many ways. To begin with, no man can doctrinally lay down the whole meaning of the gift of Christ to men. The Church has produced thoughtful scholars whom it has called, “Divines,” and described as “eminent theologians.” From these teachers we have, no doubt, received much help in the exposition of the Word of God and yet if we put them all together they have never been able to unfold to us the entire meaning of the gift of the Son of God to men! The devout and studious have, themselves, cried out, “O the depths,” but they have not pretended to fathom this abyss of mystery.

Certain teachers have fallen far short of the mark and have done great mischief by their low estimate of the unspeakable gift. What they have said may have been true, but their sin has been one of omission— omission where none should have been possible. They have said far too little about Christ and have seemed to be afraid of extolling Him too highly. In the estimation of such persons, the gift of the Savior has been simply a display of God’s good will to the race and nothing more: Jesus was a Divine Philanthropist and nothing else according to their Gospel. This is to use other balances than those of the sanctuary and to give short weight to the great Householder! It is true that God commended His love to man by the death of His Son and none can say too much upon this point. But there is far more in the gift of Christ than mere goodwill. We are glad that these men admit the Divine Benevolence, but we wish they could see more than that—for that view of our Lord which sees in Him only a display of benevolence to men does but dimly discern His Character and value. Certainly He is “unspeakable” by those who only think of Him after this fashion.

Others have spoken of Christ as a wonderful declaration of God’s opposition to moral evil. The death of Christ has been received by them as a vague expression of Divine Displeasure against sin, of course not dissociating it from His Benevolence towards men. Herein is truth, also, for how shall we ever see the purity of God more fully vindicated than in the exhibition of sin’s result in the mortal agony and death throes of our Divine Lord? Yet, if this is all that any man has to say, he has failed to comprehend the gift of God, for the great Father has done far more for men by the gift of His Son than merely to intimate the kindness of His Nature and the results of moral evil. We admit that in the death of His Son the Lord has declared His love to man and His hatred of sin, but He has done infinitely more—the Cross is not only a school but a hospital—the Crucifixion not only reveals man’s evil, but provides a remedy for it. Christ is not merely a lesson, but a gift—an unspeakable gift.

Some of our brethren dwell very much, perhaps none too much, upon the general aspect of Christ’s death towards all mankind. It is a grand fact that the human race is spared because Jesus died and that it is not only reprieved, but lifted up from degradation and put in a position to hear messages of mercy which, if believed, will bring salvation. The Lord Jesus is described in Scripture as “the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe.” His mission is glad tidings both to Israel and to all people—all of Adam’s seed are affected by His death. They do well who freely proclaim the common salvation—they cannot dwell too much upon its freeness, though I would have them not overlook its fullness and Sovereignty.

We like well to hear of the effect of the Incarnation and the Atonement upon the entire human family as placing it under a Mediator, but we would also hear of the special application of redemption and its actual *results*. No one can say too much of the great Redemption, the matchless Propitiation—yes, though one should speak with the tongues of men and of angels concerning Jesus Christ in His relation to the human family—he need not fear that he would magnify the Lord too loftily. The sinner’s Friend, the mighty Savior, the gracious Pardoner cannot be too much spoken of, for under that aspect He is truly indescribable! We delight, in addition to this, to speak of Christ’s special relationship to His own people and we lay a great emphasis upon the fact of His Substitution in their behalf.

We rejoice to speak of His bearing the sin of many, His being numbered with the transgressors, His being made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our heart expands, our eyes overflow whenever we dilate upon His suretyship and consequent Substitution. His wondrous condescending love in taking our place—His standing in the sinner’s place that we might stand in His place and be accepted in the Beloved—this carries our heart away and we never weary of the theme! O Divine Doctrine! Full of consolation! Teeming with highest hopes! Gladly would we preach forever the sublime Truth of God of the Substitution of our Lord for us!

Yet if this were our one theme we should still fail to express the unspeakable. We are apt to think that when we have laid down this doctrine clearly and distinctly and have admitted all that others have well said, that we have believed and taught all that can be known concerning the gift of Jesus Christ to men. But, Beloved, I am persuaded that it is not so. Beside the purpose of declaring benevolence and censuring sin, of lifting up the race and of effectually saving the chosen, there is yet *more* to be subserved by the Incarnation and Atonement. The purposes of God are manifold and a wheel is ever within a wheel with Him. I will not, at this time, even *try* to speak doctrinally beyond what I have already attempted, for we must stop somewhere and I will pause here, at the truth of His vicarious suffering—the gift is unspeakable when we have spoken our very best and so let this suffice.

I bid you peer over the brink upon which I would set you. Look down into this abyss of love. Be you sure of this, that this depth is unfathomable! It is idle to attempt a definition of *infinity* and, therefore, vain to hope to declare how wide, how high, how deep, how broad is the wondrous gift of God to the sons of men! Theology can speak on many themes and she has much to say on this, but her voice fails to speak the whole. From the pulpit, when occupied by a gracious man, the confession freely comes that the heralds of the Cross are not able to tell all that is hidden in Christ Jesus! The gift is unspeakable for another reason—no man can ever set forth the manner of this gift. The way and method of the giving are unknown, perhaps unknowable and, therefore, unspeakable.

Just think awhile. Do you understand and could you possibly explain the manner of the Father’s giving the Only-Begotten to us? For Jesus Christ is not only the Father’s Son, but He is God Himself, one with God! The gift of the Son is virtually God’s giving Himself to men! There can be no separation between God the Son and God the Father for, says Christ, “I and My Father are One.” “Believe Me,” He says, “that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.” Do you understand this? Is it not indescribable? Do not, therefore, be drawing hard and fast lines and speaking of Christ as suffering and of the Father as scarcely participating in the Sacrifice, for this may grow into grievous error! It has been laid down by Divines that God is impassable and not capable of any form of suffering. It may be so, but I fail to see Scriptural authority for the statement.

That God can do what He pleases I do believe and therefore He can suffer, too, if He so wills. To me a God who has no feelings is a great deal farther off from me than my Father who is in Heaven, who can be grieved by my sin and can feel for my sorrow. It may be true that Scripture only speaks after the manner of men, but then it is as a *man* that I understand it—and it does seem to me to reveal not only a living God, but a *feeling* God. Is God glorified by being petrified? Read Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders when he speaks of “the Church of *God*, which He has purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). The *blood* of *God*—is not that a mistake? Certainly not, since Inspiration thus speaks. Sometimes expressions which are mistakes in logic may be more accurate descriptions than the best arranged sentences. The expression which looks to be a contradiction may better express the Truth of God than that which is verbally accurate.

Scripture is Infallible and yet it uses none of the red tape of systematic theology. We swim in mysteries when we speak of the Father and the Son. How, then, could God give the Son to die, He being one with Himself— shall any man explain it? Or, if he *could* explain the mystery, can he tell us what it cost the Father to give His Son? Can a mother tell us how it pains her heart to part with her child? Can any father tell us the anguish of losing his only-begotten? What must it be to give up your well-beloved son to be despised and spit upon, maltreated and murdered? No. You do not *know* what it is and, therefore, you cannot tell what it is! You that have been bereaved of your dearest—you know the pang which tears the heart—but you cannot express your loss to others. Your grief is inexpressible. Who shall tell what the Father felt when He did, as it were, cast the Glory of the Well-Beloved to the dogs by sending Him among the wicked husbandmen, who said, “This is the heir, let us kill Him”?

Who shall tell what the Eternal felt when the brightness of His Glory, the express image of His Person, was bound like a felon and accursed like a criminal? When He was mocked as an impostor and scourged as a transgressor, rejected as vile and slain as worthy of death? To see His Well-Beloved hung up like a thief and made to bear infinite agony—what thought the Father of this? True, “it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief,” but not without great self-denial on the part of the great Father. All the agony of Abraham, when He unsheathed the knife to slay his son, was but a faint type of what it cost the Father when He gave the Only-Begotten that He might die for us!

A further sense of the unspeakableness of this gift will come over you if you attempt to measure our Lord’s sufferings when He was made sin for us. None can declare the greatness of His sacrifice. Think of the Glory of Christ throughout all ages at the right hand of God and remember that all this was laid aside! What a descent from Heaven’s majesty to Bethlehem’s manger—from the Throne of Jehovah to the breast of Mary! Think of the perfect Nature of Christ’s humanity and its consequent rest in God and yet He stooped out of His spirit’s peace to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself! Think of His infinite perfections and boundless deservings and of the shameful contempt that was poured upon Him! The cruel asp of ingratitude stung Him and the serpent of malice bit Him—and all the while was He Lord of All.

Every step of His way of love is full of wonders! His becoming one with us according to the flesh is a great marvel. Imagine, if you can, of what it must mean that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Incarnation is but the first step, but of that first descent of love, who shall declare the mystery? And this was merely the beginning—He became a Man that He might go further and become man’s Substitute. Try, if you can, to conceive of Incarnate God as having sin imputed to Him, transgression laid upon Him! Why, the very idea must have been horror to His perfect spirit! Imagine of Justice with its iron rod, bruising and pounding the innocent Son of God with vicarious griefs borne for us!—

***“Much we talk of Jesus’ love,  
But how little is understood!  
Of His sufferings, so intense,  
Angels have no perfect sense.”***

“Your unknown sufferings,” says the Greek Liturgy and unknown they must forever be. O Jesus, what a price it was that You paid! What griefs they were to which You bowed Yourself till You were covered with a bloody sweat! O Lord Jesus, the brightest spirit before Your Throne who has dwelt with You ever since Your Ascension cannot tell us what You endured! Your groans are an unspeakable gift!

How was it that He died who is the Resurrection and the Life? And how was it He bore sin, even He who is none other than eternal Perfection? None of us can speak here, for He is the unspeakable gift. I ask you to follow me in another line of thought while I still talk upon the unspeakable. None can describe the gifts which have come to us through the gift of Christ. Think of what we have been delivered from—think awhile of what you were by nature and what you would have continued to have been had not Grace interposed—and what you would have become if Jesus had not been given to save the lost. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, we are fallen already, but the full results of the Fall are not seen on earth. The ripe result of sin is gathered in the dark region where castaways dwell forever, finally banished from hope!

They dwell where the ring of the Sabbath bell is never heard, for they rest not day nor night. They are where the voice of Mercy can never enter, for this doleful knell tolls through that dreary land with awful tone, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” And you and I might have been there, now, and shall be there yet, if Jesus Christ is not ours. Yes, and the brightest saints in Heaven, upon whom the eternal light has risen never to set, would have been now in the outer darkness, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth if it had not been for this unspeakable gift! The distance between the unfathomable depth of deserved woe and the unutterable height of infinite Grace and Glory, an angel’s wing cannot measure! Therefore it will always be impossible to tell the height and depth of this unspeakable gift.

But now think, for a while, what are the gifts which we enjoy at this hour. There is, first of all, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace. We are washed, washed in the blood, clothed in the righteousness of the Son of God, adopted into the family of the Eternal and, “if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ”! There comes to us, by way of adoption, all the provision, nurture, education and paternal love which the heavenly Father gives to all the children of His family. Brothers and Sisters, I have not time to mention, one by one, all the Covenant blessings. All things are in the Covenant, whether things present, or things to come, or life, or death—all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s—and all these things come to us through Christ. God spared not His own Son and, in giving Him to us, He has also freely given us all things.

Now, who is he that can speak of such a theme as this, for if he does but dwell upon the blessings which flow to us from Jesus Christ, he must be lost in wonder! Other gifts may amaze us, but this utterly overwhelms us! If the streams are fathomless, who shall find a plummet to measure the fountain? I preached last Lord’s-Day night to a great congregation that had come for many miles and, being faint and thirsty, they emptied many buckets of water which were set for them. Their thirst consumed a great quantity, yet an observer might soon have known how much they drank. But who shall tell what the earth drinks in during a single thunder shower? Who shall measure the floods which roll down the great rivers? Who shall compute the volume of the sea? Yet all these are finite and may be reckoned up in order—our Lord Jesus Christ is Infinite. Of man’s gifts to man we may readily make an estimate, but when you come to the gift of Christ, arithmetic is baffled and even imagination is outstripped.

Other themes we may hope to compass by study and careful speech, but before this we are dumb with astonishment. Boundless Grace, unutterable Mercy, Divine Love—these are heavenly things and tongues of clay can never fully declare them! Furthermore, the gift of God must always be unspeakable because when it is best realized, the effect it produces upon the emotions is so great that speech fails. I would not give much for the man who can at all times fluently talk about the love of God in Christ Jesus. When he feels most his obligations, his heart will check his lips! Utterance belongs not to the deepest emotion. Only believe in your heart that God has given Christ to you, and all that comes with Him, and you will rise from your bended knees weeping for joy! A sense of forgiven sin through the atoning Sacrifice will master you!

When Jesus bares His heart before you, can you speak? I will defy you to play the orator when love holds you beneath its spell! You will have a longing to tell the story, but an incapacity to fulfill your desire. Some feelings are too big for expression. The griefs that prattle are but small—great griefs are silent. Mercies which make us talk are common and no longer wondered at, but those which come with an unveiled Divinity about them are like Moses, too bright to look upon! A sense of Covenant Love binds a man to his place and makes him sit down like David before the Lord and bow his head and cry, “Why this to *me*? Is this according to the manner of man, O Lord God?” Yes, the gift must be unspeakable because the more it is appreciated the more are we silenced—the deeper our sense of its value the less is our power to impart it to others.

Power to speak of the love of Christ is not always to be taken as an evidence of true religion, nor is its absence a matter for alarm. I remember one dear lover of Christ who wished to join a certain Church but her testimony of experience was very slender. Indeed, she said too little to satisfy the Brothers who came to speak with her and they told her so. When, bursting through all bonds she finally cried out, “I cannot speak for Him, but I could die for Him.” Many are in the same plight and, in a measure, all true souls lie under the same difficulty. We could more easily die for Christ than hope to explain fully our sense of His dear love. He is a gift unspeakable! Heaven cannot match Him—how can earth describe Him? When this gift is best expressed, even when the Spirit of God helps men to speak upon it, they yet feel it to be unspeakable. When men sing like poets, or write like Apostles, they acknowledge that the wing of their thought cannot soar to the full height of this grand mystery—they have not even expressed what they have felt and they have not felt what they inwardly know they ought to have felt in connection with so Divine a theme.

He who before his fellow men has given the most vivid description of the love of God in Christ Jesus is the very man who best knows that it is inexpressible. You shall not be able to soar among the mysteries and bask in the eternal light of Jehovah’s face and then come back and say, “I can declare it all to you.” No, Paul said that, “he heard things which it were not lawful for a man to utter.” Joys revealed in the innermost place of holy fellowship are not to be commonly published—we would mar them in the attempt at their utterance. You can often feel what you cannot possibly describe to those who most eagerly listen to you. Often my preaching of the love of Christ is, to my own mind, when I have done, as sad a failure as if I had gilded gold or enameled the lily.

I was one day in the ruins of Nero’s palace and he who guided us there had a series of rods fitted in telescopic manner into one another. On the top of these was a candle and he held it high up to let us read the inscriptions on the arch of the overhead vault. We can do that with mortal things and so make men see them, but when we have done our best to describe the love of Christ, we have felt as though we had held aloft those silly rods with a farthing candle upon them to show the sun at noontime! God is very gracious to let His dear Son be seen at all through such poor narrow windows as we are. Poor, poor work is our best preaching concerning the adorable Lord Jesus! But this is one thing we can say with respect to Him from our very hearts—He has filled us to the fullest and satisfied us.

They said of Alexander that he had an ambition so vast that if his body had been as large as his soul, he would have stood with one foot on the sea and the other on the shore and would have grasped the east with his right hand and the west with his left. If our souls were thus boundless in desire, Christ’s love could fill them! Nothing else contents a man, but with Jesus we are satisfied. Though a man were, like Solomon, to get to himself all the wisdom and the riches of the world, “Vanity of vanities” would be his verdict. But he who wins Christ and has Christ’s love shed abroad in his heart has no vacant corner in his heart, no vacuum within his soul— Christ has filled him to running over. We can say, “filled with all the fullness of God,” but as to*containing* the fullness of God, he that has the most of it knows how impossible a thing it is!

You may frame the fairest picture that man ever painted, but you cannot frame the Alps. Though his daring pencil should cover many a yard, you may hang up the master’s canvas upon your walls, but when you stand upon the mountain’s brow and look over hill and vale and sea and shore, you dream not of frames and picture galleries, but leave the panorama in its own setting, or it cannot be encompassed by human invention. You may take the population of a city, a kingdom, or, if necessary, of the world and make a census thereof and set down the millions—but who shall take a census of the birds of Heaven, the insects which swarm the air, the fish which teem the sea, the stars which stud the sky and the sands which bound the main? All these things are countable by some sort of reckoning, but the love of Christ is Infinite! “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Thus have we dealt with the unspeakable. And we now feel, even more truly than when we began, that language fails us.

**II.**Let me have all your hearts for a few minutes while I now dwell on the other Truth of God, that CHRIST IS A GIFT OF GOD TO BE VERY MUCH SPOKEN OF. To be spoken of, first, by thanks to God. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Brothers and Sisters, we do not thank as we ought for anything. We are not half as thankful as we ought to be. Luther was known to tell a story of two cardinals who were riding to the council of Constance. One of them stopped because he saw a shepherd sitting down in the meadow weeping. Dismounting, he tried to comfort him and asked him why he wept. The poor man was slow to answer, but being pressed he said, “Looking upon this toad I wept because I have never thanked God as I ought for making me a man possessed of reason and of excellent form and not a loathsome toad.”

The cardinal was amazed as he saw the piety of the peasant and as he went away he exclaimed, “O St. Augustine! How truly did you say the unlearned rise and take Heaven by force and we, with all our learning, rise not above flesh and blood.” Might not some of us faint under a like sense of ingratitude? Did you ever bless God for your creation, your reason, your continued life? I have known what it is to thank God with all my heart for being able to move my limbs and turn in bed. Perhaps you have always enjoyed good health—do you thank Him for that? To be out of the hospital, to be out of the lunatic asylum, to be out of prison, to be out of Hell—do we ever glorify God for these things? As for the unspeakable gift of *Christ*, who among us has ever worthily blessed the Lord on this account?

Brethren, if we have Jesus to be our salvation, when ought we to thank God for Him? Why, every morning when we awake! How long should we continue to praise God on this account? Till we go to sleep again! From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same His name is to be extolled. Let us praise God till sleep steeps our senses in a sweet forgetfulness. It is even pleasant to go on singing unto the Lord in the visions of our bed, as if the chords of grateful emotion vibrated after the hands of thought had ceased to play on them. It is good when even this wayward fancy of our dreams wanders towards the Well-Beloved, never rambling outside of holy ground. Let even the fairies of our night-dream sing hymns to Jesus and the cowslip bells of dream-land harbor imaginations of the fair plant of renown. Oh, to get into such a state that we shall be always praising Him—praising and praising and praising and never ceasing!

When we become low in spirit, it will be a sad reflection if we have to acknowledge that in fairer weather we forgot our Beloved. Let us give double praise while we can. While we are in good spirits and happy in the Lord let us pour forth our hymns. Tamerlane said to the mighty Bajazet, when he had overcome him in battle and taken him for a prisoner, “Did you ever give God thanks for making you so great an emperor?” Bajazet confessed that he had never thought of that. “Then,” said Tamerlane, “it is no wonder that so ungrateful a man should be made a spectacle of misery.” Conscience will taunt us when we are sorrowful by saying, “You did not praise God when you were in health and now you are ill and hoarse and cannot lift up your voice! You did not praise Him for His unspeakable gift when you knew you had it and now you are full of doubts about it and Satan has you upon the hip—you well deserve all the sorrow that your mind shall feel.”

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, let us praise the Lord. Let us vow today that, His Grace helping us, we will praise Him, praise Him, praise Him and praise Him again and again and again and again, as long as we have any being, for His unspeakable gift! We shall never get to the end of this work—the unspeakable gift is forever telling and telling, yet never shall it all be told. Help us, all that know His salvation! Help us, angels! Help us, all you coming ages! Help us, all you stars of light! But still the thing shall be unspeakable even to the end.

Next, let us show our gratitude to God in deeds of praise. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” If we cannot speak it, let us try to do something that will show forth the praise of God. Actions speak more loudly than words. If our words have failed, let us try actions. And the first thing to do is to give yourself to your Lord. Come, Beloved, if God has given you Jesus Christ, give Him yourself! You are not your own, you are bought with a price! Why not present your bodies as living sacrifices? Don’t talk about it, but really do it—*live* for Him who died for you. Then, in consequence of having already given yourself, give of your substance to God and give freely. Give not the lame and the blind, but give the best of the flock. Let this be a great joy to you—not the payment of a tax, but the tribute of delighted love.

Give to God cheerfully, for He loves a cheerful giver. Buy Him the sweet cane with money and fill Him with the fat of your sacrifices. Nothing can be too good or great for our ever blessed Lord. Our loving Master will accept at our hands the alabaster box when we break it joyfully for His dear sake. Let deeds of holy consecration mark the whole of our lives, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, when they are not brought as a price to purchase merit, but as a love token and tribute to His Grace. Think of this exhortation and carry it out abundantly—it shall turn to your temporal and eternal enrichment.

I am sure, however, that deeds of patience are among the thanks which best speak out our gratitude to God. Did it ever strike you that patience is a noble sort of Psalmody? Perhaps you will see this truth if I tell you an anecdote. In the old church stories we read of one called Didymus, a famous preacher who brought many souls to Christ. He was blind and Didymus grieved greatly over the loss of his sight. Those who heard him perceived that his blindness gave a mournful tinge to his discourses. A certain godly man named Alexander went to him and spoke to him in private after this fashion—“Didymus,” he said, “does not your blindness cause you great sorrow?” “Brother Alexander,” he said, “it is my constant grief that I have lost the light. I can scarcely endure my existence because I am always in the dark.” Then Alexander said to him, “You are doing a work which an angel might envy and you have the honor of an Apostle in speaking for Jesus Christ and will you fret because you have lost that which rats and mice and brute beasts have in common with men?”

This was not a very tender thing to say, but it strengthened Didymus patiently to endure his trial and to bless God for his unspeakable gift. What is there, after all, that we have not, if we have Christ? If you have lost everything but Christ, yet if you have Christ left, what have you lost? Why fret for pins when God gives pearls? Why grieve over the loss of a few pence when God has heaped upon us talents of gold? Submit in gracious joy to the Divine will and let your patience say, “I will thank God, I will thank God for His unspeakable gift!” Now, dear Friends, there is one way in which I want you to thank God and show your gratitude for Christ and that is by always holding a thankful creed. Believe nothing which would rob God of thanks, or Christ of Glory. I set great store by a sound creed in these evil days when the Gospel is but little valued by many. Hold a creed of which the top and bottom is this, “Grace, Grace, Grace—salvation all of Grace.”

Whenever you hear a preacher, no matter who he may be, making out that salvation is not completely of the Grace of God, just say in your hearts, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Do not go an inch away from that standpoint. Salvation is altogether a gift—it is not of works, it is not of merit—it is of Grace and Grace alone. Turn away from the man who stutters when he says “Grace.” He will never feed your soul. Hold a theology which magnifies Christ, a divinity which teaches that Christ is God’s unspeakable gift! When a man gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach to you. Some modern Divines whittle away the Gospel to the small end of nothing. They make our Divine Lord to be a sort of blessed nobody—they bring down salvation to mere savability, make certainties into probabilities and treat Truths of God as mere opinions.

When you see a preacher making the Gospel small by degrees and miserably less till there is not enough of it left to make soup for a sick grasshopper, get you gone! Such diminution and adulteration will not do for me—my heart cries, “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!” These gentlemen, you know, are highly cultivated and can tell us all about it. They have a theology which is suited to their educated reason. To them, Divine Grace can be weighed in scales and the Atonement in balances— unless, indeed, both are as the drop of a bucket—not worthy of being mentioned at all. Every grand Truth of God with them is dwarfed and dwindled down into utter insignificance. The thought of the 19th century makes men the heirs of apes, while it declares their souls to be mortal and their sins to be trifles! Our Bibles are made to be mere human records and our hopes are treated as childish dreams! These pigmy thinkers shorten all things to their pigmy scale.

As for me, I believe in the colossal! A need deep as Hell and Grace as high as Heaven! I believe in a pit that is bottomless and in mercy above the heavens! I believe in an Infinite God and an Infinite Atonement, infinite love and infinite mercy, an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, of which the substance and the seal is an Infinite Christ. Christ is all! Christ is unspeakable, the unspeakable gift of God! Hold to that, or you will not thank God as you should. Nor rest in a thoroughly sound creed, but try to bring others to accept God’s unspeakable gift. You know how the birds stir up each other to sing? One bird in a cage will excite its fellow, who looks at him and seems to say, “You shall not outstrip me. I will sing with you.” Then another joins the strain, saying, “I will sing with you,” till all the little minstrels quiver with an ecstasy of song and form a choir of emulating songsters. Hark how the early morning of the spring is rendered musical by the full orchestra of birds!

One songster begins the tune and the rest hasten to swell the music! Let us be like these blessed birds. Let us try to lead our families to praise the Lord. Bless the Lord till you set the fashion and others bless Him with you! Seek out those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ and tell them “the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” Thus, if you cannot sing more yourself, nor praise God more yourself, you will have increased His praise by bringing in others to sing with you! See you to this and let this be, from now on, the motto of your lives. Write it over your doors! Emblazon it on the walls of your chambers! Let it hang over your bed by night, “THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.” O Holy Spirit, write this line of gratitude upon the tablets of our hearts. Amen.

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PRAISE FOR THE GIFT OF GIFTS  
NO. 2247

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 13, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”  
2 Corinthians 9:15.~~***

IN the chapter from which my text is taken, Paul is stirring up the Christians at Corinth to be ready with liberal gifts for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He finishes by reminding them of a greater gift than any they could bring and, by this one short word of praise, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,” he sets all their hearts a-singing! Let men give as liberally as they may, you can always proclaim the value of their gift. You can cast it up and reckon its worth, but God’s gift is unspeakable, unreckonable! You cannot fully estimate the value of what God gives. The Gospel is a Gospel of giving and forgiving. We may sum it up in those two words and, therefore, when the true spirit of it works upon the Christian, he *forgives* freely and he also *gives* freely. The large heart of God breeds large hearts in men and they who live upon His bounty are led by His Spirit to imitate that bounty according to their power.

However, I am not going, on the present occasion, to say anything upon the subject of liberality. I must get straight away to the text, hoping that we may really drink in the spirit of it and, out of full hearts, use the Apostle’s language with a more intense meaning than ever as we repeat his words—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” I shall commence by saying that *salvation is altogether the gift of God* and, as such, is to be received by us freely. Then I shall try to show that *this gift is unspeakable.* And, in the third place, that *for this gift, thanks should be rendered to God*. Though it is unspeakable, yet we should speak our praise of it. In this way you will see, as of old, preachers used to say, the text naturally falls apart.

**I.**We begin with the thought that SALVATION IS ALTOGETHER THE GIFT OF GOD. Paul said, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Over and over again we have proclaimed that salvation is wholly of Grace—not of works nor of wages—but it is the gift of God’s great bounty to undeserving men! But as often as we have preached this Truth of God, we shall have to keep on doing so as long as there are men in the world who are self-righteous and, as long as there are minds in the world so slow to grasp the meaning of the word, “Grace,” that is, “free favor,” and as long as there are memories that find it difficult to retain the idea of salvation being God’s free gift!

Let us say simply and plainly that salvation must come to us as a gift from God, for salvation comes to us by the Lord Jesus and *what else could Jesus be*? The essence of salvation is the gift of God’s Only-Begotten Son to die for us, that we might live through Him. I think you will agree with me that it is inconceivable that men should ever have merited that God should give His Only-Begotten Son to them. To give Christ to us, in any sense, must have been an act of Divine charity. But to give Him up to die on yonder cruel and bloody Cross—to yield Him up as a Sacrifice for sin must be a free favor—passing the limits of thought! It is not supposable that any man could deserve such love. It is plain that if man’s sins needed a sacrifice, he did not deserve that a sacrifice should be found for him. The fact that he has a need proves his demerit and his guiltiness. He deserves to die—he may be rescued by Another dying for him—but he certainly cannot claim that the eternal God should take from His bosom His Only-Begotten and Well-Beloved Son and put Him to death! The more you look that thought in the face, the more you will reject the idea that, by any possible sorrow, or by any possible labor, or by any possible promise, a man could put himself into the position of *deserving* to have Christ to die for him! If Christ is to come to save sinners, it must be as a gift—a free gift of God. The argument, to my mind, is conclusive.

Besides that, over and over again, in God’s Word, *we are told that salvation is not of works*. Although there are many who cling to the notion of man’s works as a ground of salvation, yet as long as this Book stands and there are eyes to read it—it will bear witness against the idea of human merit—and it will speak out plainly for the doctrine that men are saved by faith, and not by works. Not only once, but often it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” Moreover, we are told, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by Grace.” The very choice of the way of salvation by believing, rather than by works, is made by God on purpose that He might show that Grace is a gift. “Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt: but to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Faith is that virtue, that Grace, which is chosen to bring us salvation because it never takes any of the glory to itself. Faith is simply the hand that *takes*. When the beggar receives alms, he does not bless the hand that takes, but blesses the hand that *gives*—therefore we do not praise the faith that receives, but the God who gives the unspeakable gift! Faith is the eye that sees. When we see an object, we delight in the object, rather than in the eye that sees it—therefore do we glory, not in our faith, but in the salvation which God bestows! Faith is appointed as the porter to open the gate of salvation because that gate turns upon the hinges of Free Grace.

In the next place, be it always remembered that we cannot be saved by the merit of our own works because *holy works are, themselves, a gift—* the work of the Grace of God. If you have faith, joy and hope, who gave them to you? These did not spring up spontaneously in your heart. They were sown there by the hand of Love. If you have lived a godly life for years. If you have been a diligent servant of the Church and of your God, in whose strength have you done it? Is there not One who works all our works in us? Could you work out your salvation with fear and trembling if God did not first work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure? How can you, then, claim a reward which is, in itself, the gift of God? I think the ground is cut right away from those who would put confidence in human merit, when we show, first of all, that, in Scripture, salvation is clearly said to be, “not of works, lest any man should boast.” And, secondly, that even the good works of Believers are the *fruit* of a renewed life, for, “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before *ordained* that we should walk in them.”—

***“All that I was, my sin, my guilt,  
My death—was all my own.  
All that I am, I owe to You,  
My gracious God, alone.”***

Further, if salvation were not a free gift, *how else could a sinner get it*? I will pass over some of you who fancy that you are the best people in the world. It is sheer fancy, mark you, without any truth in it! But I will say nothing about you. There are, however, some of us who know that we were *not* the best people in the world—we who sinned against God and knew it—and who were broken into pieces under a sense of our guilt! I know, for one, that there would have been no hope of Heaven for *me* if salvation had not been a free gift of God to those who deserved it not! After ministering among you for nearly 37 years, I stand exactly where I stood when I first came to Christ—a poor sinner and nothing at all—but taking Christ as the free gift of God to me, as I took Him at first, when, yet but a lad, I fled to Him for salvation! Ask any of the people of God who have been abundant in service and constant in prayer, whether they deserve anything at the hand of God. And those who have most to be thankful for will tell you that they have nothing that they have not received! Ask these, whom God has honored to the conversion of many, whether they lay any *claim* to the Grace of God, whether they have any merit, and whether in their hand they dare bring a price and seek to buy of God His love—they will loathe the very thought! There is no way to Heaven for you and me, my Friends convinced of sin, unless all the way we are led by Grace—and unless salvation is the gift of God!

But, once more— *look at the privileges which come to us through salvation*! I cannot, as I value those privileges, conceive for a minute that they are purchasable, or that they come to us as the result of our works! They must be a gift—they are so many and so glorious as to be altogether outside the limit of our furthest search and beyond the height of our utmost reach! We cannot, by our efforts, compass any salvation of any sort! But if we could, it certainly would not be such a salvation as this! Let us look, then, at our privileges.

Here comes, first, “the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.” He that believes in Christ has no sin! His sin is blotted out. It has ceased to be. Christ has finished it and he is unto God as though he had never sinned. Can any sinner deserve that?—

***“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast!  
And oh, my Soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come, here’s pardon, too!”***

Can any sinner bring a price that will purchase such a gift as that? No! Such mercy *must* be a gift.

Next, everyone that believes in Christ is justified and looked upon by God as being perfectly righteous. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him and he is “accepted in the Beloved.” By this he becomes not only innocent, that is, pardoned, but he becomes praiseworthy before God. This is justification. Can any guilty man deserve that? Why, he is covered with sin, defiled from head to foot! Can he deserve to be arrayed in the sumptuous robe of the Divine Righteousness of Christ and, “be made the righteousness of God in Him”? It is inconceivable! Such a blessing must be the gift of infinite bounty, or it can never come to man.

Furthermore, Beloved, remember that “now we are the sons of God.” Can you realize that Truth of God? As others are not, Believers are the sons of God! He is their Father and the spirit of adoption breathes within their heart. They are the children of His family and come to Him as children come to a father, with loving confidence. Think of being made a son of God, a son of Him that made the heavens! A son of Him who is God over all, blessed forever! Can any man deserve *that*? Certainly not—this must also come as a gift!

Sonship leads on to heirship. “If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” My Brothers and Sisters, if you are a Believer, all things are yours—this world and the worlds to come! Could you ever deserve all that? Could such an inheritance have come to you through any merits of your own? No, it must be a gift! Look at it and the blaze of its splendor will strike blind all idea of merit!

Further than that, we are now made one with Christ. Oh, tell everywhere this wonder which God has worked for His people! It is not to be understood—it is an abyss too deep for a finite mind to fathom. Every Believer is truly united to Christ, “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” Every Believer is married to Christ and none of them shall ever be separated from Him. Seeing, then, that there is such a union between us and Christ, can you suppose that any man can have any claim to such a position apart from the Grace of God? By what merit, even of a perfect man, could we deserve to become one with Christ in an endless unity? Such a surpassing privilege is out of the line of purchase! It is, and can only be, the gift of God! Oneness with Christ cannot come to us in any other way.

Listen yet again. In consequence of our union with Christ, God the Holy Spirit dwells in every Believer! Our bodies are His Temple! God dwells in us and we dwell in God. Can we deserve that? Even a perfect keeping of the Law of God would not have brought to men the abiding of the Holy Spirit in them! It is a blessing that rises higher that the Law could ever reach, even if it *had* been kept.

Let me say, furthermore, that if you possess a blessed peace, as I trust you do, if you can say—  
***“My heart is resting, O my God,  
I will give thanks and sing!  
My heart is at the secret Source  
Of every precious thing!”***

That Divine peace must surely be the gift of God. If there is a great calm within your soul—an entire satisfaction with Christ your Lord—you never *deserved* that precious gift. It is the work of His Holy Spirit and must be His free gift.

And when you come to die, as you may—unless the Lord comes, as He will—the Grace that will enable you fearlessly to face the last enemy will not be yours by any right of your own. If you fall asleep, as I have seen many a Christian pass away, with songs of triumph, with the light of Heaven shining on your brow, almost in Glory while yet you are in your bed, why, you cannot deserve *that*! Such a deathbed must be the free gift of God’s almighty Grace! It cannot be earned by any merit! Indeed, it is just then that every thought of merit melts away and the soul hides itself in Christ, and triumphs there!

If this does not convince you, look once more. Let a window be opened in Heaven! See the long line of white-robed saints. Listen to their hallelujahs! Behold their endless, measureless delight! Did they deserve to come there? Did they come to their thrones and to their palms of victory by their own merits? Their answer is, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!” And from them all comes the harmonious anthem, “Non nobis, Domine”—“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto Your name give Glory, for Your mercy and Your Truth’s sake.” From first to last, then, we see that salvation is all the gift of God. And what can be freer than a gift, or more glorious than the gift of God? No prize can approach it in excellence, no merit can be mentioned in the same hour. O my Brothers and Sisters, we are debtors, indeed, to the mercy of God! We have received much and there is more to follow, but it is all of Grace from first to last! We know but little yet at what a cost these gifts were purchased for us, but we shall know it better, by-and-by, as McCheyne so sweetly sings—

***“When this passing world is done,  
When has sunk yon glaring sun;  
When I stand with Christ in Glory,  
Looking o’er life’s finished story,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—  
Not till then, how much I owe!  
When I stand before the Throne,  
Dressed in beauty not my own;  
When I see You as You are,  
Love You with unsinning heart;  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe!”***

**II.**Now I would try to lead your thoughts in another direction as we consider that THIS GIFT IS UNSPEAKABLE. Do not think it means that we cannot speak about this gift. Ah, how many times have I, for one, spoken upon this gift during the last 40 years! I have spoken of little else! I heard of one who said, “I suppose Spurgeon is preaching that old story over again.” Yes, that is what he is doing—and if he lives another 20 years and you come here, it will be “the old, old story” still, for there is nothing like it! It is inexhaustible—it is like an Artesian well that springs up forever and ever. We can speak about it, yet it is unspeakable! What do we mean, then, by saying it is unspeakable? Well, as I have said already, Christ Jesus our Lord is the Sum and Substance of salvation and of God’s gift. O God, this gift of Yours is unspeakable and it includes all other gifts beside!—

***“You did not spare Your only Son,  
But gave Him for a world undone,  
And freely with that Blessed One—  
You give all.”***

Consider, first, that Christ is unspeakable *in His Person*. He is perfect Man and glorious God. No tongue of seraph, or of cherub can ever describe the full Nature of Him whose name is, “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” This is He whom the Father gave “for us men, and for our sakes.” He was the Creator of all things, for, “without Him was not anything made that was made,” yet He was “made of flesh and dwelt among us.” He fills all things by His Omnipresence, yet He came and tabernacled on the earth! This is that Jesus who was born of Mary, yet who lived before all worlds! He was that Word who “was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God.” He is unspeakable! It is not possible to put into human language the Divine mystery of His sacred Being, truly Man and yet truly God. How great the wonder of it! Soul, God gave God for you! Do you hear it? To redeem you, O believing man, God gave Himself to be your Savior—surely, that is an unspeakable gift!

Christ is unspeakable, next, *in His condescension*. Can anyone measure or describe how far Christ stooped, when, from the Throne of Splendor, He came to a *manger* to be swaddled and lie where the horned oxen fed? Oh, what a stoop of condescension was that! The Infinite becomes an Infant! The Eternal is dandled on a woman’s knee! He is there in the carpenter’s shop, obedient to His parents! He is there in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. He is there in poverty, crying, “The Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” And He is there, thirsty, asking a sinful woman for a drink of water! It is unspeakable that He, before whom all the hosts of Heaven veiled their faces, should come here among men and among the poorest of the poor! That He who dwelt amidst the glory and the bliss of the Land of Light should deign to be a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, passes human thought! Such a Savior is an unspeakable gift!

But if unspeakable so far, what shall I say of the fashion of Christ *in His death*? Beloved, I cannot speak adequately of Gethsemane and the bloody sweat, nor of the Judas kiss, nor of the traitorous flight of the disciples. It is unspeakable! That binding, scourging, plucking of the beard and spitting in the face! Man’s tongue cannot utter the horror of it. I cannot truly tell you the weight of the false accusations, the slanders and the blasphemies that were heaped on Him! Nor would I wish to picture the old soldier’s cloak flung over His bleeding shoulders and the crown of thorns, the buffeting, the mailed fists, and the shame and sorrow He endured as He was thrust out to execution. Do you wish to follow Him along the streets, where weeping women lifted up their hearts in tender sympathy for the Lord of Love about to die? If you do, it must be in silence, for words but feebly tell how much He bore on the way to the Cross—

***“Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in.  
When God, the mighty Maker died  
For man, the creature’s sin.”***

Oh, it was terrible that HE should be nailed to the Cross! That HE should hang there to be ridiculed by all the mob of Jerusalem! The abjects flouted Him, the meanest thought Him meaner than themselves. Even dying thieves upbraided Him! His eyes are choked. They become dim with blood. He must die. He says, “It is finished!” He bows His head. The glorious Victim has yielded up His life to put away His people’s sin. This is God’s gift to you—Divine, unspeakable—O you sons of men!

But it is not all. Christ is unspeakable *in His Glory*. When we think of His Resurrection, of His ascending to Heaven and of His Glory at the right hand of God, words languish on our lips! But in every one of these positions, He is the gift of God to us—and when He shall come with all the Glory of the Father, He will still be to His people the *Theo-dora*. the gift of God, the great unspeakable benediction to the sons of men! I wish that the people of Christ had this aspect of the Lord’s Glory more continually on their hearts, for though He seems to tarry, yet will He come again the second time, as He promised—

***“With that blessed hope before us,  
Let no harp remain unstrung!  
Let the mighty Advent chorus  
Onward roll on every tongue.  
Maranatha!  
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!”***

To me, one of the most wonderful aspects of this gift is Christ *in His chosen.* All the Father gave Him, all for whom He died—these He will glorify with Himself and they shall be with Him where He is! Oh, what a sight will that be when we shall see the King in His beauty and all His saints beautiful in His Glory, shining like so many stars around Him who is the Sun of them all! Then, indeed, shall we see what an unspeakable gift God gave to men, when, through that gift, He makes His saints all glorious, even as He predestined them, “to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn of many brethren.”

But we do not need to wait until we see His face to know His Glory! Brothers and Sisters, Christ is unspeakable as the gift of God *in the heart here*. “Oh,” you say, “I trust I have felt the love of God shed abroad in my heart!” I rejoice with you, but could you speak it? Often, when I have tried to preach the love to Christ, I have not been able to preach it rightly because I did not feel it as I ought. But more often, still, I have not been able to preach because I have felt it so much! I would gladly always preach in that manner and feel Christ’s love so much that I could speak it but a little. Oh, child of God, if you have known much of Christ, you have often had to weep out your joys instead of speaking them—to lay your finger on your mouth and be silent because you were overpowered by His Glory! See how it was with John—“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.” Why did you not preach, John? If John were here, tonight, He would say, “I could not preach—the splendor of the Lord made me dumb. I fell at His feet as dead.”

This is one reason why the gift of God is unspeakable, because, the more you know about it, the less you can say about it. Christ overpowers us! He makes us tongue-tied with His wondrous revelations. When He reveals Himself in full, we are like men that are blinded with excess of vision. Like Paul, on the Damascus road, we are forced to confess, “I could not see for the Glory of that Light.” We cannot speak of it fully. All the Apostles and Prophets and saints of God have been trying to speak out the love of God as manifested in Christ, but they have all failed! I say, with great reverence, that the Holy Spirit, Himself, seems to have labored for expression and, as He had to use human pens and mortal tongues, even *He* has never spoken to the fullest, the measure and value of God’s unspeakable gift! It is unspeakable to men by God, Himself! God can give it, but He cannot make us fully understand it. We have need to be like God, Himself, to comprehend the greatness of His gift when He gives us His Son!

Though we make constant effort, it is unspeakable, even *throughout a long life*. Do you ministers who have been a long time in one place, ever say to yourselves, “We shall run dry for subjects, by-and-by”? If you preach Christ, you will never run short! If you have preached 10,000 sermons about Christ, you have not yet left the shore—you are not out in the deep sea yet! Dive, my Brother! With splendor of thought, plunge into this great mystery of Free Grace and dying love! And when you have dived the deepest, you will perceive that you are as far off the bottom as when you first touched the surface! It is an endless theme—it is unspeakable!—

***“Oh, could I speak the matchless worth,  
Oh, could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Savior shine!  
I’d soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost Divine.”***

But I can neither speak it nor sing it as I ought, yet would I finish Medley’s hymn and say—  
***“Well, the delightful day will come  
When my dear Lord will bring me Home,  
And I shall see His face!  
Then with my Savior, Brother, Friend,  
A blest eternity I’ll spend,  
Triumphant in His Grace.”***

But, even then, Christ will still be *in Heaven forever*a gift unspeakable! Perhaps we shall have another talk together, Friends, on this subject when we get there. One good woman said to me, “We shall have more time in eternity than we have now,” to which I replied, “I do not know whether there is any time in eternity. The words look like a contradiction.” “Oh, but,” she said, “I shall get a talk with you, anyhow. I have never had one yet.” Well, I dare say we shall commune up there of these blessed things when we shall know more about them. As we are to be there forever and ever, we shall need some great subjects with which to keep up the conversation—what vaster theme can we have than this? Addison, in one of her verses, says—

***“But, oh! Eternity’s too short***

***To utter half Your praise.”***  
And I have heard simpletons say that the couplet was very faulty! “You cannot make eternity short,” they say. That shows the difference between a poet and a critic! A critic is a being all teeth, without any heart, while a poet is one who has much heart and who sometimes finds that human language is not sufficient to express his thoughts. We shall never have done with Christ in Heaven! Oh, my Lord, Your *Presence* will make my Heaven!—

***“Millions of years my wondering eyes,  
Shall over Your beauties rove!  
And endless ages I’ll adore  
The glories of Your love.”***

This wondrous gift of God is an utterly inexhaustible, unspeakable subject!

**III.**Now, lastly, I come to this point, that FOR THIS GIFT THANKS SHOULD BE RENDERED. The text says, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” By this the Apostle not only meant that he gave thanks for Christ, but he thus calls upon the Church and upon every individual Believer to join him in his praise. Here do I adopt his language and praise God on my own behalf, calling upon all of you who know the preciousness of Christ, the gift of God, to unite with me in thanksgiving! Let us as with one heart say it now, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”

Some cannot say this, for they never think of the gift of God. You who never think of God, how can you thank God? There must be, “think,” at the bottom of, “thank.” Whenever we think, we ought to thank! But some never think and therefore never thank. Beloved Friend, what do you think? That Christ should die—is it nothing to you? That God “gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Is that nothing to you? Let the question drop into your heart. Press it home upon yourself. Will you say that you have no share in this gift? Will you deliberately give up any hope you may have of ever partaking of the Grace of God? Are you determined, now, to say, “I do not care about Christ”? Well, you would hardly like to*say* that, but why do you practically *declare* this to be your intention, if you do not want to say it? Oh, that you might now so think of Christ as to trust Him at once and begin to raise this note of praise!

Some, on the other hand, do not thank God because they are always delaying. Have I not hearers here, tonight, who were here 10 years ago, and were rather more hopeful, then, than they are now? “There is plenty of time,” you say, but you do not say this about other matters! I admired the children, the other day, when the teacher said, “Dear Children, the weather is unsettled. You can go out next Wednesday, but do you not think it would be better to stop a month, so that we could go when the weather is more settled?” There was not a child that voted for stopping a month! All the hands went up for going next Wednesday! Now, imitate the children in that. Do not make it seem as if you were in a no hurry to be happy, for as he that believes in Christ has eternal life—to postpone having it is an unworthy as well as unwise thing to do! No, you will have it, I hope, at once! There is a man here who is going to be a very rich man when his old aunt dies. You do not wish that she should die, I am sure, but you sometimes wonder why some people are spared to be 90, do you not? You are very poor, now, and you wish that some of this money cold come to you at once—you are not for putting *that* off! Why should you put off heavenly riches and eternal life? I beseech you to believe in Christ NOW—then you will be filled with thankfulness and joy.

Some cannot say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift,” for they do not know whether they have it or not. They sometimes think that they have, but they more often fear that they have not. Never tolerate a doubt on this subject, I implore you. Get full assurance. “Lay hold on eternal life.” Get a grip of it. Know Christ! Trust Christ wholly and you have God’s Word for it—“He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” Then you can say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”

Now, dear Friends, let me ask you to join in this exercise. Let us first unitedly thank God for this gift. Put out of your mind the idea that you ought to thank Christ, but not thank the Father! It was the *Father* that gave Christ. Christ did not die to make His Father love us, as some say that we preach. We have *always* preached the very opposite and we have quoted that verse of Kent!—

“ ***‘Twas not to make Jehovah’s love  
Towards the sinner flame,  
That Jesus, from His Throne above,  
A suffering Man became.  
‘Twas not the death which He endured,  
Nor all the pangs He bore,  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was love before.”***

He gave His Son because He already loved us! Christ is the exhibition of the Father’s love and the Revelation of Christ is made because of “the love of the Spirit.” Therefore, “Thanks be unto God”—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—“for His unspeakable gift.”

While you saved ones, every one of you, raise your note of gratitude, be very careful to *thank only God*. Do not be thinking by whose means you were converted, and begin to thank the servant instead of the Lord whom he serves! Let the man who was used as the instrument in God’s hand be told, for his comfort, of the blessing God sent you through him, but thank God, and thank *only* God, that you were led to lay hold of Christ who is His unspeakable gift! Moreover, *thank God spontaneously*. Look at the Apostle and imitate him. When he sounded this peal of praise, his mind was occupied, at the time, about the collection for the poor saints. But, collection or no collection, he will thank God for His unspeakable gift! I like to see thanks to God come up at what might be an untimely moment. When a man does not feel just as happy as he might be, and yet says, “Thank God,” it sounds refreshingly real. I like to hear such a bubbling up of praise as in the case of old Taylor, of New York, when he broke down in the middle of a sentence. Looking up at the people, he said, “There now! The nominative has lost its verb, but, hallelujah! I am on the way to Glory!” And then he went on again! Sometime we ought to do just like that. Take an opportunity, when there comes a little interval, just to say, “Whether this is in tune or not, I cannot help it—thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”

Lastly, as you receive the precious gift, *thank God practically*. Thank God by doing something to *prove* your thanks! It is a poor gratitude which only effervesces in words, but skirts deeds of kindness. Real thankfulness will not be in word, only, but in deed, too—and so it will *prove* that it is in the Truth of God.

“Well, what could I do that would please God?” you ask. First, I should think you could look for His lost children. That is a sure way to please Him. Go, tonight, and see whether you cannot find one of the erring whom you might bring back to the fold. Would you not please a mother, if she had lost her baby, and you set to work to find it? We need to please God. Seek the lost ones and bring them in.

If you want to please God, next, succor His poor saints. If you know anything of them, help them. Do something for them for Christ’s sake. I knew a woman who used to always relieve anybody that came to her door in the dress of a sailor. I do not think that half of those who came to her ever had been to sea at all, but, still, if they came to the door as sailors, she used to say, “Ah, my dear boy was a sailor. I have not seen him for years. He is lost somewhere at sea, but for dear Jack’s sake, I always help every sailor that comes to my door.” It is a right feeling, is it not? I remember, when I first came to London from my country charge, I used to think that if I came across a dog or a cat that came from Waterbeach, I would like to feed it. So, for the love of Christ, love Christ’s poor people! Whenever you find them, say, “My Lord was poor, and so are you, and for His dear sake I will help you.”

If you want to please God, next, bear with the evil ones. Do not lose your temper. I mean, by that, do not get angry with the unthankful and the evil. Let your anger be lost in praise for the unspeakable gift! Please God by bearing with evil men as He bears with you. But if you have a very bad temper, I hope that, in another sense, you may lose it and never find it any more.

And lastly, if you want to please God, watch, like the Thessalonians, “for His Son from Heaven.” The Lord Jesus is coming again, in like manner as He departed, and there is no attitude with which God is more delighted in His saved people than with that of watching for the time when “unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.”

Beloved, may God help you thus to magnify His Son and to Him shall be all the praise! Let us again lift up our glad hallelujah—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Amen.

***Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—2 Corinthians 9.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—534, 236, 428.**  
Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2290 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT  
NO. 2290

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 8, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”  
2 Corinthians 9:15.~~***

IF you will read, at home, the chapter from which our text is taken, you will find that Paul was stirring up the Corinthians to an act of liberality. He had boasted of what they would do, but he had just a little fear that they might fall behind and not quite come up to what he had promised on their behalf. He stirred them up to liberal *giving*, telling them that they who sowed liberally, should reap liberally, and they who sowed sparingly would reap sparingly. Once upon that theme of giving, the Apostle could not help speaking of another gift. He saw a track just off the main road and he felt that it led him straight away to his God and to his Savior. And so, while the ink was yet flowing in his pen, he began to write about it as though he would say, “I am not thinking now, my Brethren, so much of *your* gifts as I am of another gift—not so much of your gifts to the Lord’s poor people as of the Lord’s great Gift to you—*His* poor people. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”

A person, who was collecting for some good objective, called upon a friend one day and, as he needed him to be very generous, pleaded hard with him. After a while, he seemed to quit the subject altogether, and he said, “I knew your father.” “Did you?” “Yes, and I called upon him about a certain business, just as I do upon you, and your father did not need any prompting. He said, ‘State the case,’ and as soon as the case was stated, he pulled out his purse and gave me ten times as much as I had expected to obtain from him.” You see, our friend was not exactly pleading with the son when he told that story, and yet I do not know how he could have pleaded better, for reverence for his father’s name and the desire not to seem to fall off from his father’s standard, were the very best arguments that could have been used with him!

So I admire the wisdom of Paul. When he would bring these Corinthians up to a high standard of liberality towards their poor Brethren in Judea, he says, as though it were only by the way, “Thanks be unto God, your Father and my Father, for His unspeakable Gift. Whatever you give, I can speak about, but what He gave surpasses all powers of speech! Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”

Now, this text, tonight, gives me three things to speak of. The first is, *that Christ is a Gift.* And, secondly, that as a Gift, *Christ is unspeakable.* And, thirdly, that as a Gift unspeakable, *Christ calls forth praise to God from us*.

**I.**First, then, CHRIST IS A GIFT.  
How often you hear people speak about Christ and His salvation as though they were the reward of *merit*—as though we did something by which to *win* his Divine favor! If they do not teach that salvation comes through our own merits, yet, according to them, it is the effect of our feelings and our experiences. Somehow or other, according to this common notion, we must get fit to receive God’s Gift and thus, what comes to us is more our *due* than an alms of heavenly charity! I hesitate not to say that this teaching flies in the teeth of the entire Word of God. Everywhere in the Scriptures the great word is not merit, but GRACE—not deserving, but *receiving* freely of the great mercy of our God!  
Our Lord Jesus must be a Gift to us if we are ever to possess Him. He could only come to us sons of men by way of a gift. *Consider the dignity of His Person* for a minute and then ask how it is conceivable that we could have deserved that such a Person as He should come here and live and die, that we might be saved! I can conceive of a man meriting this or that honor among his fellow men, but when I think of the Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory equal with the Father, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, very God of very God—and when I see Him giving Himself up to die for men, my very blood boils at the thought that we could *ever* have deserved that Sacrifice! One is indignant that human pride should dare to go the length of even *imagining* that a *life of perfection* could have deserved to be rewarded by the Gift of Christ!  
No, my Brothers and Sisters, if we had kept God’s Law without a flaw. If there had been no omission of duty, no commission of sin and we could have taken the compound merits of a *perfect* world and laid them at the feet of God, they could not have deserved that Christ should become Man—that Christ should live in poverty—that Christ should die in shame for man! There would have been no need of Christ’s death if man had not sinned. But had there been a supposable need, Christ’s Sacrifice could not have been *deserved* even if we had remained innocent, like our first parents in the Garden of Eden before the Fall! I am sure that none of you could, for a minute, tolerate the thought that any human merit could deserve the Incarnation of God upon this earth, the coming of the Divine Son in our nature into this world and His shameful death upon the Cross of Calvary.  
But next, this will be very evident from *the nature of the work for which Christ was given*. It is clear from the Scriptures that He was given for the undeserving. He came into the world to save sinners. He took upon Himself, not our righteousness, for there was none for Him to take, but, as we read just now, “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” The prominent and paramount idea of Christ in the Scripture is that of a Priest offering sacrifice—but the Priest is for men who need atonement for their sins—the expiation, the sacrifice, the sin-offering, is for *guilty* men. How could Christ die on the Cross for *deserving* men? The idea is absurd! No bruises were required for those who needed not to be healed. There needed to be no chastisement of peace for those who deserved well of God. The very work of Christ in dying, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,” implies that we were at a distance from God. It also implies our injustice and, consequently, our total inability to deserve such a Gift at God’s hand. No, no—a Savior is for *sinners*—a dying Savior must be for those who deserved to die! Christ does not come, therefore, to us as *deserving* Him, but He is God’s unspeakable Gift!  
And let us think of *the splendor of His Grace*, the lavish wealth of blessing which comes to us through Him. Know you not that as many of you as have believed in Christ are made to live with an everlasting life? There pulses in you, tonight, the life of eternity, the life of Heaven! You have begun to live the life that shall last forever and ever. Know you not that you have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, adopted into the family of God? You are the children of the Most High. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Did you deserve this? *Could* you deserve this? Is it possible? Being adopted into the heavenly family, you have been justified—made just in the sight of God! And now you know that you are loved with an everlasting love, that you are predestinated to glorify God here, by being conformed to the image of His Son. And now you know that you are ordained by Divine decree to sit upon a throne which He has prepared for you, and to reign with Him forever and ever. Did you *deserve* this? Can it be conceived that *anything you have ever done* could have been rewarded with such extraordinary gifts as these?  
A boy runs an errand for me, and I give him two pence, or, if I am generous, I give him sixpence. But if I were to give him a thousand pounds, he would not believe that it was a payment for his service—he would not think that possible! He would feel that the reward was far above anything that he had earned, that his service was quite unworthy of so great a gift—and he would conclude that if that great sum of money was really his, I must have given it to him out of pure generosity. He would never *dream* that he had *earned* it, even supposing that he had done his errand with all the diligence in the world! And no child of God, however much he has served his Lord, ever thinks that he deserves to be a child of God, that he deserves to be an heir of Heaven, that he deserves to be a priest and a king, to live forever at God’s right hand in untold blessedness! Oh, no, all this must be a gift—we could not have earned such a blessing as this!  
You know that there are two things to make a gift—there cannot be a gift without, first of all, one to give it, and then another to receive it. Have you received Christ? It is essential, to make Him a Gift to you, that you should accept Him. It is little enough that you should take into your empty hands the priceless treasure that God bestows. It is little enough that, like an empty cup, you should stand under the flowing spring and let the crystal stream flow in. But it is necessary in order to complete the Gift! I will not ask you to thank God for His unspeakable Gift unless, God having given, you also have received! You may receive Christ, oh, so freely! If salvation were to be *bought*—if it were to be *earned*—woe would be unto you! But being a Gift, nothing is more free! The poorest man in the world may accept a gift. A trembling hand may receive a gift. He that is a thief and a robber, yes, a murderer, doomed to die, may accept a gift, if it comes not of merit, or by way of reward, but entirely of the generosity of the bestower. Oh, what a glorious thing it is that you and I and all of us may receive God’s unspeakable Gift!  
Once received and accepted, Christ is ours. If a man has made a gift to me, I would not say anything that would hurt his feelings, but it is not his any more. If he has given it to me, it is mine. A person once handed over to me a house that was to belong to a certain part of the work that I had to conduct, and if I had taken possession of that house when it was given to me, it would have been mine. But I did not. The person died and though I held the deeds and writings, yet the gift was invalid by the law of mortmain. Had I taken possession when the house was handed to me, it would have been mine, but as the case stood, it was not mine. I must, if I had taken possession, have said to the person giving the house, “You must get out of it, or you must pay me rent, however nominal it may be, to acknowledge that this is really mine, and that you have given it over to me.” But I could not have asked such a thing as that, or even dreamed of doing so and, therefore, the gift was void, and the house was not mine for the Lord’s cause.  
Now, dear Friend, if you accept the Gift that God gives, remember that it will be yours—Christ will be yours, eternal life will be yours! You will have the title deeds of your inheritance! You will stand possessed of it. But do not put that off till death, I pray you. No—take possession, *now*, of that Christ whom God gives over to you to be His Gift to you, and your possession forever!  
And I will say one more thing. When once you receive this Gift, you will never lose it, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” which means that God never regrets that He has given this unspeakable Gift. He will never say, “You must let Me have that back.” If God has given you Christ, and you have accepted Him, He is yours forever! And this is the glory of this Divine Gift! A possession that I may lose is a very poor possession, after all. A suit at law may be brought against me and I may lose what I thought was mine. I would not like to have such a possession as that! I could not go to sleep at night through fear that I should lose it. But if God has given me Christ and I have taken Christ, He is mine! Death, nor Hell, nor anything else, shall ever be able to separate the soul from Christ, or Christ from the soul that has accepted Him. It was well spoken, “Christ and a crust, yes. Christ and no crust would be better than all the world without Him.” Oh, give me Christ, and let me die, sooner than let me live without Christ, for that cannot be truly called life which is without Him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”  
I know that some of you have been straining after *doing* something or *being* something in order to obtain God’s unspeakable Gift. Will you have it? Will you have it for *nothing*? Do not insult God by bringing your poor wretched merits as the purchase-money for His free Gift of Christ! Come just as you are and freely take what He freely gives—and Christ is yours forever!  
I was surprised, the other day, when I found that a poor soul in deep despair had obtained comfort from a sermon of mine, not upon the universal redemption of men, nor upon the free offer of salvation, but the man had laid hold of the sharp angular points of a sermon upon the Everlasting Covenant and upon the Doctrine of Election. When I heard of it, I saw how God can give a soul comfort simply by the exhibition of His Sovereign Grace. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” O Soul, if you will have Christ as a Gift, you may have Him tonight! You need not go home, first. You need not wait a moment. But if you will not have Him as a Gift, you will never have Him, for in no other way can Christ ever belong to you and me, except as God’s Gift which we, by His Grace, are led freely to accept!  
Thus much, and perhaps too much, considering our time, on the first point, that Christ is a Gift, the free Gift of God’s Grace.  
**II.**Now, in the second place, let us consider the fact that, AS A GIFT, CHRIST IS UNSPEAKABLE. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift,” said the Apostle Paul—and so say we. “Why,” asks one, “do you speak about Him, then?” Well, principally because He is unspeakable. By this time, after nearly 1900 years, if the theme we have to preach about were speakable, we should have exhausted it—but as it is unspeakable, a sea without a shore, an ocean without a bottom—we will keep on preaching for another 1900 years, if the Lord does not come—and we shall never get to the end of this theme, I am quite sure!  
I heard of a minister who explained to one of his hearers what a trouble it was for him to get a sermon. “Oh,” he said, “it takes me days, and makes my head ache, and I do not know what to do.” “Sir,” his friend replied, “if it is like that, I should think you must be near the bottom of the tub.” And I should think so, too. But when we come to speak about Christ, we have an unspeakable subject! Here is a well springing up that overflows and we can speak forever upon this unspeakable theme!  
How is it unspeakable? First, *he who spoke best of Christ declared that He was unspeakable*. Do you know anybody who spoke better of Christ than Paul did, Inspired as he was? What majestic sentences! What wonderful paragraphs you come across in Paul’s writing, where he piles up his words, mountain upon mountain, in order to glorify Christ! If anybody could have spoken Christ out from Alpha to Omega, and told all about Him, Paul was the man! And though he did not give up the blessed task, but lived and died at it, he declared that God’s Gift was unspeakable, and I am sure it is so.  
Next*, he who needs a Savior most, will tell you that Christ is God’s unspeakable Gift*. You know that man. He sits down in the deep distress of his soul, with his hand to his heavy head, but he cannot lay his hand on his heavy heart. It would break his arm to try to hold that up! Laden with guilt and full of fears, he says, “There is no salvation for me but by Christ. Oh, that I could get Christ! Oh, that I could get Christ! It would be an unspeakable blessing if I could but believe in Christ.” I know one who talked like this to his mother, the other night. “Why, John,” she said, “you look very miserable! You look as if you had the whole world hanging on you.” “Mother,” he replied, “I could better bear the whole world with Christ than live without Him.” When a man thus feels his need of Christ, he knows that Christ is God’s unspeakable Gift!  
When you receive Christ, you will find that *he who enjoys Him most feels Him to be an unspeakable Gift*. When we do not enjoy Christ much, we can talk like parrots about His charms, but when we get our souls full of Christ, generally we cannot talk at all about Him! The man who feels that Christ is his, that he is saved, and that Christ has filled him full of heavenly treasures and made him to possess all things—such a man as that—when he begins to try to talk about Christ, gets choked up. The tears are in his eyes. “Oh,” he says, “let me go home, let me get alone and sit down, and quietly think this subject out, for it is altogether unspeakable.” He who thinks that he could tell all that he knows about Christ may also conclude that he does not know much, for he who knows most of Him feels that He is God’s unspeakable Gift.  
And, Beloved, *he who has used Christ most and used Him longest will tell you this*. At first, Christ is everything to the new-born soul in one direction. By-and-by, He is everything in another direction and, in the end, Christ is everything in every direction! Tell me, my gray-headed Friend, what do you think of Christ? If you have known Him 50 years, at what is Christ best, Man? “Best?” you ask, “He is best at everything!” And so, indeed, He is. And to what use do you put Christ, my Brother, in the midst of the battle of life? Do you find Christ good as a helmet, breastplate, shoes, or belt? “Oh,” you say, “He is good as a full armor. All I need, I find in Christ, yes, more than all.” It would be impossible to tell all the uses to which Christ is put. You who have used Him most and longest will say, “He is unspeakably precious to us, for He has been good to us in sickness and in health, in poverty and in wealth, in joy and in depression. He is equally good everywhere! Oh, that we might still go on to know more of Him, for as God’s great Gift to us He is unspeakable!”

Again, *the preacher who has preached Him most fully knows that Christ is unspeakable*. Ah, dear Friends! I do not suppose that you can understand the feeling that comes over me at times. I have sometimes had glorious liberty in preaching—I have felt like Naphtali, a hind let loose—and I have talked away of my Master to my own joy, and I think to yours, too. And then, when I have been on my way home, I have begun asking myself, “Now, how did you preach, after all?” And it has seemed to me a poor, miserable affair. I have said so little in honor of my Master compared with what I ought to have said, that I have felt half inclined to come back here and begin again—only the thought has often struck me—“You will do it worse if you go back, so that you had better leave it alone as it is.”

I know a man, an eminent painter, and a person sat for him 13 times for his portrait—and the artist could not catch the sitter’s expression. I saw him throw his brush right into the middle of the painting and he said, “I give it up! I cannot do it.” That is how we sometimes feel with regard to our Master. Who can paint Him as He ought to be painted? We give it up! Go, Sir, and look at the sun, and then come back and paint the sun upon your canvas! And then go and look at Christ, and express Him by your speech. Nature, all nature together—

***“To make His beauties known,***

***Must mingle colors not her own.”***  
He who preaches Christ most fully knows that He is unspeakable! You did well to sing just now the verse that I often repeat to myself concerning my own preaching—

***“Vexed, I try and try again,  
Still my efforts all are vain!  
Living tongues are dumb at best,  
We must die to speak of Christ.”***

I have come so far and reached my last point. I wish that we had more time for such a glorious theme.  
**III.**Now, thirdly, AS A GIFT UNSPEAKABLE, CHRIST CALLS FORTH PRAISE TO GOD FROM US. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”  
The Gift of Christ makes us view God with thankfulness. Never fall into the mistake that is often made by ignorant persons when they suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to make God loving. No, no, no! Jesus Christ came into the world because God *was* loving and, in love to us, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us—  
***“‘Twas not to make Jehovah’s love  
Towards the sinner flame,  
That Jesus, from His throne above,  
A suffering Man became.  
‘Twas not the death which He endured,  
Nor all the pangs He bore,  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was Love before,”***

and He so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son. God’s unspeakable Gift is not the *cause* of His love, but the *fruit* of His love! Do not say, “Thanks be unto Christ for dying to placate the Father.” No, no! “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.” God *gave* His Son—and we adore the Giver—and bless His name. Once we thought of God with dread, but now that He has given us Jesus, we think of Him with thankfulness. We are glad that there is a God. It is no question with us whether there is a God or not! If there were no God, it were eternal ruin to us! But because there is a God, there is Heaven for us—no, our God *is* our Heaven, blessed be His name! Thus, we think of God with thankfulness.

And notice, next, that we ought *to express that thankfulness*. The Apostle says, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.” But, Paul, what brought you to that topic? You were talking to these Corinthians about *giving*, not grudgingly, as of necessity, and so on. What brought you to the subject of God’s unspeakable Gift? Paul answers, “It is impossible to say what brought me to this topic, for I am always at it. Whatever I am talking about, whatever business I have on hand, I am always thanking God for His unspeakable Gift.” The Apostle broke out into that burst of praise because he could not help it! His soul was swelling with intense gratitude and he was obliged to cry out, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift.”

Dear Friends, praising God is never out of season and never out of place. You know that some of us who profess to be Christians are the most orderly and proper people in all the world—that is to say, we never intrude our religion upon other people. We can see a man for 20 years and yet never say a word to him about Christ. We do not have those dreadful people crying out, “Hallelujah,” in the service, do we? We are so dreadfully proper! Besides that, we are dreadfully cold as well. Perhaps we should speak about Christ very imprudently and do some very rash things if we loved Him better, but we love Him so little that we become wonderfully prudent and wonderfully proper—and we and the world jog on together as if there were no difference between us! If a man does roll out an oath, now and then, we are very sorry, but we never rebuke him. Of course not! Ah, well, I wish that we could be at least as rash as one old man who was employed at a wharf unloading. He was weakly and sickly, and so they gave him less pay than others received, and he was quite content. But there was a stevedore who, one morning, swore at him, and the old man bowed his head and said nothing. The blasphemer swore, again, and the old man bowed his head again. At last the swearer said, “You old fool, what are you bowing to me for?” The good man replied, “I was not bowing to *you*, but you named the name of God, and I thought that I would pay Him reverence even if you did not.” Well done, old man! Well done, old man! May every Christian here find some way of thanking God for His unspeakable Gift! The more the world curses, the more let us bless! We are to express our thanks as well as to feel grateful.

Our expression of thankfulness for God’s unspeakable Gift would make *ourselves all the surer that Christ is ours*. A man who has received a gift and never looks at it, and never thanks the giver, will come, by degrees, to forget that he has it, or to forget the giver, and to forget how he came by it. Cultivate a grateful spirit when you think of what a Gift you have in Christ! Praise the Lord for Christ! Then you will need to praise Him, again, and when you have praised Him again, you will need to praise Him yet again—and the more you praise Him—the more sure you will be that He is really yours! Suppose that a man has a garden and that he knows it is his? He is quite sure it is his. And suppose that for 20 years he has always gathered all the fruit of the garden and lived upon it. Then nobody can question his right—he has the right of possession, the right of enjoyment. He received his garden as a gift and for the last 20 years he has thanked the giver of it. I am sure that his title is clear enough. Oh, how some of you would clear your titles if you praised God more! Your very praising and blessing Him would be a re-examination of your title deeds— and your confidence would grow to full assurance. You would not only know that you had received God’s unspeakable Gift, but you would also know *why* you had received it!

Lastly, we are to wish for the spread of such thankfulness. If we are in the right frame of mind, we shall not only, ourselves, say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift,” but we shall mean what Paul meant— let everybody else who has received this unspeakable Gift praise God for it! Brothers, let us thank God! Sisters, let us praise the Lord! I remember being at a Primitive Methodist meeting where they sang a hymn beginning—

***“Come, soldiers, can’t you rise and tell  
The wonders of Immanuel?  
Yes, bless the Lord, we can rise and tell,  
The wonders of Immanuel.”***

There was a very lively chorus to the hymn and those Methodists did sing it, too! It ran like this—  
***“All glory to the Lamb of God,  
Who purchased us with atoning blood!  
We soon shall pass over Jordan’s flood,  
And join the saved in Glory!”***

I learned a lesson in praise, the other morning. I think it was a little after five o’clock, when I was just waking, I heard a blackbird come and chirp a note or two close by my window. After a minute or two, a thrush also began to sing, And when the two together became fairly awake, they were not satisfied until they had aroused all the chaffinches, and goldfinches, and sparrows! So they chirped away and sang on until they awoke every bird near my house! What an oratorio of praise the bird musicians gave forth! They never had to look to their paper to see whether they kept to the score, but each one did keep to the score, and they rose higher and higher and higher in their exultant songs to the God of day who had chased the night away and given them light, once more, in the morning!

Now I am the blackbird that would start the praise tonight. There are birds of all sorts here, of different colors, and varying plumages, and able to sing all manner of notes. Let us join together to give the Lord an evening song as those birds gave Him a morning song—and let this be the keynote—“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!” Before I dismiss those who are not going to remain for the Communion, let us all sing—

***~~“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him, all creatures here below!  
Praise Him above, you heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”~~***

***~~EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. ISAIAH 53.~~***

Mr. Moody was once asked whether his creed was in print. In his own prompt way, he replied, “Yes, Sir. You will find it in the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah.” A condensed Bible is in this chapter. You have the whole Gospel here.

**Verse 1.***Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*Nobody ever does believe either Prophets or preachers except through the work of God’s Spirit and Grace. The Lord’s arm must be revealed, or else His Truth proclaimed by His servants will never be accepted. All the Prophets speak in these words of Isaiah, as if they all stood together, and lifted up this wail, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

**2.***For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* This is Israel’s King, the long-promised Messiah! Yet when He comes to Bethlehem, see what “a tender plant” He is! Look at the house of David, almost extinct, and see what “a root out of a dry ground” is—

***“The stem of Jesse’s rod.”***  
When Jesus comes before the sons of men, dressed in the garb of a peasant, a poor Man, a sorrowful Man, a Man who had not where to lay His head, notice how men say, by their actions, if not in words, “There is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

**3.***He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.*We rightly sing—

***“Rejected and despised of men,  
Behold a Man of woe!  
And grief His close companion still  
Through all His life below!  
We held Him as condemned of Heaven,  
An outcast from His God,  
While for our sins He groaned, He bled,  
Beneath His Fathers rod.”***

His own people, yes, His own chosen ones, turned away from Him! And you and I did so till God’s Grace changed our hearts and opened our eyes! But why was He “despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief”? Why was the Prince of Israel such a suffering Man? He had no sin for which to be chastened. There was no evil in His Nature that needed to be fetched out with the rod of correction. Oh, no! The answer is very different—

**4, 5.***Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.*What a joyous note there is in that sorrowful line, “With His stripes we are healed”! Glory be to God, we are healed of our *soul-sickness*, cured of the disease of sin by this strange surgery, not by stripes upon ourselves, but by stripes upon our Lord!

**6.***All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* The general sin of the race, the special sin of the individual—all gathered, heap upon heap, mountain upon mountain—and laid by God on Christ! We sometimes sing—

***“I lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God.  
He bears them all and frees us  
From the accursed load.  
I bring my guilt to Jesus,  
To wash my crimson stains  
White in His blood most precious,  
Till not a spot remains,”***

and I will find no fault with that hymn. But the real laying of sin upon Jesus was effected by *God*, Himself—“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

**7.***He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.*He never pleaded for Himself. At the earthly judgment seat, He said not a word for Himself, so that even Pilate “marveled greatly.” Oh, the eloquence of that silence! Truly it was golden! Omnipotence restrained Omnipotence! Christ held Himself in as with bit and bridle. “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

**8, 9.***He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.*Therefore He was allowed to be buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. He was no felon, whose body must be cast out to the kites and jackals, but “He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.”

**10.***Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*Wicked men slew our Lord, and their crime was the blackest in the world’s history, but, unconsciously, they were carrying out “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.” Christ died for others, but He lives, again, and through Him a godly seed shall live forever and ever—“When You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” He is made to prosper because He died.

**11.***He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.*His death pangs were birth pangs—“the travail of His soul.” He sees the multitude that shall be born through His death, and He is content.

**11.***By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many.*Dear Hearer, will He justify you? Do you know Him? If you know Him so as to trust Him, He has justified you—you are a justified man tonight! “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many.”

**11.***For He shall bear their iniquities.* They kick against this doctrine nowadays. They cannot bear it, yet it is the very marrow of the Gospel— Christ bearing sin that was not His own, that we might be covered with a righteousness which is not our own, but comes from Him! Paul, by the Spirit, put this great Truth of God thus, “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

**12.***Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*Thanks be unto God for this great Sacrifice!

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FORTS DEMOLISHED AND PRISONERS TAKEN  
NO. 1473

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 11, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”  
2 Corinthians 10:5.~~***

THIS chapter presents the remarkable spectacle of a minister of the Gospel of Peace going forth to war! At first sight we wonder how the meek and gentle Paul should speak about warring and talk of pulling down strongholds and “having a readiness to revenge all disobedience.” The surprise is all the greater because he is going to war in the Church—a shepherd entering the fold with a sword! One would not so much marvel that he carried his weapons against the outside world, but on this occasion it is within the Church at Corinth that he is about to commence a campaign! Yet observe how earnestly he deprecates the conflict; how he beseeches them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to spare him a task which was so unpleasant to his feelings as to deal sternly with those whom he would far rather have commended.

But the wonder ceases when we find that the shepherd fights only with grievous wolves and even in that conflict declares, “though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.” Note, moreover, that his weapons are of a peculiar kind, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” He is not about to assault his antagonists in the Church with bitter words of railing such as they used against him—he is not about to meet the philosophers with such philosophies and sophisms as those with which they assailed the Gospel! And neither is he coming forth with any kind of temporal weapon to inflict anything of injury upon the leaders in error—his weapons are of a very different sort. They are not carnal, but *spiritual*.

Trials under a Public Worship Act he knew nothing of. An appeal to Caesar upon *Church* matters never crossed his mind. For the Church of God ever to avail itself of force or compulsion in order to propagate its doctrines would be contrary to the spirit of Christianity! For the Christian bishop to become a soldier, or employ the secular arm would seem to be the very climax of contradiction! A warrior ambassador is a dream of folly! I remember a story which illustrates that absurdity. When a certain bishop-prince in the olden times went forth personally to battle and was taken prisoner, the Pope sent word to the king who had captured him that he was to set him at liberty at once, for he was a son of the Church.

The king, with considerable wit, sent back to the Pope the coat of armor which the bishop had worn on the field with this message, “This have we found—know now whether it is your son’s coat or not.” And so we might

send back, I think, to the nominal Church, the black and blood-stained gown of the Inquisition, the garb of the headsman and the hangman, the smoke-browned raiment of those who lit the Smithfield fires and even the parchments on which are written the Test and Corporation Acts and the Act of Uniformity and say, “Know now whether these are your sons’ coats or not.” Is the raiment of a man of war the vestment of a servant of the Lord? Are robes of legal authority the adornments of heralds of peace?

Jesus Christ did not thus array His Apostles when He sent them forth to war and not with such weapons did Paul arm himself when he entered the conflict. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” Yet the spiritual weapons which can be wielded by the Christian minister and, indeed, by every Christian, are not to be despised, for while not fleshy, they are mighty through God! *God* is *in* them!*God* is *with* those who use them! The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; the arrows of the Truths of God which pierce the consciences of men; the weapon of all-prayer; the influence of the Holy Spirit—that Divine Power—such weapons as these are, by God’s power, made mighty to the overthrow of spiritual principalities and powers!

The Truth of God and holiness are the appointed engines for the pulling down of the castles of evil! Blessed is he who in every conflict for God takes heed to use no other weapons than those which the Lord has hung up in the tower of David built for an armory—where hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men! Those only can fight the Lord’s battles successfully who come to Him to be armed for the fight and reject all fleshy force. The *spiritual* shall be victorious, but others must fail!

The passage, if I were to confine it to its immediate connection, would represent Paul as dealing with those lofty ones who had usurped authority in the Church at Corinth; who denied his Apostleship and set themselves up as superior to him while they, themselves, preached error and led the people astray. Paul declared that when he came among them armed with the power with which God had clothed him, he would overthrow every proud opposition and convince them all of the Truth of God to their conversion or to their confusion. But I shall speak rather of a warfare carried on in individuals—a warfare in our own souls—for what is true of the triumphs of the Gospel in the masses is true because it gains the same conquest over individuals.

While I am speaking of the war of the Gospel against sin within the heart of man, may you who have never felt its power be praying that it may conquer even you. and may those who have experienced its sacred Omnipotence be pleading to be yet more completely subjugated to its sway—

***“Great King of Grace, our hearts subdue,  
May we be led in triumph, too,  
As willing captives to our Lord,  
To sing the victories of His Word.”***

There are three things in the text worthy of our observation. The first is *fortresses demolished*, “casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.” Secondly, *prisoners seized,* “bringing into captivity every thought.” and thirdly, *prisoners led away captiv*e—for such is the force of the Greek, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”—as if the captured ones were taken away and put under new service to the anointed Prince.

**I.**First, let us look at FORTRESSES DEMOLISHED. When the Gospel endeavors to penetrate the human heart it meets with earthworks of prejudice which men have cast up to screen their minds from the force of the Truth of God. Many things are opposed to the knowledge of God. The objective sought is that men may be brought to know God—to know who He is and what He is. To know their relation to Him as fallen men. To know His plan of restoration. To know Him in Christ Jesus and to know as to *love* Him, to*obey* Him and to become like He. This is the great objective for which the Gospel is sent into the world—that the knowledge of the Glory of God may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

But men desire not the knowledge of God’s ways and shut up their hearts against the entrance of Divine Light by much evil reasoning and imaginations. Some are garrisoned against the knowledge of God by the feeling that *they do not need to know God*. The masses of our fellow countrymen are not so much*opposed* to the Gospel as *indifferent* to it. They pass by our places of worship and they see their neighbors entering and sometimes they say, “Who preaches there?” But, “*What* is preached there?” is a question seldom asked. Religious enquiry seems to be very dull at the present time. Time was when the announcement of evangelical doctrine excited universal attention, though at the same time almost universal opposition—that *opposition* was better than a state of stagnation like the present.

Men nowadays pass by the Cross as if a dying Savior were nothing to them. Graceless zealots, as they call them, may fight about their creeds— as for them—they have something more practical to think about. “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?” are far more important questions to them, than, “What must we do to be saved?” This entrenchment has to be carried and the Gospel *does* carry it by the power of the Holy Spirit, for it flashes conviction on the soul, creates alarm, awakens apprehension and so storms the stronghold of indifference and utterly demolishes it! When the Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come, he is indifferent no longer!

We call him an, “enquirer,” and the name is correct, for he does enquire about the weightiest matters which concern eternity, God, Heaven, Hell and his own immortal destiny. He desires to know, at first, more than he is, at that time, capable of learning! He questions about high mysteries which are for *men* in Christ rather than for babies! But most of all, he wants to know, “How can I be at peace with God?” If the Holy Spirit does but apply to a man’s heart such a Truth of God as this—that he is already condemned because he has not believed in Christ—then indifference is as a bulging wall and as a tottering fence! Even If a man had no other sin, it is quite sufficient to condemn him forever, that he neglects his God and turns away from his Savior, for unbelief is an act of high treason against the Divine Majesty, plucking at the crown jewel of Jehovah’s truthfulness. Hence “the wicked shall be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God.” Lay this gun in a proper position and let it be fired by the Eternal Spirit against the indifference of the human heart and it soon casts down the wall of carelessness!

Then the sinner discovers that if he does not know his God, it were better for him that he had never been born! He finds out that if he does not know his Savior, he is doomed to endless woe and this makes him cry out in anguish of heart, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Among the other, “imaginations,” with which man fortifies himself is the idea of many that *they know already*. Trained from their childhood in false doctrine, they hold fast to it and defy the Gospel to reach them. They are Christians by *birth*, they say, forgetting the Inspired Declaration, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Others make up their minds as to what the knowledge of God *ought* to be and, of course, they quarrel with God’s view of things. They fashion a god and a gospel after their own fond notions and then they dream that they have reached the summit of wisdom! They refuse to go to school to learn Christ and when He says, “Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God,” they turn from Him with disdain! They know quite enough and are resolved to learn no more.

A large proportion of our fellow men are in this condition and are perfectly content and satisfied to remain as they are. Graduates in the university of self-importance—full of ignorance and equally full of pride—they scarcely deign to give Christ a hearing and hardly go as far as the Athenians who said, “What will this babbler say?” Nothing shuts the heart more completely against the knowledge of God than the conceit that we already know and need no teaching from above! It is written of the true Church, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord,” but many are not such children, for they are wise in their own eyes and refuse instruction!

But, O Sirs, how the Holy Spirit casts down this imagination when He makes men feel that they are blind by nature and lets them know that the natural man understands not the things which are of God, for they are *spiritual* and must be *spiritually* discerned! A little heavenly Light suffices to reveal to men their darkness, for if they will but think, they must admit that if God deigns to teach us in the Scriptures, it must be because apart from them we are ignorant! There is no need of Revelation and the Bible is worthless; there is no need of an Incarnate Deity and Calvary is a superfluity if men already know God apart from the Lord Jesus and the Word by which He is pleased to reveal Himself! But let the Holy Spirit bring this home to a man’s heart and he begins to cry out against his own pride! He bemoans his own blindness and he is quite willing to become a fool that he may be wise, a child that he may sit at Jesus’ feet!

Another entrenchment, behind which many are securely hiding, is the idea that *if they do not know God they can find Him out without His help*. This is a very general notion, nowadays. Scientific thought is supposed to be the way for finding out God and the old Scripture is out of date which says,” Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live.” Plain truth is, in this wonderful century, of small account—men crave to be mystified by their own cogitations. Many glory in being too intellectual to receive anything as absolute certainty—they are not at all inclined to submit to the authority of a positive Revelation! God’s Word is not accepted by them as final, but they judge it and believe what they like of it.

This is madness! I speak to those who believe in the Scriptures and I say if, indeed, there is a Revelation, it becomes us to be silent before it and accept it without dispute! The Lord knows what is better than we can ever know and if He has been pleased to speak plainly and solemnly His Word, it is ours to believe what He says because He says it! It may be all very well to prove that such-and-such a Revelation of God is consistent with reason, consistent with analogy, consistent with a thousand things— but the attitude which needs such argument is a spirit of rebellion against God! If there is a Revelation, every part of it is of authority and must be believed. Human thought is not the arbiter of Truth, but the Infallible Word is the end of all strife.

It is not ours to say what the Truth of God must be, or what we think it *should* be, or what we would *like* it to be—but reverently to sit down with open ears and willing heart to receive what God has spoken. If an astronomer were to refuse to examine the stars and teach an astronomy invented in his own brain, he would be an idiot! And those who treat theology in the same fashion are not much better! “Surely,” says one, “we ought to modify our beliefs by public opinion and the current of thought.” I say, “NO,” a thousand times! The Incorruptible Word of God lives and abides forever and is incapable of modification! To modify is to adulterate, nullify and render it of no effect, so that it becomes another gospel and, indeed, no Gospel.

The thought of tampering with the revealed Truth of God is vicious and ought not to be tolerated by any Christian for a second! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a thing which is to be molded according to the fashion of the period—it is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Whether the Greek philosophy rules or is exploded. Whether some more modern theory blazes up or smolders down is small concern of ours, for we are set to preach the one unvarying Gospel of Jesus Christ sent down with the Holy Spirit from Heaven! No man was ever led to a saving faith by our meeting him half way and consenting to his unbelief! No real faith was ever worked in man by his own thoughts and imaginations—he must receive the Gospel as a Revelation from God, or he cannot receive it at all.

Faith is a *supernatural* work wherever it is found and if we think that we can beget faith in ourselves or others by the use of the fleshy weapons of philosophy, we shall certainly be foiled! The Scriptures pressed home by the Holy Spirit are God’s power unto salvation—not men’s cogitations and imaginations! There is the Revealed Gospel—reject it at your own peril! There is Jehovah’s Revelation of Himself to men—receive it or be damned! This is the ground to go upon if we would speak as the oracles of God. God grant that proud thinkers may come upon this ground and become Believers.  
Here we are boldly met by some who say, “We do not need this doctrine which you call the ‘knowledge of God.’ *We already know of something better*. We tell you that your Gospel, about which you make such a fuss, is outworn and done with.” Treat it so, Sirs, and perish, if you will, but as for us, we will mourn day and night over your unbelief. You will surely destroy your souls in rejecting the Divine Testimony, but in so doing you will prove that Word to be true which says that the Gospel is a savor of death unto death as well as of life unto life.

You know better, you say, but how can this be? Do you know God better than God knows Himself? Do you know more about His way of reconciling men to Himself than His own Messenger, the Lord Jesus Christ, knows? Do you profess to know better than the Eternal Spirit who inspired the Scriptures? It is to those Scriptures that we crave your reverent attention and not to any assertions of *ours—*we pray you will not reject them! I heard one say the other day that he never felt any desire to pray and never had prayed in all his life. And though I looked at him with sorrow, I could only say to him, “Dead men never cry. You are dead in sin and so have not the Divine breath. You have not been born again. You have not a new nature or a right spirit—if you had, you could not help praying and believing.”

To me his statements were confirmations of Bible teaching concerning the real state of all unregenerate men. The Gospel, as we have said before, wherever it creates faith, begets it by its own power and by the power of the Eternal Spirit convincing men of the Truth of God and enlightening those whom the Lord our God has chosen. Now, where the Gospel comes, it undermines and overturns everything which opposes the Truth of God and makes a man feel that of God he knows nothing until the Lord reveals it to him.

Find a sinner made conscious of sin and you have found a man who does not know better than his God! Find a man with an awakened conscience and you have found a man who does not know better than his God! Find one who believes in Christ, sits at Jesus’ feet and the more he learns the more surely have you found in him a man who does not know better than his God, but who still cries out to be taught more that he may possess to the fullest the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

There is yet another entrenchment behind which some hide themselves from the knowledge of God and that is, “I never can know. I do not know and I never can know. I despair of ever being able to know the Lord.” In this despair the rebel entrenches himself as in a very cannon and becomes desperate in his resistance to the Gospel. Yet even this rampart is cast down by mighty Grace! When the Holy Spirit comes with the Word of reconciliation, the sinner catches at the idea of Atonement by a Substitute. He is charmed by the Truth of God, “I am lost in myself, but saved in Christ. I am in myself judged and condemned for sin, but in Christ I see my sin laid on Another and put away.” He catches at that Truth, so simple, so sublime and as he believes it, he begins to know Him whom to know is eternal life!

The Spirit of God, as He shines with Divine Light into the soul, soon sweeps away the Egyptian darkness of despair and in the Light of God the man sees light! You see what my drift is? It is just this, that there are certain walls of reasoning, reckoning, thinking—our version calls them “imaginations”—which are to be cast down and the Gospel does this when used by the Holy Spirit! Nor is this all, for with the walls, the battlements fall. Man, having devised the fortress of reasoning, erects towers of pride on them which the Apostle calls, “high things,” of which he says that the power of God casts down “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”

These lofty castles are such as the following—“I have a noble nature within me. My instincts are towards right. I have not done much amiss. I am as good as my neighbor. I can overcome any temptation. I am persuaded that I can fight my own way into eternal happiness,” and all such vain ideas. Let but the Gospel come with power and all these citadels are laid low! Away they go, like Jericho’s old bulwarks, rocking and reeling till, in a cloud of dust, they thunder to their fall! In how many cases we have seen this to be so! Fine men have come into this place—men that knew a great deal better than anything they could find in the Bible—they have come in quite confident that nothing would ever change them!

These have sat down like ancient knights, mailed from head to foot, invulnerable to any shafts of ours—but the Blessed Spirit has found an arrow in some simple saying that we have gathered from God’s blessed Word, and, lo, the proud warriors have fallen in the dust! Convinced that they were ignorant and foolish, the formerly proud boasters have begun to cry, “What must we do to be saved?” And before long, being made champions of the faith, it has been their delight to humbly yield judgment, will and heart to the obedience of Christ! O that the Lord would thus storm the prejudices and self-conceits of all my unconverted hearers and sweep them away by His mighty love!

**II.**After a breach has been made and the city has been taken, PRISONERS ARE TAKEN. This is our second point. The text runs thus, “Bringing into captivity every thought.” The word translated, “thought,” has a very broad meaning, but its best explanation is that which is placed first in the lexicon, “everything which comes from the *mind*.” The mind is like a city and when it is captured, the inhabitants which swarm its streets are the thoughts—and these are taken prisoners. Look at the process which I will rapidly describe.

The Gospel comes with power to the heart of a man and he begins to fear the wrath of God and the judgment to come. Look how he trembles! Christ has captured his thoughts of self-security. He no more says, “Though I add drunkenness to thirst, it shall surely be well with me.” On the contrary, he cries, “I am guilty! I have broken God’s Law and I am condemned.” The Lord has captured his thoughts of self-righteousness. This is the man who yesterday boasted in himself that he was righteous! The pure and holy Law of God has come near his conscience and he feels guilty and, therefore, cries for mercy!

Now he begins to pray, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” And it is clear that his thoughts of independence; his ideas that he could do without God are made prisoners! His thoughts of pleasure in alienation from the Great Father are now slain, for he desires to draw near to the Most High. Look! A little hope begins to dawn! He hopes that there may be salvation for him. His thoughts of rebellious despair are led captive in fetters of iron. Praise the Lord! Watch him further. The Spirit of God encourages him and he comes to believe in Jesus—his self-trust is a prisoner. That Jesus died for sinners is a Truth of God which now he accepts and he casts himself upon it—his proud intellect is a captive and he gladly bows at the Redeemer’s feet!

Listen to him as he sings, “I am forgiven! God assures me of it! I am justified because I have believed in Jesus! Oh, how I love His precious name.” His inmost heart is captured—all the thoughts of his love are now subdued and the Savior whom he once despised, he now adores! Look how, with gratitude, he brings his alabaster box to break it and pour the sweet perfume on the Savior’s feet! Jesus has won his heart! And Jesus holds it in a *willing* captivity and, therefore, the man consecrates himself to Christ—to live and to die for Him!

Thus the whole mind of the man, yes, the whole man, has thrown down its rebellious weapons and surrendered unconditionally to the conquering arm of the Lord Jesus! I dwell very briefly upon this point because I wish to enlarge upon the last.

**III.**These prisoners are to be LED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY—“Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Monarchs of the olden times, such as the kings of Assyria and Babylon, when they subdued a country, removed the people a far distance away from their old haunts to find new homes. Now, when the Lord captivates the thoughts of our mind, He leads them away, conducting them to another reason altogether. The offspring of the mind He guides into the *spiritual* realm where they delight in the Lord and bow themselves before Him.

Let us look at this procession of captives led away to Grace, the triumph of the Conqueror to settle them down in another region under another King! From the highest to the lowest, all the faculties of the soul are made to pass under the yoke—I shall not attempt a list according to mental science, but mention them as they occur to me. He who, being made conscious of his sin, believes in Jesus Christ submits all the thoughts of his judgment and understanding to the obedience of Christ and this is a great point gained. Before, he put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness—but now, when he is in difficulty about a moral question he asks his Lord!

Now, if pleasure tempts him, he judges whether it is sweet by the question whether it would be sweet to his Lord! Now, if a certain doctrine is stated, he weighs it not in the balances of his own thoughts, much less in the scales of popular opinion, but he asks, “What did my Master say? What would the Lord Jesus think of this?” He suspends his own judgment upon his Master’s judgment. He does not say, “I am a law unto myself,” but he says, “Christ is the Way and in His steps I desire to follow.” Thus his reason is led into captivity to the higher reason and understanding of his supreme Lord!

If there is a Truth of God which he does not know, he tries to learn it. If his Lord sets it before him as a lesson and if it is hidden from him, he is content not to know. His prayer is, “Lord, teach me, or else I shall never learn. I wish to have my understanding developed to the fullest, but let it be under Your sweet Light. Let my mind blossom and open all its flowers beneath the sunlight of Your Divine instruction.” I know it is not so with some professed Christians, for they too often invent their own doctrines and think out their opinions apart from their Master. To think is admirable, but not if we mean, thereby, to supplement the teachings of Christ, or to improve upon them, or to accommodate them to popular theories in science and philosophy!

For my part, true science may say what it will and never lack for an attentive listener while I live—the more loudly it shall speak the better—if it will speak facts and not *theories—*if it will tell me what *God has done* and not what *man* has dreamed! All that true science ever can discover must tally with the Word of Revelation, for God speaks in Nature nothing but the same Truth as He has written in the Holy Scriptures. Let our wise men ransack earth to its center and climb to Heaven and make inquisition through every star—the testimony of universal Nature, if heard aright, shall never contradict the Inspired utterances of the Holy Spirit!

The evil is that the wise men add their own inferences to the facts as if they were of equal authority. What, then, is to be done? Shall we alter the deductions of the fallible or try to shape the declarations of the Infallible? The question is not difficult to answer! We are not to revise the statements of the Bible, but the inferences of the philosophers! When philosophy contradicts Revelation, what do I say? So much the worse for philosophy! In spite of the perpetual restlessness which I see in many who are forever mending that which is perfect in itself, my understanding is happy to delight in the Infallible testimonies of Jehovah! Let those fellows change—we shall not! Let them come *up* to us—verily, believers in God’s Revelation will never go *down* to them, for that would be to be disloyal to our Master, Christ, whose teachings are too sacred for us to knowingly alter a letter of them!

Whatever others may do, it is the delight of those who have felt the overwhelming power of the Divine Spirit to find in Christ the wisdom with which their intellect is more than content. The same power of the Truth of God and of the Holy Spirit leads captive the will. My Lord Will-be-Will, as Bunyan describes him, is a very stout fellow. Some men think he is exceedingly obstinate, “I will and I will, and I will,” and by no means can they be made to yield. In truth, the will has a wonderful power over all the faculties and rules them like a despot. It is boasted that the will of man is free, yet Luther was quite correct when he called it a slave! Never is it so much a slave as when it brags of its own liberty! Let the Spirit of God come into the heart and apply with power the Gospel of Jesus Christ—and the human will no longer glories in its freedom, but surrenders and is subjugated!

It still remains a will, but the will of God is supreme over it. Hear it describe itself—“Lord, this is my will, or what I want to be my will. ‘Not as I will, but as You will.’” Look how the will wears its golden fetters and kisses them with happy lips, so glad to find true freedom in being subdued to the obedience of Christ! It is also very beautiful to see how human *hopes* are spell-bound by Divine Grace. These winged things were known to flutter no higher than the tainted atmosphere of this poor world—but now they find stronger pinions and soar aloft to things not seen as yet, eternal in the heavens! The man’s *fears*, too, all nestled in the ruins of his sinful joys, were awakened by the voices of his fellow man. But now, ennobled by Divine Grace, they ascend into another sphere! They cover their faces with their wings before the Throne of God, while the man fears to grieve the Holy Spirit, fears to offend against the Father’s love, fears to do *anything* which would dishonor the Savior. His joys and sorrows are now found where they never went before—he rejoices in the Lord and he sorrows after a godly sort.

His *memory* also now retains the precious things of Divine Truth, which once it rejected for the trifles of time! His *powers of meditation*and consideration keep within the circle of the Truth of God and holiness, finding green pastures there. This done, you shall see the same enthrallment cast over the Christian man’s *desires and aspirations*. He has flung away his old ambitions and aspires to nobler things. He is not without his longings, but he longs for *heavenly* blessings. His wishes and desires to fly to Christ as doves to their windows. His affection, which is no longer set upon things upon the earth, but on things above, draws his desires upward. He pines for holiness, for usefulness, for the Glory of God! His own glory he discards and is willing to be of no repute so long as he may but make the name of Jesus famous among the sons of men!

I would to God, dear Brothers and Sisters, that this sacred vassalage would be more fully felt by every motion of the mind so that no desire would dare to wander even for a moment! The same blessed servitude binds the man’s *plots and designs*. He still plans, but it is not for his own aggrandizement—his grandest design is to bring jewels to the crown of Christ! He now arranges his life with circumspection and with diligence— not with cunning and craftiness—for holiness is his policy and his scheme of life is *sanctity*. Does not this talk of mine sound rather like sarcasm to some who profess to be Christians? If it does, stand convicted, for it is not I that am wrong in this, but you—for every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! And even when we are thinking about common things or matters that have to do with business, we are to be serving our Lord, for, “every thought,” not *some thought*, is to be bowed unto the obedience of Christ.

It is a wicked error to conceive that so much of our life ought to be religious and so much to be secular. A Christian’s *whole* life is to be his religion and his religion is to saturate his whole life! You are as religiously to eat your meals as you eat at the Lord’s Table! You are as religiously to speak the Truth of God in your parlor as you would in the pulpit! Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, it is all to be done to the Glory of God! The great thought you are to have in opening your shops, in trading, in toiling, in furnishing your houses, in nursing your children and even in taking recreation, is still to be, “How can I glorify God in all this?” All, ALL, must be brought into captivity to Christ!

When a man yields himself to Jesus, he should comprehend his house, his money, his body, his time, his wife, his children—everything in the deed of surrender—for He who bought us with His precious blood did not buy us with a reserve and leave the devil a mortgage upon us! We are our Lord’s unencumbered freehold forever! We are His own conquered portion which He took out of the hand of the Amorite with His sword and with His bow and, therefore, over the whole of our being He has an absolute and undivided right of property!

The renewed man’s *love and hate* are both held captive by the power of Divine Grace. He loves Jesus truly and intensely. He hates sin with his whole soul. Indignation is a hard thing to tame, but to my mind it is a grand thing to see a man’s anger made the servitor of Christ so that he only grows indignant when he wars with that which is mean, cruel, unjust, un-Christlike! Then he does well to be angry, for his anger is but virtue on fire! It is a fair sight to see Christ’s sacred bands worn by our tastes which are so volatile and hard to constrain. Concerning tastes, it is never wise to dispute, but Jesus’ love creates a delicacy of mind, a discernment of that which is tender and gentle, pure and heavenly—an abhorrence of that which is evil so that the Lord’s redeemed become very *connoisseurs* in things moral and Divine.

*The fanc* y, too—that impalpable cloud painted as by the setting sun, that will-of-the-wisp of the spirit—even this is impressed into royal service and made to wear the colors of Christ so that men even *dream* eternal life! When godly men give their imagination rein, even Pegasus bears a royal burden and in his flight from the actual to the imaginative he feels the golden bridle of the King’s rule restraining and directing all his airy motions. Yes, the Holy Spirit wins an undisputed sway, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Do you not wish for this complete subjection, you to whom Jesus is God and Lord? I know you do and, what is more, I am sure you wish for the time when that which is worked in yourselves shall be accomplished in all mankind!

Christ’s Gospel has not come into the world to be co-equal with other faiths and share a divided kingdom with differing creeds. False gods may stand face to face to each other in one Pantheon and be at peace, for they are all false together, but where Christ comes, Dagon must go down—not even the stump of him must stand! Truth is of necessity intolerant of falsehood! Love wars with hate and justice battles with wrong. Christ Jesus will be All in All and sit upon the Throne alone. May the day come in which obedience to Christ shall be universal! What a scene would present itself if every thought of every human being were in holy subjection to Christ! Not a poor woman would sing beneath her lowly roof of thatch without rendering holy adoration—while on the throne, neither queen nor prince would plan anything but what should be for the Glory of Jesus Christ!

No council chamber would know a policy which would be contrary to the Prince of Love, nor would the freest thinker think anything contrary to the thoughts of Jesus. The wild men of the plain would cease to forget the Lord and the civilized dwellers in cities would no longer cast off His fear. The common people, in multitudes, would seek Him and the nobles would study how to honor Him. How happy will the time be when all inventive genius shall own the sway of Jesus and man shall desire no more to fashion weapons of war, but only to design that which shall minister to the well-being of mankind! When art with pencil and chisel shall refrain from all which excites lascivious thoughts and perpetuates the memory of blood and slaughter, but shall bow at Jesus’ feet to honor God by setting Nature’s beauties before reverent eyes!

How glorious will it be when Learning, poring over its classic books, shall find in human wisdom trophies for the surer wisdom of Jesus! And when Study, searching by the midnight lamp, shall seek out the heights and depths of Divine Love! It charms me to think of every poet singing Divine songs for earth’s great King, drinking no more from the Castellan fountain, but finding all their springs in God alone! Then, too, shall Music compose her most harmonious symphonies and pour forth her richest notes in worship of the redeeming Lord, while Eloquence, no longer declaiming in the defense of wrong, shall spend her force in the maintenance of peace and righteousness and in the extolling of the Lord! Dawn even now, auspicious day! Why does the night hang so heavy? Why bides the darkness around us for so many ages?

Great Captain of Salvation, You can achieve the victory! We have compassed this Jericho these many days, but still the walls have not fallen! Up, You mighty man of war, for You are such, and come to the battle and then the battlements of sin will fall. “The Lord is a man of war: Jehovah is His name.” Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old! Are You not He that has cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? Because of truth and righteousness, ride forth in Your majesty! For peace on earth and glory to God in the highest, come forth in the glory of Your might with the everlasting Gospel, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

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PEDIGREE  
NO. 3091

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1908.  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Are they Israelites? So am I.”  
2 Corinthians 11:22.*

PAUL was proud of his extraction as a Jew. Taking this expression in its literal sense, I feel that he had much to be proud of. Judah’s banner must not rank second among the nations. The nation of Israel is most ancient and most honorable. When as yet Greece and Rome were not known, God had brought forth His people out of Egypt “with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm,” and had cast out Amorite and Perizzite to make room for the vine which He had brought out of Egypt. Poets, statesmen, philosophers, divines had all come to ripeness and the fullness of strength in Judah’s land, while as yet the other nations were sunken in barbarism. When our little island of the sea was just a mass of forests, with here and there, perhaps, a naked savage wandering through it, David was praising God on a ten-stringed instrument! We talk of Norman blood, but what is it compared with Jewish blood? We speak of the dignity of peers and nobles of our infant monarchy, but this ancient nation stretches its parents of nobility far back—right up to the days of “the Friend of God,” when he stood under the oak at Mamre!

The people of Israel were famous because of God’s election. As a nation they deserve honor, but as the elect of God they must stand high in our esteem. One little stream of pure love and truth went wandering amidst the arid wastes of human depravity. The election of Grace fell mainly—I might almost say *entirely—*within the 12 tribes that sprang from the loins of Jacob in those early days. They were the conservators of the lamp of the Truth of God. Theirs were the oracles and grandest and best of all of them, “as concerning the flesh, Christ came.” Never despise the Jew when you remember that while our Savior was a Man, yet He was a Man of that peculiar type. Let us think of the Jew, JehovahTsidkenu, the Son of Mary, and feel a sympathy forever with His flesh and blood.

Besides, the Jewish race has a history yet to come, marvelous and strange history whose lines are intertwisted with all the threads of the history of other nations. I am not about to amuse you by any prophesying. This is not the place to desecrate the Sabbath with whimsical interpretations of Daniel, Ezekiel and the Revelation! But still, it is plain upon the very surface of Scripture that Israel shall yet be restored to grandeur as a nation, that the King of the Jews shall reign and that in all the splendors of the millennial age, the Jew, ingathered with the fullness of the Gentile, shall have his full share. This much we know and in this much even we, the Gentiles, do unfeignedly rejoice. For the Son of David is He who has made both one and broken down the middle wall of separation between us—and henceforth there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free—but we are all one in Christ Jesus. However, were I here tonight as a convert to the Christian faith with Jewish blood within my veins, I would speak with no bated breath concerning it, nor wish to hide my pedigree, but count it the highest of all honors which could come to me after the flesh, that I sprang from the loins of Abraham, “the Friend of God.” I do not marvel that Paul was so jealous of it, or that he says, “Are they Israelites? So am I.” He was no bigot—remember, he was the Apostle of the Gentiles—it was he who constantly disclaimed all confidence in circumcision. It was he who withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed in this matter. It was he who, as with a battle-axe, was continually breaking down the barriers which divided Jew and Gentile. But yet, for all that, as a man, he was not ashamed to say, “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.”

I propose now, however, to take the text in another light. In a spiritual sense, all the Lord’s people are Israelites. “They are not all Israel, which are of Israel” after a carnal lineage, but all God’s people are the true Israel, the spiritual seed in whom the promises made to Abraham are this day fulfilled. I hope we can say, some of us, with a loud and emphatic utterance—and others with a humble whisper, “Are they Israelites? So am I,” thus putting in our claim to the privileges which belong to the people of God.

Let us accordingly spend a few minutes, first, in describing *a peculiar people—*Israelites. And then, secondly, in asserting *a personal claim,* saying, “So am I.”

**I.**This PECULIAR PEOPLE, called Israelites, I will describe in two ways. *The Israelites of God are like their father,* like Israel. And they are *like their ancestors,* like Israel.

First of all, they are *like their father.* All the Israel of God are in some respects like Jacob, who was surnamed Israel. [Mr. Spurgeon preached many

Sermons on Jacob, among them being the following—#239, Volume 5—JACOB AND ESAU; #401, Volume 7—JACOB’S WAKING EXCLAMATION; #1401, Volume 24—JACOB WORSHIPPING ON HIS STAFF; #1544, Volume 26—MAHANAIM—OR, HOSTS OF ANGELS; #2116, Volume 35—THE UNCHANGING GOD CHEERING JACOB IN HIS CHANGE OF DWELLING PLACE; #2817, Volume 49— JACOB’S FEAR AND FAITH and #3010, Volume 52—JACOB’S MODEL PRAYER—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

They are so, for one reason, *because of their election*. What says the Scripture? “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” “The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand,” it was said, “The elder shall serve the younger.” Jacob was God’s chosen one. He had set His love upon him and, before he was born, He had distinguished him as His elect one. Now that is a deep mystery and there are many who quibble at and question it. I am not here to answer them. The Book says so—let them quibble with the Book, not with me! That Doctrine, I know, is often used to discourage seeking souls and the great Truth of predestination is set in contrast with the other Truth of free agency, as though the one contradicted the other. But, believe me, it is only our ignorance that makes us think the two things contradictory! “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out,” is just as true as Christ’s later declaration, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him.” It still stands true that “whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” though it is written, “I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” and, “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Let this be recognized as a Truth of God, then, by every true Israelite—that he is so *by reason of the choice of God*. We cannot say it was our choice—we dare not attribute our separation from the rest of mankind to anything in us by nature. We must lay our crown at the feet of Divine Sovereignty and bless that distinguishing, discriminating Grace which has made us differ from the rest of mankind! We are Israelites by *election*.

And you will observe that, very early in Jacob’s life, *he, too, made an election.*“Chosen of God before time began,” he chose his God’s inheritance in return. There stood the mess of pottage and there, unseen, was the birthright, the inheritance according to promise. Esau, hungry and profane, said, “I shall die of hunger, and then what good will this birthright do unto me?” And for a mess of pottage, which he chose, he rejects the heavenly heritage! Not so Jacob—what Esau sold, Jacob bought. He bought at a dearer price, however. Think, oh, think of that greater inheritance than a mere mess of lentils! At any rate, you have now before you a picture of what every true Israelite becomes by the work of God’s Grace in the heart. If you choose this world and neglect the world to come, you are Esau. You may be a child according to the flesh, but you are not a child according to promise. But if you from your heart can say, “I count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt and for the love I bear His name, what was my gain I count my LOSS” then, dear Friend, this election, which you make, is a proof that God has made an election of you and that you are of the seed of Israel whom God has blessed. They turn from the pottage to take the portion—they leave earth to seek Heaven.

Then comes one feature in Jacob’s history which is common to all true Israelites. No sooner had Esau got his pottage and Jacob the blessing, than Esau sought to slay Jacob. There must be *a hatred between the child of the flesh and the child of the Spirit.*They slept together in the same womb, but they could not live together on the same earth without animosity against each other. Jacob must flee. He must leave his father’s house. He must go outside the camp. And this is your lot if you are an Israelite. The world will soon find you out and you will be a speckled bird—and the birds round about you will be against you. If any man suffers as a Christian, let him rejoice! And if you are a Christian, you will have to suffer as a Christian for Christ’s sake. You must bear reproach. And in obeying your Master’s Laws, you will come into conflict with the world’s customs and, consequently, will lose the world’s favor. So there are Israelites and you are among them—and for the Truth of God’s sake you become an alien to your mother’s brethren.

Jacob, in leaving his father’s house, however, received a great blessing in which he is typical of all Israelites—namely, *the manifested Covenant made with himself personally.*He slept with a stone for his pillow, the hedges for his curtains, the heavens for his canopy—and as he slept, he dreamed that he saw a ladder, the foot thereof stood on the earth, but the top reached to Heaven. And at the top of it was the God of the Covenant who made a Covenant with His servant which He established and made fast forever. Beloved, if you are of God’s Israel, you have had some insight into the Covenant of Grace—you have seen it in the Person of Jesus Christ whose Humanity, like the ladder’s foot, stands here on earth, but whose Deity, like the ladder’s top, is lost amidst the blaze of God! You have seen, by the eyes of faith, the God who makes and keeps the promise in the Person of Jesus Christ, speaking to you and saying, “Certainly I will be with you, and I will bless you.” You must have had some such Revelation of God in Christ Jesus, or else I would have to question whether you are one of the Israelites at all—for they who know the Lord, know Him as their Covenant God and know him as David did when he said, “Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

To complete our little outline of Jacob’s history in which all the Israelites must follow him, I introduce you to Jacob at the brook of Jabbok. It was there that Jacob became Israel—the supplanter became a prevailing prince! Oh, it was a noble sight which the stars alone saw, when Jacob grasped the Angel! Bold hands, that of mortal that can grasp the Angel of God! And oh, it was nobler still when, having grasped Him, he was not content with using hands alone in that blessed struggle, but came to use feet and knees, and every bone and nerve and muscle! It was a matchless wrestling, then, when the Angel would have thrown the man, but the man would gladly throw the Angel! He played the man, indeed, then, when he said unto God, “I will not let You go except You bless me.” “I will not.” O God, can Your creature thus address You? Yes, when You have given us faith enough to utter such a word as that, You have given us full permission to speak even as we will unto You and, each one of us to say, “I will not let You go except You bless me.”

Now, if we are Israelites, we know something of *wrestling and prevailing prayer.*You are no Christian if you do not pray. A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. You have no inheritance among the people of God if you have never struggled with that Covenant Angel and come off the conqueror. Prayer is the indispensable mark of the true child of God. I know what you will tell me—you will tell me that you are so weak and feeble. Ah, Brother, in this you are like Jacob, who went from Peniel, halting on his thigh. It is not given to mortals to be altogether strong. You must feel your weakness. You may be mighty with God and yet He may make you weak with men. You may be too strong for the Angel and yet one touch of this Angel’s finger may cause your sinew to shrink so that you go halting to your grave. Ah, some of us have not merely had one sinew shrunk, but very many—and whenever we try to run the heavenly race, we feel these shrunken sinews much injure our running. But still we are pursuing, and though lame, we shall yet take the prey. So, you see, in election, in the choosing of the inheritance rather than the pottage, in being hated by his brother, in being separated from his father’s house, in entering into Covenant with God, in wrestling and even in weakness, Israel becomes the type of the true Israelite! And I hope, as I have been going over the history, some of you have said, “Are there any such persons in the world that are Israelites? Even so am I.” I hope you have seen your own portrait, here, and have said, “The preacher has photographed my history—so am I.”

Now we are going to give you another portrait of the Israelite, this time not taking the single man, Israel, but taking *the race Israel in their early history.* When Israel ceases to be a family and becomes a nation, we find it in the house of bondage, in what is very significantly called, “the iron furnace”—iron for strength and a furnace for heat! So is it with every Israelite. Every child of God is originally found in the bondage of sin. It gives us no effort to remember when we were the slaves of Satan. The scars of his whip are scarcely healed. When we see others sinning, we are glad to say, “Such were some of us, but we are washed. Oh, how lately did these arms wear the fetters and were these feet hampered with the chains! We are free now, but once we were slaves!”

Israel in due time was delivered—delivered in two ways—delivered by *blood*and by *power.*So is it with every child of God—*delivered by blood.* The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the lintel and on the side posts, and while the Destroying Angel, swift to slay, went through the whole of Egypt and slew the first-born, He spared the first-born of Israel—not one of them fell dead. Oh yes, and we, too, through the precious blood of Jesus, which has been sprinkled upon us, we too are saved! Our Passover Lamb is slain for us—the sprinkling of His blood has made us safe—it speaks better things than the blood of Abel, for it speaks peace to us and gives us safety and deliverance. And, my Brothers and Sisters, we have been brought out with *power,*too! Power as great as that which worked plagues on the fields of Egypt and made Pharaoh’s haughty heart yield! The might of the Holy Spirit, which has set us free, is as great as that which divided the Red Sea and made its waters stand “upright as a heap.” Let Moses sing, but we will sing too! Let Miriam dash her joyous fingers against the timbrel and we will emulate her! We will sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, “for He has triumphed gloriously in our cause. He has set us free and brought us up out of the house of bondage, breaking the iron yoke from our necks.” Thus we are like Israel.

Israel *went into the wilderness* and, I suppose we have all been there, at least all of us who are God’s people find this world to be a wilderness to us. In the wilderness they were all covered by the pillar of cloud by day, and they were enlightened by the pillar of fire by night. And Divine Providence is our daily protection and our constant comfort. They went out daily to gather manna. Brothers and Sisters, I suppose you find that you have need of daily Grace and that you cannot live upon bread alone, but you must have the Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God. You have learned to eat angles’ food! The meat that drops from the skies is necessary to your life. The corn that grows in the furrow cannot feed your soul. Your body leans on that staff of life, but your soul needs more spiritual food such as Jesus Christ alone can give. Beloved, the children of Israel in the wilderness all looked to the same Tabernacle and there they saw one ministering priest offering incense and sacrifice by blood. And we stand tonight all looking to the same Savior, hoping—no, KNOWING—that we are all washed in the same precious blood! And as we see the smoke of His Sacrifice going up to God, we, as one undivided Israel, praise and bless His name!

You remember, too, that *all Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan to the land of Canaan and won their heritage.*Each tribe had its portion and everyone was settled in his proper place. We are, so it were, standing upon Jordan’s brink. Since last we met, some of our Beloved ones have crossed the stream, “and we are to the margin come.” Nor does it trouble us, for Jordan is dry. The Ark of the Covenant stands in the middle of that river and makes it so dry that every child of God shall go through it dry shod! The trumpet sounds which bids us march to victory! The land that flows with milk and honey is before us—we have a portion fair in that blessed land. Let us go to Pisgah’s top tonight if we cannot cross the Jordan just yet and, with Moses, “view the landscape over.” There are the glittering lights of the habitations of the blessed. There are the groves of immortality where they wander. There are the rivers of joy at which they sit and the oceans of glory in which they bathe! Listen to their songs! Catch you not the strains that come from the celestial harps? Know you nothing of the harmonies? Have you never perceived their gracious melodies? Here is your portion, Beloved! All Israel came to the promised land and so shall we! And we shall then forever reign with Jesus, our blessed Jesus, who leads us in to possess the land!

So much, then, concerning Israel from the second picture. I trust some of us have been saying, while we have seen the picture and heard the history of Israel described, “‘Are they Israelites? So am I.” I too was in Egypt. I too have had the blood sprinkled on me. I too have eaten of the Paschal Lamb. With loins girt about I have passed into the wilderness of separation, wandering my forty years up and down these arid plains of earth. I am looking for my heritage. I look to my great Leader, and I follow Him to victory and to peace!”

**II.**Having thus described the peculiar people, we stop a moment and notice A PERSONAL CLAIM—*“So am I.”*  
This is *a claim that needs proof.* The Apostle knew that his claim was indisputable, but there are a great many persons who say, “So am I,” when they have no right to say it. When others come to the Lord’s Table, they come there. When Believers in Christ are baptized, they are baptized, too, and they virtually say, “Whatever saints may be, such are we.” Ah, it is one thing to pretend to be a noble in Christ’s court, and another thing to really be a peer in Heaven’s realm! Your patent of spiritual nobility will serve your turn here among poor men who cannot investigate it, but remember! Remember! You will all be tried before you will be permitted to enter Heaven! See you not those scales in mysterious vision? I see them before my eyes—massive scales—and the weights of the sanctuary are put into one scale and each one of us must, before long, take our place in the other scale. Will it turn with us? Shall we be found good weight, or shall we leap into the air while the voice shall say, “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin—you are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting; your claims are disproved and your hopes destroyed forever”?  
Beloved, let us not claim to be Christians if we are not! I warn any of you who make a profession of religion, especially if you are members of this Church, if your hearts are not right with God, shake off your profession as Paul shook off the viper from his hands! Nothing can be more detrimental to you, at the last, than to have had a name to live while you have been dead! Far better to honestly confess yourself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel than to be an interloper among the saints of God, partaking of the children’s bread while you are not a child and entering into the sanctuary of God where you have no right to stand! If we dare to say, “So am I,” let us only say it after having searched ourselves as in the Presence of the great God and having said to Him, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”  
Supposing that we have given good proof, I can only say that the claim in the text is one which *will yield us great joy.*When God’s people are rejoicing most, what a satisfaction it is to me if I can say, “So am I!” Here stands one of the Lord’s people and he cries, “My sins are forgiven through His precious blood. I am a pardoned sinner!” “So am I.” “I am covered with Christ’s righteousness, a garment all Divine bedecks me and I am accepted in the Beloved!” “So am I.” “He has taken me into union with Himself and made me a member of His body. I am a member of Christ’s mystical body!” Oh, can you say, “So am I”? Surely these three words will be enough to make Heaven begin below if, when the saints rejoice most in their standing and position before the Lord, you can say, “So am I.” And you can certainly do so, dear Friend, in all the fullness of joy, if you can say with me—  
***“A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of Covenant Mercy I sing!  
Nor fear with Christ’s righteousness on,  
My person and offering to bring.  
The terrors of Law, and of God,  
With me can have nothing to do—  
My Savior’s obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view!”***  
“This is the reason I trust Him wholly, trust Him only, trust Him simply, trust Him now and trust Him always.” Oh, if you can say, “So do I,” then all the position which the saints of God hold belongs to you! All their enjoyments are your possessions! You may say, “Such am I.”  
Now I want to introduce you to a few little scenes, one after the other. I will suppose that we are all talking together about *the happiness of God’s people.*One quotes the text, “Happy are you, O Israel. Who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord?” and he expatiates thus, “God’s people are a happy people, they find that godliness has the blessing of this life and of that which is to come. We can praise God all day and even in the night He is still with us, and we make the night watches vocal with His praise. We are a happy people.” I hear a voice up in the corner of the room where we are sitting. Someone says faintly, “And so am I.” Let us go and look. Why, here is a poor old woman who has been bed-ridden. “How long, Sister?” “Thirteen years.” “Have you much to comfort you?” “Oh, very much! I have my Savior’s Presence.” “Have you had a good nurse and kind attendants, with plenty of temporal comforts?” “No, I have had none of those things. I am a poor pensioner of the parish. I have sometimes scarcely enough bread to eat.” “Have you many pains?” “Yes, I am full of disease, racked from head to foot with sickness.” “I thought you said just now, ‘So am I! I am happy.’” “Oh, yes! I did say that and I will say it again, for, notwithstanding all my tribulations, my consolations abound through Jesus Christ and I can say—  
***“‘Sweet affliction, sweet affliction  
For it brings my Savior near’—***  
“notwithstanding all my sufferings and my pains, and my having tossed to and fro till my bones have come through my skin, yet, if you say you are happy, ‘So am I.’”  
We are talking together again about *the riches of God’s people.*I have been giving out a hymn in the little parlor, and we have been singing— ***“How vast the treasure we possess!  
How rich Your bounty, King of Grace!  
This world is ours, and worlds to come—  
Earth is our lodge, and Heaven our home. I would not change my blest estate  
For all that earth calls good or great!  
And while my faith can keep her hold,  
I envy not the sinner’s gold!”***  
And I say, “We are rich and increased in goods, we have all we need, and we are thankful for it.” And I hear a voice say, “So am I.” Come here and show yourself! “I don’t like to show myself in such respectable company as this.” “Never mind, come here.” “No,” he says, “my clothes are too much out of repair for me to come before this present company. I have toiled and worked very hard, but now in my old age I cannot work much and the garb of poverty is the only one that I can wear. I eat my bread with my own tears and with much of the sweat of my brow—and I have nothing in the world I can call my own—and I never expect to own anything except that spot of ground in which my ashes shall be buried by charity. But if you say God’s people are rich, so am I. I have got here the title-deeds of a mansion fair and of a heritage so rich that I would not barter it for the throne of the Caesar’s or all the kingdoms of the earth.”  
While we are thus communing with one another, we turn from the happiness and the riches of God’s people to speak about *their safety.*“All those who trust in Jesus Christ are saved. Their sins are all forgiven. They can never be condemned. Their feet are upon the rock. They shall be with Christ in Glory—they are saved!” And I hear a voice come from somewhere up there, “So am I.” Now, whose voice is it? I think I remember hearing it before. It sounds like the voice of a dying man, like the voice of a man in pain—a rough voice, too, as if it belonged to some very uncouth body—who is it? It is the dying thief and he says, “You were singing about me just now—  
***“‘The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day  
And there have I, though vile as he,  
Washed all my sins away!’***  
“I am a dying thief, but I am saved! It is only a few minutes ago since I believed in Jesus, but I am saved! He who has served the Lord for 70 years cannot say more than that. He can say, after 70 years of service, ‘I am a saved man,’ and I can say, though Jesus only now turned His eyes upon me and said that He would remember me, I too am a saved man.” So, you see, there are some things in which the very youngest Believer is placed on an equal footing with the very oldest— they are alike saved if they can each say, “So am I.”  
There may be somebody in this chapel, perhaps, who cannot read. Such people are getting scarce in London and if we use a long Latinized word in the sermon, that poor body says, “I cannot make out what he is talking about.” But if I begin to talk about Jesus Christ and say, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” If I begin to speak about experimental vital godliness within the heart and about union to Jesus Christ. If I say that all the Lord’s people know something about His love—they are all taught in His Grace—I know you, my Friend, would say, “So am I. So am I. If there is any man here who says that he is a debtor to God’s Grace, so am I. If there is any man who says that he owes more than others, so do I. If there is anyone here who claims to have had much sin forgiven and, therefore, to be much in debt to God’s Grace, so am I. And if there is any man here who vows, when he gets to Heaven, that he will sing the Lord’s praises with all his might, for he feels himself to be a very deep debtor to God, so am I. Dear Friend, I am not inclined to yield to you when it comes to the question of claiming the privilege of God’s Israel, the privilege of nearness to His heart, of access with boldness in Christ Jesus, the privilege of prayer, the privilege of suffering, the privilege of service. If you say, ‘I am entitled to these things,’ I will put in my claim, and say, ‘So am I.’”  
And I do hope there are some poor trembling saints here who will be so tenacious of their privileges that though they are the very least in Israel, “less than the least of all saints,” yet, since the mercies of God belong to the saints, as saints, and not as full-grown saints, or advanced saints, or well-taught saints, they will put in their plea and each one say, “So am I. So am I.”  
I was thinking, as I came here tonight, whether I would not even defy the very angels of God about this matter. There are spirits before the Throne of God—bright spirits that walk in white and sing His praises— and they are very happy, and they are full of joy. So am I! They wear white robes, they are clad in pure white linen. So am I! They stand secure in Jesus’ love. And so am I! They sing of their election by His Grace. And so will I! They are there, and they see His face and sing His praise. And so will I! They know themselves to be loved by Him. So do I! And they drink of the river of His pleasures as they think of Him. So will I! Beloved Christian, in some respects you are on a par with the glorified spirit. You are as much pardoned as they are. You are as much justified as they are. You are as much one with Christ as they are. You are as much chosen of God as they are and you are, in one respect, as safe as they are—no, in some things you have the advantage! There are works which perfect saints above all holy angels cannot do, so let no one stop you in your glorying in Christ Jesus. But when they speak the most, say of yourselves through Grace, “So am I.”  
Oh, what a different tale we might have told tonight! Think of what a different story the preacher might have had to tell tonight. Oh, think— think—think—dear Hearer! There might have been heard the wailing of lost souls, gnashing their teeth and crying, “We are lost—lost—lost forever!” And you and I might have been saying, “And so am I.” There might have come up a dolorous cry from the depths of Hell, “We are banished from God’s Presence! The light of His love shines not on us! We are in the blackness of darkness forever!” You and I might have said, “So am I.” But instead of that, He has plucked us from the miry Pit and set our feet upon a Rock, and made us sing His praise tonight and, with the brightest spirits, say, “So am I.” Oh, how we ought to love Him! Now, tomorrow, if you go out into the world and you see a Christian badly beaten, and hear men jeeringly say, “There is a Christian”—step forward and say, “So am I.” Tomorrow the devil will be tempting some of the Lord’s people and you may, if you like, turn tail and run away. But come boldly forward and say, “So am I.” Take your share with them! Some of us are workers for Christ. I wish you could each one say, “So am I.” There are some who give their talent, their time, their substance, their whole heart to Jesus. I wish we could each one say, “So do I.” Standing here, we have sometimes said that if Jesus Christ would tread on us. If He could make Himself one inch more lofty, we would be glad to be trodden as the mire in the street, for we have given ourselves unto Him as a burnt-offering, living and dying. May every Christian here feel, “So am I.” Oh, prove your gratitude by your devotion and live as those who, having claimed privileges, are willing to take the responsibility connected with it!  
Is there a lost and ruined sinner here? “Yes,” says one, “I am.” Jesus Christ came to save sinners. I am hanging on Him and trusting Him. I would that each one of you could say, “So am I.” Sinner, you have no hope but in Jesus. Trusting Him, His saints are safe. Will you trust Him? God help you to trust Him at this very moment! Cast yourself where millions have cast themselves before—upon the covenanted mercy of God in Christ—and as they leap up and cry, “We are saved,” you, too, may stand up and say, “So am I.” May the Lord bless us! May we be numbered with His Israel in the day when He comes to make up His jewels, for His name’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 81.***

**Verse 1.***Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob*In these days, the Psalms would have to be altered if they are to suit the dogmas of modern thought, for “the God of Jacob” is altogether rejected by those wondrous thinkers who think they know so much! The God of the New Testament, they say, is a very different Being from the God of the Old Testament. According to them, the Old Testament God is too stern—the New Testament God is far softer, quite effeminate, indeed, if they rightly describe Him. But we do not hesitate to say, over and over again that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the Immutable and Unchangeable One—the God of Sinai, is as much our God as the God of Calvary! And so we delight “to make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.”

**2-6.***Take a Psalm, and bring here the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the Psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the New Moon, in the time appointed on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a Law of the God of Jacob. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when He went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not. I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.* Child of God, have you forgotten the time of your deliverance? God has not and here He reminds His people Israel of their deliverance out of Egypt. So He says concerning you, “I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.” Do you not remember the joy of that glad moment when the burden of sin was taken away from you and the pots of your own self-salvation lay broken at your feet? Glory be to Him who brought us out from that terrible house of bondage!

**7.***You called in trouble, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder: I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah.*But how sadly did they stand the test! You and I, too, have not only received much mercy at the hands of God, but we also have had our testing times. We can look back to the waters of strife with deep regret that there we failed so sadly.

**8-10.***Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto you: O Israel, if you will hearken unto Me; there shall no strange god be in you; neither shall you worship any strange god. I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt: open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.*What a wonderful verse this is! We have been so accustomed to hear the expression, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt,” followed by the Law. But here it is followed by a gracious encouragement to us to pray—“Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Whatever force the Law derived from that preface, this exhortation derives the same force and no child of God ought to forget that. He who delivered you from the burden of sin bids you open your mouth wide and He will fill it! And after your deliverance from guilt, do you not feel that you may well ask great things of such a gracious God?

**11-15.***But My people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would none of Me. So I gave them up unto their own heart lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued the enemies, and turned My hands against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him: and their time should have endured forever.*Alas, poor Israel! Through what sufferings and captivities did you go because you would not trust in the Lord? And how often some of God’s children have had to go through years of sorrow and spiritual captivity because of their lack of close walking with their God and complete obedience to Him! May we learn from the sins of others and be helped to walk closely with our Master!

**16.***He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied you.*If the Word of God does not seem to feed us as once it did, it will surely be because we have not hearkened to our Lord, or walked in His ways. May He give us Grace to render complete obedience to His holy will!—

***“So shall Your choicest gifts, O Lord,  
Your faithful people bless,  
For them shall earth its stores afford  
And Heaven its happiness.”***

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE THORN IN THE FLESH  
NO. 1084

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 8, 1872 BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted~~***

***~~above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities,  
that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”  
2 Corinthians 12:7, 8, 9.~~***

MANY persons have a morbid desire to roll up the curtain and gaze upon the secret lives of eminent personages. Paragraphs detailing the private habits of public men are delicacies for such minds. Books stuffed with idle gossip and mere trash are sure of a wide circulation if they tell how princes ate, how warriors drank, how philosophers slept, or how senators arranged their hair. And now we are able to gratify curiosity and yet minister to edification—for we have unveiled before us a portion of the secret life of Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

We may not only see his bed-chamber, but learn the Apostle’s visions! We may not only see his private infirmities, but learn the cause of them. Let us not, however, be actuated by so low a motive as mere curiosity while we gaze upon the open secret. Let us remember that the Apostle never intended to amuse the curious when he penned these words, but he wrote them for a practical purpose. Let us read them with a desire to be instructed by them and may the Holy Spirit teach us to profit.

This record was not sent to us merely that we should know that this eminent servant of Christ had abundant revelations or that he suffered a thorn in the flesh—it was written for our profit. One excellent end that may be answered by this narrative lies upon the very surface. We are plainly taught how mistaken we are when we set the eminent saints of the olden times upon a platform by themselves, as though they were a class of super-human beings. Because we fall so far short of them we excuse our indolence by conceiving *them* to be of a superior nature to ourselves so that we cannot be expected to attain to their degree of Divine Grace. We elevate them upon a niche out of the way so that they may not rebuke us, thus rendering them a homage which they never sought and denying them a usefulness which they always coveted.

As we never try to fly because we have no angelic wings, so we do not aspire to supreme holiness because we imagine that we have not Apostolic advantages. Indeed, this is a very injurious idea and must not be tolerated. What the ancient saints were, we may be! They were men of like passions with ourselves and therefore are most fit and practical examples for us. The Spirit of God which was in them is in all Believers and He is by no means straitened! Their Savior is our Savior—His fullness is the fullness out of which all of us have received. Let us put far away from us every notion of separating the holy men of former days from ourselves, as if they were a saintly caste to be admired at a distance but not associated with as comrades.

They fought the common fight and won by the strength available to all Believers—let us esteem them as our Brethren—and with them pursue the sacred conflict in the name of the common Leader. Let us fix our eyes upon these companions of our warfare and, regarding them as a sympathetic cloud of witnesses, let us run as they ran that we may win as they won and may glorify God in our day and generation as they did in theirs!

Paul, my Brothers and Sisters, doubtless enjoyed more revelations than we have done but then he had a corresponding thorn in the flesh. He rises above us, but he sinks with us, also, and so encourages us to emulate his rising. He was a good man but he was *only* a man! He was a saint, but he had the infirmities of sinners! He is our Brother Paul, though he is “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.” And as we read his experience this morning, I hope we shall be made to feel a fellowship with him and so be spurred on to imitate him.

**I.**Our text suggests to us, first of all, A DANGER to which the Apostle was exposed—“Lest I should be exalted above measure.” Upon that let us speak first. Here is a peril to which we are all exposed, more or less, but the Apostle Paul was especially liable to it because of his peculiar circumstances. He had been caught up into the third Heaven—secret things which had not been seen before were laid bare before his gaze. Nor were his eyes, alone, filled—his ears, also, were satisfied for he heard words which it was not possible for him to repeat and which, could he have repeated, it would not have been expedient for him even to whisper in the unpurified ears of mankind.

He had been taken into the innermost part of the third Heaven—into that secret Paradise where Christ dwells with His perfected saints! He had entered into the nearest communion with God possible to a man while yet in this life. Should he not feel somewhat exalted? Surely exultation must fill that man’s bosom who has been brought within the veil to see his God and to hear the unutterable harmonies! It was natural that he should be exalted and it was not unnatural that he should stand in danger of being exalted above measure! Devout exaltation very rapidly degenerates into self-exaltation. When God lifts us up, there is only one step further— namely our lifting up ourselves—and then we fall into serious mischief, indeed.

I wonder how many among us could bear to receive such revelations as Paul had? O God, You may well, in Your kindness, spare us such perilous favors! We have neither head nor heart to sustain so vast a load of blessing. Our little plant needs not a river to water its root—the gentle dew suffices—the flood might wash it away. How many has God blessed in the ministry for a little while, or, if not in the ministry, in some other form of service? But, alas, how soon have they swollen with conceit and have become too big for the world to hold them! Puffed up with vanity, the honor put upon them has turned their brain and they have gone astray into gross folly, sheer vanity, or defiling sin.

Much branch and little root has brought down the tree! Wing without weight has made the bird the sport of the hurricane. Even Paul’s boat, when it enjoyed so mighty a wind of Divine Revelation, was nearly upset and would have been totally wrecked had it not been for the Lord’s casting in the sacred ballast of which we shall have to speak by-and-by, when we consider the preventative sorrow which saved Paul from being exalted above measure.

Now, observe, if *Paul* was in this danger, we cannot hope to be free from it for he was eminently a holy man, eminently a humble man, eminently a wise man, eminently an experienced man. Though specially favored, he was one to whom the highest privileges were not such novelties as to intoxicate him with vanity. He had enjoyed earthly honors—he had once been a highly esteemed Rabbi among his fellow countrymen and this did not elevate him with pride. He counted all his honors but loss for Christ’s sake. He afterwards became a well-beloved Apostle of Jesus and the narrative of his works and sufferings, which you have in the preceding chapter is far too long for us to give you even a digest of, yet he does not seem to have been exalted thereby.

He achieved a thousand marvels of heroism and left them all behind him, pressing forward as though he had to the point done nothing! And when he had done all, he counted himself to be less than the least of all saints and the very chief of sinners! He was a man by no means childish and vain, but a man of great mind, deep comprehension and profound knowledge. He was not readily carried away by approbation or puffed up with self-esteem. If he knew much, yet he knew also that he knew only in part—and if his judgment was very acute, as it certainly was, yet he often cried, “Oh, the depths!” His was a splendid, well-balanced intellect sanctified by the Grace of God. Yet, for all that he was in danger of being exalted above measure—how much more likely, then, are we who have not his judgment, who have not his knowledge, have never occupied so lofty a station—and have never performed such mighty deeds? If so massive a pillar trembles, what peril surrounds poor reeds shaken of the wind?

Observe that in Paul’s case the favor which threatened to intoxicate him with pride was one which did not operate in the common coarse way in which temptations to vanity usually assail mankind. The most of men who are exalted above measure are puffed up with the approbation of their fellow men—they love flattery, they court esteem—and admiring words are the very food of their souls! But Paul’s gifts from Heaven were not things which were likely to excite the high esteem of his fellow men. It is probable that had he spoken to his fellow disciples and said, “I have enjoyed revelations,” they would have doubted his statement or have attached but small importance to it. And had he spoken to the outside mass of Jews and heathens upon the subject, he would have become more than ever the subject of their ridicule.

What would have excited more the laughter of the Greek, or the sneer of the Roman, or the wrath of the Jew than to hear that Paul, the tent maker, had entered the invisible world and heard words which it was not lawful for him to utter? Brothers and Sisters, you thus see that our Apostle was not tempted with the common, vulgar temptation of adulation and flattery. His soul would easily have risen superior to so gross an assault and he would have trod down the evil like the mire in the streets. No, the temptation was more subtle and more adapted to the noble caliber of the man. He was eminently a self-contained man, a man who had learned to think for himself and speak for himself and act for himself.

And now the temptation was that he should say within his own soul, “I have seen for myself and with these eyes as others have not. I am a seeing man among blind dotards. What do these grovelers know? What are they, compared with me? I am the favorite of Heaven. I have been indulged by the Eternal with an admission into His secret audience chamber! I am something more than the rest of the sons of men.” Paul cared nothing either for the frown or the smile of men. He was superior to all that, but his temptation lay within himself and hence it was the more difficult to grapple with.

It may be, Brethren, that some of you, not having revelations, may possess a something within yourselves—a deep experience, a secret penetration into the marrow of the Divine Word—an intimate knowledge of some portion of Divine Truth. And though you would not care about the esteem of your fellow men, or be puffed up by praise, yet this personal consciousness that you have a something that others have not—this sense of superiority to them in some things may be to you a daily stumbling block—and create in you an overweening self-esteem.

Now, let us observe that although in Paul’s particular form of it, this temptation to exaltation above measure may not be very common nowadays, yet, in some shape or other, it waylays the best of Christians. The common run of Christians—and they are very numerous—may not be tempted in this way. But the choice spirits, the elect out of the elect, the elite of the saints of God are most likely to be molested by this tendency to be exalted above measure through the abundance of gracious revelations.

Some real Christians have a constitutional tendency towards inordinate self-esteem. They never err through timidity, but they are very easily led into self-confidence. Every man loves the commendation of his fellow men—no man living is indifferent to it—

***“The proud to gain it toils on toils endure; The modest shun it but to make it sure.”***

It is vain for us to boast of not caring about it. We *do* care about it and our duty is to keep that propensity in check. He who thinks he is humble is probably the proudest man in the place. But there are some men in whom self-consciousness is so uppermost and so evidently powerful that you can see it in almost everything they do. It is their struggle, if they are Christians, to keep it down—but it will come up in the form of being very easily annoyed because they are overlooked in some good work—or in being easily irritated because they fancy that somebody is opposing them when that somebody never *thought* of them.

The too great prominence of the ego is the fault of many and the danger of all. Not a few have to battle with this all their lives and I should not wonder if they should be the persons who all their lives also will endure a thorn in the flesh. But there are others to whom the temptation comes in a more refined fashion. They have more knowledge than those among whom they dwell. I mean more Scriptural knowledge, more real*spiritual* knowledge and a deeper inward experience. And when they hear the prattle of young beginners, or listen to the fearful blunders of many would-be great saints, they cannot help smiling to themselves and, almost as naturally, they cannot help saying, “Thank God I know better than that.”

The temptation to be exalted above measure, in such a case, is near at hand. They have probably also enjoyed some success in sacred work while they have seen others idle, indifferent and consequently unsuccessful. Now, if God gives any man success in winning souls, I am certain that he will be lifted up to his own perdition unless a corresponding source of humiliation is opened at the same time. We must rejoice in spiritual success—it would be ungrateful not to do so—but we must be on our guard against boastfulness of spirit.

My dear Friend, if the Lord shall make you the spiritual parent of a score of souls, will you feel no exultation within your spirit as you shall see these arrows in the hands of a mighty man—these spiritual children of your youth? Will you feel no elevation of joy? Shall the father’s heart never leap at the sight of his offspring? We must and will rejoice, none shall hinder us of this sacred gladness! But, mark well that here will be our danger! Among the flowers of gratitude will grow the hemlock of pride! While our thoughts of thankfulness, like angels, adore the Lord, the Satan of self-exaltation will come in among them.

It is most noteworthy that all the things of which we have spoken are, none of them, justifiable grounds for boasting, if such grounds can ever be. What if a Believer should have received more Divine illuminations than his fellow? Did not the Lord give them to him? Why should he boast as if he had not *received* the favors? Have his own reason, wit and effort worked these things? There are two beggars in the street. I give one a shilling and the other a penny—shall the man who obtains the shilling be proud and glory over his companion? If I give him the larger alms, irrespective of any consideration of merit but simply because I choose to do what I will with my own, shall he boast?

Yet thus foolish are we! Generally the fondest boasting in this world is excited by accidental circumstances. If there is a boy in the school who is conceited, it is not the lad who has worked hard and long at his studies and so obtained a distinguished position—no, the young boaster is generally a youthful genius who has great readiness at his tasks and is as lazy as he is gifted! You will not often find a man assume great airs who has achieved a great invention and blessed his fellow men by a valuable discovery. But lofty is the carriage of the brainless aristocrat who owes his position to the accident of his birth! If we must glory, let us wait till we can do so legitimately—the bounties of Sovereign Grace are prostituted when they become the subjects of pride. Shall Jesus, who had all things in Himself, be lowly and shall we, who owe all to His charity, be lifted up? God forbid.

Beloved, above all things it is dangerous for a Christian to be exalted above measure, for if he is he will rob God of His Glory and this is a high crime! The Lord has said, “I will not give My Glory to another.” To give God’s Glory to graven images is bad, but to usurp it for *ourselves* is by no means better. I see no difference between the worship of a god of stone and the worship of a god of flesh. Self is as degrading an idol as Juggernaut or Kalee. God will not honor that man who retains honor for himself. The meek He will exalt, the proud He will abase. Self-exaltation is equally evil to the Church with which the man associates and the more prominent he is, the more pestilent is his sin.

Suppose Paul to have been lifted up—he would have been of small use to the Gentile Church afterwards. He would have sought *himself* and not the things of Christ! And very soon Paul would have become an object of parties and the leader of a sect—the cry of, “I am of Paul,” would have been sweet music to him and he would in all ways have encouraged those who adopted it—and a schism would have been the result. Had he been exalted above measure, he might have become a rival rather than a servant of Jesus. He might have disdained his lowly office and have aspired to lord it over God’s heritage. We might have heard of him as a right reverend father in God rather than as the servant of Jesus Christ and His Church.

It would have been bad for ungodly sinners, too, for a proud Paul would never have gone from city to city to be persecuted for preaching the Gospel. Proud preachers win not men’s hearts. He who is exalted in himself will never exalt the Savior and he who does not exalt the Savior will never win the souls of men. It would have been worst of all for the Apostle, himself, for pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. We should have had in Paul’s history an awful instance of how men may be like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, for brightness and yet may fall like Lucifer, into the blackness of darkness forever.

If God had not taken Paul in hand, the danger with which he was surrounded would have been fatal to him. To God’s Glory, to himself, to sinners, to the Gospel, to his own salvation it would have been a danger, indeed. Thus have I spoken upon the peril.

**II.**Now, secondly, let us consider THE PREVENTATIVE. Paul says, “There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.” Now, note every word here. First, he says, “There was given to me.” He reckoned his great trial to be a *gift*. It is well put. He does not say, “There was *inflicted* upon me a thorn in the flesh,” but, “There was *given* to me.” This is holy reckoning.

O child of God, among all the goods of your house, you have not one single article that is a better touch of Divine Love to you than your daily cross. You would gladly be rid of it, but you would lose your choicest treasure if it were withdrawn. Blessed be God for the crucible and the furnace! “There was given to me a thorn in the flesh,” Rich Grace bestowed the blessing. At first the Apostle may not have seen his thorn to be a gift, but afterwards, when experience had taught him patience, he came to look at that sharp, pricking, festering torment as a gift from his heavenly Father.

You, O tried one, will come to do the same one of these days. When the vessel first was launched upon the river and was about to cross the sea, it felt itself light and airy and ready to bound over the waves. It longed for a voyage across the Atlantic that it might fly like a sea bird over the crest of the billows. But suddenly, to her sorrow, the gallant ship was stopped in her career and moored close by a bank of sand and shingle and men began to cast stones and earth into her. Then the boat murmured, “What? Am I to be weighed down and sunk low in the water with a cargo of mire and dirt? What a hindrance to my speed! I thought I could fly just now like a sea bird—am I to be weighted till I am like a log?”

It was even so, for had not the vessel been thus ballasted, she had soon been wrecked and had never reached the desired haven. That ballast was a gift, a gift as much as if it had been bars of gold or ingots of silver. So your trials, your troubles and your infirmities are gifts to you, O Believers, and you must regard them as such.

The Apostle says, “There was given to me a thorn.” Note that—“a *thorn*.” If the English word expresses the exact meaning—and I think it is pretty near it—you need not be at a loss to understand the simile. A thorn is but a little thing and indicates a painful, but not a killing trial—not a huge, crushing, overwhelming affliction, but a common matter—none the less painful, however, because common and insignificant. A thorn is a sharp thing which pricks, pierces, irritates, lacerates, festers and causes endless pain and inconvenience. And yet it is almost a *secret* thing—not very apparent to anyone but the sufferer.

Paul had a secret grief somewhere, I know not where, but near his heart, continually wherever he might be, irritating him—perpetually vexing him and wounding him. A thorn, a commonplace thing such as might grow in any field and fall to any man’s lot. Thorns are plentiful enough and have been since Father Adam scattered the first handful of the seed. A thorn—nothing to make a man unbearable or give him the dignity of unusual sorrow. Some men boast about their great trials and there is something in feeling that you are a man greatly afflicted. But a *thorn* could not drive even this wretched satisfaction. It was not a sword in the bones, or a galling arrow in the loins, but only a thorn, about which little could be said.

Everyone knows, however, that a thorn is one of the most wretched intruders that can molest our foot or hand. Those pains which are despised because they are seldom fatal, are frequently the source of the most intense anguish—toothache, headache, earache—what greater miseries are known to mortals? And so with a thorn. It sounds like a nothing—“it can be easily removed with a needle”—so those say who feel it not and yet how it will fester! And if it remains in the flesh it will generate inconceivable torture. Such was Paul’s trial—a secret smarting, incessantly irritating, something—we do not know what.

It was a thorn “in the flesh“—in the flesh. He was not tempted in the *spirit*—it was in the flesh. I suppose the evil had an intimate connection with his body. Many as the leaves of autumn have been the guesses of learned men as to what Paul’s thorn in the flesh was. Almost every disease has had its advocates. I was particularly pleased to find that Rosenmuller thought it to be the gout [Brother Spurgeon suffered from severe gout]—but then other critics think it to be weak eyesight, stammering, or a hypochondriac tendency. Richard Baxter, who suffered from a very painful disorder which I need not mention, thought that the Apostle was his fellow sufferer. One Divine is of the opinion that Paul endured the earache and I generally find that each expositor has selected that particular thorn which had pierced his own bosom.

Now I believe that the Apostle did not tell us what his peculiar affliction was, that we may everyone feel that he had sympathy with us—that we may everyone believe that ours is no new grief. It was a trial mainly of the body and from the use of the term, “flesh,” rather than, “body,” it would seem that it excited in the sufferer some fleshly *temptation*. It may not be so, but still, the writer is so accustomed to associate with, “the flesh,” the idea of*sin*, that I think it no idle conjecture that some temptation which the good man considered he had effectually overcome, fell upon him by reason of his bodily ailment. It became, therefore, to him not merely a thorn in his flesh, but, “a messenger of Satan,” tempting him to an evil which he abhorred and which for many a day had been so trampled down by his nobler nature that he almost thought such a propensity extinct within him.

Then he adds, “The *messenger* of Satan.” Not Satan—it was not a great enough temptation for that. It was a “messenger of Satan”—one of Satan’s errand boys, nothing better—a suggestion from an *inferior* evil spirit. He does not set it down to the Great Master Spirit, but to a mere messenger of the Prince of Darkness. It was not intended by God that Satan should, on this occasion, come forth against Paul, for such an encounter might not have humbled him. It is a grand thing to fight Satan face to face and foot to foot—a stern joy fills a brave man’s heart when he feels that before him stands a foeman worthy of his steel!

A combat with the arch-enemy might not, therefore, have humbled Paul. But to be beset by a mean, sneaking devil—not a great, grand fiend, but a mere lackey of Hell and to be troubled and tormented by so mean an adversary—this was galling and humiliating to the last degree! It was, therefore, all the better for the purpose for which it was sent, namely to prevent his being lifted up. “What?” Paul seemed to say, “Am I to fight with such a contemptible temptation as this? Am I, who have built up the Church and seen the Lord and been caught up into the third Heaven—am I to do battle with this miserable, base, despicable propensity which I thought I had done with these 14 years ago?”

Yes, so it was, the Lord had sent “a messenger of Satan” to buffet him. And that word, “buffet.” Note that—to *cuff* him. That is it. Not to *fight* with him with the sword—that is manly, soldierly work—but to *buffet* him as masters used to cuff their slaves, or as schoolteachers box the ears of boys. Paul seems to feel the degradation of being buffeted. “I that would do battle with Satan and put on the helmet of hope, the breastplate of confidence and go forth against all the powers of Hell—am I to be *cuffed* as though I were a slave and chastened as though I were a boy? Must I be smitten by these vain and wretched temptations which even in my spiritual youth I was able to subdue?”

Every part of the process tended to lower him and it was intended to do so, lest he should be exalted above measure. You see, Brothers and Sisters, that this preventative was well adapted to work out its design, for assuredly it would recall the Apostle from ecstasies and excitements and make him feel that he was in the body after all. He said once, “Whether in the body, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell,” but when the thorn in the flesh was tearing him he soon settled that question! This made him feel he was a man, even as others. He had dreamed, perhaps, that he was growing very angelic, but now he feels intensely human. This made him feel he was only a man—though he was filled so full with God, still he was only a man—and could be filled as full with the devil, too, if deserted by Divine Grace.

This made him feel that he was a *weak* man, for he had to do battle with base temptations—temptations that seemed not worth fighting with. He had to be cuffed and buffeted in a small way, like a babe in Grace. This made him know that he was a man in danger and needed to fly to God for refuge—for here he was, ready to be exalted above measure even by Divine blessings—and ready to be provoked into sin by the mere buffetings of an evil spirit! From all this I gather that the worst trial a man may have may be the best possession he has in this world—that the messenger of Satan may be as good to him as his guardian angel!

It may be that it is well for us to be buffeted of Satan as ever it was to be caressed of the Lord Himself! It may be essential to our soul’s salvation that we should do business not only on deep waters, but on waters that cast up mire and dirt. The worst form of trial may, nevertheless, be our best present portion. I perceive, also, that the worst and deepest experience may only be the necessary complement of the highest and the noblest. I mean it may be necessary that if we are lifted up we should be cast down. It may only be part and parcel of the cry, “Nearer my God to You, nearer to You” that we should have to groan out, also, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The two fit into each other like the pieces of a puzzle—they rise and fall like the scales of a balance—and without its fellow, either of them might be ruinous to us.

Learn, also, that we must never envy other saints. If we hear Paul speak of his visions, let us recollect his thorn in the flesh. If we meet with a Brother who rejoices abundantly and whom God owns and blesses, let us not conclude that his pathway is all smooth. His roses have their thorns, his bees their stings. As for ourselves, let us never wish to be without our daily cross. The kite broke away from its string and instead of mounting to the stars it descended into the mire. The river grew weary of its restraining banks and longed to burst them, that it might rush on in the wild joy of freedom—down went the embankments, the river became a flood—and carried destruction and desolation wherever it rushed.

Unleash the coursers of the sun, and, lo, the earth is burned! Unbind the girdle of the elements and chaos reigns! Let us never desire to be rid of those restraints which God has seen fit to lay upon us—they are more necessary than we have ever dreamed of. Remember how the vine, when bound to the stake which upheld it, judged itself a martyr and longed to be free—but when it saw the wild vine at its feet, rotting in the dampness and pining amidst the heats and producing no fruit—it felt how necessary were its bonds if its clusters were ever to ripen. Be content, dear Brothers and Sisters, to keep the thorn in the flesh if it saves you from being exalted above measure!

**III.**THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THIS THORN UPON PAUL. First—it drove him to his knees. “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice.” Anything is a blessing which makes us pray. This thorn compelled Paul to cry unto God and, having commenced to pray, he resorted to prayer again and again. “I besought the Lord thrice.” It may be that this was the exact number of his special prayers on that point—it may, however, only intimate that he *often* cried to God for deliverance from this trouble. Yes, we may be lax in prayer when all things flow with even current, but we multiply prayers when trials increase.

In this way Paul was kept from being proud. The revelations now seemed forgotten, for the thorn in the flesh was the more prominent thing of the two. Now he would not speak about visions and could not, for, when his tongue was tempted to move upon that subject, the thorn began to prick his side again. A man does not need to tell pretty stories when his head is aching or when sharp pains are goading him. Paul was not allowed to dazzle himself with the brightness which God had set before him. His thoughts were turned in another direction, yes, blessedly turned to the Mercy Seat, where he could get no evil but must derive much profit.

He continued to pray till at last he received for an answer not the removal of the thorn, but the assurance, “My Grace is sufficient for you.” God will always honor our prayers. He will either pay us in silver or in gold—and sometimes it is a golden answer to prayer to deny us our request and give us the very opposite of what we seek! If you were to tell your child that you would grant him anything he asked for, you would not intend by that that you would give him a poisonous drug if someone should delude him into the idea that it would be useful to him. You would mean that you would give your child all that was really good for him.

God, therefore, knowing that this thorn in the flesh was a sacred medicine to Paul, would not take it away, even though most urgently requested to do so. Well does Ralph Erskine say of prayer—

***“I’m heard when answered soon or late,  
Yes, heard when I no answer get.  
Most kindly answered when refused  
And treated well when harshly used.”***

So, though refused, Paul was answered for he got something *better* than the taking away of the thorn in the flesh—the result was that the Grace given him enabled him to bear the thorn and lifted him right above it—till he even rejoiced and gloried to think that he was permitted so to suffer. “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

This is a grand thing! Suppose any person here is very poor and he has prayed to the Lord many a time to raise him above need and at last God has said, “My Grace is sufficient for you”? What more can he need? My dear Brother, my dear Sister, rejoice in poverty and thank God that you are poor! If the Lord is the better glorified thereby, be grateful for your low estate and say, “I have the honor to be permitted to glorify God in poverty.” Perhaps it may be you are the subject of a painful bodily infirmity and you have prayed to have it removed—yet the Lord knows that your infirmity is for His glory and your good. Well, when He says, “My Grace is sufficient for you,” accept and bear the trial not only with resignation but with acquiescence! Wish not to change your estate. Your heavenly Father knows best!

**IV.**Now lastly, THE PERMANENT RESULT of this preventative upon Paul. For the present you see it kept him from being exalted, by making him pray and by leading him to receive more Grace—but *permanently* the remedy was very successful, for through the power of the Holy Spirit it kept him always humble. This thorn in the flesh made him humble in reference to his visions, for he became silent about them. Fourteen long years rolled away and the Apostle never told anybody that he had been caught up into the third Heaven.

I gather from the way in which he puts it here that he never mentioned it to a soul. This was singular. Why, if I were caught up into the third Heaven I should tell you of it the first time I had the chance of addressing you! And I guarantee that most here would not be long before they would impart to their friends the blessed secret. The thorn in the flesh must have had a powerful effect upon the Apostle’s mind when it led him to wrap up his treasure in his bosom and go through the world, nobody being any the wiser for all that he had seen. He was a humble man, indeed.

When he did tell it, it was dragged out of him. He told it for a purpose. It was only because the Corinthians had denied his Apostleship, and said, “What does he know concerning Divine things?” that he felt bound to vindicate his character—otherwise he would not have told it. Notice how modestly he speaks of it—in such a way that it does not leave the impression on your mind that he was an eminently honored man through receiving the revelation. The impression received, rather, is how weak it was of Paul to be exalted above measure and how gracious it was of God to give him the thorn in the flesh to keep him where he should be!

Observe that his way of telling the story is modest in its very form but it is especially humble in its spirit, for he takes us off from the idea of how gloriously God revealed Himself to Paul and makes us rather look at the weakness of the recipient of the revelation than at the great honor conferred by the revelation itself. It is no small matter when God sends a thorn in the flesh and it answers its end, for in some cases it does not. Without the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit thorns produce *evil* rather than good.

In many people their thorn in the flesh does not appear to have fulfilled any admirable design at all—it has created another vice instead of removing a temptation. We have known some whose poverty has made them envious. We have known others whose sickness has rendered them impatient and petulant and others, again, whose personal infirmity has rendered them perpetually fretful and rebellious against God. O, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, let us labor against this with all our might and if God has been pleased to put a fetter upon us in any shape or fashion, let us ask Him not to allow us to make this the occasion for fresh folly, but, on the contrary, to bear the rod and learn its lessons! Pray that when we are afflicted we may grow in Grace and in likeness to our Lord Jesus and so bring more honor to His name.

Does not this teach us all the solemn duty of being content whatever our lot may be—content without the revelation if we are without the thorn—content with the thorn if we have the revelation—content without either revelation or thorn so long as we may but have a humble hope in Jesus Christ our Savior? O, Beloved, what a happy people God’s people are and ought to be when everything turns for their good—when even the thorn that was a curse becomes to them a blessing—and out of the lion comes forth honey!

If the thorn is a blessing, what must the blessing itself, be? If the smarts of earth heal us, what will the joys of Heaven do for us? Let us be glad! Ours is a happy portion! Let us go on our way rejoicing that we are favored to possess Divine life and shoulder our cross cheerfully, for we shall soon, (ah, how soon!), wear our crown.

The last thought of all is, what a sad thing it must be not to be a Believer in Jesus Christ because thorns we *shall* have if we are not in Christ, but those thorns will not be blessings to us. I understand drinking bitter medicine if it is to make me well. But who would drink wormwood and gall with no good result to follow? I can understand toiling if a wage is in prospect, but I cannot see the sense of toiling when there is no reward for it. Now, you who love not God, your lives are not all flowers and sunshine. It is not all music and dancing with you now. I know you have your cares and troubles. You have your thorns in the flesh and perhaps a great many of them—and you have no Savior to run to.

You are like a ship in a storm and there is no harbor for you. You are as birds driven before the wind and you have no nests in which to shelter but must be driven forever before the blast of Jehovah’s wrath. Consider this, I pray you—meditate upon your condition and prospects and when you have done so, may your heart cry out—“I would gladly have God to be my Friend!” Remember that He who sent Paul thorns for his good once wore a crown of thorns Himself for the salvation of sinners!

And if you will come and bow before Him as He wears that diadem and trust Him as the Son of God made flesh for sinners and bleeding and dying for them, you shall be saved this morning! Your sins, which are many, shall be forgiven you! And though I cannot promise you that you shall be without thorns as you live, I can promise you that your thorns shall be removed—they shall become to you a rich blessing which will be better, still. There is one thorn you shall never have if you believe in Jesus—the thorn of unforgiven sin—the fear of the wrath to come! You shall have the peace of God which passes understanding which shall keep your heart and mind by Christ Jesus. O, that some would trust in Jesus this morning! Go, Brothers and Sisters, and pray it may be so. The Lord grant it, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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STRENGTHENING WORDS FROM THE SAVIOR’S LIPS  
NO. 1287

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL, 2, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“And He said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of  
Christ may rest upon me.”  
2 Corinthians 12:9.~~***

PAUL, when buffeted by the messenger of Satan, addressed his prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ and not, as he usually did, to the heavenly Father. This is a somewhat remarkable fact, but it is clear from the passage before us. He says, “For this thing I besought *the Lord* thrice,” and that *the Lord*, here, is the Lord Jesus is pretty clear from the fact that he says in the next verse, “that the power *of Christ* may rest upon me.” His prayer was not directed to God, absolutely considered, nor does he speak of the power of *God*, but his prayer was directed to the Lord Jesus Christ and it was the power of the Lord Jesus Christ which he desired to rest upon him. It is an Infallible proof of our Lord’s divinity, that He may be addressed in prayer! And this is one instance, with several others, which show us that we may legitimately present our petitions, not only to the ever-blessed Father, but also to His Son Jesus Christ.

There seems to me to be a peculiar fitness in a prayer to Jesus when the temptation came from a messenger of Satan, because the Lord Jesus has endured the same temptation, Himself, and knows how to succor them that are tempted. Moreover, He has come to earth to destroy the works of the devil. In His lifetime He manifested peculiar power over unclean spirits and was constantly casting them out from those whom they tormented. It was one of His few rejoicing notes, “I saw Satan, like lightning, fall from Heaven.” It was by the name of Jesus that devils were expelled after Christ had risen into Glory. “Jesus I know,” said the spirits whom the sons of Sceva endeavored in vain to exorcise.

Devils felt the power of Jesus and, therefore, it was wise and natural that the Apostle Paul should, when buffeted of Satan, turn to Jesus and ask Him to bid the evil spirit depart from him. Is it not a little remarkable, also, that this prayer was not only addressed to Jesus, but was offered in much the same manner as the prayer of our Lord in the Garden? The Apostle prayed three times, even as our Lord did when He, too, was sorely buffeted by the powers of darkness. Paul’s thrice-repeated cry was intensely earnest, for he, “*besought*” the Lord thrice.

And Paul, singularly enough, met with very much the same answer as his Master, for our Lord was not permitted to put aside the cup, (it could not pass away from Him unless He drank it), but an angel appeared unto

Him strengthening Him. And so, in Paul’s case, the trial was not taken away from him, but he was strengthened by kind, assuring words and by being led to see that God would be glorified by his enduring the trial. I see, then, the Lord Jesus reflected in His servant Paul as in a mirror! I hear the three-times repeated prayer, I mark the cup standing unremoved and I see the strength imparted in the midst of weakness!

Our text fell from the lips of Jesus Christ, Himself, and if anything could make its language more sweet than it is in itself, it would be this fact, that He, Himself, delivered the words to His chosen Apostle. It is Jesus who says, in the words of the text, “*My* Grace is sufficient for you, *My* strength is made perfect in weakness.” This Truth of God casts a soft, mellow light upon the words, helps us to interpret them and enables us to derive all the greater comfort from them. When Jesus speaks, a special charm surrounds each syllable.

The exact tense of the Greek words are not easy to translate into English. The Apostle does not merely tell us that his Lord said these words to him 14 years ago, but the tense connects the past with the present, as if he felt that the answer was not simply something past, but something which continued with him in its consoling power. The echoes of what his Lord had said were still sounding through his soul! I should not miss the Apostle’s meaning if I read it, “He has been saying to me, ‘My strength is sufficient for you.’” The words had an abiding effect upon the Apostle’s mind, not merely for the time reconciling him to the particular trouble which had afflicted him, but cheering him for all the rest of his life— strengthening him in all future trials to glory in his infirmities and render praise to God.

It is a sweet thing to have a text of Scripture laid home to the heart for present uses, but when God the Holy Spirit so applies a promise that it abides in the heart for the term of one’s natural life, then are we favored, indeed! Elijah’s meat gave him strength for 40 days, but what is that meat which endures unto life eternal? What bread must that be which feeds me through the whole period of my pilgrimage? Here, then, we have before us food which Jesus Himself provides, so nutritive that His Spirit can cause us to remember the feast to our dying day! O Lord, feed us, now, and give us Grace to inwardly digest your gracious Word.

With this preface, which I beg you to remember during the discourse, since it indicates my line of thought, we now come to the text itself—a mass of diamonds, bright and precious! In the text we notice three things—first, *Grace all-sufficient.* Secondly, *strength perfected.* And, thirdly, *power indwelling*.

**I.** In the text, even the most superficial observer notices a promise of GRACE ALL-SUFFICIENT. In the case of our Lord Jesus, the Spirit so rested upon Him as to be sufficient for Him at all times. Never did the Spirit of God fail to uphold the Man, Christ Jesus, under the most arduous labors, the most terrible temptations and the most bitter suffering. Therefore He completed the work which His Father gave Him to do and in death He was able to exclaim, “It is finished.” The Lord, here, assures His chosen servant that it should be the same with him—“My Grace,” said He, “is sufficient for you.”

To bring out the full meaning of these few words, I will give you four readings of them. The first is a strictly grammatical one and is the first sense which they bear. Taking the word translated, *Grace*, to mean favor or love—for that, also, is included in the word charts—how does the passage run? “My favor is sufficient for you.” Do not ask to be rid of your trouble, do not ask to have ease, comfort, or any other form of happiness—My favor is enough for you. Or, as good Dr. Dodge reads it, “*My Love is enough for you*.” “If you have little else that you desire, yet surely it is enough that you are My favored one, a chosen subject of My Grace. My love is enough for you.”

What a delicious expression! You do not need an explanation. Repeat the words to yourselves and even now conceive that the Well-Beloved looks down on you, and whispers, “My love is enough for you.” If you have been asking Him three times to deliver you from your present affliction, hear Him reply, “Why do you need to ask Me anymore? My love is enough for you.” What do you say to that? Do you not answer, “Yes, Lord, indeed it is. If I am poor, if You will me to be poor, I am content to be severely tried, for Your love is enough for me. If I am sick, so long as You will come and visit me and reveal Your heart to me, I am satisfied, for Your love is enough for me. If I am persecuted, cast out and forsaken, cheerfully will I bear it, if a sense of Your love sustains me, for Your love is enough for me. Yes, and if I should be left so alone as to have no one to care for me in the whole world. If my father and my mother should forsake me and every friend should prove a Judas—‘Your love is enough for me.’”

Do you catch the meaning, and do you see how Paul must have been comforted by it if he understood it in this primary and most natural sense? “O Paul, it is sufficient for you that I have made you to be a chosen vessel to bear My name among the Gentiles. It is enough for you that I have loved you from before the foundation of the world, that I redeemed you with My precious blood, that I called you when you were a blasphemer and injurious, that I changed your heart and made you love Me and that I have kept you to this day and will keep you, even, to the end by My inimitable love. My love is enough for you. Ask not to be set free from this buffeting. Ask not to be delivered from weakness and trial, for these will enable you the better to enjoy My favor and that is enough for you.”

We will now read our text another way, keeping to our authorized version, but throwing the stress on the first word—“*My*Grace is sufficient for you.” What Grace is this? Note who it is that promises. It is Jesus who speaks, therefore it is *mediatorial* Grace, the Grace given to Jesus Christ as the Covenant Head of His people, which is here intended. Think of it a minute. It is the Head speaking to the member and declaring that His Grace is enough for the whole body. The anointing oil has been poured upon the Head that it may go down the beard and descend to the garments and, lo, one poor member of the body is mourning and complaining, for it is fearful of being omitted in the plenteous anointing. But the

Head comforts it by saying, “*My*anointing is enough for you, since it is enough for all My members.”

It is the Head, Christ, in whom all fullness dwells, speaking to one of the members of His mystical body and saying, “The Grace which God has given to Me without measure on behalf of all the members of My body is sufficient for you as well as for the rest of them.” Beloved, seize the thought! The Lord has given to Christ all that the whole company of His people can possibly need—no, more than that—for, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” And of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace, and from that fullness we hope, continually, to draw forevermore. This is the Grace which is sufficient for us!

It greatly tends to help faith when you can see the relation that exists between the Redeemer and yourself, for Jesus is*your* Covenant Head, and God has been pleased to give Himself and all His infinite riches to the Lord Jesus Christ as your federal Representative. And as your Covenant Head, the Lord Jesus assures you that the stores laid up in Him on your behalf are sufficient for you. Can you limit the mediatorial power of Christ? Don’t you know that God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him? Be you, then, assured that Christ’s Grace is sufficient for you!

I will read the text again and this time put the stress in the center. “My Grace *is sufficient* for you.” It is *now* sufficient. You are buffeted by this evil spirit, but My Grace is sufficient for your present need. Paul, you have been beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked and in perils often—and in all these My Grace has been sufficient—and now I tell you this present trouble, though it is somewhat different in shape from the rest, is, nevertheless such as I am well able to meet. My Grace is sufficient for you in this, also.

The nearness of an object increases its apparent bulk and so the affliction under which we are at *present* laboring seems greater than any we have known before. Past trials appear, when we have passed them, to have been small things compared with present troubles and, therefore, the difficulty is to see the sufficiency of Grace for present and pressing afflictions. It is easy to believe in Grace for the past and the future, but to rest in it for the *immediate* necessity is true faith. Believer, it is *now* that Grace is sufficient! Even at this moment it *is*enough for you. Do not say this is a new trouble, or if you do say it, remember the Grace of God is always new!

Do not complain that some strange thing has happened to you, or if you do, remember blessings are provided in the Grace of God to meet your strange difficulties. Tremble not because the thorn in the flesh is so mysterious, for Grace is mysterious, too, and so mystery shall be met by mystery. At this moment and at all moments which shall ever occur between now and Glory, the Grace of God will be sufficient for you! This sufficiency is declared without any limiting words and, therefore, I understand the passage to mean that the Grace of our Lord Jesus is sufficient to uphold you, sufficient to strengthen you, sufficient to comfort you, sufficient to make your trouble useful to you, sufficient to enable you to triumph over it, sufficient to bring you out of it, sufficient to bring you out of 10,000 like it, sufficient to bring you home to Heaven!

Whatever would be good for you, Christ’s Grace is sufficient to bestow! Whatever would harm you, His Grace is sufficient to avert! Whatever you desire, His Grace is sufficient to give you if it is good for you. Whatever you would avoid, His Grace can shield you from it if so His wisdom shall dictate. O child of God, I wish it were possible to put into words this allsufficiency, but it is not. Let me retract my speech—I am glad that it *cannot* be put into words, for if so, it would be *finite.* But since we never can express it, glory be to God, it is inexhaustible and our demands upon it can never be too great! Here let me press upon you the pleasing duty of taking home the promise, personally, at this moment, for no Believer here need be under any fear, since for him, also, at this very instant, the Grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient!

In the last reading which I will give, I shall lay the emphasis upon the first and the last words—“*My*Grace is sufficient for *you*.” I have often read in Scripture of the holy laughter of Abraham, when he fell upon his face and laughed. But I do not know that I ever experienced that laughter till a few evenings ago, when this text came home to me with such sacred power as literally to cause me to laugh! I had been looking it through— looking at its original meaning and trying to fathom it, till at last I got hold of it this way—“*My*Grace,” says Jesus, “is sufficient for *you*,” and it looked almost as if it were meant to *ridicule my unbelief*! For surely the Grace of such a One as my Lord Jesus is, indeed, sufficient for so insignificant a being as I am!

It seemed to me as if some tiny fish, being very thirsty, was troubled with fear of drinking the river dry, and Father Thames said to him, “Poor little fish, my stream is sufficient for you.” I should think it is, and inconceivably more! My Lord seemed to say to me, “Poor little creature that you are, remember what Grace there is in Me and believe that it is all yours. Surely it is sufficient for you.” I replied, “Ah, my Lord, it is, indeed.” Put one mouse down in all the granaries of Egypt, when they were the fullest after seven years of plenty, and imagine that one mouse complaining that it might die of famine. “Cheer up,” says Pharaoh, “poor mouse, my granaries are sufficient for you.” Imagine a man standing on a mountain and saying, “I breathe so many cubic feet of air in a year. I am afraid that I shall ultimately inhale all the oxygen which surrounds the globe.”

Surely the earth on which the man would stand might reply, “My atmosphere is sufficient for you.” I should think it! Let him fill his lungs as full as ever he can, he will never breathe all the oxygen, nor will the fish drink up all the river, nor the mouse eat up all the stores in the granaries of Egypt! Does it not make unbelief seem altogether ridiculous, so that you laugh it out of the house and say, “Never come this way again, for with a mediatorial fullness to go to, with such a Redeemer to rest in, how dare I, for a moment, think that my needs cannot be supplied?” Our great Lord feeds all the fish of the sea and the birds of the air—and the cattle on the hills, and guides the stars, and upholds all things by the power of His hand—how, then, can we be straitened for supplies, or be destitute of

help?

If our needs were a thousand times larger than they are, they would not approach the vastness of His power to provide. The Father has committed all things into His hands. Doubt Him no more! Listen, and let Him speak to you—“*My*Grace is sufficient for *you*. What if you have little Grace, yet I have much—it is My Grace you have to look to, not your own, and My Grace will surely be sufficient for you.”

John Bunyan has the following passage which exactly expresses what I, myself, have experienced. He says that he was full of sadness and terror, but suddenly these words broke in upon him with great power, and three times together the words sounded in his ears, “My Grace is sufficient for you; My Grace is sufficient for you; My Grace is sufficient for you.” And “Oh! I thought,” says he, “that every word was a mighty word unto me, as, *‘My*’ and, *‘Grace*’ and, *‘sufficien*t’ and*‘for you.’* They were, then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others are.”

He who knows, like the bee, how to suck honey from flowers, may well linger over each one of these words and drink in unutterable content— ***“Have we forgot the Almighty name  
That formed the earth and sea?  
And can an all-creating arm  
Grow weary or decay?  
Treasures of everlasting might***

***In our Jehovah dwell!  
He gives the conquest to the weak,  
And treads their foes to Hell.  
Mere mortal power shall fade and die,  
And youthful vigor cease—  
But we that wait upon the Lord  
Shall feel our strength increase.”***

**II.** Secondly, in the text we have STRENGTH PERFECTED—“For My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Now, running the parallel, still between Jesus and Paul, remember, Beloved, that it was so with our Lord Jesus Christ. He was strong as to His Deity—in Him dwelt all strength, for He is the mighty God—but how was His strength as Mediator made perfect? The Scripture says, “Perfect through suffering.” That is to say, the strength of Christ to save His people would never have been perfected if He had not taken upon Himself the weakness of human nature and if He had not, in that feeble nature, descended lower and lower in weakness. Had he saved Himself, He could not have saved us. But His giving up of all that He had made Him rich towards us. And His putting on of weakness made Him strong to redeem us.

O Incarnate God, You could not redeem till You were swaddled as a Babe in Bethlehem! No, You could not redeem till You were made to bear a Cross like a felon! No, You could not perfect redemption till You did hang, a ghastly corpse, upon a gallows! No, it was even essential that You should be laid in the grave! Your work was not fulfilled till three days and nights You did abide in the heart of the earth among the dead! The Lord Jesus could say—“My strength is made perfect in weakness.” This was to be realized in Paul and is to be fulfilled in all the saints. Of course the strength of God is always perfect—we do not understand that anything is necessary to make perfect the Divine power—but the words fell from the lips of Jesus as our Mediator and Representative—and it is *His* strength which is made perfect in weakness.

In us this is true, first, because *the power of Jesus can only be perfectly revealed in His people by bearing them up, keeping them and sustaining them when they are in trouble*. Who knows the perfection of the strength of God till he sees how God can make poor puny creatures strong? Yonder is a timid, sickly woman who lives a life of agony. Almost every breath is a spasm and every pulse a pang. Each member of her body is subject to tortures of which others scarcely dream. But look at her cheerful patience! As much as possible, she conceals her pain that she may not distress others. You hear no mutter of complaint, but oftentimes she utters words as cheery as those which fall from persons in robust health. And when she *must* tell of her afflictions, she always speaks of them in such a tone that you feel she has accepted them at the Lord’s hands with complete resignation and is willing to bear them as many years as the Lord may appoint.

I do not wonder when strong men say strong things, but I have often marveled when I have heard such heroic sentences from the weak and trembling. To hear the sorrowing comfort others when you would think *they* needed comfort, themselves! To mark their cheerfulness when, if you and I suffered half as much, we should have sunk to the earth—this is worthy of note! God’s strength is perfectly revealed in the trials of the weak. When you see a man of God brought into poverty and yet, in that poverty, never repining. When you hear his character assailed by slander and yet he stands unmoved, like a rock amidst the waves. When you see the gracious man persecuted and driven from home and country for Christ’s sake and yet he takes, joyfully, the spoiling of his goods and banishment and disgrace—then the strength of God is made perfect in the midst of weakness!

While the man of God suffers and is under necessities, distresses and infirmities, then it is that the power of God is seen. It was when tiny creatures made Pharaoh tremble that his magicians said, “This is the finger of God,” and evermore God’s greatest Glory comes from things weak and despised. This is equally true to the man, himself. *God’s strength is made perfect to the saint’s own apprehension when he is weak*. Brothers, if you have prospered in business all your lives and have had an easy path of it, I will tell you something—you do not know much about the strength of God. If you have been healthy all your lives and never suffered. If your families have never been visited by bereavements and if your spirits have never been cast down, you do not know much about the strength of God.

You may have read about it in books and it is well you should! You may have seen it in others and observation is useful. But a grain of experience is worth a pound of observation and you can only get knowledge of the power of God by an *experimental* acquaintance with your own weakness— and you will not be likely to get that except as you are led along the thorny, flinty way which most of God’s saints have to travel—which is described by the word, “tribulation.” Great tribulation brings out the great strength of God! If you never feel inward conflicts and sinking of soul, you

do not know much of the upholding power of God. But if you go down, down, into the depths of soul-anguish till the deep threatens to shut her mouth upon you—and then the Lord rides upon a cherub and does fly, yes, rides upon the wings of the wind and delivers your soul and catches you away to the third Heaven of delight—*then* you perceive the majesty of Divine Grace! Oh, there must be the weakness of man felt, recognized and mourned over, or else the strength of the Son of God will never be perfected in us!

Thus have I given you two meanings of the text. Others see the strength of God in our weakness and we, ourselves, discover it when our weakness is most manifest. I think the term, “made perfect,” also means *achieves its purpose*. Read it thus—“For My strength fully achieves its design in weakness.” Brothers and Sisters, God has not done for us what He means to do unless we have felt our own weaknesses. As long as a portion of strength remains, we are but partially sanctified. When our Lord has accomplished in us what He is aiming, the result will be to empty us out and to make us discover the utter vanity of *self*.

If the Lord ever takes you, like a dish, and turns you upside down and wipes you right out and sets you away on a shelf, *then* you will feel what He *means* you to feel—that is to say, you will feel as if you were waiting there for the Lord to take you down and use you and then, be sure, He will come, in due time, and use you for His honorable purposes, laying meat upon you for His hungry people and making you an ornament at His banquets of love. If you feel yourself to be a full dish, I will tell you what there is in you—you hold nothing but the slop and filthiness of depraved nature. The Lord will never use you till all that is poured out and you are wiped quite clean and put away with nothing of yourself remaining in you, wherein you may rejoice!

All the saints who are ready to go to Heaven feel themselves to be less than the least. But those professors who are, by no means, ready for Glory are highly self conscious and feel that there is a great deal in them which is very commendable. Those who enter Heaven carry nothing of self with them, neither will any of us enter there so long as we talk proudly of our attainments. Those who claim to possess “the higher life” have been heard to boast of their purity, but those who enjoy the highest life in Glory cry, “Not unto us! Not unto us be glory!” It is a mark of fitness for Heaven when self is dead and Grace, alone, reigns. The strength of God is never perfected till our *weakness* is perfected. When our weakness is consciously and thoroughly felt, then the strength of God has done its work in us.

There is yet another meaning. *The strength of God is most perfected or most glorified by its using our weaknesses*. Suppose the world had been converted to Christ by 12 emperors? The establishment of Christianity might have been readily accounted for without glorifying God. Imagine that Christianity had been forced upon men with the stern arguments which Mohammed placed in the hands of his first disciples—the glory would have redounded to human courage and not to the love of God. We wonder not that the gods of the heathen were dashed to the ground when the scimitars were so sharp and were wielded by such ferocious warriors. But when we know that 12 humble fishermen, without arms or armor, without patronage or prestige, without science or sophistry overthrew colossal systems of error and set up the Cross of Christ in their place, we adoringly exclaim, “This is the finger of God!”

And so, the other day, when the Lord took a consecrated cobbler and sent him out to India, whatever work was done by William Carey was evidently seen to be of the Lord! If societies would send out distinguished scholars, it is thought by some that in all probability heathen intelligence would recognize abilities and genius and respect them. And, convinced by reasoning and influenced by talent, they would bow before superior Western culture! Yes, and so they would be converted by a conversion in which the Lord would not be glorified, but proud man would have the praise. In what way would that increase the Glory of God?

God uses weakness rather than strength and so His power is revealed. All that you have that is strong, my Brothers and Sisters, will be of small service in this matter, for the Lord will not exalt your strength and make you proud of your attainments. Your weakness and infirmities, in all probability, the Lord will see fit to use, for He delights to take the base things and the things that are despised and use them to achieve His purposes—that the excellency of the power may be all His own.

Let me notice, last of all, on this point, that all history shows that the *great strength of God has always been displayed and perpetuated in human weakness*. Brothers, what made Christ so strong? Was it not that He condescended to be so weak? And how did He win His victory? By His patience, by His suffering—that is to say, by those things wherein His human *weakness* appeared. Now, look at Christ mystical, namely, the Church. How has His Church ever been strong? Of course you reply, “By the strength of God!” I know it—but what has brought forth the strength of God so that it has been undeniably *manifest* and, consequently, operative upon mankind? Has it been the strength of the Church? No, but the *weakness* of the Church, for when men have seen Believers suffer and die, it is *then* that they have beheld the strength of God in His people!

The sufferings of the saints have been the victories of the Truth of God! The martyrs led the van! They suffered most and, consequently, are the champions of the elect army. The weakness which allowed of their being destitute, afflicted, tormented, has been the battle-axe and the weapons of war with which the Lord has procured conquest for the Gospel. When one of the pastors of a Church in London was put to death in Smithfield one early morning, before the frost was melted by the sun, there stood around the stake a number of young people who had been accustomed to listen to his teachings. Strange thing for young Believers to be up so very early to see their pastor burned to death! What do you think they were there for?

No idle curiosity could have brought them to such a spectacle! It is written that they went there *to learn the way*. Do you see? They saw him burn and came there with that intention—to learn the way to die for Christ, themselves! The church of Rome could do nothing with a people who, from the weakness which compelled them to suffer, gathered

strength to die triumphantly! The weakness of the martyr, as he suffered, revealed the strength of God in him—which held him fast to his principles while he was gradually consumed by the cruel flames. Had not men been poor worms, capable of being crushed and capable of agonizing the upholding Grace of God, they could never have been so conspicuously revealed. Blessed be the name of the Almighty! He displays His might in our weakness even as He shone forth in the midst of the burning bush.

He spoke, and lo, the heavens and the earth stood forth. A marvelous creation! But then there was nothing to oppose the fiat of His power—His all-powerful Word was not hampered by using weak instrumentalities. How, then, is God to show yet greater power? How shall Omnipotence or all kinds of power be seen? Why, Brothers and Sisters, He will not use His unfettered Word alone, but He will clog and encumber it by using infirm and weak instruments! He will, in the Kingdom of Grace, work by men compassed with infirmities—and achieve His purposes by agencies, in themselves, unfit for His ends—and then His power will be doubly seen!

The celebrated Quentin Matsys had to make a well-cover in iron one morning. He was a master in the art of fashioning the metal and could shape it as though it were so much wax. His fellow workmen were jealous and, therefore, they took from him the proper tools. And yet with his hammer he produced a matchless work of art! So the Lord, with instruments which lend Him no aid, but rather *hinder* Him, does greater works of Grace to His own Glory and honor. He takes us poor *nothings* who are weak as water and uses us to accomplish His designs! And this is His almightiness gloriously displayed!

Omnipotence, when it does what it wills by its bare Word is one thing, but when it takes weakness into league with it and performs its powerful deeds by means of *weakness*, it is quite another and by the weakness it doubly manifests itself.

**III.** The most blessed part of the text remains—POWER INDWELLING. Dr. Adam Clarke here furnishes us, on the last part of our text, a most useful observation, “Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Now mark, the Greek word here used, interpreted, “rest,” is the same word employed by John, when he says, “The Word was made flesh and,” as the Greek runs, “*tabernacled* among us and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, all of Grace and Truth.”

The passage before us means just this, “I glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may tabernacle in me.” Just as the Shekinah light dwelt in the tent in the wilderness beneath the rough badger skins, so I glory to be a poor frail tent and tabernacle, that the Shekinah of Jesus Christ may dwell in my soul. Do you catch the thought? Is it not full of beauty? See, then, what he means—First, he puts the power of Christ in opposition to his own power because if he is not weak, then he has strength of his own. If, then, what he does is done by his own strength, there is no room for Christ’s strength. That is clear, but if his own power is gone, there is space for the power of Christ. If my life is sustained by my own strength and my good works are done in my own strength, then there is no room for Christ’s strength. But the Apostle found that it was not so and, therefore, he said, “I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may tabernacle in me.”

But what is the power of Christ? Let the text I quoted tell you—“The Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.” What power, then, was this which Paul expected to tabernacle in him but the power of Grace and the power of truth? It must be so, because God had said, “My *Grace*is sufficient for you.” Paul catches at that promise and he cries, “this is the Truth of God and I rely upon it” and he, therefore, expects that the Grace of God and the faithfulness of God would tabernacle in him and shine forth within his soul. This is the power of Christ which he expected to rest upon him. What more could we desire?

What is the power of Christ? I answer next, it is Christly power—the kind of power which is conspicuous in the life of Jesus. There was a power in Christ peculiar to Himself, as all can see who read the New Testament—a power unique and altogether His own. You know what the power of Alexander was—it was a power to command men, inspire them with courage for great enterprises and keep them in good heart when called to endure hardships. You know what the power of Demosthenes was—it was the power of eloquence, the power to stir the patriotic Greeks, to break the fetters of the Macedonian. But what was the power of Jesus? It was power to *suffer*, power to be made *nothing* of, power to *descend* to the very depths for love of God and love of men. There lay His power—in those five conquering wounds, in that majestic mournful face, more marred than that of any man—in that great agonizing heart which sent forth sweat of blood when men were to be pleaded for before the Lord.

Love and patience were Christ’s power! And even now these subdue the hearts of men and make Jesus the Sufferer to be Jesus the King. Therefore Paul says, “I glory in my infirmities that this same power may tabernacle in me. I triumph in weakness, in reproaches, in poverty, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake, that I may suffer, humble myself, be obedient and prove my love to God even as Jesus did. When I am weak then am I strong.” He meant strong to prove his love by enduring the weaknesses and afflictions which he accepted for his Master’s sake. What was this power of Christ? I answer again, it was a part of the “all power” which our Lord declared was given unto Him in Heaven and in earth—“Go you, therefore, and teach all nations.”

Paul desired to have that power living in himself, for he knew right well that if he had to “go and teach all nations” he would have to suffer in so doing. And so he takes the suffering cheerfully, that he might have the power! Even as beneath the badger skins of the tabernacle, the Glory of the Lord shone forth, so the mighty converting power of Christ which dwelt in Paul was gloriously revealed while he endured reproaches and persecutions, sufferings and death for Jesus’ sake. What was Christ’s power again? I answer, to complete my sermon, His power lay in His weakness, His humiliation, His dependence upon God, His faith in God, His self-abnegation, His perfect consecration to the Father. And Paul says that he was made to suffer and to be weak, that this same power to become nothing, that God might be glorified, might rest in him!

I have done when I say just this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, go home and never ask the Lord to make you strong in yourselves! Never ask Him to make you anybody or anything, but be content to be nothing and nobody! Next, ask that His power may have room in you and that all those who come near you may see what God can do by nothings and nobodies! Live with this desire, to glorify God! Sometimes when God honors us in His service, a great, “I” stands in the Lord’s way. Tremble when you see a poor, weak preacher made useful in converting souls—then all the papers and magazines begin to blaze his name abroad! And silly Christians—for there are plenty of them—begin to talk him up as if he were a demigod and say such great things about him and describe him as wise, eloquent and great.

Thus they do all they can to *ruin* the good Brother! If the man is sensible, he will say, “Get you behind me, Satan, for you smell not of the things that are of God” and, if God gives him great Grace, he will retire more and more into the background and lie lower and lower before his God. But, if you once get a man to feel himself to be great and good, either a fall will happen, or else the power of God will withdraw from him—or in some other way the Lord will make His people feel that His Glory He will not give to another.

The best of men are flesh and blood and they have no power except as God lends them power. And He will make them know and feel this. Therefore, neither exalt others nor exalt yourselves, but beseech the Lord to make and keep you weakness itself, that in you, His power may be displayed. God grant it may be so, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 11:5-24; 12:1-9.  
*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—909, 681, 745.***

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A WAFER OF HONEY  
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A SERMON  
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***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
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***~~“My Grace is sufficient for you.”  
2 Corinthians 12:9.~~***

LET no Christian imagine that he will ever have immunity from trouble while he continues in the body. Should you be favored with visions and Revelations of the Lord, caught up to the third Heaven, admitted into Paradise and privileged to hear things which it were not lawful for a man to utter, conclude not that you have escaped the rod— rather expect that such high privilege will need heavy affliction to balance it! If God has given you the great sail and the prosperous wind, He will also give you the heavy ballast to keep your keel deep in the stream. Do not expect, dear Brothers and Sisters, that because you have been strengthened in the faith, you will therefore be loosened from the burden of the flesh—neither because you may have been the means of strengthening others, that, therefore, trouble will be light for you. Even into your ship the deep waters may come. Think not that it is so watertight that the billows will only dash against it. You may be called to feel heaviness—your faith may be all but staggered and your soul may have to cry out from the depths because of the slender strength you possess.

The Lord has such ways of chastising His children as to make them feel. We think, some of us, after we have suffered a certain amount of trouble, that we have been so conditioned to it we shall no longer be moved as we used to be. The Apostle Paul had been beaten with rods, tossed about in shipwrecks, yet he had suffered hunger and thirst and nakedness till he felt that, if any man had a right to glory after the flesh, he had. Still, even he found that the Lord had a way of getting at his heart and making it smart. He had thorns in the flesh, messengers of Satan that did most effectually buffet him. We, too, must have trials— briars of a kind that shall come right home to us and touch us in our bones and in our flesh.

Neither let us think, dear Friends, that even the privilege of the Mercy Seat will shield us from the rod. When chastened we run to prayer, but we shall not, therefore, escape the chastisement! Paul, an Apostle, prays. He who certainly must have understood “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man,” beseeches the Lord three times, yet the thorn in the flesh was not blunted, much less removed! He still had to suffer as he had done before. Oh, how often we think we can use the Mercy Seat for our own lust! Is not prayer too sacred a thing for us to make a selfish use of it? When God gives us the key of His storehouse and bids us take what we will, shall we use even a single promise of His Word merely to pander to our own desires and to enable us to escape from enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? If we thus misuse prayer, we may be excused for it, but we shall not be accepted in it. Even Paul is non-suited when he asks ease for the flesh. He gets no release from trouble. He gets something better, however, for the Lord says to Him, “My Grace is sufficient for you; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Thus, Beloved, we must reckon upon the adversities that are sure to befall us. “In the world you shall have tribulation.” This is one of the Divine shalls and wills. The Lord will chasten those whom He loves and His children shall suffer—you can be sure of that. It is as sure as any other thing in the world, “You *shall* have tribulation.”

**I.** To those who have proved the truth of this declaration, the text will be peculiarly sweet. THERE ARE CERTAIN SORE VEXATIONS OF SPIRIT FOR WHICH GRACE IS THE ONLY BALM. The Lord does not say, “My Providence shall protect you.” Nothing of the kind—Divine Grace is the remedy in this case and, I take it, this was because the Apostle was suffering in the very core and center of his being. There are many trials, the grief of which may be fully relieved by ordinary Providences—but these that come and wound a man to the quick—require Grace as their only effectual balm.

*Past experience of Grace is of no avail* in such a case. It is *present* Grace that is promised in the text and it is present Grace that is required. When we have sometimes been bowed down and walked in darkness, and seen no light, we have called to remembrance our song in the night and our spirit has made diligent search—but that very song has been turned into howling in the remembrance and all that we thought we felt, and thought we knew has vanished from before our eyes! I do not know how it has been with you, but there have been times with me when I could set no value upon my past experience. The devil has said it was all a delusion, my faith mere presumption, my hope mere excitement—and all my joys but the effusion of animal spirits. There will be a time when he will bid you look back and all the way will look like the Valley of the Shadow of Death. You cannot see one hopeful sign in it! And you turn over the books of experience and read them, and you think, “Well, my spot is not the spot of God’s children, and my footprints do not seem to be at all like the footprints of the flock.” I tell you, if you have ever done business in deep waters, you have found that anchors at home are of no use in a storm—and that the anchor which stood so well a year ago, if it is left at home on shore—is of no use to you now in the storm! It is present Grace, nothing but present Grace, that will do now! You have eaten all the cold meats and you have brought out from the cupboard every moldy crust you can find—and now your soul is reduced to the very last and faints within you. And now you must cry to your God in your trouble and get present Grace in this, your time of need!

And if past experience is of no use, *much less is past success*. Somebody might have touched the Apostle on the shoulder and have said, “Paul, Paul, Paul! Why must you feel the buffetings of Satan? Did you not establish the Church at Corinth, and plant churches throughout all Asia Minor? Who has served his God as faithfully as you have? Have you not been on many journeys, in perils by waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the sword, in watches and fasts? Have you not had the care of all the Churches? Has not your Master highly distinguished you and made you not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles? What multitudes of spirits are now before the Throne of God that were born, under God, through your ministry! And what thousands are still on the road who call you their spiritual father and to whom you have been as a nursing mother in the faith!” If you had said this to the Apostle, he would have replied, “Yes, sometimes this might have comforted me. If it had been a question of my Apostleship, this would have been satisfactory. If the point in hand had been a question as to whether my ministry has been acknowledged of God, this would have been decisive. But I am touched in another place, now, and the wound is so deep, my sore is grievous. And my heart is so exceedingly heavy that no kindly thought of others, and no pleasant musings of my own bring me the slightest relief. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me!” The Lord knows how to succor him and, therefore, He gave him that gracious assurance, “My Grace is sufficient for you.”

I think it is well, dear Friends, to remember the Lord’s past goodness, but we must not live on that—we must go and get fresh supplies from Heaven. Old manna, to this day, though it came from Heaven, will always breed worms and stink, if it is kept. There is no alteration in it from the days of Moses and it is the same at this moment. You must eat the manna as you get it and constantly go for more! The old manna will be of very little use to you. It is only on Sundays, when your soul is perfectly at rest and quiet—it is only at those sweet resting seasons, which the soul sometimes enjoys, that the remembrance of the past becomes very sweet. You must have daily present dispensations of manna from the Throne of God.

In such a case as this, to which the Apostle was brought, we feel sure that *the fact of his high office and eminent attainments of Grace* would not have been a sufficient consideration. Paul, who shall match you? So deep in knowledge and so ardent in zeal, you seem to have a seraph’s spirit. So mighty in words and yet, so humble in your own esteem, you are surely a prince in Israel! Paul was not one of the young men, much less one of the babes in Grace. He says, “There are not many fathers,” though certainly he, himself, was worthy to be called a Patriarch. Yet that fact would not comfort him. And, Brothers and Sisters, you may come to such hard pinches that your growth in Grace and the flourishing of your virtues will not afford so much as a drop of comfort to you—you will have to go to the Eternal Fountain to drink, for even these marble cisterns will have been broken and will hold no water.

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Observe, further, Brothers and Sisters, that the Lord does not say, *The consolation of your brethren shall be sufficient for you*.” Oh, how

sweet it is to be comforted by our fellow Christians! Let those who will, walk in isolation—give me sweet communion, for to tell one’s trial to a true Brother in Christ is often to lighten the weight, as if half of it were removed! Sometimes it is to be wholly relieved, for the words of some wise men in our Israel are, indeed, as balm that brings speedy healing to the wound. But there are wounds which the stranger intermeddles not with, no, that even the dearest friend cannot touch! There are certain vexations of spirit and disquietudes of soul that mock human agency. I have had, sometimes, to converse with some members of the Church and I have never felt so much the littleness of my own power as when I have tried be comfort them and failed. I thought it was because I was but as a little child in experience and could not talk with them as a father in Israel might have done, whose years might have given him more wisdom. But I have found that even the fathers have failed and that years have not always sufficed to give sufficient knowledge to comfort the troubled conscience, or to remove the burden from the galled shoulder. No, there are cases that mock the ordinary practitioner and must be taken straight to the Great Physician, for the only thing that will survive the purpose is the Grace, the *present* Grace of an all-sufficient God!

I might prolong this catalog, but you who experimentally know the Truth of God will know from your own experience that there are trials and there are points in affliction where nothing can possibly console but the immediate outpouring and receiving of the Grace of God.

**II.** And now, Beloved, in the second place, let me say that SUFFICIENT GRACE IS A SURE BALM—that even for the most acute disorder, the most chronic disease—“Grace” *is* “sufficient.”

Do you not perceive that it just meets *the fear which trial excites*? What is the Christian’s fear when he is buffeted, tried and afflicted? I know him in his sober senses—he has a fear of sin. Listen to him. “I am afraid of being poor,” says he, “not because I dislike poverty, but I am afraid of my faith, lest I should murmur against God. I am not afraid of suffering,” he says, “if God sends it to me, I am willing to receive it. But I am afraid of my faith, lest the pangs should be too severe and I should doubt my God. I am not,” he says, “afraid of slander or of persecution. I have learned to rejoice in this, for so am I made a member of the goodly fellowship of the martyrs—but I *am* afraid lest I should deny my Lord, or be ashamed of Him, or prove an apostate, after all. As I look forward to the temptations of the world, the suggestions of Satan and the corruptions of the flesh which shall yet assail me, I am not afraid of their coming if I can but be guaranteed that they shall not cause me to sin”— for the only real wound the Christian gets is when he has sinned! Sufferings are only scars, flesh wounds—sins are the real wounds! We are never trampled on by Satan, however low our spirits may sink. It is only when we give way—capitulate in very terror and begin to be afraid— that Satan is really victorious. The battle of sin is the battle in which Satan gains the victory! But suffering, shame, distress, peril, nakedness and sword are no triumphs to Satan, for, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

You see then, Brothers and Sisters, *that Grace meets the danger because it deals with sin*. You are afraid that your patience will give out, so the Lord says, “My Grace shall operate upon your patience and make you endure.” You think your faith will fail, so the Lord says, “My Grace gave you your faith and My Grace, like oil secretly applied to the fire by One standing behind the wall, shall keep your faith burning while the devil pours on his floods to quench it. It was My Grace that first taught you to love My great name so, when persecuted, My Grace shall make you love Me more. I have kept you from apostasy until now and, let what will come, My Grace, by which I guaranteed your final perseverance, shall be sufficient for you and you shall come out of all your trials and troubles like silver out of the furnace—not defiled—but cleansed and purified by the flames.” You see then, Brothers and Sisters, that this assurance does actually touch the fear which the Christian may ever have before his eyes—no, it does not merely touch the fear, but it absolutely touches all the real danger! It is as though the Lord should say to one of His servants who was standing alone, while thousands of his enemies were shooting at him with their arrows, “They shall shoot at you, but I have covered you with armor from head to foot.” Or it is as if you or I trembled at the thought of crossing the deep sea and the Lord had said, “The sea is deep, and you must cross it—but I will be by you and you shall go through it dry shod.” Or it is as if He said, “The fire is hot and you must walk through the midst of it. Those glowing coals your feet must know, but I will so cover you by My power that the flames nor coals shall not hurt you—you shall walk through the fire and not so much as the smell of it shall pass upon you.”

What does it matter how much we suffer if we have Grace to endure it? Put a Believer where you will, if his Master gives him Grace, he is in the best place he can be for security! I have heard Brethren sometimes say, “Such a minister is in great danger! His position is lofty, his head will be turned.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if he had had the keeping of his own head, it would have been turned long ago! And your head will turn even if you are on the ground if you have the keeping of it! But if God sets a man as high as the stars and if He kept him there, he would be able to sing, “You make my feet like hinds’ feet, and make me to stand on high places.” It is the Grace we have, not the position we occupy, that is the important matter! If a man had Grace enough, you might put him in the worst haunts of sin and he would be the better for being there!

Now, do not think I say what I do not know. Solomon saw hyssops grow on walls and cedars on Lebanon. However, I have seen cedars grow on walls and hyssops on Lebanon! I have seen the smallest Christians in the best places and the best Christians in the worst positions. I have seen, in the midst of the haunts of the harlot, Grace shining in all the purity and chastity of lovely womanhood. And in the haunt of the thief and of the burglar, God has been pleased to have some choice saint, that, for honesty, integrity and holy living might have been worthy to have walked in a bishop’s palace, or to have adorned the best Evangelical drawing room in England! Brethren, it is not the position that is the main thing! The best of men may grow in the worst places and some of the meekest of Believers may be found where there ought to have been the bravest. I will leave this point, therein, by repeating that whatever may be the trial of heart which a man may have to endure, this assurance just meets the case—“My Grace is sufficient for you.”

**III.** And, lastly, SHOULD NOT THE ASSURANCE THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE SUFFICIENT GRACE MAKE US EXCEEDINGLY GLAD?  
“My Grace is sufficient for you”—what then? “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities”—not only gladly, but, “most gladly.” *Nothing else will make you happy*. The Grace of God comes to meet your case and now how happy you should be! Think about the sureness of this fact, that sufficient Grace will be ours! My dear Brothers and Sisters, I am not careful about *preaching* tonight, I merely talk right on about some things that you know and can testify. It has been so, has it not, in your experience? If there is one saint here who has an accusation to make against his Lord, let him speak! He might well say to you, “Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? Which of you have I failed to succor? When have I violated My promise? You have been in the waters—were you drowned? You have passed through the fire—were you burned? What loss have you ever sustained by your troubles? Did I ever refuse to hear your cry when you called upon Me? When was it that, in the day of battle, I did not cover your head and that I left you as a prey to the destroyer?” My answer is—O Lord, You know all things and You know that Your servant’s witness is—

***“When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,  
Has gathered thick and thundered loud,  
He near my soul has always stood,  
His loving kindness, oh, how good!”***

And is not that your case, my Brother, my Sister in the Lord? I am sure it is! Well then, this ought to make you glad. “My Grace is sufficient for you,” says the Lord. Your past experience proves it. Gladly, therefore, rejoice that you have an opportunity yet again of testing and trying the good Word of the Lord!

Again, *is not God’s Grace sufficient for you in your present emergency*? Have you had some trouble today? I suppose you have had quite enough, too, for I never did find a day yet that had not enough trouble in it, and sufficient for the day is the evil thereof—well, but have you not had sufficient Grace today? Do you feel dull, heavy and gloomy in God’s House of Prayer? Well, but there is Grace to be had and, therefore, looking to Him before you go to bed, you may still have another day to sing of the sufficient Grace which was given in the necessary hour! “Oh, but,” you say, “it is not now! I can trust God for today, but there are clouds looming before me and I fear to enter them.” Well, my dear Friend, if He is faithful to you today, add that to the fact that He was faithful yesterday! Is He not the same yesterday, today and forever? And ought you not at once to rejoice in Him? Furthermore, ask your Father and He shall tell you to turn to the records of Inspiration and they shall teach you! Were the righteous ever forsaken? And when did the Lord cast off His chosen? They have certainly been in quite as deep waters as you have ever known—you have not yet been brought to lose all that you have, to lose every child—not yet do you sit among the ashes and scrape yourself with a potsherd as Job did. And can you say, to the fullest extent, “They that walked in the streets did condemn me”? Not yet have you drunk of that cup and been baptized with the baptism of Him who said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”—

***“His way was much rougher and darker than yours”—***

and yet your Lord triumphed! And all His people, in all ages, and under every circumstance, have triumphed in Him! If you could find one child of God who has been left, and if you could find one instance in which God has been untrue to you, then it would be fair for you to be depressed in spirit—but until then, you should be most joyful!

Remember also, Brothers and Sisters, that *we would never know how sufficient Grace was if it were not for these troubles—*therefore we ought to be glad of all the lessons that assure us how ample and sufficient this Grace is! I know not whether all soldiers love the thought of war, but there are many who plead for a campaign. How many an officer of low rank has said, “There is no promotion, no hope of rising, no honors unless we have to fight. If we could run to the cannon’s mouth, there would be some hope that we might gain a promotion.” Men get few medals to hang upon their breasts who never know the smell of gunpowder. The brave days, as men call them, of Nelson and Trafalgar, have gone by—and we thank God for it—but still we do not expect to see such brave old veterans, the offspring of this age, as they who are still to be found lingering in our hospitals—the relics of our old campaigns. No, Brothers and Sisters, we must have trials if we are to get on. Young men do not become midshipmen altogether through going to the school at Greenwich and climbing the mast on dry land—they must go out to sea and be on deck in the storm! And if we are to be among the worthies, we must have stood side by side with King David! We must have gone down into the pit to slay the lion, or have lifted up the spear against the eight hundred as Adino did. Conflicts bring experience and experience brings that growth in Grace which is not to be attained by any other means!

Besides, Brothers and Sisters, *how is God’s Grace to be seen by other men in the world except by our trials*? Grace is given to keep us from sin, which is a great blessing. But what is the good of Grace except it is in the time when the trial comes? Certainly, the Grace that will not stand in the hour of temptation or affliction is a very spurious sort of Grace and we had better get rid of it, if we have it. When a godly woman’s child dies, the infidel husband sees the mother’s faith. When the ship goes down and is lost in the sea, the ungodly merchant understands the resignation of his fellow man. When pangs shows through our body and ghastly death appears in view, people see the patience of the dying Christian. Our infirmities become the black velvet on which the diamond of God’s love glitters all the more brightly! Thank God I can suffer! Thank God I can be made the object of shame and contempt for, in this way, God shall be glorified! This shall be the wonder of many and to the praise of His own Grace—that so mean and so contemptible a thing was made the instrument of effecting His purpose!

I will say no more except to commend this assurance to you and ask you to take it home and lay it on your tongue. It will be like a wafer made with honey. Mind you have it for your breakfast tomorrow morning and let it be your constant daily meal—live on it—“My Grace is sufficient for *you*.” Let the word, “you,” come home to your heart, as though God spoke it to *you* and as if He had never spoken it to anyone else!

There are some of you to whom the text does not apply, except in this light—you have many sins—but if you trust Christ, His Grace is sufficient for you. You have been head over heels in the kennel of sin, but the power of His blood is sufficient to make you white. And even if you have become a very prince and peer in the dominions of evil, the Grace of Christ is sufficient to wash you whiter than the driven snow! May the Lord add His blessing on these feeble rambling remarks, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
ROMANS 3:9-27; 5:6-11; 8:1-32.**

**Romans 3:9.** *What then? Are we better than they?* The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans contains so horrible an account of the manners of the Gentiles, the heathen of Paul’s day, that it is one of the most painful chapters in Scripture to read. Not long ago, one of our missionaries out in China was attacked concerning the Bible on this very ground. One of the learned men said to him, “This Bible of yours cannot be as ancient as you say that it is, for it is quite clear that the next chapter of the Epistle to the Nomads must have been written by somebody who had been in China and who had seen the habits and ways of the people here.” So accurate is the Holy Spirit, who knew right well what the ways and manners and secret vices of the heathen were, and still are! But the Jews said, “Ah, but this is a description of the Gentiles.” So Paul replies, “What then? Are we better than they?”

**9, 10.***No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentile, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.* Then he selects passages out of different parts of Scripture to show what man is by nature.

**11-18.** *There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.* These are all quotations from Old Testament Scriptures, from their own Psalmists and Prophets from whom Paul quotes to the Jews so that they might see what their own character was by nature.

**19.** *Now we know that what things soever the law says, it says to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*. The Law of God was given to the Jews and the descriptions which it gives must be descriptions of the Jews. “Therefore,” says Paul, “as Gentile mouths have been already stopped by the descriptions of *their vices*, you also, the favored people of God, have your mouths stopped by the descriptions of yourselves taken from your own Prophets.”

**20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh*. Whether Jew or Gentile—  
**20, 21.***Be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now*. Since man is lost, since man is guilty—  
**21-27.***The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets: even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus. Where is boasting then?* If salvation is given to the guilty and if all are guilty—if no one can claim exemption, and yet salvation is freely given—what then? Why, salvation must be purely by the Grace of God! So let Grace have all the honor. “Where is boasting then?”  
**27.***It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No: but by the law of faith*. The law of works sometimes aids boasting, for a man rejoices and glories in what he has done. Yet the law of works ought to stop our boasting because we are guilty in God’s sight. The law of faith stops our mouth because we are under obligation to God and do not dare to boast, seeing that we have nothing of good but what we have received from Him! **Romans 5:6.***For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*. What a wonderful sentence that is! Not, “Christ died for the saints, “not, “Christ died for righteous men,” but, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”  
**7-9.***For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*. What an argument this is for the final safety of Believers! If Christ died for us when we were enemies, surely He will give us, now that He has died for us and made us His friends, His reconciled subject— “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”  
**10.***For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life*. There is a threefold argument here. We were enemies, yet God blessed us even then, so will He not bless us even more, now that we are reconciled to Him? When we were enemies, He reconciled us unto Himself. Having done that, will He not certainly save us? We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son—so much more shall we be saved by the life of the risen and glorified Jesus, which has almighty, irresistible power!  
**11.***And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement*.  
**Romans 8:1.***There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus*. Observe that Paul writes “There is therefore,” for he is stating a Truth of God which is founded upon solid argument. “There is therefore now”—at this very day, at this very moment—“no condemnation”—none of any sort—none that will lie in the Court of Conscience or in the Court of King’s Bench above! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” Our forefathers used to read this verse, “There is therefore now no damnation.” One of the martyrs, being brought before a Popish bishop, heard the bishop say to him, “Dying in your heresy, you will be damned.” “That I never shall be,” answered the good man, “for there is therefore now no damnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.’” He had sought the very spirit of the text, for there is nothing that can condemn the man who is in Christ Jesus!  
**1.***Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. This is the distinctive mark of a man in Christ Jesus. He does not let the flesh govern him, but the Spirit. The spiritual nature has come to the front and the flesh must go to the back. The Spirit of the living God has entered into him and become the master-power of his life. He walks “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”  
**2.***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*. And nothing else can do that. Every man is, by nature, under bondage to that which Paul describes as “the law of sin and death.” There is a law in our nature which is so powerful that even when we would do good, evil is present with us, and we cannot get away from that law except by introducing another, which is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Dr. Chalmers has a remarkable sermon upon it—*The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*—and it is this new affection for Christ which is the accompaniment of the new life in Christ, which expels the old forces that used to hold us under bondage to sin and death.  
**3, 4.***For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. The Law of God never made anybody holy and it never will do so. The Law says to a man, “This is what you ought to do and you will be condemned if you do not do it.” That is quite true, but the Law supplies no power to enable us to do this! It says to the lame man, “You must walk,” and to the blind man, “You must see,” but it does not enable them either to walk or to see! On the contrary, our nature is such that when the Law issues its commands, there is a tendency in us at once to *disobey* them. There are some sins which we never would have thought of committing if we had not been commanded not to do them, so that the Law of God—not because of its own nature, but because of the *wickedness of our nature*, is weak and ineffectual for the producing of righteousness. But the Lord Jesus Christ has come, has lived and has died—died for us who are His people, and has put away our sins. Now we love Him! Now, being delivered from all condemnation, we love Him who has delivered us and this becomes the force by which we are inclined to holiness and led on further and further in a course, not merely of morality, but of holiness before God! What a blessed system this is, which saves the sinner from the love of sin, delivers a man from sinning, gives him a new nature and puts a right spirit within him!  
**5.***For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.* Flesh cares for flesh. The man who is all body cares only for the body. The man whose mind is under subjection to his body, minds “the things of the flesh.”

**5.** *But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit*. Where the Holy Spirit is supreme. Where the spiritual world has become predominant over the heart and life. There, men live for something nobler than the worldly man’s trinity, “What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and how shall we be clothed?” The carnal life is only becoming to a beast, or a bird, or an insect. But when a man cares for his immortal spirit and lives for Divine and spiritual things, he has attained to the life that is life, indeed!

**6, 7.** *For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*. As long as a man lives only for this present evil world, lives for self, lives under the domination of the flesh, he cannot really know God, or truly serve Him. Such a mind as his “is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.”

**8.** *So then they that are in the flesh*. That is, those who are under its condemnation and power—  
**8-10.***Cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any men have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness*. So that although Christ dwells in a man, he must not reckon that he will be free from suffering, pain and sickness, for the body has not yet risen from the dead and does not yet feel the full effect of regeneration. The soul is risen from the dead by regeneration and it, therefore, “is life because of righteousness.” The body will, in due time, also share in the power of Christ’s Spirit. The day draws near when we “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”  
**11, 12.***But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*. We have got nothing good out of the flesh at present, for it is not yet “delivered from the bondage of corruption,” though it is to be delivered.  
**13.***For if you live after the flesh, you shall die.* For the flesh is to die.  
13. But if you, through the Spirit do mortify. Or, kill—  
**13.***The deeds of the body, you shall live*. Shall a dying body, then, be my master? Shall the appetite for eating and drinking, or anything else that comes of the flesh, dominate my spirit? God forbid! Let death go to death—and the flesh is such. But the newly-given Spirit of God, the Spirit who has quickened us with immortal life shall rule and reign in us forevermore!  
**14-21.***For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed anew. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the Son of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. We are part and parcel of creation and we shall draw it along with us. There shall be new heavens and a new earth. The curse shall be taken from the garden, thorns and thistles shall no longer grow there, and there shall be no killing or devouring in all God’s holy mountain. The galling yoke, which we have laid on the whole of creation by our sin, shall be taken off it by our Redeemer!  
**22, 23.***For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body*. We groan in unison with a groaning creation and we shall not, at present, get altogether rid of our aches, pains and sicknesses.  
**24-32.***For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we say, then, to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 757, 729.**  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2050 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PARADOX  
NO. 2050

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 4TH, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON~~***

***~~“When I am weak, then am I strong.”  
2 Corinthians 12:10.~~***

The expression is paradoxical and seems somewhat singular. Yet it was the experience of the Apostle Paul, a man of calm spirit. He was by no means fanciful—he was a wise man and far removed from a fanatic. It was the experience of one who was led of the Spirit of God and therefore it was a gracious experience—the experience of one who was a father in Israel, who could safely bid us to be imitators of him, even as he imitated the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore it was a safe experience.

If we are weak, so was Paul. And if, like he, we are strong in our weakness, we shall be in the best of company. If the same things are seen in us which were worked in the Apostle of the Gentiles, we may join with him in glorying in infirmities because the power of Christ does rest upon us and we may count ourselves happy that with such a saint we can cry, “When I am weak, then am I strong.”

**I.**Perhaps I can expound the text best if I first TURN IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND and use it as a warning.  
“When I am strong, then am I weak.” Perhaps, while thinking of the text thus turned inside out, we shall be getting light upon it to be used when we view it with the right side outwards and see that when we are weak, then we are strong. I am quite sure that some people think themselves very strong and are not so. Their proud consciousness of fancied strength is the indication of a terrible weakness. We have among us certain persons who think that they can do all that is needful for their own salvation whenever they please to do so. They can perform all sorts of good works, or at least quite enough to carry them to Heaven.  
Their first idea is that they are to be saved by their own doings. And they really expect to be so saved. They may admit that they have a few faults and flaws in their character. But these are so trifling as to be hardly worth mentioning and God Almighty is too merciful to be very particular. Their lives have been excellent, their tempers amiable, their manners courteous, their spirit generous and they quite believe that by keeping on at the same pace they will win the prize—if they do not, who will? The ship of their character is in fine condition. They have no leaks which the pumps cannot keep down.  
Their sails are not rent and they hope to sail into the haven of peace with a glorious cargo of merit, having an abundant entrance and hearing a loud, “Well done!” Ah, my Friend, that consciousness of legal strength is a mere delusion and it will have to be taken out of you. There is no going to Heaven that way—by self and the works of self. Your error is a common one but it is fatal. I have seen many epitaphs of persons, placed by the mistaken kindness of friends upon their tombstones, which I felt sure would have been sufficient to shut them out of Heaven if they had been true. These departed worthies do not appear to have been sinners at all— their virtues were superlative, their faults non-existent.  
Such wonderful people would appear from their epitaphs to have flown up to the gates of Heaven upon the wings of their own virtues and to have entered there without a passport of mercy, as citizens by their own right of the New Jerusalem. I wonder how they would behave themselves in Heaven, if they were really admitted there! All the rest are singing, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”— but these needed no washing and so they would be likely to strike up a little song by themselves and sing, “Our robes never needed washing. We kept them white as snow.”  
What a discord that would create in the music of the skies! What a division of character and feeling would be found among celestials! I cannot see how there could be any harmony of sentiment among sinners saved by Divine Grace, and righteous ones who owed nothing to mercy, nothing to the atoning sacrifice.  
No, my strong and virtuous Hearer, you are under a grave delusion. There is a great similarity between your talk and the talk of that religious individual who went up to the temple in our Savior’s days and standing before the thrice-holy God, dared to say, “God, I thank you that I am not as other men are.” He was not justified that day, nor will you be. A poor tax-gatherer, despised by himself and an outcast from his own people stood in the temple at the same time and all that he dared to say was, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” This unworthy sinner when to his house justified, while the other worthy person was not accepted.  
If you think yourselves strong enough to procure Heaven by your own efforts, you are ignorantly insulting the Cross of Christ. You seem to insinuate that your virtues can avail you without Jesus. If you really mean this, there is no less venom of rebellion against God in your selfrighteousness than in the outward vice of those who make no pretense to godliness. For you to put your works in the place of Jesus is a blasphemy against the Savior’s blood and righteousness. Why needed Christ to die if men could save themselves? Why need He bleed upon the Cross if your merits will suffice to gain you a place among the blessed? There is a fatal weakness in the claim of that man who thinks himself strong enough to force his own passage to the Throne of God. That weakness lies in the pride which insults the Crucified, the disloyalty which prefers itself to the royal Savior—  
***“Perish the virtue, as it ought—abhorred,  
And the fool with it who insults his Lord.”***  
Listen to me a moment and quit your fancied strength—you, my Hearer, cannot keep the Law of God for you have already broken it. How can you preserve a crystal vase when you have already dashed it to atoms? You must now be saved by the merits and the strength of Another, or not at all. For your own merit is out of the question through past failure. That strength of yours, upon which you dote so much, is perfect *weakness*. May the Lord show you this and make you faint at heart on that account. For then you shall be strong with real and saving strength! Now your imaginary strength is making you really weak and that boasted merit of yours is shutting you out from true righteousness.  
He that is strong in the notion of merit is weak even to utter folly before the God of Truth. “Yes,” we hear you reply, “there is a Gospel way of salvation. We know that there is, for you preach it continually. You tell us that men must repent and believe the Gospel. That they must be renewed in the spirit of their minds and must both overcome sin and follow after holiness.” Yes, I do say all that. But what do you say to it? Is it really so that you find here a ground for your own strength? Do you say, “I feel that I can repent whenever I please and believe in Jesus when I choose?” Ah, then I must assure you that when you are strong in that way, you are weak.  
I have never known anybody repent who gloried in his power to repent. I never knew a man heart-broken for sin who boasted that he could break his own heart when and where he pleased. “What?” cries one, “Surely I can believe in Jesus Christ when I please!” I have not denied that statement, have I? But I tell you that your notion of power to believe is your weakness. And I would rather by half hear you cry, with deep solemnity, “Oh, that God would give me faith! Lord, help my unbelief!” Your sense of inability to believe in Christ would be a far better token for good, in my judgment, than your present flippant talk about believing when you like. Men who are in earnest talk not so—whatever their strength may be, they find it little enough in the hour of need.  
I beg to assure you that I have never known a man believe in Jesus who trusted that he could so believe. For his trust in his own believing kept him from trusting Jesus. But I have known many a poor, struggling soul lie at the foot of the Cross and say, “Lord, help me to look to Jesus and live.” And God has helped him to give that look in which there is eternal life. While he has been praying, his prayer, yes, his weeping prayer, has had in it that very look to Jesus for which he was pleading. His sense of inability to believe has made him look to Jesus for believing and he has found it in Him.  
You say that you can turn your heart towards God whenever you please. I am not going into any dispute with you about your assertion, nor the doctrine which is supposed to support you in your profession of strength. But I will say this—your idea of having personal strength, with which to purify and renew your own heart—your idea that you can create in yourself a right spirit—your idea that you can raise yourself from your death in sin—is to me a prophecy of much evil for yourself. Where *self* is conspicuous I see an omen of mischief. I see no good in this fine opinion of yourself. But if I heard you cry, “Create in me a clean heart, O God”—if I heard you say, “Lord, quicken me out of my death in sin”—if I saw you lying down before the Most High and praying, “Turn me and I shall be turned”—I should have a far brighter hope of you.  
In your weakness you would become strong. But in your present strength, I am sure I see a great weakness, which is likely to be your ruin. O dear Hearts, your best friend does not lie within your own doors. Your hope for better things shines yonder at the right hand of God where the living Savior has all power given to Him in Heaven and earth. Sinner, if you grow no sweeter flowers than the dunghill of your own nature can nourish, you will die amid poisonous weeds. If you never drink of better water than the filthy well of your own heart will yield, you will perish of thirst, or of a deadly draught.  
Another and a better helper than one born in your house must come this way. Help must be laid upon one that is mighty, exalted of the Lord out of the people, and endowed with Divine power and Godhead—for only such a Savior, infinitely good and great, can save a soul so lost as yours. When you get down, down, down, into utter weakness, then you will be strong, because then you will rest upon the Lord’s salvation. But as you are strong in your thoughts of yourself you are kept from Jesus and are weakness itself.  
So far I have spoken by way of warning to unconverted people. I desire now to say a word to those who profess to be Christians and, let us hope, are so. But they are, in a measure, erring in the same way as those to whom I have spoken. They are remarkably strong—at least in their own esteem they are very Samsons—although others fear that the Philistines will capture them. By this token may they know their own weakness— even by this—that they think themselves strong.  
First, many are wonderfully strong as to *knowledge*. They know almost everything. If in any department they are a little short, they make up for it by knowing so much more in the other direction. If they are too narrow here, they overlap there. They are knowing men and need no man to tell them so. They are instructed in the faith from pole to pole—they know both that which is afar off and that which is near. An argument is a pleasure to them. They go into company where the eternal verities are denied and feel a delight in taking sides. They will sit where the vital simplicities of God’s Word are set up like marks for boys to throw at. And they like the amusement, for it exercises their knowing faculty and gives them a chance of showing their mental power.  
They are not children but quite able to think for themselves. They are not credulous but amazingly clear-headed and cultured. I have noticed these fine gentlemen have been the first to deny the faith and to fall into all manner of heresies. Do you wonder? Those who are so very sure are always the most uncertain. I could instance some that had such confidence in themselves that they would have argued with the very Fiend of Hell on any question for they felt that not even Satanic craft could conquer them. But at this present moment the Prince of Darkness holds them in his power. They hold no controversy with the devil now, for they are very largely agreed with him in assailing the Gospel of God’s Grace.  
They have gone entirely over to the denial of everything that is gracious and holy and Scriptural—and the main cause of their apostasy is their own invincible self-confidence. They were so strong that they became weaker than others. O Brethren, when we are very wise in our own esteem we are bordering upon fools—even if we have not already entered into that company. When we tremblingly sit at Jesus’ feet to learn everything afresh and fresh from Him, when we shudder at anything that questions His Deity, or lowers His sacrifice. When we shut up a book and cast it from us because we feel that it pollutes us with unbelief—then are we wise and strong.  
When the Word of the Lord is enough, then are we in the way of wisdom and strength. The man of one book is proverbially a terrible man— but the man of ten thousand books, who can baffle all adversaries and foil all foes—shall soon lie wounded on the plain, if he is not slain outright. Let us take heed unto ourselves, that we fall not through being headstrong, or strong in the head, which is much the same thing.  
Again—I have noticed some professedly Christian people wonderfully strong through experience. Their experience has been very extensive and the knowledge it has brought them they consider to be especially profound. Consequently they are not afraid of temptation for they feel that they are too wise to be entrapped. They are so experienced that things which young people ought not to think of, they can do with impunity—so they foolishly dream. They can go just so far and then stop, for they are fitted with the patent brakes of prudence. They are such good mountain climbers that they can stand on the edge of a precipice and look over and even hang over, without fear of their ever being giddy and falling over. Of course they would not advise other people to go quite so far as they may safely go.  
But then, what is temptation to other men is no temptation to them. Their vessel is so tight and trim and they understand navigation so perfectly that they rather *like* a tempest than not, just to show how well their vessel can behave in a storm. Ah me, when you next read the list of wrecks you may expect to see the name of their ship among the castaways. Old birds may not be caught with chaff but they can be shot with a gun. No one is out of danger and no one is more in danger than the man who is carnally secure. Those who feel that their experience, be it what it may, only teaches them that the farther they can keep from temptation the better—these are in a better state.  
When experience drives us to pray with emphasis the prayer, “Lead us not into temptation,” then it is working aright. In the idea of strength and wisdom lurks an awfully perilous weakness. But in a sense of personal weakness dwells a real strength. If you are extremely jealous, conscientious and watchful, many will tell you how weak you are. But you are, in reality, a strong man, because of your fear to encounter evil influences—in that fear lies one essential element of holy strength. But he that would rather brave temptation, because he feels so strong, shall find it may be to his everlasting sorrow, how great is his weakness.  
He that shuns the appearance of evil because of conscious weakness, shall find therein his security and strength. Oh, let none of us, because we are getting gray, suppose that we are not vulnerable to sin! Let us not dream that because we have been Church members so many years, or even because we have sustained a long and useful ministry, that we are therefore beyond gunshot of the enemy or without necessity to seek daily strength for daily duty. My Brethren, we cannot perform the smallest duty aright apart from the help of God.  
Neither can we be secure against even the smallest sin, apart from the perpetual guard of Him that keeps Israel. If we, in our self-conceit, write ourselves down among the mightiest and forget our entire dependence upon heavenly Grace, we may be left to prove, by unhappy experience, that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.  
Let us note another point. I have known certain Christian people who thought themselves singularly strong in the matter of wisdom and prudence. They have been gifted with clear insight and a measure of shrewdness and have, therefore, felt that their judgment on most subjects was that of an umpire. Have you ever noticed that the raw material of a very grossly foolish person is a cautious individual? The cunning are the readiest dupes when craft is busy in taking its prey. So, too, a wise man is needed if there is to be exhibited the worst form of folly. If we were called upon to select a man who, as to his life as a whole, perpetrated the greatest folly, we should mention Solomon.  
Yet he was the wisest of man. Yes, the cream of wisdom, when curdled, makes the worst of folly. Was ever man so insanely enthusiastic in vain pursuits as this master of all knowledge? Then, Brethren, whenever we feel sure of our own superior intelligence, let us suspect ourselves of weakness. Let the same fear come upon us when we feel sure about our way—so sure that we think we need not pray about it—or in any manner wait for Divine direction. Beware of those matters in which you think you cannot err. Men who have been wise in great difficulties have blundered fearfully where all was simple.  
The Israelites thought that the men who came to them begging for a league of brotherhood could not deceive them. It must be safe to be on good terms with these interesting strangers. Why, look, their shoes are well-near worn from their feet and patched and clouted to the last degree! Their clothes, which we doubt not were new when they left their distant homes, are now threadbare and their bread which they took fresh from the oven, is stale with age. It is evident, upon the face of it, that they must have come from a very remote part of the world and therefore a treaty with them will not interfere with the Divine Command. There can be no need to pray about a case so clear.  
Thus the Gibeonites deceived them, as we also shall be overreached when we are so exceeding sure of our course. Brethren, let us not be wise as to dispense with our heavenly Counselor and Guide. Would not that be the height of madness? It is a salutary thing to feel that your case requires you to trust the helm of your ship with the Divine Pilot. It is even a blessed thing to feel that you are shut up to faith and must by absolute trust in God throw the responsibility of your action upon Him. I will give you an instance. Abraham, the father of the faithful, is placed in a peculiar position. God has commanded him to take his son Isaac and offer him for a sacrifice. Here is a terrible puzzle. Here was enough to stagger any human mind.  
Surely it could not be right for a father to slay his son! How could it be wise to kill the son in whom all the promises of God were vested? The more you think of the case from a father’s standpoint, the more it will perplex you. Abraham could not make anything out of it by his judgment but he met it all by faith. All that he could

say to Isaac was, “My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb.” He was thus saying to himself, “The Lord will get me out of this difficulty.” He had no wisdom with which to conjecture how the affair would end—he had to cease from guessing and just trust in his God. Abraham made no mistake in this. Oh, that we could do the same!  
Observe that same Abraham when he goes down to Egypt. His wife is exceedingly beautiful and he fears that the king of Egypt will kill him in order to obtain his wife. What will he do? I can see a great many ways in which he might have warded off that evil. He was not called upon to go to Egypt at all, if he thereby risked his wife’s honor. Or, if he must go, he should have gone boldly, acknowledging his wife and trusting both her and himself with the Lord. Instead of that, the Patriarch begins by inducing Sarah to join with him in equivocation. “Say you are my sister.” She was in some sense his sister. But it was using a word in a double sense for a deceitful purpose and it was a pitiful thing for Abraham to do.  
Nor was it a prudent scheme after all—in fact it was the cause of the very trouble which it sought to prevent. Sarah would not have been taken away from Abraham at all if Pharaoh had known that she was his wife—so that the wise was snared by his own craftiness. The Lord graciously delivered him but in that very act left a root of bitterness behind to be his future plague. Pharaoh gave to him women servants and I doubt not among them was Hagar, who became the object of sin and the source of sorrow to the household. In the fancied strength of Abraham, by which he emulated the craft of other Orientals, he displayed his weakness.  
But in the other case, where no wit or wisdom could assist him, he cast himself upon the Lord and in his weakness he behaved like the grand man that he really was. Brothers and Sisters, let us confess ourselves fools, that we may be wise. For otherwise we shall fall into that other condition, of professing ourselves wise and becoming fools. Let us ignore our wisdom, even if we have any. God alone is wise—he that trusts either his own heart or head is a fool. Lean not to your own understanding but lean wholly upon the Lord and so shall you be established.  
Further, dear Friends, we shall often find that our strength will lie in patience—in extreme weakness which yields itself up to the will of God without the power or will to murmur. We sang in our hymn just now— ***“And when it seems no other chance or change From grief can set me free,  
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,  
And, patient, waits on You.”***  
I am sure that in reference to power, either to do or to suffer rightly, we are *not* strong when we compliment ourselves upon our ability. And we *are* strong when, under a sense of absolute inability, we depend wholly upon God.  
That sermon preached in the glory of our oratory turned out to be mere husks for swine. While that discourse which we delivered in weakness, with a humble hope that God would use it, proved to be royal meat for the Lord’s chosen. That work which you performed in the vigor of your unquestioned talent came to nothing—while that quiet act which you washed with your tears and perfumed with your prayers will live and yield you sheaves. Creature strength brings forth nothing which has life in it—only the seed which the Creator puts into the hand of our weakness will produce a harvest. It is well to *be nothing*—it is better still to be “less than nothing.” We ought to dread a sense of capacity, for it will render us incapable. But a sense of utter incapacity apart from God is a fit preparation for being used by the Lord.  
***“Unto them that have no might He increases strength.”***  
So it is in bearing as well as acting. If we say, concerning sickness, “I shall never be impatient. I can bear it like a stoic.” What of that? You will then have done no more than many have done before you, with no great gain to themselves or to others. But if, bowing your head before the Lord, you wait His sovereign will and say, “Lord help me. If your left hand shall smite me, let your right hand sustain me. I am willing to drink this bitter cup, saying, ‘Not as I will but as You will.’ Lord, help me!”—you shall bear up triumphantly and come out of the furnace refined, to the praise and the glory of your God.  
When you fancy that you are strong to suffer, you will fail. But in conscious weakness you will be enabled to play the man. I have now done with the text, as I have turned it upside down. May God bless it to any here who feel high and mighty, by causing it to put them in their proper place.  
**II.**Now, let us take our text THE RIGHT WAY UPWARDS. “When I am weak, then am I strong.” “When” and “then” are the two pivots of the text—the hinges upon which it turns.  
“When I am weak.” What does that mean? It means when the Believer is consciously weak, when he painfully feels, and distinctly recognizes, that he is weak. Then he is strong. In Truth, we are always weak, whether we know it or not. But when we not only believe this to be the fact but see it to be the fact—then it is that we are strong. When it is forced home upon us that we are less than nothing and vanity—when our very soul echoes and re-echoes that word, “Without Me you can do nothing.”—then it is that we are strong.  
When he is growingly weak. Yes, for he sees his own weakness more and more clearly as he advances—as he grows stronger in faith he is much more conscious of the weakness of the flesh. I talked about my weakness from this platform five-and-twenty years ago. But I stand here and tremble under it now to a far greater degree than I did in my younger and more vigorous time. I knew it three-and-thirty years ago when I first spoke to you but I did not know it as I know it now. I was then weak and I owned it—but I am now weak and groan about it almost involuntarily. Yes, and I sometimes sing because of my weakness, learning to glory in my infirmities because the power of Christ does rest upon me.  
When we are growingly weak, when we become weaker and weaker, when we seem to faint into a deeper swoon than ever as to our own strength till death is written upon every power that we once thought we had and we feel that we can do absolutely nothing apart from the Holy Spirit—then we are strong, indeed. We are strong, too, when we feel painfully weak. It is well when we mourn because we are so weak and cry out to ourselves, “My weakness, my weakness, woe unto me! When I would do good, evil is present with me. When I would rise to Heaven, the body of this death detains me. I would do great things for God but I have no might. Alas for my weakness!”  
At such a time we are really rising and are bringing most glory to God. These are growing pains—agonies such as none know but the truly and growingly spiritual. A painful weakness is strength. It may seem a paradox, but it is true.  
We are strong when we are contritely weak. When we confess that much of our weakness is our fault—a weakness which we ought to have overcome—even then we have in that weakness a real strength. The sort of weakness that makes a man say, “I cannot be any stronger, I am doing my best,” is not strength but folly. But that weakness which makes you lament your failures and deplore your shortcomings has in it a holy stimulus and force. That weakness which makes you dissatisfied with all you are and all you do is goading you on to better and stronger things. If you feel that even when most earnest you have not prayed as you could wish, there is evidently strength in your desires and your desires are prayers.  
If after any service you pour forth showers of penitential tears because the service was imperfect, there is evidently a strong soul of obedience within you. When you can neither repent, nor believe, nor love as you wish to do, you are repenting, believing and loving with a strength which is more true than apparent. It is the will with which we act which is the strength of the action. And when the will is so powerful that it makes us mourn because we cannot find how to perform its bidding, then are we strong according to the Divine measurement of strength. Contrite weakness is spiritual strength.  
When a man is thoroughly weak—not only partially but altogether weak—then is he strong. When apart from the Lord Jesus, he is utter weakness, and nothing more—then it is that he is strong. Let me persuade you to make a full confession of weakness to the Lord. Say, “Lord, I cannot do what I ought to do—I cannot do what I want to do—I cannot do what I used to do—I cannot do what other people do—I cannot do what I mean to do—I cannot do what I am sure I shall do—I cannot do what I feel impelled to do. And over this sinful weakness I mourn.” Then add, “Lord, I long to serve You perfectly, yet I cannot do it. Unless You help me I can do nothing aright. There will be no good in my actions, my words, my feelings, or my desires, unless You continue to fill me with Your own holy energy. Lord, help me! Lord, help me!”  
Brothers and Sisters, you are strong while you plead in that fashion. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. And he will strengthen you, now that you are emptied of self. How true it is, “When I am weak, then am I strong!”  
I have brought out the “when.” Now lend me your ears and hearts for just a minute, while I bring out the “then.” “Then am I strong.” When is that? Why, a man is strong when he is consciously weak—because now he has reached the truth. He really is weak. And if he does not know that he is so, he is under the influence of a falsehood. Now a lie is a thing of weakness. Lying strength is all fluff and foam—a mere appearance, a mockery, a delusion. Nothing hinders from getting the reality like contentment with a mere appearance. The true heart is heartily sick of shows and shams and it cries, “Lord, help me to get rid of these shadows! Help me to come to the Truth of God! Help me to deal with realities!”  
When you are made to feel your utter weakness you are on sure ground of truth—unpleasant truth, no doubt, yet sure truth. You are now on safe ground touching fundamentals, and making sure work. What you now do will be soundly done. All the while that we keep building on a sandy made-up foundation we are piling up that which will, in all probability, come down even faster than we put it up. While the rotten rubbish remains on the spot, you cannot do anything worth doing. But if that accumulation can be carted away, there will seem to be a great hole but you will get down to the real bottom and get a foundation. And then what you build will be worth putting up because it will stand. Therefore, a man becomes strong when he is consciously weak, because he is on the truth and is not being flattered by false hopes.  
Next, he will be strong because he will only go with a commission to support him. He will not be eager to run without being sent. He says within himself, when he proposes a service to himself, “No, I am too weak to undertake anything of my own head.” He will wait for a call. This is not the kind of man that will climb up into a pulpit and from a dizzy brain pour out nonsense. He will not crave to lead, for he feels that he needs much help even to follow. He feels himself too weak to set up for a master in Israel. This is not the kind of man that will venture into argument with skeptics for the fun or for the glory of the thing. Oh, no. He is too weak for that.  
He says, “If I am called to defend the faith, I will do it in God’s strength, hoping that it will be given me in the same hour what I shall speak. If I am called to preach, I will preach and nobody shall stop me. For the Lord will be with my mouth.” But, you see, until the man is conscious of his own weakness, he will run without being sent. And there is nobody so weak as that man. No one so weak as the man who has no commission from God and no promise of help from Him. Such a man will be thinking of this and thinking of that and running for this, that and the other, because he has a lot of wasted energy which he wants to use somewhere or somehow. Could we once see him consciously weak we should hear him say, “Here am I, send me!” in answer to the question, “Whom shall I send?” Then he would not go a warfare at his own charges but he would draw upon the all-sufficiency of God and find himself equal to every emergency.  
The man who is consciously weak is strong, next, because of the holy caution that he will be sure to use. He will be on his guard because he does not feel able to cope with adversaries. He will ask for a convoy for his little boat for he is aware of pirates. If this weak man has to pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, depend upon it, he will carry in his hand the weapon of prayer, like a drawn sword. The man that has strength goes hurrying on over hedge and ditch and soon comes into mischief. But the consciously weak pilgrim keeps to the high-road and travels carefully. And hence he is strong.  
Fear is a notably good housekeeper—she may not keep a luxurious table but she always locks the doors at night and takes care of all under her charge. Holy caution begets prudence. And prudence, by fostering vigor and crying for heavenly aid, becomes strength.  
Moreover, when a man is weak, then is he strong because he is sure to pray and prayer is power. The man who laments his weakness is sure to cry to the strong for strength. The more his weakness presses on him, the more he will pray. When his own weakness becomes utter and entire and he is ready to perish then he turns unto his Lord and is made strong. The utterly weak cry out unto God as nobody else does. He is too weak to play at praying—he groans, he sighs, he weeps. In his abject weakness he prevails, as Jacob did.  
Jacob wrestled all night. But now at last the angel has touched the hollow of his thigh and made his sinew shrink and he cannot wrestle any longer. What will he do now? He falls. And as he falls he grasps his antagonist and holds Him fast, crying, “I will not let You go except You bless me.” As much to say, “I cannot wrestle with You, I cannot try another fall. But I can and will hold You fast. The dead weight of my weakness makes me hold You as an anchor holds a ship. I will not let You go except You bless me.”  
The weaker a man is in himself, the stronger he is in prayer. He makes use of his weakness as an appealing argument—“Lord, if I were strong, You might leave me. Do not leave me, for I am weakness itself. I am the feeblest child in all Your family, leave me not, neither forsake me. If You leave any, leave not your poor dying infant that can hardly wail out its griefs.” Weakness, as a plea with God in prayer, becomes a source of strength.  
When we are weak we are strong, again, because then we are driven away from self to God. All strength is in God and it is well to come to the one solitary storehouse and source of might. There is no power apart from God. As long as you and I look to the creature we are looking to a cracked, broken cistern, that holds no water. But when we know that it is broken and that there is not a drop of water in it, then we hasten to the great Fountain. While we rest in any measure upon self or the creature, we are standing with one foot on the sand. But when we get away from human nature because we are too weak to have the least reliance upon self whatever—then we have both feet on the Rock and this is safe standing. If you believe in the living God and if all your own existence is by believing, you live at a mighty rate. But if you believe in God in a measure and if, at the same time, you trust yourself in a measure, you are living at a dying rate and half the joy which is possible to you is lost. You are taking in bread with one hand and poison with the other—you are feeding your soul with substance and with shadow and that makes a sorry mixture. When the shadow is taken away and you have nothing but the substance—*then* are you strong, fed upon substantial meat.  
Last of all, dear Friends, I believe that when a man is weak he becomes strong to a large extent because his weakness compels him to concentrate all his faculties. A sense of weakness brings out all the forces of a resolute spirit and leads him to call in All the energy within his reach. When I have preached to you in extreme weakness, as I have often done, when I have afterwards read the sermon I have been much more satisfied with it than I have been with others in which I felt more pleasure at the time.  
God helps us most when we most need His help. And, besides that, the man himself is, by his weakness, forced to use himself right up. When a man feels himself to be rather a large vessel he puts in the tap somewhere near the top and only a small supply flows out to the people. But when he is, in his own feelings, like a poor little cask with only a small supply in it, he puts the tap right down at the bottom and permits all that is in the barrel to flow forth. Many a poor weak Brother who says all the little that he knows, give forth more instruction than the learned Divine who only favors his people with a small portion of his vast stores. When a man, in serving God, spends himself to the last farthing, he will often far more enrich his hearers than the man of ten talents who uses his resources with a prudent stinginess.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, it will often be a good thing for you to feel, “Now, God helping me, I must do my very utmost at this time. I have so little ability that every faculty within me must be wide awake and serve God at its best.” Thus your weakness will arouse you and set you on fire, and, by the blessing of God, it will be the means of gaining you strength. Very well, then, let us pick up our tools and go to our work rejoicing, feeling—Well, I may be weaker, or I may be stronger in myself but my strength is in my God. If I should ever become stronger, then I must pray for a deeper sense of weakness, lest I become weak through my strength. And if I should ever become weaker than I am, then I must hope and believe that I am really becoming stronger in the Lord. Whether I am weak or strong, what does it matter? He who never fails and never changes will perfect His strength in my weakness and this is glory to me. Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1458 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON UPON ONE NOTHING BY ANOTHER NOTHING

NO. 1458

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Though I am nothing.”  
2 Corinthians 12:11.*

THE Divine discipline had succeeded well with the Apostle Paul. There was danger of his being exalted above measure by the abundance of the Revelation which he received and, therefore, there was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him—this trial fully answered its purpose and Paul remained a lowly-minded servant of Jesus Christ. His humility comes out in the incident before us. He was compelled to defend himself and prove his Apostleship and this he does very thoroughly but very modestly. In the midst of strong expressions of selfassertion, every one of them truthful and none of them exaggerated, his true humility is as manifest as if he had been unveiling his inward faults, or writing his, “Confessions.”

Augustine in his, “Retractations,” is no more humble than Paul in his self-vindication. It is easy for a man to use lowly expressions when he is writing about his own faults and the Grace of God which saved him from them, but it is not so easy to maintain the virgin blush of modesty when called in necessary self-defense to vindicate one’s own character and mention one’s own achievements. Indignation is generally awakened in such a case and humility creeps out of the way— the more amazing is it, then, to find Paul esteeming himself as *nothing*, even when answering the cruel depreciations of his opposers.

Read verse 11 and see the lowly heart of the man—“I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing was I behind the most eminent Apostles, though I am nothing.” Beloved, when we have to take the same medicine, may it have as sure an effect upon us as it had upon Paul. If it should be necessary for us to be buffeted, or to endure a thorn in the flesh, may the affliction be as much sanctified to its end as it was in his case! Alas, I am afraid that some have many thorns in the flesh and yet are not humble. They have many buffetings and yet are lifted up and, what is worse still, they have never enjoyed a perilous abundance of Revelation to lift them up, but rather they have been surfeited with an abundance of that which is gross and earthy and yet they are not humble.

Though they have no good thing to glory in, they have exalted themselves above their brethren and have spoken harshly of them and to them and have been exceedingly high and haughty in all that they have done. Such persons may expect to be stopped in their boasting before long. May God grant that a little thorn may be enough for us; that one touch of the knife may suffice to let out our proud blood; that a little buffeting by the messenger of Satan may avail to prevent our being exalted above measure, for has not the Lord said, “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose month must be held in with bit and bridle”?

A little trial ought to suffice to ballast us, for I am sure we have nothing so abundant in the way of Revelations and spiritual attainments that we should feel inclined at all to boasting. It is a great shame if we have fallen into the danger which Paul escaped and have fallen into it without rhyme or reason. He who is proud about nothing is a fool in capitals. I desire to call your attention to the fact that although Paul was undoubtedly humble and the discipline of God had helped to keep him so, yet there is not a particle of cant in any of his expressions. There is no trace of the whine of hypocrites revealing, rather than concealing, their self-conceit. Humility has been well defined as having a just estimate of yourself. There is no humility in such self-depreciation as would lead you to deny what God has worked in you, or worked by you— that might be willful falsehood and certainly would be grievous error.

Falsehood is not a constituent element of anything that is gracious— we are not required to call five talents one in order to be humble. If we make a fair and just estimate of ourselves, we shall certainly discover nothing to boast about and we shall not, then, be likely to borrow from the lips of others words and confessions which do not accurately represent our character, or state our feelings and, ought not, therefore, to be employed by us. The mimicry of humility is a very common piece of masquerading. You shall find persons speaking in very lowly terms of themselves, but they do not expect you to believe them. A Brother who has called himself worldly in prayer, if you should tell him in private conversation that you were glad to hear his truthful description of himself, would not take it at all kindly, but would ask who and what are *you* that you should judge him! He would tell you he is as spiritual as you are and perhaps more so.

A monk, we remember, confessed that he was so great a sinner that he had broken all the commandments. But when afterwards one of his friends began to charge him with breaking first one commandment and then another, the hypocrite averted that he had not broken any one of them! Men are so little humble that when they smite on their breasts they may be still boasting in their hearts! Mock humility creeps around us, cringing and fawning, but every honest man loathes it and we may be sure that God loathes it, too. Now, if the Apostle had said that he was not an Apostle at all, that he had never suffered anything for Christ, or done anything to spread the Gospel, he would have been speaking, as some say, humbly. But this is a mistake—he would have been telling lies!

He, therefore, does nothing of the kind. He says that he is not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles; speaks of his sufferings and his toils; told of the manifestations of Divine Grace to his soul and, yet, for all that, he finishes his detail of experience by saying, “Though I am nothing.” Brothers and Sisters, do not deny what God has done for you, or by you! Look at all of it and value it and bless the Lord for it! But still, when all is said and done you must, no, I trust you cheerfully will come back to this—“Though I am nothing”—speaking truthfully all the while and not using a good expression for a sort of religious fashion’s sake, but because it is deeply felt to be quite as true that you are nothing as it is true that God has blessed you!

I shall endeavor at this time, as the Spirit of God shall help me, to speak upon this very remarkable expression of the Apostle, “Though I am nothing.” O, that both the preacher and his hearers may be able to enter into the spirit and soul of the text and make it all our own!

**I.**And first, we shall say of it that this was OTHER MEN’S ESTIMATE OF HIM. Everyone did not value the great Apostle as we do, but many spoke ill of him. Perhaps he meant, “though I am nothing *in the opinion of my detractors*.” I hardly think he intended it, but still, he may have included that in its meaning. He may have meant, “I am not a whit behind the most eminent of the Apostles, though in the judgment of others I am nothing.” I mention this point, first, because it may comfort any earnest servant of God who is faithfully serving his Master but finds himself undervalued and despised by those from whom he expected sympathy and help.

You may be starting in the Christian life as a young man full of zeal and fervor, but you dwell among a people who count you hot-headed and self-conceited and do their best to thwart you. You are like Joseph among his brothers and the archers sorely shoot at you. You are looked upon as a dreamer and a pretentious fool. Your companions are as rough to you as were David’s brothers when he came down to the host—they charge you with pride and willfulness. Be comforted about this trial if you are, indeed, a true-hearted soldier of Jesus Christ, for if Paul heard that in the judgment of many his personal presence was weak and his speech was contemptible—and if many other eminent men have been frowned upon and misjudged—you need not wonder if the same thing happens to you! It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth—bear it and profit by it!

The case is harder with older servants of God. After a long life of usefulness, Churches often forget all that a man was and did in his vigorous times and now that the elasticity of his mind has abated, they treat him with indifference. His ministry is now more solid and full of experimental teaching—an ungenerous race of hearers do not say that his preaching has become weighty, but they complain that the old gentleman is “very heavy” and they cannot endure his prosiness. The good old man, who deserves to be honored by his congregation, runs the risk of being elbowed out and reckoned as a worn-out nobody. You must not marvel, my dear Brother, if foolish lovers of novelty should so treat you! It is inexcusable and yet it is common. It wounds your heart and makes you wish to be gone to the better land, but do not let it too sorely vex you, for the same thing happened to him at whose feet you would be glad to sit—I mean the Apostle of the Gentiles—who, when he was “such an one as Paul the Aged,” knew that to many he was nothing.

In following up the subject, we observe that Paul was nothing, first, *in the estimation of hatred*. His Jewish brethren, when he was, with them, the slave of their prejudices and an advocate of their principles, thought him some great one. He was a leader among them, a Pharisee among the Pharisees, a man deeply taught in rabbinical lore, a scholar to be gloried in, a zealot to be trusted! Then Paul was something! But when he went over to the hated sect and became a worshipper of the Nazarene, he was nothing! The bigot spat at the very mention of his name. He was an apostate, a worthless fellow, a madman, a nothing! He became an alien and worse, a castaway and a curse. Such is, in a measure, the case when men become thoroughly and bravely followers of Jesus. The world’s market price of them falls a hundred per cent.

If a scientific man is of infidel principles, he is cried up as an eminent thinker and discoverer. But should he be a true Christian and know 20 times as much as his fellows, he is a person of antiquated views and narrow notions. If a preacher proclaims novel heresies, then he is declared a man of advanced thought, a leader abreast of the times— though, indeed, there may be nothing in him but an affectation of singularity and lack of reverence for the Word of God! He who is content with the exceeding broadness of the Divine testimony and asks no greater liberty than that of the Truth of God, is, in certain quarters, reported to have narrowed his soul and to be possessed of but slender intellect.

Of course, it has always been so, but I think it is easier to call a man a fool than to prove him to be so and it is a great deal easier to boast of your own wonderful powers, the expansiveness of your mind and the great progress that you have made in thought, than it will be to convince really thoughtful and experienced men who walk with God that, after all, the new is better than the old and that the inventions of man’s fancy are better than the doctrines of Divine Revelation! That is, however, the custom of men who, being short of arguments, seize upon the weapons of contempt. If you are not of their way of thinking you are not a thinker at all! If you will chime in with their notions, you are worthy of all honor! But if yon differ from them, you must be nothing. Paul was marked at zero by the measurement of those who hated him.

He was also *nothing in the valuation of envy*. There arose, even in the Church of Christ, certain ones who loved pre-eminence and found the Apostle already in the highest place. False brethren claimed to be Apostles and, in order to maintain their pretensions, they questioned the Apostleship of Paul. They strove to rise by pulling down one who was superior to themselves. Who was Paul? they asked. He could write a weighty and powerful letter, but if you came to listen to him, his weak eyes, his short stature and his cramped resolve to know nothing but Christ crucified caused him to make a sorry figure as an orator! They, themselves, with enticing words and fair speeches, boasted that they far excelled him.

Where was the excellency of his words? Where was the depth of his wisdom? He was nothing and they sneered at him and exalted themselves. The Apostle knew all this and was by no means crushed, thereby, for he could stand even before envy. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, envy has a wonderful skill in the cruel arts of slander and detraction—if the envious cannot quench the sun, they can at least point to its spots, or raise a dust to blind men’s eyes to its brightness! Many a hero of the Truth of God has been despised for the very reason which ought to have secured him honor. It is an unfortunate thing for some men, if they love their own ease, that they have risen to conspicuous usefulness, for in a middle place they might have been allowed to be something, but jealousy is now resolved to rate them as nothing.

If Paul had wanted to be comfortable and repose had been his objective, he had only to subside into the common ranks of the lukewarm Laodiceans and then he would have been far less plucked at. Zeal and holiness, if they are accompanied with a measure of success, will secure a man that contempt among the envious which is the homage that evil hearts must, of necessity, pay to goodness. Again, the Apostle was, evidently, *nothing to those who desired that Christianity should make a fair show in the flesh*. Certain brethren had come among the Believers who brought with them human wisdom and thought to adorn the doctrine of Christ and cause the offense of the Cross to cease. Gnosticism was the “modern thought” of the Apostle’s age and of the era which followed it. It was a translation of the Gospel into the language of the schools and the evaporation of its true life and meaning in the process.

Our Apostle abhorred the wisdom of words. “We use,” says he, “great plainness of speech.” He tore the mask from off those half heathens who made the Cross of Christ of no effect by their philosophizing and, therefore, they retaliated by declaring that he was not a man of a great mind—that, in fact he was nothing! Other teachers arose who were opposed to the philosophical way, but they must take the way of tradition and ritualism, declaring that men must be circumcised, or else their faith in Christ would be of no avail. Such persons dwelt much upon the observance of holy days and months and so on, and thus stirred up the spirit of the Apostle till he came forth and cried, “I, Paul, say unto you, that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing! By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

By declaring the plain Gospel of salvation by Grace through faith, he laid the axe at the root of all ritualism, as he had before done at the root of all rationalism. Straightway the high churchmen discovered that Paul was nothing! He might have decorated the Gospel with learning and made it palatable to the Greeks, or he might have cramped it with tradition and made it agreeable to the Jews, but he scorned to do either. When Peter went a little in the Jewish direction, Paul “withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed” and, therefore, some cried up Cephas, but cried down Paul and, according to their account, he was just nothing.

May the Lord grant to all of us who preach the Gospel a willingness to be lightly esteemed! May the Lord give us all Divine Grace to be fools in the estimation of modern wise men! May we have enough backbone of holy firmness to be conservative of the old Truth and to be careless of the ridicule of the worldly wise. May we have enough loyalty to Christ to be willing to be despised for His sake! May we be man enough not to care one atom whether we are in honor or dishonor, so long as our conscience is clear that we have faithfully preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified! The day shall come when he who has borne the most disgrace for Christ will be esteemed the happiest and most honored man alive—and when he who was counted the greatest fool for Christ shall be acknowledged to be among the wisest of men and shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

Will we not cheerfully consent to be nothing for His sake who made Himself of no reputation for our sakes? Will we not, with John, rejoice that He must increase and that we must decrease? It is our joy to see Him All in All and if any shame or contempt borne by us could lift up His name but one hair’s breadth, we would rejoice with joy unspeakable. After all, what is man’s opinion? The balances are not those of the sanctuary and the weights are not those of justice. The verdict of earth will be reversed by the judgment of Heaven, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God! When any measure of injustice grieves us, we should console ourselves with the remembrance that so persecuted they the Prophets that were before us and yet the Prophets have lost no real honor! They also despised our Master and yet His Throne has lost none of its Glory.

Thus have we discussed a meaning which some have seen in the text and if it is not the first sense of it, at any rate it is a truth which may be profitably remembered.

**II.**But now, secondly, we have here in the words of the Apostle HIS OWN ESTIMATE OF HIMSELF. “Though I am nothing.” Our first observation upon the Apostle’s valuation of himself is that it is *a very great correction upon his original estimate of himself*, for in former days he carried a high sail and would by no means lower his flag to any man. When he was on the road to Damascus to hunt the saints, he was on first-class terms with himself and thought that he was doing God a great service. He was somebody then, both good and great, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee. You might have ridden many a mile to find his equal. Saul was like his namesake of old, head and shoulders above all others. But *Paul* was of quite a different stature— short and even diminutive. I refer, of course, to his height in his own esteem, He would not, then, have claimed that he was nothing, for he was a student of the Law and a great deal more besides.

*This corrected estimate very much resulted from the enlightenment which he received at his conversion*. What a flood of light does the Lord pour in upon a man’s soul when he brings him to Himself! At first it almost blinds him, so that like Paul, he admits, “I could not see for the brightness of that light.” It was so in my own case. I had often been down into the cellar of my heart and I rather admired the purity and order of the place. It seemed to me to be festooned and decorated and it boasted a good share of vegetation and a considerable life of its own. A dim, flickering light sufficed to show me, as I thought, that it was by no means a very foul place, but rather the reverse! I could not be so vain as to say that I thought it absolutely *perfect* in cleanliness and beauty, but still, it was as well as could be expected and far better than the most of other hearts.

Now, it was ordained that this flattering illusion should be dispelled. One day, as I went into this vault, there came one with a larger candle than I had been known to carry and what I saw surprised me beyond measure! I saw that the festoons which I imagined to be special decorations were huge cobwebs heavy with dust! The vegetation, too, I saw was all blanched and much of it a noxious growth, while the life which I had somewhat boasted of, I was ashamed to look upon or even to think of! That candle shining in the cellar of my soul had worked a melancholy change in my thoughts of myself and foolishly I resolved never to permit so bright a light to enter there, again, as if to *hide* the evil was to remove it!

But things could not remain as they were, for one day there came Another who did me a worse, yet better turn, for He descended into my cellar and removed certain shutters which had long excluded the light of day. When next I entered the vault I was ready to swoon for very flight, for a *dunghill* was sweetness to it—it was the concentration of abominations! There were all manner of creeping things, loathsome and polluting! I was ready to die at the sight. But, to tell the truth, I did not, even then, see it all, for the window was still so much covered over with thick cobwebs and filth that the whole of the light did not enter. Yes, I fear I have not even yet seen all the pollution of my nature, but I thank God I have seen enough to make me cry to Him who is able to cleanse! Hercules turned a river into the Augean stable and purified it and my Lord Jesus has, with His own blood, purged my nature—but this I know, I am nothing—less than nothing in my natural state.

I have but given you a parable of what the Apostle saw in himself when the Law came with its condemning power into his soul. During those three days in which the scales were on his eyes and he was blind, not seeing the sun for a season, he turned all his sight within and saw himself. Then great Saul dwarfed into little Paul and the learned rabbi shriveled into a poor Brother who was glad to receive humble Ananias and to learn from him what he was yet to do. He who hectored over the Church of God now meekly arose and was baptized, calling upon the name of the Lord. Three days of glorious light, so bright that it made him blind, had corrected his estimate of himself—and it was in memory of that lesson and of all that he had learned subsequently that he said, “Though I am nothing.”

Beloved Friends, *the force of that estimate had increased by a growing belief in the Doctrines of Grace*. If you wish to find the free will of man very much extolled, you must not read in the Epistles of Paul. If any of you desire to write an essay upon the dignity of human nature, or to preach a sermon upon the glory which still remains in man despite his fallen state—the recuperative power of human nature despite its disease—you will gain little help from our Apostle! I could refer you to certain modern Divines for a good deal of stuff of that kind, but the Apostle of the Gentiles does not deal in that material. His indictment against humanity in the first chapter of Romans is as terrible as it is true. “Dead in trespasses and sins” is his description of man’s condition—Sovereign Grace is his only remedy!

He tells us of being born again and of being newly created by the work of God. He tells us of justification by faith through Grace by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but he has not a word to say of human power or merit. If ever a man could say, “Grace! Grace!” and *did* say it and kept on saying it most distinctly, it was the Apostle Paul! In proportion as he learned the fullness, freeness, richness and sovereignty of Divine Grace did he see, side by side with it, the nakedness, the filthiness, the *nothingness* of man and so he who could best glory in the Grace of God thought less and less of himself and said, “Though I am nothing.”

In addition to this *his own internal experience had very much helped him to feel that he was nothing*, for he had experienced great spiritual struggles. “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” was not once or twice his cry, but he often felt the law of his old nature struggling against the law of his mind and he lived in lifelong conflict with the evil which he saw within himself, therefore feeling daily that salvation must be of Grace alone and that he himself was nothing and less than nothing.

Beloved, I feel sure that when the Apostle said that he was nothing, he meant that he was *nothing in comparison with his Lord*. He had seen the Glory of His Master up yonder in Heaven and he had preached that Glory among the sons of men and, as for himself, he could not find any figure to represent his own insignificance. The smallest of figures was too large for him. He dared not describe himself by the figure *one* and so he put down a *zero* and declared, “I am *nothing*.” When a man’s heart is filled with adoring reverence of the Redeemer, he shrinks into nothing and feels a kind of self-annihilation passing over his spirit. And, if you have never seen the Lord, but only heard of Him, you may aim at humility, but when your eyes see Him, then will you *have*it, for you will abhor yourself in dust and ashes. Our Apostle had in the fullest sense seen the Lord and, for that reason, with emphasis, he cried, “Though I am nothing.”

He meant, next, that he was *nothing to boast of—*that albeit he had been a night and a day in the deep and had been stoned and had been beaten with rods, and had been a faithful sufferer for Christ—albeit that he had preached the Gospel in the regions beyond, not building upon another man’s foundation, yet in all these he saw nothing whatever of which he could boast, but he was still nothing. I remember well a talkative Christian who supposed herself to possess very remarkable attainments, very much of the same character as those who swarmed around us a few months ago, people who were of very superfine hotpressed quality. I wish them every blessing, but I am not at all enamored of their pretensions, wonderful as they are.

Now, this superior person was talking of the marvelous things which she had felt, known and done. She was, if not quite perfect, in remarkable danger of becoming so! She turned to an aged Christian in the company and said, “But you, dear Brother, do not say a word.” Now, you know there are individuals who *say* little, who *think* all the more and our old friend was one of them, but still remained silent. “Come,” she said, “have you no religious experience?” The old man said very quietly, “I never had any to *boast* about.” That remark I heartily endorsed! If we attain to the highest experience and rise very near to God and conquer open sin we shall still have to look within and say, “I am nothing.” Boasting is a sure sign of *failure* wherever it is found—even a giant like Goliath had hardly done boasting before he fell beneath the sling and stone of a ruddy youth!

Restrain every feeling of pride! No, chase it from your soul, for it is foolish and will lead to further folly. It is a noxious insect which will corrupt whatever it lights upon, gaudy though its wings may be. King Herod was soon eaten of worms when he began to be blown up with pride. Where there is the most precious Grace, there is always a jewelcase of humility to keep it in. Gilded wood may float, but an ingot of gold will sink. Diotrephes was a nobody and loved the pre-eminence. Paul was not a whit behind the chief of the Apostles, yet he said, “Though I am nothing.” If we reach the Apostle’s point of conscious nothingness we had better stop there, for there is no place safer and happier and none more consistent with the facts of the case! Those who are lowly, are excellent, but pride is pestilent. The possession of Grace secures a measure of selfdeprecation and in proportion as that Grace increases, the thermometer of self-estimation will fall. Below zero is the proper point for us—for in truth we are less than the least of all the saints!

The Apostle meant, next, that he was *nothing to trust in*. “Though I am nothing.” We begin our Christian life by trusting in Christ, alone, and we shall continue so to trust as to His merit. But we are very apt to get wrong in other matters. We begin with a sense of being very weak and foolish and we look to Jesus only for strength and guidance. But after a while we think ourselves growing into deeply experienced and wellinstructed Christians and the temptation is to lean somewhat to our own understanding and stability. All this comes of evil and will lead to further evil. I recollect well a person asking a Brother of my acquaintance to lend him a certain sum of money. This my friend was willing to do, but the man added, “You know you can trust me. I have been a Christian now 35 years and I am past temptation.”

My friend, like a wise man, buttoned his pocket very quietly and said he must decline to make him a loan. He had intended to do so till that vainglorious speech was made. That boaster failed the next day and was discovered to have been an arrant rogue! Whenever a man says, “I am past temptation,” he reveals the pride of his heart! And whenever any of us even *dream* of such a thing about ourselves, we have need to tremble for fear that some terrible fall is near. Yet that thought does come across us, though we do not utter it—we half think in our hearts that those inexperienced young men may go wrong, but that we who are middleaged men are not so likely to be overthrown. Yet grievous sins in Churches are as common among the more advanced as among the young.

Most, if not all, of the great falls recorded in the Bible happened to middle-aged and old people! Think of the drunkenness of Noah and of Lot and the sin of Reuben, Judah, David and Peter and you will see that these were not hot-headed boys, but experienced men who should have acted better. We must come to this—I am nothing—I am strong in the Lord when He strengthens me, but I am as weak as an infant without His aid. I may know a great many things as the Lord continues to teach me, but if His Grace were removed I should be as foolish and ignorant as when I first came into His school. “In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.” Within my nature there is no stay for my confidence. I am nothing to trust in.

“Though I am nothing,” again, means this— *I am nothing worth considering—*as if he said, “If there is any good thing for me to do, I never calculate whether I shall be a loser by it or a gainer, for I am not worth taking into the account. If Christ’s kingdom will but come, it does not matter whether Paul lives or Paul dies. I am nothing in comparison with His Glory.” I think he meant this, also—“I am of small consequence. Christ’s kingdom will go on without me. Souls will be won without me. His Glory will be promoted in the world even if I am no more alive to work for His cause. I do not count myself to be a person of such consequence to His Church that the Lord needs me. He may *use* me, but if He does not use me, He will use somebody else. I am but a pen and He can produce many such. If He does not write with one, He can write with another—I am nothing. If I am now a trumpet in His hand, He can blow through another if He chooses to lay me aside, for rams’ horns are common enough and the walls of Jericho will not stand for lack of them.” I think that was what he meant by, “Though I am nothing.”

I pray God we may make a low estimate of ourselves and never dream ourselves to be essential to God’s cause. I shall yet spend a few minutes more in speaking of our own estimate of ourselves, dear Brothers and Sisters, and may we all be made, by Divine Grace, to say “Though I am nothing.” I will tell you why I wish that we may come to this. It is because it will be exceedingly beneficial to us if, with deep sincerity, we feel that we are nothing. It will prevent pride and that which will prevent pride is worth a fortune. It will prevent our being mortified, as we sometimes are, because notice is not taken of us when we have done something that we thought was greatly praiseworthy. If we say, “Though I am nothing,” we do not expect people to talk much about a *nothing*, nor do we wish them to do so—we are glad to get into the shade and if we do not receive a single word of commendation we are content to have worked for the Lord in quietness.

No man will look for honor among his fellows when he acknowledges that he is nothing! This humility will also prevent severe censures of others. We are all very handy at picking holes in our Brethren’s coats, but when we are *nothing* we shall draw back our hand and say, “It does not become a nothing and a nobody to be finding fault with other people.” I sometimes wish that those who criticize ministers would think of this. I do not believe that a public person can nowadays say five plain words which some critic or other will not misunderstand or misrepresent. I wish they would try to speak or write themselves and see whether others could not pull *them* to pieces quite as readily! You will be greatly helped in avoiding censoriousness if you have a lowly view of yourself so as to say—“Though I am nothing.”

This will also help you to avoid all self-seeking. Why should you seek your own praise if you are nothing? There is no good in seeking for great things for a nothing! If you are nothing, you will keep your motives clear. You will seek the Glory of God and not your own. If you are nothing, selfdenial will become very easy to you. You will be willing to be a doormat to God’s temple for His saints to wipe their feet upon if you can be more serviceable there than in any other capacity. A man who feels himself to be nothing will be easily contented. He who is nothing does not need a thousand a year to maintain his dignity. He who is nothing, having food and raiment, is content. It would be a pity to spend a great deal upon nothing so he that is nothing thanks God for what he has and eats his bread and drinks his cup of water and blesses God that he has all that and Jesus Christ, too!

Mr. Somebody needs a large estate and a heap of money and when he has that, Mr. Somebody need much more and is never satisfied. Then, too, he has so many calls that he cannot afford to give anything away, while he who is nothing has his weekly tithe to bring, for he feels himself to be nothing but a steward and must use his Master’s goods faithfully. He who knows himself to be nothing is also full of gratitude. If you catch him alone, you will find the tears in his eyes and if you question him, he will tell you that he was weeping to think that God should ever have loved *him*, for he is such a nobody. He was wondering at his election, marveling that Eternal Love should have pitched upon*him*. He was wondering at redemption, admiring that the Lord Jesus Christ should have shed His blood for *him*! He was wondering at effectual calling, amazed that the Holy Spirit should ever have called *him*. He was wondering at the persevering love of God, that the Lord’s mercy should have endured his ill manners so long. He was wondering that there should be a Heaven for him, wondering that there should be eternal life for Him. “Though I am nothing,” he says, “yet Infinite Grace is mine!”

How can there be all this for a nobody? Great God, how good You are! Is not all this a sweet commendation of a lowly spirit? He that lives in the Valley of Humiliation, among the lilies, dwells where the birds sing all day and the gazelles and the does of the field lie down in peace! Now, I finish with this one thought. When the Apostle says, “*Though*I am nothing,” that word shows that there was a fact in the background. He had been telling us that he was once caught up into the third Heaven and had enjoyed a special Revelation of Christ. Yes, beloved Believers, we have had our banqueting days when the banner over us was love. We have been very near the Beloved and we have been made to drink the spiced wine of His pomegranate and He has manifested Himself to us as He does not unto the world. All this you know, and I, also, know it, “though I am nothing.”

In addition to this, “the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad,” by enabling us to serve His cause. If we have not been stoned and scourged, yet we have borne something for Christ and borne it cheerfully. If we cannot emulate the Apostle in abundance of service, yet the Lord has not left us without fruit unto His Glory and this we are right glad of, though we heartily add, “though I am nothing.” We can also believingly say—“though I am nothing,” yet the Spirit of God dwells in me. “Though I am nothing,” the Spirit of God uses me! I want you not to forget the background of mercy which sets out this poor noticing and make it look all the less, albeit that it makes it all the sweeter for it to be so little. Oh, yes, and there is a Heaven for me and there is eternal life for me and there are the three Persons of the Divine Trinity sworn to save me! And Heaven and earth may pass away, but I shall never perish, neither shall any pluck me out of Jesus’ hands, “though I am nothing.” His angels are commissioned to keep me, and He, Himself, in Covenant, has given His oath and promise to preserve me, “though I am nothing.”

“Though I am nothing.” Does it not make your soul laugh with inexpressible delight to think that you shall wear a crown of life that fades not away and that your hands shall strike the strings of a harp which shall pour forth immortal melody though you are nothing? My heart dances while I feel that the pearly gates, the streets of gold, the goodly company of angels and the assembly of the firstborn are for me, “though I am nothing”! Dearly Beloved, go away with “Though I am nothing” in your mouths, but yet say, “Yet has He loved me with an everlasting love and because He has set His love upon me, He will deliver me and set me on high! Since I was precious in His sight I have been honorable and He has loved me and He gave more than Egypt and Ethiopia for me, ‘though I am nothing.’”

The Lord bless you and if there is a sinner here who is somebody, may the Lord turn him into nobody! But if there is a nobody here, may the Lord bless him, for he is the sort of man that Jesus saves! O Soul, you must be *nothing* if God is to save you! You must come down from your high horse! You must give up your trust in works and ceremonies and natural goodness and be *nothing*! And when you are nothing, then will Jesus Christ be All in All to you! He is a full Christ for empty sinners. He gives life to dead sinners, healing to sick sinners and clothing to naked sinners! But if you are full and rich and lively in yourselves, you may go your way—He will have nothing to do with you.

If you are nothing. If you are clean emptied out and stripped and done for, ground to powder, crushed, and rendered helpless, you are of those for whom Jesus shed His precious blood! Come, trust in Him and find eternal life!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 11:13-33; 12:1-12.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—625, 627.**

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:**  
BELOVED FRIENDS—Yesterday I was gladdened by a telegram from our well-beloved deacon, Mr. Murrell. “All going well. Tabernacle crowded each service. All friends united and hearty, expecting great results this February.” This was more precious to me than a banknote for a large amount! I have no greater joy than to hear that the Lord blesses the work at home. For myself, as you desire to hear frequently of my welfare, I can only say that the weather here is variable and I have varied with it, but yet I am greatly refreshed and in a fair way to recover strength. I still lean heavily upon my staff and can only totter a short distance, but my spirits are revived and my mind is regaining its tone. Pray for me daily, as I also do for you with all my heart.

Your loving friend,  
***C.H. SPURGEON***  
Mentone, February 11, 1879  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1788 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PROOF OF OUR MINISTRY  
NO. 1788

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 29, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak towards you, but is mighty in you. For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we, also, are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. Examine yourselves, as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not  
know, yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—  
unless you are reprobates?”  
2 Corinthians 13:3, 4.~~***

The Apostle had much joy in being the founder, the father and the fosterer of so many Churches, but this joy brought with it constant and heavy trial. Care pressed heavily upon him, for he mentions it as the crown and crush of all his burdens—“That which comes upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.” He was not simply as a father among them, but he was as a nurse, continually on the watch and, in all tenderness, anxious for her little ones. He was deeply grieved when he saw anything wrong, lest he should have labored in vain, and should see any perish who appeared to be hopeful converts. He always had in his mind’s eye the account which he would have to give at the last—and his prayer was that he might render that account with joy and not with grief, for he adds, “That is unprofitable for you.” His whole soul went after the people of his charge and his heart sank within him when he observed prominent sin among them.

The Corinthian Church was enriched with many gifts, but impoverished by slender Grace. This Church had elected to conduct its arrangements upon the principle of everybody speaking who had something to say. Moreover, it chose to be a Church without rule and order, not caring to appoint officers who would be shepherds of the flock. That Church seems to have been a frequent trial to the Apostle and, after writing to them once very earnestly, he wrote to them a second time with equal tenderness and energy—and then he said he would have to visit them in person—and when he did come, he would, by discipline among them, make them know that Christ would not endure sin in His Church. Whatever they had to say about Paul, personally, he meant to be faithful to God and to the Truth of God—and he was sure that the power of God would be with him to support him in the work of reformation.

He writes in a sorrowful strain and yet one cannot help seeing how calm and judicious he is—how deliberately he enquires into evidence and how impartially he judges the case. He had an intense desire to do the right thing and, therefore, passion and prejudice did not operate upon him. In this particular text he shows the high qualities of moral courage, inflexible justice, loving tenderness and wise prudence—proving himself to be a fit leader of the host. On account of Paul’s having put his finger upon the mischief that was among them, the Corinthians turned round upon him and disparaged him—his letters might be weighty and powerful, but his personal presence was weak. And his speech—well, it was contemptible! They even questioned whether he was an Apostle at all!

Had he lived with Christ? Had he sat at Jesus’ feet? No—it was apparent to everybody that his conversion took place *after* the departure of the Lord and you could never be quite sure that he had been *supernaturally* called as he said he had been. Thus they murmured among themselves. From this ordeal, Paul does not shrink for a moment, but he answers all their evil speeches in the language before us.

First, notice that he exhibits *God’s chosen method of operation*in the Church by His appointed servants. This is a very interesting feature in the text. Secondly, he shows them what was *the sure proof of power.* And then, thirdly, he turns the tables upon those who had examined him and bids them give *the needed proof of themselves—* “Examine yourselves; prove yourselves; know you not, yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are reprobates?”

**I.**The Apostle Paul teaches us in these verses THE LORD’S CHOSEN METHOD OF OPERATION. The rebellious Corinthians had spoken ill of the Apostle as lacking in power—his personal presence was not commanding, his speech was not fascinating, and so forth. Paul does not deny the charge, nor endeavor to exalt himself, but he glories in his infirmities because the power of God rests upon him! He admits anything they may have to say about his deficiency in natural dignity and elocution, but he declares the general principle of *power in weakness*, by which the Lord conducts the matters of the Gospel dispensation.

Power in weakness is the great secret of the Gospel mode of working! Life, born of death, is the life of our souls—a life which would never have been in us at all if it had not been for the most cruel death on record— when men crucified the ever-blessed Lord. The Apostle says, in verse four, “Though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.” That is to say, our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished His mighty purpose by becoming weak—through His weakness He became able to suffer and to die—in order to save us from the thralldom of sin.

It was necessary that the Infinite should lay aside His power and become an Infant, that He who rules over all things should become, Himself, obedient unto death! That He who wore the royal robe of Sovereignty should be found in fashion as a man! He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a Servant and fulfilled the Divine Law. Yes, more, inasmuch as a great sacrifice must be offered for sin, a death was required—but it was not possible that God, regarded as God purely and simply, should die—therefore Jesus stooped to our weakness and by weakness received the power to die, if I may call it so—that He, by that death, redeem us! By assuming our weakness He gained the power to act as our Substitute and put away our sin by the Sacrifice of Himself.

I am not aware of any other passage of Scripture where weakness is, in so many words, ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ. This makes the text the more striking! Remember that there was resident within His complex Person a boundless power which He could at once exert. He occasionally permitted some outgoings of that power to let men see that His subjection was voluntary. He said of His life, “No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” Yet He was so weak that another was called in to bear His Cross. He cried, “I thirst!” He appealed to His God, saying, “Why have You forsaken Me?” And He was brought into the dust of death. He only spoke to those who came to take Him and they fell backward—a word would have brought Him 12 legions of angels! Truly did He say to Pilate, “You could have no power at all against Me, except it were given you from above.”

Yet as a voluntary captive He was bound—and as a willing Substitute He died—“He saved others, Himself He could not save.” Even on the Cross He displayed abundant evidence that He possessed inherent Omnipotence, for before He gave up the ghost, the midday sun veiled its face and traveled on in tenfold night! The veil which hid the Holy of Holies was torn in two as by giant hands! The rocks were split; the earth shook, the dead arose—to let men see that He who died in weakness was none other than the Son of God! He used His weakness as the instrument of His strength by which He became almighty to redeem!

Now, you perceive that this weakness of Christ is the way in which He exerts a wondrous power among men. Because of His being obedient to death, even the death of the Cross, “God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.” Because He died in weakness, He has become mighty to save by the putting away of sin. Has He not already finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness? By this sign He conquered—the ensign of His bloody Cross is the seal of victory! It is Himself wounded, Himself hung up as a malefactor, Himself dead as a victim on the altar before the most high God—it is Himself thus slain which is His power to pardon and to save!

You know, Brothers and Sisters, that our Lord’s power over our hearts comes by His great love and the matchless manner of His showing it. Stooping so low to save such unworthy ones, He conquers our hearts! His dying love has begotten living love within us. It sends a spear into the heart of sin that Jesus yielded His heart for our sakes. This nails up the hands and feet of our rebellious lusts, to think that Jesus was crucified for us! This leads us in golden fetters, the happy captives of His mighty Grace, when we behold how His love stooped to the curse for us! The weakness of Christ is stronger in its power over our hearts than all His strength could have been. It is by *weakness* that Christ has achieved His mighty purpose! Today He has left His weakness on the Cross and gone upward to His Throne—and there He sits clothed with a Glory born of His weakness! The eyes of my faith even now behold Him! I am glad I do not see Him more clearly, otherwise I must cease to speak to you and fall at His feet as dead, so great is His majesty, so glorious is His exaltation! That glory in our esteem has sprung out of His weakness, His sorrow, His death. Your brightest coronet, O Christ, is fashioned from the crown of thorns! You are more lovely, now, than You ever were before! The marks of Your passion have made You altogether lovely in the eyes of Your people!

Why did Paul interject this teaching? It was to show us that this great principle runs through all God’s work in the saving of men. He does not save men, today, by the strength of His ministers, but by their *weakness*! And it is not the power of the Gospel, judged after the manner of the flesh, that is to conquer nations, but, as in our Lord’s case, the victory is to be won by *weakness*! Look at Paul, himself—he came among these Corinthian people and, I dare say, when they were first converted they felt like the Galatians—that they would pluck out their own eyes and give them to him! But after a while, although he was very faithful, they turned against him, and said he was no orator, he had no great force of conception, or majesty of diction!

The Apostle was willing enough to admit that he was devoid of such showy gifts. Though you and I, at a distance, think very greatly of Paul, and very rightly so, yet among those cavilers he was lightly esteemed. He did not give himself the lofty airs of the great teachers of the day and, therefore, foolish persons despised him. Some liked Apollos better and others preferred Cephas—and thus they formed parties—agreeing in opposing Paul, but agreeing on nothing else. Paul was willing to lose all personal honor, though, in truth, not a whit behind the chief of the Apostles. He said, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” He cheerfully sank, that His Lord might be exalted!

Moreover, in those days there was a great liking among the people, especially those who thought themselves educated, for the Greek philosophers. They said to one another, “Have you studied Solon? Have you accepted the teaching of Socrates? Have you drank in the doctrines of the divine Plato? That is the man! In him there is depth of reasoning and breadth of thought! As for this Paul, he does not seem to care for the great masters of thought.” “No,” says Paul, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” They looked for philosophy and did not get it—and he did not mean they should. “But at least,” they said, “what he has to say ought to be delivered with all the graces of oratory, after the best manner of the schools.” “No,” says Paul, “my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom—that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

If he had power among them, he determined that it should be the power of the Holy Spirit and no other power. The charms of oratory are but a poor and fickle force! Tricks of language are a wretched sort of witchcraft! Instead of the colored flames of fancy, Paul would let into their minds the pure white light of the Truth of God as it shines from the Cross! Those things which were looked upon in those days as the chief instruments of power by which orators swayed human minds, Paul deliberately renounced and relied on higher forces! He kept to the preaching of the Cross, which was to them that perish, foolishness—but to the saved, the power of God! He put forward that side of the Gospel which was most objectionable, so that to the Jews it was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness! He did this of design, for so the Lord always works, making His Divine Power more glorious in the absence of that which is thought to be power among men!

The Apostle, as a Jew, was full of ceremonial teaching which was very powerful with Jews, but to this he died. As a man, he was well and deeply educated in philosophy, but to that he also died, knowing nothing but the Cross and the scandal thereof. As his Master saved men by His weakness on the Cross, so did He save men by His Word spoken in the apparent weakness of Paul! And yet, again, I believe the Apostle meant this—that though he might have come among them, if he had liked, and said, “I am an Apostle! I have supreme power over Churches. Out of this Church I shall eject offenders without any question, for I am among you as your spiritual director!” But he never used such authority. On the contrary, he was the servant of all, patient to the last degree, gentle, humble, condescending, unselfish, fully consecrated. If any one was grieved, Paul was grieved *with* him! If any suffered trial, Paul was tried! He might have said, as His Master did, “I am among you as he that serves.”

He did, after the Divine example, continually wash the saints’ feet. His was a humble manner, for he sought nothing of them but that he might lead them in the way of holiness and maintain peace in their midst. He was no lord over God’s heritage, but the most humble of them all. He hoped all things, endured all things, believed all things for the sake of those entrusted to his charge. Thus he was a power among them—his evident self-sacrifice made him have more influence at Corinth than all their proud leaders of division! By laying aside authority, he became mighty to influence them for good. By God’s Grace, I, too, desire to practice this lesson to perfection.

All of you, my Brothers, who desire to be useful, must learn that in selfsinking, your usefulness will be found. Do not seek to be great—try to grow less and less. He who becomes least is greatest of all. The way to rise in the peerage of the Church is to go *down*! Do not take what you have a right to take. Do not covet the position which you feel you might righteously assume—take the lowest place, do the meanest service—be willing to be *anything* or *nothing* so that God is glorified. Be ready to be stuck in any corner, or stowed away in any lumber room, if such should be the will of God. And then the probability is that you will be largely and honorably used. The way to success in the Kingdom is by a constant sense of personal unworthiness and weakness. “When I am weak, then am I strong.”

By death with Christ, we come to live with Him! By being crucified with Him, we reign! By perfect self-surrender we obtain all things! He that saves his life shall lose it, but he that loses it for Christ’s sake shall find it both here and hereafter! I think you see the Apostle’s drift and how completely he answered all objections against himself grounded upon his apparent unimportance and weakness. It only remains for us to meet all such charges against ourselves in the same satisfactory manner!

**II.**I come, in the next place, to a very important matter and that is THE SURE PROOF OF POWER—the indisputable evidence of any minister’s call from God to preach the Gospel. Notice the Apostle says, “Since you seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me*.” He did not care about what they thought of his own speaking—they might throw that to the dogs if they liked—but he was greatly concerned that they could think lightly of the Lord Jesus who spoke in Him! If Christ speaks by any one of us, it will ill become us to see Him despised and feel no sorrow. Brother, never care about your own speaking—but if it is really so that the Lord Jesus bears witness to this generation through you—then do not allow Him to be rejected without entering your solemn protest.

A little further on, the Apostle declares that even the power of the living Christ is the power of God. Our Lord Jesus kept nothing to Himself but His weakness through which He was crucified, for He lives by the power of God! Such must be the power of every Christian worker—we are weak with Him—but we shall live with Him by the power of God towards those whom we bless. It was said, the other day, “It is a wonderful power which a certain man possesses—we see no cause to account for it.” That man will not be true to himself or his Lord if he ascribes that power to his own personal acquirements, for if it is true power, it comes from that Spirit who distributes to every man according to His will. Power belongs to *God*—and that is the case even when He puts a measure of it upon men! Let that be understood once and for all.

Then, says Paul, “If you need a proof of Christ’s speaking in me with power, look at yourselves.” Paul says to his own Corinthian converts, “You are our Epistle!” If anybody enquires whether Paul can write, he does not exhibit his *hand* or his *pen—*he points to their *lives*—Epistles “written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.” Beloved, you who are our flocks are the evidences of our being good shepherds! You are God’s husbandry and the test of how far *our* husbandry has been the *Lord’s* husbandry must be found in your fruitfulness! If you want to know whether Christ has spoken in me, I reply, “Since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to youward is not weak, but is mighty in you, examine yourselves.” Our witness is in your hearts! The mighty power of the Word of Christ has been proved within the arena of your experience, for it has moved you powerfully, influenced you wonderfully, and changed you supernaturally!

What is more, it still works in you, for Christ is in you, “unless you are reprobates.” Jesus abides in you and the proof of our ministry is the effect it has had and still is having upon your minds. To put it more correctly, the proof that Christ really does speak by us is that He has worked, in you, by that speaking, after such a fashion as proves the doctrine to be Divine! Your souls are the seals of Christ’s power! Standing here, this morning, while yet the trumpets of joy have hardly ceased their silver sound, loving you and blessing God for many of you who are the fruit of my labors, I feel upon my heart the burden of the Lord! In vain is all our mutual content in each other unless in very deed the Gospel of God is confirmed and glorified in us! I feel compelled to say to you, Beloved, that if the outside world demands a proof of my call from God, I must refer them to you for it—you to whom God has spoken by me must be the witnesses whether it is of God or not—and if you fail me, my commission will have lost its seal! The *imprimatur* which establishes our right to our holy office will be found in the influence of the Gospel upon your character.

Listen, then, a moment with such sympathy with me as your love will inspire. If you seek any proof of Christ speaking by me, you have it, first, in your own *conversion,*many of you. You will have no doubt of the minister’s call if his testimony has brought you life in Christ. After I had heard a poor plain man preach the Gospel and had been brought to the Savior’s feet by his testimony, if I had been met outside by a High Churchman who thought that a common working man had no right to preach, I would have had small patience with him! Suppose he had said to me, when I was just converted, “The man is not qualified to preach. He has never been to Oxford or Cambridge. He has never been ordained. God cannot have sent him”? I would have smiled at such nonsense, for I was sure God sent him, since by his means I had been brought up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay!

You never doubt the validity of the orders—that, I think, is the cant phrase—of the man who has led you to the Savior. How could you? Whatever he may be to others, he is to you, assuredly, a messenger of mercy, a servant of the living God. “Give God the praise,” they said to the man whose eyes had been opened by Jesus, “*we* know that this man is a sinner.” “Ah,” said the shrewd, ready-witted man, “whether he is a sinner or not, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Was there any answer to that fact? In later days, when the chief priests and scribes saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against them! The conversion proves that he, by whose means it was worked, was sent by God! If I have been made useful to any of you, do not let me lose the reward of seeing you walk as those who are truly alive from the dead. Do not be fickle and unsteady, but continue in the faith grounded and settled, for he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.

Further, God proves that He has sent a man by the *comfort* which he gives to true Believers by his ministry. The servant of God expounds the exceedingly great and precious promises. He describes the Covenant of Grace. He pictures the adorable Person of the Divine Lord. He bears testimony to the faithfulness of God and to the inward operation of the Holy Spirit—and in all this he ministers good cheer to the saints. Now, has it not happened to you while this has been done that your hearts have leaped within you? Have you not come into this place burdened and while Jesus has been speaking to you, have you not lost your load? Do not many of you go on from week to week with merry hearts because of the Word of the Lord which comes to you full of consolation? Well, then, whether it is I or any other preacher of the Word of God—if by our speaking, the Lord strengthens your weak hands and confirms your feeble knees—He points us out to you as messengers of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter! Oh, the riches of Divine consolation! Have you tasted them? Then there is no disputing against taste—of all arguments, that of *experience* is the most conclusive.

Further, when Christ, speaking in His servants, brings to us *correction*, it is an equal proof that it is of the Lord. You did not know it, but you had lived in the omission of a certain duty—the Light of God dashed into your soul by the hearing of the Word of God as to that omission—and with that Light came love—so that you wept over your sin and ceased from it at once. Surely that was a proof of Christ’s speaking in the minister! Have you not, sometimes, felt your hearts turned inside out, as if the spirit of burning were searching and purging you? Was not that of the Lord? Dagon sat upright enough in his own temple while he was left alone, but the Ark of God was brought in and, by-and-by, Dagon had to go down! There was a great crash—the Lord’s Ark had struck him—and only the stump of Dagon was left!

Has it not been so with you through the preaching of the Word? We must all confess that Christ’s voice has been like a winnowing fan to drive away our chaff. His Truth has blown through us like a strong northern blast and it has swept down the withered leaves of our fancies, conceits and self-reliances. Our cry has been, “We all fade as a leaf and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away!” We have stood bare and leafless before God and, thereby, we have been prepared for another spring to clothe us with a fresher and more enduring verdure. That use of the Word of God for correction becomes a definite answer to the question, “What is the proof of Christ speaking in us?”

Then, dear Friends, the general *conduct and conversation* of members of a Church must always be the best recommendation of the ministry which feeds them. My heart sinks within me when I hear of those who have been numbered with us, have shared our love and esteem and yet have behaved inconsistently. Is this to be laid at *my* door? I confess I cannot help blaming myself and growing sad. Did I not hear of an earnest Temperance man in public, drinking in private? Is this the fruit of my ministry? Ah me! Did I hear of another professor whose household is a scene of constant strife? Did I observe coldness and indifference creeping over others? Did I find a Brother censorious and bitter? Is this the result of my labor? I could weep and it breaks my heart!

Do we hear of some that they are not upright and truthful in their dealings? Do people say, “These are members of Spurgeon’s Church”? I do not blame the world for saying so! It is only just that men should estimate our ministry by its results. We cannot help such judgments, nor do we repine at them. You are either our joy and crown, or else our sorrow and dishonor! You must estimate whether a man farms well by the crops which he raises. True, you cannot condemn him if a few thorns and thistles spring up in the hedgerows, because those things are so natural to the soil that they are there in no time. But if the acres are *covered* with thistles; if there is a preponderance of weeds, everybody says, “This is wretched farming!” Farmers may make a great outcry about new machinery and artificial manures, but if there is no harvest, it is still poor work.

Oh, dear Sirs, by the love you bear to us, who labor for Christ among you, let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ! I cannot say this in words so emphatically as I desire to do. I should like to coin my heart in order to pass it round to you in living medallions, bearing each one this inscription—“For Jesus’ sake, be holy.” Unless you are a holy people, it were better for me that I had never been born! Unless you follow Christ and exhibit His spirit wherever you dwell, what is the good of all our preaching? We might as well have stood upon a mountain and whistled to the wind as have pleaded with you unto tears! Unless there is a purity of life and a holiness of conversation in you as a Church, I shall have sown dead seed.

I think I can faithfully say that there is holiness among you, but oh, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation! Let each one among you be upon his guard lest in some evil hour you should bring dishonor upon the cause you love—upon the Christ by whom you live! Men do not read the Bible, but they read *us*—let us give them a good version of the Scriptures in our lives! They will not study our doctrinal opinions, but they will examine our practical examples—and if we are not what we ought to be, we wound the Savior afresh, stab at the heart of His Gospel— and impede the progress of His Kingdom. Oh, blessed Master, the faults of Your disciples are no faults of Yours, and yet the world lays them all on You! You are all holiness and goodness and yet You have to bear blame for Your erring followers! Truly, my Brothers, those of us who work for the great Master need not be at all surprised if we, too, have to take our share of the dishonor brought upon us by thoughtless or untruthful men. If Judas sins, John grieves—it must be so. God set to our ministry this attesting seal—that you may be a peculiar people, zealous for good works!

Again, dear Friends, whenever the Word of God comes to your heart so that you *consecrate* yourselves wholly unto God and go forth and live the life of dedication, then you give proof of Christ speaking in us! When your zeal burns, when your hearts bleed for the perishing, when you speak by the power of the Holy Spirit who has filled you, when you go forth and work wonders by instructing the ignorant, impressing the careless and guiding the wanderers to Christ, then, again, I can say, “Do you seek a proof of Christ speaking by me? *You* are my witnesses inasmuch as by our words you have been stirred up to speak in the power of the Holy Spirit for the winning of souls.”

There is one more operation of God’s Word about which I can speak with very great comfort to myself, and that is the operation of the Word of God in the *completion* of the Christian character and in the display of it in the last hours of Christian men and women. I have come down many times from the sick chamber of those members of this Church who are now in Heaven and I have done so with faith confirmed and joy increased! Those beloved ones have given me more strength and assurance than I ever derived from the study of the ablest works in my library! They were, sometimes, very poor, but I remember well the glory of the little room wherein they were disrobing for the Beatific Vision. Their heavenly serenity, varied with bursts of triumphant joy, has driven all my fears away! Some have been wasted with disease and shackled with pain till it seemed *impossible* that an original thought could have come from them—and yet their speech has been fresh and new—an inspired utterance far excelling poetry!

They only spoke what they were seeing, what they were enjoying, for the jeweled gates were set open to them and they peered within and then turned round and told us a little of what they saw! It has been a glorious thing to find none of them trembling, none confused, none wavering. No dying man has looked me in the face and said, “Sir, you did not preach a religion which a man can die with. You taught me doctrines which are not substantial enough for the dying hour.” No, I feel even now their death grips, as they have clasped my hand and told me of their overflowing joy! They have said to me, “Bless the Lord that ever I stepped into the Tabernacle to hear of Justification by Faith, of the Divine Substitution, of Atonement made by blood and of a faithful God who casts not away His people!”

Such expressions I have heard from those upon the borders of Immanuel’s land. These are our seals and the tokens that Christ has spoken by us! Go and speak, my Beloved Brothers in the ministry here, today, with great confidence, for I doubt not you have the same assuring proofs! You that teach in the school, or in any way set forth Christ, be sure that God will confirm His own truth with signs following. He keeps an office open for setting the royal stamp on all Truth that is earnestly proclaimed— proclaimed in *weakness*—but with true evidences of power, because mighty in those who believe it!

I hope you will bear with me in thus speaking of what has so plain a relation to myself, but truly, these many years God has worked among us great marvels of Grace—and I am overwhelmed when I imagine, even for a moment, what we would do if the Spirit of God were to withdraw. You will not turn your backs in the day of battle, will you? God will help you and keep you steadfast in the faith once delivered to the saints and He will help you to be a holy people, walking in your integrity, will He not? May He make all our people to be holy, for if not, I shall have to go back to Him with many cries, for God will have humbled me among you and I shall have to bewail those who have sinned! Alas for a ministry so publicly known if it is publicly dishonored! Alas for the people of the living God if traitors cause them disquietude! O Church in this Tabernacle, “hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown”!

**III.**To each one of us there is A NEEDED PROOF OF OURSELVES. Hence the text says, “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” It is something to have our ministry attested, but it is much more to have your *salvation* attested. Dear fellow Believers, observe that you can *know* whether you are saved or not—assurance, yes, *full* assurance is within your grasp—but it is only to be obtained by a simple faith and by a sincere and thorough examination of yourselves. Observe, the Apostle says, “examine yourselves.” Therefore you are not to take it for granted that you are saved—if you do, you may be sadly mistaken. “Examine yourselves.”

In London, years ago, every shop had its sign and they had a saying that the house which had the sign of the sun in a certain street was darker than any other—all their sun was outside—it had the sun for a sign but no sign of the sun! So there are some who have Grace for their sign, but no sign of Grace! God grant we may not be such. To have a name to live is a wretched thing if we are really dead. In such a case we are nothing but living lies, devout deceits, bastard professors—in a word— “reprobates.” To pretend to be other than what we are in the sight of the heart-searching God is despicable and damnable! The Spirit of God, by the mouth of the Apostle, bids us, “examine ourselves.”

Of course we are to examine our lives, but He goes further and says, “Examine*yourselves*.” Sin within will ruin even if it is not seen in act. Of course we are to examine our doctrines, but even more we are to examine *ourselves*. Heart error is more deadly than head error. Self-examination has not to do with garments but with the man, himself. Yes, you prayed very prettily, but was that prayer out of *yourself*? Yes, Sir, it was an admirable sermon and apparently very earnest, but is it your *soul’s* utterance, or only a parrot lesson? “Examine yourselves,” your own persons, as in the Presence of the Most High!

Supposing you have done this, then do it again, for the next sentence is, “Test yourselves.” Pry deeper! Thrust the lances in further! You have already given yourself a good sifting—take a finer sieve and go to work again! You have already been in the crucible—go in again and become as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times! A man cannot make too sure work about his own salvation. “Oh, but,” someone says, “I never doubted my own safety.” Remember—

***“Who never doubted of his state,  
He may, perhaps he may, too late.”***  
One stands up and has the impudence to say, “I never sin.” Sit down, Sir! Do not *dream* that you are among *fools*—we know better! You may hold your fond conceit if you please, but meanwhile we pray for you—may the

Lord open your eyes to see the sin in you, for pride is blinding you, its scales are upon your eyes! “In many things we offend all.” “Enter not into judgment with your servant: for in your sight shall no man living be justified.” What man is he that does good and sins not? We must again and again examine ourselves!

But can we not be certain of our safety? Yes, we can—but only certain because we have not shunned the most rigorous self-examinations. If you do not test yourself, you may sit down and say, “Oh, I am all right.” Yes, but you may be fostering within your spirit a peace which will end in your final ruin—and you may never open your eyes to your deception till you lift them up in Hell! Be ready to be searched. It is well when a man likes a heart-searching ministry, when He says, “Cut deep, Sir! Do not spare me! If I am a hypocrite, let me know it.” I like a man whose prayer is, “Lord, let me know the worst of myself, that I may be upright before You. Search me and try me, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” This is what we need! This is the age of shams—sham preaching, sham hearing and sham professors—we must strive after *realities*. There are such things as common graces which will not save and, worse still, such things as counterfeit graces which will destroy. Therefore, let us see to it that we first examine and then *prove* ourselves.

And what is to be the point of search? “Whether you are in the faith.” Whether what you believe is true and whether you truly believe it! Whether your faith is the faith of God’s elect—the faith that is of the operation of the Spirit of God—or mere nominal, notional, temporary faith. “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” Dwell mostly on this point, “Do you not know, yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you are reprobates?” Is Jesus Christ in you? “I know all about Him.” Yes, but is He *in* you? “I read of Him.” Read on, but is He *in* you? Come, Friends, let us, each one, put this question to himself, “Is Jesus formed and living in my heart?”—

***“There is life in a look at the Crucified One.”***But you have not looked at Him unless He has come to live in you—the first glance of the eye that sends the soul to Christ also sends Christ to the soul! That man is not in Christ who has not Christ in him. Do you have to go a long way to get at Christ? Then you may well tremble, for with true saints Christ is at home, formed in them, the hope of Glory! Unless you are counterfeits to be rejected and thrown away as slag of the furnace, Christ is in you at this very moment! This is very heartsearching—let it search your hearts.

Within a short time and none of us knows how soon, our Lord will come! Quick ears can hear the rolling of His chariots. Perhaps before that, you and I may be called away. Are we ready? I do not often enter this place without being told, “So-and-So is gone.” I cannot help looking upon this vast congregation as moving along in procession to the tomb—I am also, myself, marching with you. We are all going together and we shall meet together at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I would not have you say in that day, “We came to hear you and you did us no good, for you tickled our ears and tried to play the orator.”

I never did anything of the sort! I declare before the living God I never thought of such a thing! I have strived to strike straight at your hearts and consciences. You shall not say that of me either here or hereafter! But when we meet in the judgment you will say, “It was power in weakness. Christ spoke in you, we were converted, comforted and sanctified by Him.” Ah, we shall meet, Brothers and Sisters, we shall meet on the other side of Jordan, in the land of the hereafter, in the city of the blessed—we shall meet and sing together to the praise and glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved!

The Lord be with you all for His name’s sake! Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— 2 Corinthians 12:13:1-6.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—178, 119 (PART II), 639.**

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #218 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

SELF-EXAMINATION  
NO. 218

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 10, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.~~***

***~~“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves.~~***

***~~Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates.”  
2 Corinthians 13:5.~~***

I HAD intended to address you this morning from the third title given to our blessed Redeemer, in the verse we have considered twice before— “Wonderful, Counselor, *the mighty God*.” But owing to excruciating pain and continual sickness, I have been unable to gather my thoughts together and therefore I feel constrained to address you on a subject which has often been upon my heart and not infrequently upon my lips and concerning which, I dare say, I have admonished a very large proportion of this audience before. You will find the text in the thirteenth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, at the fifth verse—“*Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates*?”—a solemn text that we cannot preach too impressively, or too frequently meditate upon.

The Corinthians were the critics of the Apostles’ age. They took to themselves great credit for skill in learning and in language and as most men do who are wise in their own esteem, they made a wrong use of their wisdom and learning—they began to criticize the Apostle Paul. They criticized his style. “His letters,” they said, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible.” No, not content with that, they went so far as to deny his Apostleship and for once in his life, the Apostle Paul found himself compelled to “become a fool in glorying. For,” says he, “you have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chief Apostles, though I am nothing.” The Apostle wrote two letters to them—in both he is compelled to upbraid them while he defends himself and when he had fully disarmed his opponents and wrested the sword of their criticism out of their hands he pointed it at their own breasts, saying, “Examine yourselves.” You have disputed my doctrine. Examine whether *you*are in the faith. You have made me prove my Apostleship. Prove your own selves.

Use the powers which you have been so wrongfully exercising upon me for a little season upon your own characters.

And now, my dear Friends, the fault of the Corinthians is the fault of the present age. Let not anyone of you, as he goes out of the House of God say unto his neighbor, “How did you like the preacher? What did you think of the sermon this morning?” Is that the question you should ask as you retire from God’s House? Do you come here to judge God’s servants? I know it is but a small thing unto us to be judged of man’s judgment—our judgment is of the Lord our God—to our own Master we shall stand or fall. But O men, you should ask a question more profitable unto yourselves than this! You should say, “Did not such-and-such a speech strike me? Did not that exactly consort with my condition? Was that not a rebuke that I deserve, a word of reproof or of exhortation? Let me take unto myself that which I have heard and let me not judge the *preacher*, for He is God’s messenger to my soul—I came up here to be judged of God’s Word and not to judge God’s Word myself.” But since there is in all our hearts a great backwardness to self-examination, I shall lay out *myself* for a few minutes this morning earnestly to exhort myself and all of you, to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith.

First, I shall *expound my text*. Secondly, I shall *enforce it*. And thirdly, I shall try and help you to *carry it into practice* here and on the spot.  
**I.** First, I shall EXPOUND MY TEXT. Though in truth it needs no exposition, for it is very simple, *yet* by studying it and pondering it, our hearts may become more deeply affected with its touching appeal. “*Examine* yourselves.” Who does not understand that word? And yet, by a few suggestions you may know its meaning more perfectly.  
“Examine.” That is a *scholastic idea*. A boy has been to school a certain time and his master puts him through his paces—questions him, to see whether he has made any progress—whether he knows anything. Christian, catechize your heart. Question it, to see whether it has been growing in grace—question it, to see if it knows anything of vital godliness or not. Examine it—pass your heart through a stern examination as to what it knows and what it does not know by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.  
Again—it is a*military idea*. “Examine yourselves,” or renew yourselves. Go through the rank and file of your actions and examine all your motives. Just as the captain on review day is not content with merely surveying the men from a distance, but must look at all their accoutrements, so do you look well to yourselves. Examine yourselves with the most scrupulous care.  
And once again, this is a *legal idea*. “Examine yourselves.” You have seen the witness in the box, when the lawyer has been examining him, or as we have it, cross-examining him. Now, mark—never was there a rogue less trustworthy or more deceitful than your own heart. And as when you are cross-examining a dishonest person—one that has ulterior motives to serve—you set traps for him to try and find him out in a lie—so do with your own heart. Question it backward and forward, this way and that way. For if there is a loophole for escape, if there is any pretense for selfdeception, rest assured your treacherous heart will be ready enough to avail itself of it.  
And yet once more—this is a *traveler’s idea*. I find in the original, it has this meaning—“Go right through yourselves.” As a traveler who has to write a book upon a country is not content to go round its borders merely, but goes, as it were, from Dan to Beersheba, right through the country. He climbs the hilltop, where he bathes his forehead in the sunshine. He goes down into the deep valleys, where he can only see the blue sky like a strip between the lofty summits of the mountains. He is not content to gaze upon the broad river unless he traces it to the spring from where it rises. He will not be satisfied with viewing the products of the surface of the earth, but he must discover the minerals that lie within its deep.  
Now, do the same with your heart. “Examine yourselves.” Go right through yourselves from the beginning to the end. Stand not only on the mountains of your public character, but go into the deep valleys of your private life. Be not content to sail on the broad river of your outward actions, but go follow back the narrow rill till you discover your secret motive. Look not only at your performance, which is but the product of the soil, but dig into your heart and examine the vital principle. “Examine yourselves.” This is a very big word—a word that needs thinking over. And I am afraid there are very few, if any of us, who ever come up to the full weight of this solemn exhortation—“Examine yourselves.”  
There is another word you will see a little further on, if you will kindly look at the text. “*Prove*your own selves.” That means more than selfexamination—let me try to show the difference between the two. A man is about to buy a horse. He examines it. He looks at it. He thinks that possibly he may find out some flaw and therefore he carefully examines it. But after he has examined it, if he is a prudent man, he says to the person of whom he is about to buy it—“I must prove this horse—will you let me have it for a week, for a month, or for some given time, that I may prove the animal before I actually invest in him?  
You see, there is more in proof than in examination. It is a deeper word and goes to the very root and quick of the matter. I saw but yesterday an illustration of this. A ship, before she is launched, is examined—when launched she is carefully looked at. And yet before she is allowed to go far out to sea, she takes a trial trip. She is proved and tried and when she has roughed it a little and it has been discovered that she will obey the helm, that the engines will work correctly and that all is in right order, she goes out on her long voyages.  
Now, “prove yourselves.” Do not merely sit in your closet and look at yourselves alone, but go out into this busy world and see what kind of piety you have. Remember, many a man’s religion will stand examination that will not stand proof. We may sit at home and look at our religion and say, “Well, I think this will do!” It is like cotton prints that you can buy in sundry shops—they are warranted fast colors and so they seem when you look at them, but they are not washable when you get them home. There is many a man’s religion like that. It is good enough to look at and it has got the “warranted” stamped upon it. But when it comes out into actual daily life, the colors soon begin to run and the man discovers that the thing was not what he took it to be.  
You know in Scripture we have an account of certain very foolish men that would not go to a great supper but, foolish as they were, there was one of them who said, “I have bought a yoke of oxen and I go to prove them.” Thus he had at least worldly wisdom enough to prove his oxen. So do you prove yourselves. Try to plow in the furrows of duty—see whether you can be accustomed to the yoke of Gospel servitude. Be not ashamed to put yourselves through your paces. Try yourself in the furnace of daily life, lest haply the mere examination of the chamber should detect you to be a cheat and you should after all prove to be a castaway. “Examine yourselves; prove your own selves.”  
There is a sentence which I omitted, namely, this one—“Examine yourselves, *whether you are in the faith*.” “Oh,” says one, “You may examine me whether I am in the faith. I am an orthodox Christian, fully up to the standard, good genuine weight. There is no fear whatever of my coming up to the mark and going a little beyond it, too.” Ah, but my Friend, that is not the question! I would have you orthodox, for a man who is heterodox in his opinions will most liked be heterodox in his actions. But the question now is not whether you believe the Truth of God—but whether you are *in* the Truth of God! Just to give you an illustration of what I mean— there is the ark. And a number of men around it. “Ah,” says one, “I believe that ark will swim.” “Oh,” says another, “I believe that ark is made of gopher-wood and is strong from stem to stern. I am quite sure that ark will float, come what may. I am a firm believer in that ark.”  
Yes, but when the rain descended and the flood came, it was not believing the ark as a matter of fact—it was being *in* the ark that saved men and only those that were in it escaped in that dread day of deluge. So there may be some of you that say of the Gospel of Christ, “I believe it to be of a particular character,” and you may be quite correct in your judgment. You may say, “I think it to be that which honors God and casts down the pride of man.” Herein, too, you may think quite right. But mark, it is not having an orthodox faith, but it is being *in* the faith, being *in* Christ, taking refuge *in* Him as in the ark, for he that only has the faith as a thing*ab extra* and without being *in* the faith, shall perish in the day of God’s anger.  
But he that lives by faith, he who feels that faith operates upon him and is to him a living principle. He who realizes that faith is his dwelling place, that there he can abide, that it is the very atmosphere he breathes and the very girdle of his loins to strengthen him—such a man is in the faith. But, we repeat again, all the orthodoxy in the world, apart from its effect upon the heart as a vital principle, will not save a man. “Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves.”  
“Know you not your own selves?” If you do not, you have neglected your proper study. What avails all else that you do know, if you know not yourself? You have been roaming abroad, while the richest treasure was lying at home. You have been busying yourself with irrelevant affairs, while the main business has been neglected and ruined. “Know you not your own selves?” And especially know you not this fact, that Jesus Christ must be in your heart, formed and living there, or else you are reprobates? That is, you are worthless persons, vain pretenders, spurious professors. Your religion is but a vanity and a show. “Reprobate silver shall men call you, because the Lord has rejected you.”  
Now, what is it to have Jesus Christ in you? The Roman Catholic hangs a crucifix on his bosom. True Christians carry the cross in their hearts. And a cross inside the heart, my Friends, is one of the sweetest cures for a crosses on the back. If you have a cross in your heart—Christ crucified in you, the hope of glory—all the cross of this world’s troubles will seem to you light enough and you will easily be able to sustain them. Christ in the heart means Christ *believed* in, Christ *beloved*, Christ *trusted*, Christ *espoused*, Christ *communed* with, Christ as our daily food and ourselves as the temple and palace wherein Jesus Christ daily walks. Ah, there are many here that are total strangers to the meaning of this phrase. They do not know what it is to have Jesus Christ *in* them. Though you know a little about Christ on Calvary, you know nothing about Christ in the heart. Now, remember, that Christ on Calvary will save no man unless Christ is in the heart. The Son of Mary, born in the manger, will not save a soul unless He is also born in your hearts and lives there—your joy, your strength and your consolation. “Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?”  
**II.**The second point was to ENFORCE THE TEXT. I have proved it. Now I am to enforce it. And here is the tug of war. May the Spirit of the living God drive the sword in up to its very hilt this morning, that now the power of God may be felt in every heart, searching and trying the reins. “Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith.”  
“Examine yourselves,” first, *because it is a matter of the very highest importance*. Small tradesmen may take coppers over the counter without much examination. But when it comes to gold, they will ring it well for they could not afford to lose a sovereign out of their little gains. And if it comes to a five pound note there is an anxious holding it up to the window to see if the watermark is there and whether all is correct, for it might be ruin to the man if he lost a sum so large. Ah, but, merchants and tradesmen, if you are deceived in the matter of your own souls, you are deceived, indeed. Look well to the title deeds

of your estate. Look well to your life insurance policies and to all the business that you do. But, remember, all the gold and silver you have are but as the rack and scum of the furnace compared with the matter now in hand. It is your *soul*, your own soul, your never dying SOUL! Will you risk that?  
In times of panic, men will scarcely trust their fellows. I would to God there was a panic this day, so that no man would trust himself. You may trust your fellows far more safely than you may trust yourselves. Will you think, Brothers and Sisters, what your soul is? “The *life* is more than meat and the body than raiment.” But the soul is as much more to be accounted of than the body, as the body is more important than the raiment. Here are my clothes—let me be robbed of my garments. If my body is secure, what does it matter? And as for my body, what is it, after all, but the rag that enshrines and covers my soul? Let that be sick, let that become like a worn-out vesture, I can afford to lose my body. But, O God, I cannot afford to have my *soul* cast into Hell! What a frightful hazard is that which you and I are running, if we do not examine ourselves! It is an everlasting hazard. It is a hazard of Heaven or of Hell, of God’s eternal favor, or of His everlasting curse. Well might the Apostle say, “Examine yourselves.”  
Again—“Examine yourselves,” *because if you make a mistake you can never rectify it, except in this world*. A bankrupt may have lost a fortune once and yet may make another. But make bankruptcy—spiritual bankruptcy—in this life and you will never have an opportunity to trade again for Heaven. A great general may lose one battle but with skill and courage he may retrieve his honor by winning another. But get defeated in the battle of this life and you can no more gird on your armor, you are defeated forever—the day is lost and there is no hope of your being able to gain it again, or so much as to make the attempt. Now or never, Man! Remember that. Your soul’s eternal state hangs on the turn of today. Loiter your time away, waste your abilities, take your religion at second hand—of your priest, of your minister, or of your friend—and in the next world you shall everlastingly rue the error, but you shall have no hope of amending it— ***“Fixed is their everlasting state,  
Could man repent, ‘tis then too late.  
There are no acts of pardon passed  
In the cold grave, to which we haste;  
But darkness, death and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there.”***  
“Examine yourselves,” again, *because many have been mistaken*. That is a matter which I will undertake to affirm upon my own authority, certain that each one of you can confirm it by your own observation. How many in this world think themselves to be godly when they are not? You have in the circle of your own friends persons making a profession of whom you often stand in astonishment and wonder how they dare to do it. Friend, if others have been mistaken, may not you be, too? If some here and there fall into an error, may not you also do the same? Are you better than they? No, in no way. You may be mistaken also. Methinks I see the rocks on which many souls have been lost—the rocks of presumption and the siren song of self-confidence entices you on to those rocks this morning. Stay, mariner, stay, I beseech you! Let yonder bleached bones keep you back. Many have been lost, many are lost now and are wailing at this present hour their everlasting ruin and their loss is to be traced to nothing more than this—that they never examined themselves whether they were in the faith.  
And here let me appeal to each person now present. Do not tell me that you are an old Church member. I am glad to hear it. But still, I beseech you, examine yourself, for a man may be a professor of religion thirty or forty years and yet there may come a trial when his religion shall snap after all and prove to be a rotten branch of the forest. Tell me not you are a deacon—that you may be and yet you may be damnably deceived. Yes, and whisper not to me that you are a minister. My Brethren in the ministry—we may lay aside our cassocks to wear belts of flames in Hell. We may go from our pulpit having preached to others what we never knew ourselves and have to join the everlasting wailings of souls we have helped to delude. May God save us from such a doom as that! But let no man fold his arms and say, “I need not examine yourself.” For there is not a man here, or anywhere, who has not good cause to test and try himself today.  
Furthermore—examine yourselves, because *God will examine you*. In the hand of God there is the scale and the balance. You shall not be taken into Heaven for what you profess to be. But you shall be weighed— everyone of you put into the scale. What a moment will that be with me and with you when we are in God’s great scale! Surely were it not for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for a certainty that we shall be clothed in His righteousness at last, we might all tremble at the thought of ever being there—lest we should have to come out of the scale with this verdict, “Tekel,”—(“Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin”)—“you are weighed in the balances and are found wanting.” God will not take His gold and silver by *appearance*, but every vessel must be purified in the fire. We must each one of us pass through a most searching test and scrutiny. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us, how much more shall God condemn us? If we are afraid to examine ourselves, how can we not tremble at the thought of the dread searching of God? Some of you feel that you are condemned this very day by a poor creature like myself—how much more, then, shall you be condemned when God, robed in thunder, shall summon you and all your fellows to the last infallible judgment? Oh, may God help us now to examine ourselves!  
And I have yet one more reason to give. Examine yourselves, my dear Friends,*because if you are in doubt now, the speediest way to get rid of your doubts and fears is by self-examination*. I believe that many persons are always doubting their eternal condition because they do not examine themselves. Self-examination is the safest cure for one half the doubts and fears that vex God’s people. Look at the captain over yonder. He is in his ship and he says to the sailors, “You must sail very warily and carefully and be upon your watch, for to tell you the truth, I do not know where I am. I do not exactly know my latitude and longitude and there may be rocks very close ahead and we may soon have the ship broken up.” He goes down into the cabin, he searches the charts, he takes an inspection of the heavens, he comes up again and he says, “Hoist every sail and go along as merrily as you please. I have discovered where we are. The water is deep and there is a wide sea room. There is no need for you to be in any trouble, searching has satisfied me.”  
And how happy will it be with you, if, after having searched yourself you can say, “I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” Why, then you will go along merrily and joyfully because the search has had a good result. And what if it should have a bad result? Better that you should find it out *now* than find it out too late. One of the prayers I often pray and desire to pray as long as I live, is this—“Lord, let me know the worst of my case. If I have been living in a false comfort, Lord, rend it away. Let me know just what I am and where I am and rather let me think too harshly of my condition before You, than think too securely and so be ruined by presumption.” May that be a prayer of each heart and be heard in Heaven!  
**III.**And now, how ARE YOU TO SEARCH YOURSELVES? I am to try and help you, though it must be very briefly.  
First, if you would examine yourselves, *begin with your public life*. Are you dishonest? Can you thieve? Can you swear? Are you given to drunkenness, uncleanness, blasphemy, taking God’s name in vain and violation of His Holy Day? Make short work with yourself. There will be no need to go into any further tests. “He that does these things has no inheritance in the kingdom of God.” You are reprobate. The wrath of God abides on you. Your state is fearful. You are accursed now and unless you repent you must be accursed forever.  
And yet, Christian, in spite of your many sins, can you say, “By the grace of God I am what I am. But I seek to live a righteous, godly and sober life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation”? Remember Professor, by your works you shall be judged at last. Your works cannot save you, but they can prove that you are saved—or if they are evil works, they can prove that you are not saved at all. And here I must say everyone of us has good cause to tremble, for our outward acts are not what we would have them to be. Let us go to our houses and fall upon our face and cry again, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And let us seek for more grace that henceforth our lives may be more consistent and more in accordance with the spirit of Christ.  
Again—another set of tests—*private tests. How about your private life?*Do you live without prayer, without searching the Scriptures? Do you live without thoughts of God? Can you live as an habitual stranger to the Most High, having no love to Him and no fear of Him? If so, I make short work of the matter—you are “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” But if you are right at heart, you will be able to say, “I could not live without prayer. I have to weep over my prayers, but still I should weep ten times more if I did not pray. I do love God’s Word, it is my meditation all the day. I love His people. I love His House. And I can say that my hands are often lifted upward towards Him. And when my heart is busy with this world’s affairs, it is often going up to His Throne.” A good sign, Christian, a good sign for you. If you can go through this test, you may hope that all is well.  
But go a little deeper. Have you ever wept over your lost condition? Have you ever bemoaned your lost estate before God? Have you ever tried to save yourself and found it a failure? And have you been driven to rely simply, wholly and entirely on Christ? If so, then you have passed the test well enough.  
And have you now faith in Christ—a faith that makes you love Him? A faith that enables you to trust Him in the dark hour? Can you say of a truth that you have a secret affection towards the Most High—that you love His Son, that your desire is after His ways, that you feel the influence of the Divine Spirit and seek every day to experience the fellowship of the Holy Spirit more and more?  
And lastly, can you say that Jesus Christ is *in* you? If not, you are reprobate. Sharp though that word is, you are a reprobate. But if Jesus Christ is in your heart, though your heart sometimes is so dark that you can scarcely tell He is there, you are accepted in the Beloved and you may “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”  
I intended to have enlarged. But it is impossible for me to go further. I must therefore dismiss you with a sacred blessing.

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TWO CHOICE BENEDICTIONS  
NO. 3371

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1913.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 26, 1867.~~***

***~~“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, on this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless you, and keep you: the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”  
Numbers 6:23-27.~~***

***~~“The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” 2 Corinthians 13:14.~~***

IT seemed to me that as this was the last of the Thursday evenings of the dying year and I should no more meet some of you who only come here on Thursday evenings during this year, it would be well for us to close the year as our Master closed His life on earth, with a benediction— and, oh, it will be a rich enjoyment in the year to come if, by God’s Grace, we shall be able to grasp and make our very own the precious things which are here presented to the whole redeemed family of the living God! I shall begin, therefore, first of all with—

**I.**THE AARONIC BLESSING.  
This was pronounced at the close of the public tabernacle service when the people were about to separate, the one from the others. It is said by the Rabbis to have been only spoken at the morning sacrifice, but not in the evening because, say some, the old faith of the few gave them the early blessing. But it remained for Christ to come in the eventide of the world, at the end of time, to give us the evening blessing, the blessing of the great, eternal, evening Sacrifice.  
It is worthy of notice that the word, Jehovah, which is put in capital letters in our English version, occurs three times—three blessings—and each time the word has a different accent in the original Hebrew. And the Rabbis, although they did not know the meaning of it, or pretended not to know, yet all agree that there is some significant mystery therein. The word would not be accented thus differently unless there were some different shade of meaning intended. I believe we have here the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. “The Lord bless you and keep you.” Is that the blessing of the Father? “The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.” Is that the blessing of the Son? “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” Is that the blessing of the great forgiving Holy Spirit? I think it is very likely. At any rate, this threefold blessing from the Jehovah, whose name is mentioned three times, may direct our thoughts to the glorious Trinity, the Trinity in Unity, whom we cannot understand, but on whom our faith rests and in whom our love finds delight and repose!  
Let us look at these three blessings. *“The Lord bless you and keep you.”*When we bless God there is nothing more than well-saying and well-wishing. But when God blesses us, it is well-doing! We cannot bless God in the sense of giving to Him so as to add to His riches or to His Glory, for He is the infinitely great, the inconceivably glorious and nothing that we can do can add to Him. We can only bless Him by expressing our thanks to Him, paying to Him our reverent love. “The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock.” “Blessed be the name of the Lord from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.” But when God blesses us, I say, it is well-doing! He blesses us in our very creation and much more in our new creation. It is a blessed thing to be born, but a much more blessed thing to be born-again! He blesses us in our food—but much more in giving us Christ who is the Bread to keep alive and nourish our soul’s best life! We are blessed in being clothed, but infinitely more blessed in being wrapped about in the Righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is a blessing to be a member of a kind, loving, happy family—but it is an unspeakable blessing to be a member of the family of Christ and adopted into the family of God!  
What a blessing it is, my Brothers and Sisters, to have sin pardoned, to have righteousness imputed, to have sanctification worked in us—in short, to enjoy all the privileges and benedictions of the New Covenant! Now, I think some of us can say, “God has blessed us, oh, how richly.” Blessed us sometimes when we did not perceive the blessing, for many of God’s mercies come, as it were, in at the back door of our house. We do not see the mercies, and when we do, we are too often ungrateful and forget them. What blessings we have received in trouble—in deliverance from trouble—in sustaining us in it! Oh, what blessings have we not had? Some of you, perhaps, have had very remarkable mercies during the year. Now, while the blessing is pronounced, “The Lord bless you,” let your reply be, “The Lord has blessed me!” This will encourage you to expect that He will continue to do the same. And what blessings, my dear Friends, may we hope will be in store for us during the coming year? Many troubles, I have no doubt, are in store for us. If we were to have a telescope here this evening and we could look through it and see the future, those would be very foolish who looked! He would be the wise man who said—  
***“This will set my heart at rest—  
What my God appoints is best.”***  
For if that telescope were here and you were trying to look through it, you would be sure to breathe on the glass with your hot breath—and in your anxiety you would see nothing but clouds and darkness—whereas, very likely, there would be nothing of the sort there. Leave that matter with your God! The future, though it may possibly have trial and trouble, will still be blessed if you are God’s servant. One thing there is of which you can be quite confident—He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Another thing will also be fulfilled, “As your days, so shall your strength be.” You are very poor, are you? Yet, at any rate, none can rob you of this assurance—“Your bread shall be given you: your water shall be sure.” If you are fearing many trials, this promise is your special fortifying—“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” You have God’s word for it, “Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God.” If, during the next year, it is appointed unto you to die, you may still say, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” “The Lord bless you.” As I say that to each Believer here, knowing that the Lord will so bless you, may your soul look forward, not with dread, but with hope! “The Lord bless you” was the wish of the priest under the old Law, and it is always the Nature of God to confirm what He bids His servants desire. “The Lord bless you.”  
Now, observe the blessing which is said to spring out of that, “The Lord bless you, *and keep you.”*And no small mercy it is to be kept by God! Where would we be if He did not keep us in a moral and spiritual point of view, yes, and in a natural point of view, too? It is God that keeps our lives from death and our bodies from perishing. Perhaps, during the past year, some of you have been kept when in storms at sea, or when you have been upon a railway, or when you have passed through places infected with disease. It is no small privilege to hear the Lord say, “He will give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways: they shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” The Lord has blessed us and kept us in that sense during the past year. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a privilege to be kept from falling into sin! He is ill-kept who is his own keeper! He is worse kept who has his brother for his keeper! But he is splendidly kept who has God to be his shield on his right hand, his glory and his defense.  
During the past year we have seen some high professors put out like candles and the foul odor of their fall has filled the Church with nausea and depression. We have known some who were like bright stars who have turned out to be only meteors—and their once dazzling brilliance has suddenly died out in greater gloom. Why are we still kept? We have had enough temptation to cast us down! Enough tinder here, inside our hearts, to have made a great blaze! How is it we are still unburned and walking in the paths of righteousness?  
Must we not say, “The Lord has blessed us and kept us”? Let us, then, without reserve, commit our souls to Him for the future. Let us not fancy that we shall not fall. Oh, that is a thought that is very apt to twine itself around us like a serpent! “I am not so giddy as some people! I am not at all likely to do what some young people have done and get into this sin, and that sin. I have had so much experience, I shall be able to stand!” That is the very man that is likely to fall! We are never so weak as when we think we are strong, and never so strong as when we know we are weak and look out of ourselves to our God! Distrust self, then. There would not be such a supplication as, “The Lord bless you and keep you,” if you did not need keeping. Trust in God for your help. If you fear temptation, let this be your prayer, “Lead us not into temptation,” and if you trust in God, you will pray, “Deliver us from evil.” You will be tempted during the year that is soon coming, but He will, with the temptation, make also a way of escape. He will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able to bear! You shall go through the wilderness leaning on your Beloved and you shall not slip, though the way is ever so smooth, nor trip, though the road is ever so rough. You shall be upheld, for God is able to hold up in perfect safety those who stay themselves upon Him. “The Lord bless you and keep you.” Holy Father, we breathe the prayer to You as we read this blessing! Pronounce it upon us now by the mouth of Your own dear Son, and let us now and until life’s latest hour be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation!  
Now, take the next blessing bestowed, through Aaron, upon the people. *“The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.”*I understand by the expression, “The Lord make His face to shine upon you,” His being completely reconciled to us. As they would say in the Hebrew, a man’s face frowned, his countenance fell, when he was at enmity or angry with another. But when he was his friend and genial towards him, then his face revealed it, it began to beam or shine! Now, this is the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is through Him that God’s face is made to shine upon us. The Lord would have no favorable regard towards a sinner as such while his sins still lay upon him because of impenitence and lack of faith. The Lord’s love might come to him as an elect creature, but viewing him merely as a sinner, he would be the subject of Divine disapprobation!  
But when the sinner is washed in the blood of Christ, when the sinner is justified through the righteousness of Jesus, then the Lord looks upon him with pleasure. That very man who was an heir of wrath becomes a child of love! and he who would have been driven from God’s Presence with, “Depart, you cursed,” is established in Christ’s heart with “Come, you blessed.” Now, dear Friends, I hope many of us have already received, during the past year, this great blessing, “The Lord make His face to shine upon you.” Don’t you feel that you have, tonight, to look up to God and do not feel any fear? You know that He is not frowning upon you! He is reconciled unto you—you are reconciled unto Him. You may say, “Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.” And you are persuaded that as God looks upon Christ, and upon you in Christ, you are well-beloved in Him. Well now, as it has been, so it shall be, for if God once makes His face to shine in the sense of His favor, He never takes that favor away! You may not see it. You may think He is angry with you and, in another sense, He may be, but legally, and so far as concerns the Law and its power of condemnation, there is not a single thought of anger in the mind, or feeling of displeasure in the heart of God towards any one of those who rest in Jesus!  
You are accepted in the Beloved. God sees no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel. As He looks upon them in His Son, He sees them without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.  
“*The Lord make His face to shine upon you.”*Well, and what springs out of that? Why this, *“and be gracious unto you.”*Because God is thus favorable towards us through His dear Son, Divine Grace comes to us. And what a great, all-comprehending word is that! Grace! It has many meanings and includes a whole universe of blessing! Grace—it is the free and undeserved favor of God! Grace—it is the mighty operation of that favor, effectually working in them that believe! Grace—it is that which enlightens us to see our lost estate—that which leads us to see the AllSufficiency of Christ! Grace—this works faith in us, gives us love to God! Grace creates our hope, carries on the work within our souls and completes it, too! Grace—it is a term so comprehensive that I would need the whole of this evening, yes, and longer, too, to enumerate the mighty catalog comprised and packed, as it were, in this golden casket of the word, Grace! “The Lord be gracious unto you.” Well, now, Beloved, He has been gracious to us in the past. Oh, the Grace of God to me!—  
***“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,  
Daily I’m constrained to be!”***

Can you say the same? Look at what a sinner you have been and yet how favored! Look at your backslidings! Look at your ingratitude and yet His mercy does not cease—

***“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor!”***  
Let your hearts say it, if your lips do not. And now, Beloved, He will be gracious to you in the future as He has been in the past. Every mercy received is a pledge of mercies yet to come! He knew what He was doing when He began with us and, therefore, He will not leave off. If He had meant to destroy us, He would not have shown us such things as these. The great Master Worker would not have built the house so far if He did not mean to finish it. All His previous Grace and glory will be wasted and evaporate if He should not complete His redeeming work. Therefore, I am sure that after advancing so far with His glorious purpose, He will finish it and, if necessary, in the teeth of men and devils! He has begun and His right arm, which always goes with His Grace, will surely carry it through to the end. “The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.”

But now, thirdly, *“The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”*Is this the voice of the Holy Spirit? Whether it is so or not, does not greatly matter to us tonight. “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you.” Does not this mean, “The Lord give you a conscious, a delightful sense of His favor”? Wishing to see a difference—I will not insist upon it—wishing to see a difference, I put the second blessing as meaning God’s being reconciled. But the third blessing as meaning God manifesting that reconciliation and giving His children the enjoyment of His favor. Now, God’s people do not always have this—it is not always sunshine. “The evening and the morning were the first day,” and there is evening as well as morning in the day of God’s people. God always loves His people, but His people do not always know it. Because of their sins, they do not always enjoy it. Oh, what a blessing it is when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in the soul—when we can say, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” When we get out of these mists and fogs and can see the sun once more shining clear and bright, Beloved, it is Heaven on earth! It is the true ante-past of Heaven above, when the Lord lifts up His countenance upon you! I have no doubt the original allusion is to a father whose child has done wrong and he says, “Now, Sir, get out of my sight, you have grieved and vexed me. You shall not see my face.” The child goes upstairs to bed—anywhere out of his father’s sight. And after a while, when the father hears he has been penitent and sees his tears, he smiles again upon him, gives him a kiss and presses him to his heart. May God the Holy Spirit give us just that! May everyone of us have it!

We have, some of us, had it during the past year. We grieve to confess that we did backslide, but when we returned again, we found Him just as willing to receive us as at the first and He lifted up His countenance upon us once again! We said, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,” and He did so! We asked Him to take away His wrath from us, and we found that “His anger is but for a moment.” When weeping came to us for a night, joy appeared in the morning. It will be just the same with us during the next year. If we transgress and repent, and return to Him, we have an actual promise that He will forgive us. Now, what says the text? “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” There is no peace like the peace which we have with God, and no peace with God like that which comes from a sense of His assured love! And belief in Christ for the pardon of sin gives us the blessing of non-condemnation. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” But this sense of non-condemnation may sometimes be destroyed through weakness of faith. We may be brought very low and our peace may be disturbed, but when we come back to the Cross, and look once more to Him who died there, He is our peace and we see in Him that our peace is made with God—and then our peace becomes like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea! I think it would be impossible for me to describe peace. You must feel it to know it. Peace with God is like that clear shining we sometimes see after a heavy shower of rain. With the thunder and lightning it seemed as if Heaven would be torn in pieces and all the earth shaken, and then, suddenly, it is all over and the sun shines forth! There is a rainbow with its many colors on the clouds, and all the flowers lift up their drooping heads, each one loaded with a gleaming benediction—and all the earth fragrant and smiling and seeming to steam forth the incense of gratitude! Now, after the storm of the conviction of sin, when the Spirit of God comes, it is as quiet and peaceful as that. And after a storm of trouble— and I know what that means—after a hurricane of trial, we can take all our distresses and cares and lay them down at God’s feet and feel that we need not care about them anymore!

But if my Father did not undertake them, I would not, for I cannot. He has promised He will, if I cast my cares upon Him. You sometimes walk out of this place when God has blessed your soul and feel, “Now, I do not know what may happen, and really I do not care what does. My heart is resting on my God—I have left it all to Him and I am sure it will be right, whatever may come.” Like Jonah, you may lose your gourd, but you cannot lose your God! You may see dark weather before you, but still you can go to Him who cannot fail you—and there shall your soul have repose. Now, that is the peace of God which passes all understanding and, therefore, it must surpass all expression. The peace of God which can only be known by the man who enjoys it—a peace which the world does not give and cannot destroy, but which Heaven, itself, can work in the soul! Now, may we have this blessing, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

If we stopped here tonight and went no further, provided we got these blessings and fed upon them, it would be quite enough. Let me just read that text again clearly. “The Lord bless”—now the next word is the very pith of it, and let it be read now to each one of you, my good Sisters and Brothers, you who are young in years and young in Divine Grace, never mind who it is, so long as you are resting upon Christ—Jesus, the great High Priest, speaks from the eternal Glory and He says, “The Lord bless *you*.” “Oh, but I do not deserve it!” Just so, but, “the Lord Bless you.” “I am so unworthy, I am so backsliding!” Yes, but the Lord Jesus Christ knows all, covers all. We will read it, then, “The Lord Bless *you—you,*and keep*you:*the Lord make His face to shine upon *you,*and be gracious unto *you*: the Lord lift up His countenance upon *you,*and give *you*peace.” Oh, have you got that worked into your very hearts? It will be like a bundle of myrrh that you may keep in your bosom and it will sweeten your soul the whole year round, making you to know that you are blessed in and of the Lord who made Heaven and earth!

Now, I shall ask your attention for a little while to the second blessing, that spoken in God’s name by the Apostle Paul, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. “The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” Here we have—

**II.**THE NEW TESTAMENT BENEDICTION.  
This second blessing is precisely like the first as to its essence and substance. But there is some little difference as to the expression and circumstance. The first thing that strikes me in reading it through, as it almost always does when I pronounce it, is this—you notice *it begins with the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Lord Jesus is the Second Person of the blessed Divine Unity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—but this benediction begins with the Son of God. Why is that? In the order of Doctrine and fact, all infinite blessings begin with the Father. He is the Fountainhead of Creation. He is the Fountain, Christ the channel and the Holy Spirit produces the grand results. Father first, Son next, Spirit third. But in the order of experience—the order in which the blessing comes—it is always the Son first. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” Not the Father first, but the Son first! What a sinner learns to comfort him first is not that the Father loves Him. No. He learns first of all that Jesus Christ died for sinners because God loves Him—and so he puts his trust in Him. The first thing a poor Believer gets, then, is Grace through Jesus Christ. After that, perhaps, he may sometimes think that God the Father has no love towards him, but as he begins to read his Bible and to experience more of Divine Grace in his heart, he finds that God the Father is full of love. So, then, he goes on and gets the love of God the Father. And when he knows this, perhaps he often wonders what communion may be of, and fellowship. And when he hears some of those delightful hymns which we sing at the Lord’s Supper, he thinks he shall never get to them—to talk with God, to have communion with Christ—but, by-and-by, as the Lord leads him on, from being a babe, he grows to be a man and he gets into communion with the Holy Spirit. Babes in Grace know “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But as they grow they discover “the love of God our Father.” And as they grow still more, they come to “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” The three things are put in the order of experience, not in the order of fact, nor the order of Doctrine.  
Having noticed that, just observe the three blessings as they come. *“The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich.” You know His great poverty—you know His great Grace which brought Him from yonder starry heavens to lie in a manger, to live in obscurity for 30 years and to die upon the Cross in pains that cannot be told. Now, Grace comes to us through Christ and, therefore, it is said, “by His Grace.” He is the golden pipe through which it all flows. Believing in Him, we receive the mercy of God! Coming through Him to the Mercy Seat, we obtain unnumbered favors by virtue of our union with Him. As the branch derives sap and then fruit from the vine, we derive Grace from Him. He is to us the channel of all the good gifts of our heavenly Father. “May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be with you all.”*Be with you all—it is not in the singular—it is not to each one. It is, “with you *all,”* because the genius of the Gospel is expansive. You notice the Redeemer’s prayer. It is not *My*Father. No, but “*our* Father which are in Heaven ” And the Gospel’s benediction, though it is personal—blessed be God for that—yet it is also expansive—“be with you *all.”* We are to think of all our Brothers and Sisters. When we get a blessing, we are to look upon ourselves as part of the Divine family. When we come together to break bread, we do not come, each one alone—though it would be the Lord’s Supper if only one man were there—but we come there in humble fellowship, one with the other! “Eat, drink you all, of this,” said Christ. “Take, eat, this is My body.” He would have all His disciples come there and partake. And so with this blessing of the Grace of Jesus Christ—may it be with you all!  
Has it been with us all during the past year? There are not so many here tonight as usual. May I, therefore, put the question to each one personally? Has it been with you—and you—and you? Have you, my Hearers, known daily the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you stood by faith at the foot of the Cross and felt that you rested your all on Him? If so, I know you possess His Grace. He it is who has given you power to trust Him wholly and absolutely. All the Grace there is in His great heart and mind belongs to you!—  
***“Plenteous Grace with Him is found,  
Grace to cover all our sins.  
May the healing streams abound,  
Make and keep us pure within.”***  
May it be with you all!  
Next comes *“the love of the Father.”*It is from the love of God that everything blessed and blessing springs. We must not imagine that Jesus Christ died to induce His Father to love us—a very foolish and pernicious idea that! God the Eternal Father always loved His people and Christ has removed the sin which restrained the shinings of the most glorious manifestations of that love—but He loved before Christ died. You know you can boast—  
**“*‘Twas not to make the Father’s love  
Towards His people sure,  
That Jesus came from realms above!  
‘Twas not the pangs He bore  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was Love before.”***  
That fountain sprung up eternally! It was a well that needed no digging. Oh, dear Friends, I trust we know what the love of God means. Has it not been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us? We shall know it in years to come, for where it once takes possession it never departs. Once in Christ, in Christ forever! In Christ’s love you have begun a banquet which will never end. “May the love of God be with you all,” is meant for all God’s people. But is that love present with all? If you have not tasted God’s love, you do not know what life, true life, means. The richest, the most celestial, the most transporting joy that mortal mind can know is a full assurance of the love of God! Dear Hearer, do you love Christ? Can you answer the question, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” Then, if you have love for Christ, pure and true love and trust, if it is the fruit of God’s love to you, then be of good cheer! May the love of the Father be with you all your days!  
Then comes “*the communion of the Holy Ghost.”* A very ugly word that—“Ghost.” A better translation of the original Greek word would be, “Spirit.” “Holy Spirit,” and I sometimes wish that we always called Him by that name. It is far more expressive. The word, “ghost,” bears such a strange and weird meaning, now, that it were better in this connection entirely to abandon it! The word, “communion,” means not only the Holy Spirit coming to us and having converse with us, but communion means copartnership. When the Churches in Macedonia made a collection for the poor Church in Judea, Paul called the collection, “communion,” because by means of giving money to the Church in Judea they had a fellowship, something like having all things common—that is the perfection of fellowship!  
Now, the Holy Spirit, if I may use the expression, has all things common with God’s people. He gives to them all things. “He shall lead you into truth.” What the Spirit knows and teaches us, we are able to bear. He knows the mind of God. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He gives us to participate in all that He possesses. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of peace. He gives us peace. He is the Spirit of holiness and sanctification—rather, He is the Spirit of light—He kindles light in our souls. He is a sacred fire. He baptized the Church in fire. Everything that the Holy Spirit is and has, He is and has for the Church of God and in common with the Church of God! Now, what an unspeakable blessing this is, to enter into a sacred copartnership with God the Holy Spirit! To talk with Him, to live with Him, to feast with Him, to have Him to be ours and for us to be His! Now, may such a communion as this be with us! I question whether we have ever got up to the fullness of this.  
I think I told you the other evening the story of a good woman who was a little distressed in her mind and who, in reading the passage, “Your Maker is your Husband,” said, “Now, I won’t be distressed any longer. When my husband was alive, I took care to live up to my income and now I will take care to live up to my heavenly Husband’s income.” Oh, I wish to get hold of living up to God’s income, for all He has is given to His people! What rich lives we would have if we were to participate in all that He has! We would be continually feeling His power in our souls. Have we done this? May each one of you say, “Lord, give me to know the communion of the Holy Spirit all my days, until I shall be taken up to dwell where You reveal Yourself without a veil between!”  
Now, in closing, you see the difference between the two benedictions is this—the second blessing is really *exhibited,*the first a little veiled— something like Moses, when his face was too bright for the people to look upon, he put a veil upon his face. So the blessing Aaron pronounced is not so distinct or clear as the Apostolic blessing. Note, again, that the blessings in the second benediction are *deeper—*they are traced up to their source in the Triune Godhead, “Grace, love and communion.” The one is a deep, the other a great deep. Note, yet again, that they are wider*.*The blessings of the Old Testament are individual and personal—to “you.” The blessings in the New Testament are to the Corinthian Church and to all the Churches—“with you all.”  
In the first case there was a confirmation and in the second case there is one also—“Amen,” which is the Divine confirmation of this benediction.  
But I notice in the Apostolic benediction there is one thing which there is not in the first, namely, *the communion,* that is, the privilege—the privilege which comes to a child of God in this age of bliss when Christ is fully revealed. Did you ever notice that when John was born, an angel appeared to his father, Zacharias, to announce that Christ was come? No sooner did that bell begin to ring to tell that Christ was coming, than what happened? The greatest blessing was about to be pronounced and, therefore, the smaller blessing had to be silenced. When Zacharias came out, he was expected to bless the people, but what did he do? He could not speak a word—he was speechless and he beckoned with his hand— and that morning the assembly went home without the benediction! The priest could not pronounce it. Now, I dare say they said one to another, “What a strange thing it was. We always had that benediction before, ‘The Lord bless you, and keep you,’ but this morning the priest could not speak a word.” You and I know what that means. We must stop that one because there is a better coming! God seemed, as it were, to give notice to His people, “I am about to hush the voice of Aaron because Melchisedec is coming. I am about to stop the sound of the symbolic, because the real Priest is coming. I am about to hush the voice of Zacharias because the Son of God is now to appear and declare that the fullest blessing of Jehovah will rest upon His people.”  
Now, let us go our separate ways tonight, guided home, I trust, safely and rightly. And let us feed upon and make our soul’s bread the two precious texts that have been before us. And I am not afraid but that you will be like those who went out to gather the manna—you shall each have enough! He who needs much shall have in abundance and he who requires little shall have no lack. Let us close by singing the blessing and go our way to turn all life into a song of gratitude for God’s rich benedictions! Amen.

THE OBJECTIVE OF CHRIST’S DEATH  
NO. 2483

***~~A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1896.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 15, 1886.~~***

***~~“Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Galatians 1:4, 5.~~***

THE Apostle Paul, in his writings, is notable for the fact that he scarcely ever mentions the name of the Lord Jesus Christ without pausing to praise and bless Him. There are many benedictions and hallelujahs in Paul’s Epistles which might have been omitted so far as the run of the sense is concerned, but not one of them could be omitted because his heart was so aglow with love to his Divine Master that he only needed to mention that dear name and out burst his praises in a second! Brethren, let us all try to keep a heart like the Apostle’s—so full of love to Christ that we have only to come across His track and we shall at once fall down and worship and adore Him or, upon the wings of holy love mount up nearer to His Throne.

I am quite sure that when Paul was writing the Epistle to the Galatians, he was eager to get at his task. The Galatians had turned aside from the Gospel of God’s Grace and Paul was in dead earnest to bring them back to the grand Truth of the doctrine of salvation and justification by faith in Christ. He was burning to get at his work of trying to win them back to the old paths, but it seemed necessary and courteous to begin with a salutation. In that salutation occurred the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so off went the Apostle! Earnest as he was to get to the special subject on which he was about to write, he felt that he must tarry a while and write a little to the honor of his Divine Master. So we read, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Then He gets at the business he has in hand—“I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ to another gospel: which is not another; but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ,” and so on.

He is red-hot upon that subject, yet he must stop a minute or two to pen some few words of praise to his glorious Lord and Savior. The old proverb says, “Prayer and provender hinder no man’s journey.” And to stop a little while, to praise and bless the name of Jesus Christ, hinders no man’s argument! Whatever it is that you have to do, if your Master shall cross your path, pause a while and praise Him as best you can. When Mary sat at Christ’s feet, she was not wasting her time, she was employing it then to the highest possible profit! And when you and I get away from the Master’s work to think of our Lord, Himself, and to praise Him and commune with Him, we are by no means wasting our time! We are gathering strength and laying it out to the best possible purpose with regard to our future work and warfare.

I can see the great wisdom of the Apostle in acting in such a fashion as this. He is about to write to these Galatians concerning their leaving the Gospel—what is the best way to make them sorry for turning aside from the faith? Why, to set before them Jesus Christ, Himself, who is the very essence and glory of the Gospel! I have heard of one who preached much against certain errors, but there was another servant of the Lord who never preached against those errors, but who always proclaimed the Gospel right out straight—and when one asked him why he did not attack the errors, he said, “I do preach against them most effectually. If there is a crooked stick about and you want to show how many crooks there are in it, you need not do anything except lay a straight one down by the side of it—and the crookedness of the other stick will be detected at once.” So the Apostle admires, extols and adores the Lord Jesus Christ and thus, in the best possible manner, introduces what he has to say concerning the errors of the Galatians. Oh, for a burst of sunlight from the face of Christ! Then would the shadows of today soon fly away! They who have never seen Him may love modern novelties and falsehoods, but if they have beheld His face and have been won by His charms, they will hold that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever, is infinitely to be preferred to all the inventions of men! I could say no less than this when I noticed the position in which our text is placed.

But now let us come to the text itself. To my mind it contains four things. First, *what our Lord Jesus Christ aimed at with regard to His people—*“that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” Secondly, *what our Lord has done to secure this end—*“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” Thirdly, *why He did it—*“According to the will of God and our Father.” And fourthly, *what we shall say concerning it—*“To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

**I.**First, then, WHAT DID OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AIM AT WITH REGARD TO HIS PEOPLE?  
To preserve them from going down into the Pit? To rescue them from Hell? To bring them to Heaven? Yes, all that, but more than that! His great objective with regard to His people is to deliver them from this present evil world. We are living in this present evil world and, as Paul called it by that name, we need not alter the phrase, for we cannot help knowing that it is *still* an evil world. And in it are God’s redeemed and chosen people, by nature part and parcel of that world, equally fallen, equally estranged from God, equally set on mischief, equally certain to go down into the Pit of destruction if left to themselves. The objective of Christ is to carve out a people from this great brook of stone—it is His purpose to find His own people who were given to Him before the earth was—and to deliver them from the bondage and the slavery in which they are found in this Egypt, of which they seem to form a part, though to the eyes of Christ they are always as separate and distinct as the Israelites were when they dwelt in the land of Goshen.  
What does the Apostle mean by saying that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world?  
First, Christ came that He might *deliver His people from this common condemnation of this present evil world*. This is the City of Destruction which is to be burned with fire and Christ’s business is to fetch His people out of it. Therefore He sends His Evangelists to cry to them, “Flee from the wrath to come! Tarry not in the city, but escape for your lives— you are in a doomed world which will certainly be destroyed—therefore, flee to the only Shelter from the coming storm.” The Lord desires that we should be so clear of this world that when it is condemned we may not share in the condemnation. It is Christ’s purpose to bring us into a state of justification before God, through His blood and righteousness, that we may not perish in the common wreck in the day when the world shall be consumed with fire, but that we may have our ark wherein, as righteous Noah was preserved from the deluge of water, we may be saved from the fiery floods of Divine Wrath. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world that He might deliver us from that condemnation which now rests upon all the race of Adam except those who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel.  
But He came with this further purpose, *to deliver us from the condition in which the world is found*. In Paul’s day the world was in a horrible state. Then the slave was chained to his master’s door, like a dog, and slept at night in a hole under the stairs—and the slave’s master indulged in all kinds of debauchery and sin. The cruelty of the Romans satisfied itself with gladiatorial shows where men murdered each other to make a public holiday. Christ came to gather out a people even from among these abominations—and He did gather them out—a holy people who could not and would not live as the rest of the world lived! They did not go away into the deserts, or hide themselves in caves, living as hermits, but they went up and down in the earth, attending faithfully to the duties of daily life, yet everywhere marked as differing from other men. Their moral tone—their whole thought about the things of this world and the next—was altogether different from that of the rest of mankind, for Christ had come to draw them out of the kennel of iniquity in which others lived like beasts, to lift them up out of the bog of sin and make them to be a pure-minded, holy, kind, generous, loving people who should be like their Master, Jesus Christ!  
For this purpose, the Savior died. He thought it worth His while, even, to die upon the Cross that He might thereby make a better, purer, nobler, more unselfish, more devout people than as yet had appeared in the Roman or Jewish world. And this is what He is still doing in this present evil world! He is lifting up men and women out of the filthiness in which they have been wallowing—making them love holiness, purity, temperance—and hate all that is evil in the sight of God.  
This, then, is the great objective of Christ’s death—to deliver us from the world’s condemnation, and to deliver us from the world’s condition.

He also came *to deliver us from the world’s customs*. There are many things which a worldling does which a Christian cannot do. I need not enlarge upon the tricks in trade which are all too common in the present day, but if you are Christ’s own, I charge you, do not even*think* of them, but let your course be straight as an arrow’s and let your conscience be clean as the driven snow! It is not for God’s people to say, “It is the custom of the trade, so we may do it.” What have you to do with that? It is the custom of the trade to ruin men’s souls, but the Churches of God have no such custom, nor have those who follow closely after the Lord Jesus Christ. He has come on purpose that we may not conform to the sinful fashions of men, but that we may have a way of our own, or rather, that we may make Christ’s way the way of holiness, to be our way.

Hence, He has come *to deliver us from the spirit of the world*. The spirit of the world is, “I can swim. So, if everybody else is drowned, there will then be the more room for me.” “I fight for my own hand,” says the worldling, “and if, in the process, I crush the widow and the fatherless, I cannot help that—they should not get in my way.” The rules of political economy do not permit of anything like mercy—they are as inflexible as the laws of nature. They are something after this fashion—“Grind down the poor and get as much as you can out of them for as little money as possible. Care for nobody but yourself. Mind the main chance. Make money, honestly, if you can, but if not, make it anyway, only keep clear of the law, for it would be a mistake to fall into its clutches.” Now, Christ has come to gather out of the world a people who will not be possessed with this detestable spirit, but who will resolve to live for others rather than for themselves. We are to consider those who are around us and to think what influence our conduct will have upon them. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to love even our enemies. We are to do good to the unthankful and to the evil. We are, in all ways, and according to the measure of our ability, to copy the example of our Father who is in Heaven, who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the evil as well as upon the good. O Friends, look what Christ has come to do—even to separate to Himself a people like Himself out of this present evil world!

Yet once more, He will do this *by delivering us from all fear of this world*. What a great many of you there are who dare not do anything but what society agrees should be done! If society says, “This is the right thing to do,” you call it “etiquette,” and you do that particular thing. Then all the people around you are very respectable and you want to be counted respectable—and the consequence is that you dare not call your souls your own, and you do not act as you would wish to until you have first asked your neighbors’ permission. There are multitudes of people still in the condition of abject slavery to those who are around them! But when Christ came into the world, He gathered out of the world a people who were not afraid of anybody. After His good Spirit had renewed them, they walked about fearless of the greatest earthly potentates! There was the great Emperor of Rome, for instance, and who dared ever contradict what the Emperor of Rome said? The man who wrote our text did!

And Paul before Nero is a vastly greater man than the cruel tyrant upon the throne. When they bring the saints before the judgment seat, the Roman consul says, “Offer sacrifice to idols. You know the law—take that incense and put it on the altar, this very moment.” One of the guards says, “Sir, this man is obstinate and rebellious. I have told him what he is to do, but he refuses.” The consul says, “Do you, impious wretch, refuse to worship Jupiter? Put that incense on the altar this moment, or you shall be torn in pieces with hot irons.” The man before him replies, “I am a Christian.” “Is that your answer?” “Yes, Sir, my only answer. I am a Christian.” “Then tear him with the pincers! Let him learn what my hot irons can do.” They do it and the brave saint bears it. Perhaps a groan escapes his lips, for flesh is frail, but when he is asked again, “Will you worship Jupiter?” He replies as before, “I am a Christian.” “To the lions with him, then! To the lions with him,” cries the enraged persecutor, and he is taken off to the amphitheatre. But as that poor simple peasant walks across the arena, the wild beasts, themselves, seem cowed before him and, though he is soon torn in pieces, everybody goes home from the amphitheatre saying, “What a strange being that man was! He seemed utterly devoid of fear!”

Yes, the early Christians were without fear and without reproach, for Christ came to set them free from fear of this present evil world.  
O Brothers and Sisters, were the martyrs as brave as this, and are we going to yield to whatever laws and rules the world lives to lay down for us? Do we mean to believe its current theology, or philosophy, and do or not do as it may dictate? For my part, “I would as well not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself.” Since Christ has given me my liberty, I am His servant, and whether I am in fashion or out of fashion is no concern of mine so long as I please Him! Dear Friends, let it be so with you, I pray you, and may the Lord daily divide you more and more from the world so that, at home or abroad, everybody can see that you are not of the world! Love men, seek their good and in the highest and best sense be far more loving to the world than the world is to itself, but still, fear it not. Why should you? It is “the present evil world” which “lies in the Wicked One.” It is for you bravely to bear your protest against the world every day you live, for to this end did Christ come to this earth, “that He might deliver us from this present evil world.”  
**II.**We have seen what our Lord aimed at by His death. Now, secondly, WHAT DID CHRIST DO TO THIS END—to deliver us from this present evil world?  
The answer of the text is, “*He gave Himself*.” I will not say that He gave His royal crown, that diadem which did outshine the sun. I will not say that He laid aside His azure vest and hung it on the sky as He came down to earth. I will not say that He gave up for us the thrones and royalties of Heaven. You know that He did all this and far more—nor need I remind you that, when upon earth, He gave up all that He had, even to His last garment, for they parted His raiment among them and for His vesture they cast lots. I need not say that He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, nor that He gave His hands to the nails and His feet to the cruel iron. I need not say that He gave His body, His soul and His spirit, for you have it all in these three words—“He gave Himself.”  
“He gave Himself *for our sins*.” That is the wonder of Christ’s death! Our sins could not be put away except by His dying in our place. There was no expiation of our sin and, consequently, no deliverance from its condemnation except by Christ’s bearing in our place, that wrath of God which was due to us—and He did it. “He gave Himself for our sins.” I need not say more upon that point except just this. Do not, I pray you, let us permit Him in any sense or measure to fail in His supreme objective. “He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world,” therefore, out of gratitude to Him, if for no other reason, let us not be of the world, or like the world, servants of the world, slaves of the world. What? Did Christ die to deliver us from the world and do we go back to it and deliberately put our necks under the world’s yoke, wear the world’s yoke and become, again, the world’s slaves? I am ashamed of myself and of you whenever we, for a moment, act as the ungodly world acts and become as the world is—self-seeking, rebellious against God’s will, living contrary to the Divine Law of Christ. Oh, let every drop of blood He shed on Calvary purge you from all resemblance to the world! Let the dying Savior’s cries move you to hate the sin which the world loves! From Calvary, hear Him cry, “Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” By the blood with which He bought you, be you not of the world, seeing that He has redeemed you from among men that you might be altogether His own!  
How does the death of Christ deliver us from the world? It does this *by removing from us the condemnation of our sin*. Having borne our sins in His own body on the tree, Christ has forever freed us from the penalty that was our due. You know that is the very essence of the Gospel and you also know that I preach this Truth of God every time I stand here, so I need not enlarge upon it now.  
Christ has also delivered us from the world *by making sin hateful to us*. We say to ourselves, “Did sin kill Christ? Then we cannot play with that dagger that stabbed our Lord! How can we be friendly with the world that cast Him out and hanged Him on a tree? O murderous sin, how can I give you lodgment in my heart when you killed the Altogether Lovely One?” Men speak hard things of regicide, but what shall I say of *deicide*? And sin is that deicide which slew the Christ of God! Yet, marvel of marvels, by that death on the Cross He has crucified us to the world and the world to us and so He has delivered us from this present evil world!  
I may add that Christ has also delivered us from the world *by the splendor of His example in giving Himself to die for His enemies* and by the Glory of His infinite merit whereby He purchased back that image of God in Adam which sin had obliterated. He gave Himself, the very image of God, and more than that, *God Himself*, that He might give back to us that image of God which long ago we had lost. Thus has Christ delivered us from this present evil world. Judge, Sirs, whether He has thus delivered you.  
**III.**Time flies, therefore I must hasten on to the third question which is, WHY DID CHRIST DO THIS?  
First, because our holiness was included in the purpose of God. The text says, “According to the will of God and our Father.” Mr. Charles Simeon used to say that there were some, in his day, who thought that the very word, “predestination,” sounded almost like blasphemy. And I have no doubt that there are some left who cannot bear to hear of the will and the purpose of God! But to us these words sound like sweetest music! I do not believe that there ever would have been a man delivered from this present evil world if it had not been according to the will, the purpose, the *predestination* of God, even our Father! It needs a mighty tug to get a man away from the world. It is a miracle for a man to live in the world and yet not to be of it—it is a continuous miracle of so vast a kind that I am sure it would never have been worked if it had not been according to the will of God our Father. Yet so it stood in the Divine Decree, that there should be a people chosen from among men—a people who would be called out from among the mass of the ungodly, who would be drawn by supernatural power to follow after that which is right and good and holy. A people who would be washed in the blood of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit in the spirit of their minds and, therefore, should be a peculiar people in the world but not of it—the people of God set apart to Himself, to be His, now, and His, hereafter forever and ever! I delight to remember that this is the will of God, even our sanctification, our separation from the world!  
Now I want to push home this Truth of God into your very hearts. If this is, indeed, the purpose of God, let us see to it, my Brothers and Sisters, every one of us, that we *fulfill that purpose in our daily lives*. Let us come out from the world more clear and straight than we have ever done. I believe that there would be much more persecution than there is if there were more real Christians. But we have become so like the world, that the world does not hate us as it once did. If we would be more just, more upright, more true, more Christ-like, more godly, we would soon hear all the dogs of Hell baying with all their might against us! But what of that? It would just be the fulfillment of the Divine Purpose and God would be well pleased with us. Come, then, and let us fall back upon the Omnipotent strength which always slumbers within the Divine will. Lord, if it is Your will, fulfill it in me! If this is Your purpose, accomplish it in me! Oh, what brave men and women those early saints were! I do not wonder that our friend cried out, just now, when I depicted the martyr— but there were tens of thousands of such holy men and women in the days of persecution!  
Have you never heard of her whom they set in a red-hot iron chair because she would not turn away from Christ, or of that other poor feeble woman who was tossed on the horns of bulls, but who, nevertheless, spoke up right bravely for her Master as she came to die? Yes, and there have been boys and girls, who, for Christ’s sake, sooner than sin, have braved the most fearful deaths! Remember John Bunyan when he refused to give up preaching? They put him in prison and said to him, “Mr. Bunyan, you can come out of prison whenever you will promise to cease preaching the Gospel.” He said, “If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the Grace of God.” “Well,” they said, “then you must go back to prison,” and he answered, “I will go back and stay there, if necessary, till the moss grows on my eyelids, but I will never deny my Master.” This was the stuff of which the godly were made, then! May the Lord make many of us to be like they—men and women who cannot and will not do that which is evil, but will, in the name of God, stand to the right and the true, come what may!  
**IV.**Lastly, WHAT SHALL WE SAY CONCERNING IT ALL? Why, just this, “To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”  
First, *God is glorified in Christ’s death*. Has the Father given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us? Then there is Glory enough in Jesus Christ upon the Cross to last throughout eternity! Fix your eyes upon that bleeding Savior—behold the glorious Justice of God in laying guilt on Him, punishing it on Him and behold, also, the inconceivable love of God in thus putting His Only-Begotten to death that we might live through Him! You need not range the world around to see the Glory of God in nature, though that is a delightful employment, for there is enough Glory in the Cross of Christ to last throughout all eternity. The Apostle says, “To whom be glory forever and ever.” How long that is, I cannot tell. “Forever” is without any end, but Paul says, “Forever *and* ever,” and there is Glory enough in the Cross of Christ to last forever and ever, as long as the Eternal Jehovah, Himself, exists!  
Well, then, has Jesus Christ delivered us from the world? Have we fled to Him and been pardoned? Are we accepted in the Beloved? Then *let us begin to glorify God now*. Let us glorify His dear Son. Let us praise Him. Let every beat of our heart proclaim our joyous thankfulness and so continually yield sweet music to God. I would that every breath were like a verse of a Psalm and our whole life an endless hallelujah to His Glory!—

***“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise!  
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies,”***

for it is, indeed, a subject of great praise to be separated from the world, and to be made holy to the Lord.

But, Brothers and Sisters, *when you once begin the music, never stop* because, as the Apostle says, Glory is to be given to God, “forever and ever.” I saw, last week, a Brother from the backwoods of America, and he said to me, “Twenty years ago I was in your vestry and you did me much good by something that you said to me.” I asked, “What did I say?” And the good man replied, “You said, ‘Brother, as a minister, there are two occasions upon which you ought to preach Jesus Christ.’ I enquired, ‘What are those two occasions?’ You answered, “In season and out of season.’” Well now, there are two occasions upon which we ought to praise God—“in season, and out of season!” Praise Him when you feel like praising and when you do not feel like it—praise Him till you do! When you can say—

***“I feel like singing all the time,”***  
then sing! And when you say, “I do not feel like singing,” make a point of singing just to let the devil know that he is not your master! It is a good thing to praise Christ in the presence of His friends. It is, sometimes, a better thing to extol Him in the presence of His enemies. It is a great thing to praise Jesus Christ by day, but there is no music sweeter than the nightingale’s—and she praises God by night. It is well to praise the Lord for His mercy when you are in health, but make sure that you do it when you are sick, for then your praise is more likely to be genuine. When you are deep down in sorrow, do not rob God of the gratitude that is due to Him—never stint Him of His revenue of praise whatever else goes short. Praise Him, sometimes, on the high-sounding cymbals— crash, crash—with all your heart and being. But when you cannot do that, just sit and give Him praise in solemn silence in the deep quiet of your spirit.

To be redeemed from a dying world, to be fetched out from a condemned world, to be brought out from slavery, to be made a child of God is enough to make you emulate the angels and even to excel them! They cannot rise to so high a pitch of gratitude as you ought to reach, even now, and ought to keep up all the days of your life—and then, “forever and ever” in the Presence of the King.

O you poor souls who are still in the world, God help you to get out of it! O you who are lost and ruined, there is no hope for you but in Jesus Christ our Savior! Tell all men about Him, Brothers and Sisters! You who are saved, talk about Christ everywhere! Let no man whom you ever meet be without a knowledge of the way of salvation. “I do not know what to say,” says one. “I do not yet know much about it myself.” Do not say it, then, if you do not know it! But, if you do know it, proclaim it! If you have tasted and handled it, proclaim it as best you can—in broken English, if in no other style—

***“Proclaim to sinners round  
What a dear Savior you have found.”***

So, even through you the purpose for which Christ bled shall be accomplished, that is, the severance of His elect from the great mass of mankind among whom they lie, and this shall be to the praise of the glory of His Grace forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*JOHN 17.***

This matchless chapter contains that great intercessory prayer of Christ for His people which may most properly is called “the Lord’s prayer.”

**Verse 1.** *These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.*What a sight it must have been to see the Divine Intercessor in this, His last great prayer before He poured out His soul to death! We can never read this chapter so as fully to enter into its meaning, for there must always be in it a depth far greater than our experience can fathom. A man must die and enter Heaven before he can fully realize all that Christ meant when He said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.”

**2.***As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* Notice the doctrine of this verse. Here is the mention, both of a general and a particular relation to Christ. “You have given Him power over all flesh.” Never think of setting a limit to the value of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice! Never dream that you can understand all its influences and all its bearings. By His death, Christ has power over all flesh. But notice, also, the special purpose and objective of redemption. Observe how it applies particularly to the elect of God. The motive for the Father’s giving Christ power over all flesh is this, “that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”

**3.***And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*The knowledge of God and the knowledge of the Messiah, the Sent One—this is not only life, but it is life that can never die—“This is life eternal.” Have you, dear Friend, received this eternal life? Do you know the only true God? Do you know Jesus Christ whom He has sent? Then, at this very moment, you possess eternal life and you shall never perish, for eternal life is a life that cannot possibly die!

**4, 5.***I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the Glory which I had with You before the world was.* This is such a prayer as never could have been prayed by a mere man and you cannot understand this prayer at all apart from the Manhood and the Deity of Christ combined. No human being could have written such a prayer as this even if it had been proposed to him to write a prayer that would be equally suitable to God and man. It is only suitable to Christ, the GodMan, and it is, in itself, one of the best evidences of the Inspiration of Scripture! I dare take my stand upon this chapter, alone, and say that here we have the finger of God, the writing of the Holy Spirit—and here we have the very Words of Him who was God and Man in one Person.

**6.***I have manifested Your name to the men which You gave me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word.*How gracious it was on our Lord’s part to say the best He could of His disciples! These 12 men had learned but little of the Divine Word, but they had believed what they had been taught, so Jesus could say of them to His Father, “Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your Word.”

**7, 8.***Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given to them the Words which You gave Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.*I want you to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ makes no boast of being “an original thinker.” On the contrary, He says to His Father concerning His disciples, “I have given to them the Words which You gave Me.” I would rather repeat the Word of God, syllable by syllable, than I would *dare* to think for myself apart from the revealed will of God! What are men’s thoughts, after all, but vanity educed from vanity? But the Word of the Lord endures forever—it shall abide when even Heaven and earth shall pass away! Hence our Savior lays great stress upon this fact, “I have given to them the Words which You gave to Me.” Brother minister, may you and I, when we come to die, be able to say to the Lord concerning our people, “I have given to them the Words which You gave to me.”

**9.***I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours.*In this, our Lord’s last great intercessory prayer, He was especially engaged in petitions for His own people. There is a sense in which He intercedes for all mankind, but in the higher and more special sense referred to in this verse, Christ’s own chosen ones occupied all His thoughts—“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours.”

**10-11.***And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.* Christ is God and, therefore, looking into the future, He can speak of His approaching departure as though it had already happened.

**11.***Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are.*See the plaintive power of this prayer of a tender heart. First, our Lord shows His love by praying for us and then by dying for us. Notice what importance He attaches to the unity of His people—“that they may be one, as we are.” Let us all try to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” I suppose that while we are in this world, we shall never all think alike, but let us all think alike about our Lord—and gather to His name and feel a holy unity through His Spirit! When shall it be again said that all Christ’s disciples have “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism”? Alas, they tore His seamless robe and it still remains torn through the schisms and errors which divide His people, one from another!

**12, 13.***While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to You.* These are sweet Words with which to die. Oh, that you and I might have them in our hearts, if not on our lips, in our expiring moments! “And now come I to You.” Our Lord thinks nothing of the bloody way by which He was to go to the Father. What though the Cross, nails and spear are in the road? He thinks comparatively little of all those terrible things, for He looks beyond them. And He says, “Now come I to You.”

**13.***And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.*Have you ever obtained this blessing, Brothers and Sisters—Christ’s joy in you—what is more, Christ’s joy *fulfilled* in you? God grant to all of us to know, by happy experience, the meaning of this wondrous expression!

**14, 15.***I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.*“Do not let the world so besmear and defile them as to do them mischief. Let them keep on as lamps burning in dark places. Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the Evil One.”

**16-18.***They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*As the Father took Jesus out of the bosom of His love and bade Him go as His missionary to men, so does Jesus keep us, for a while, away from the bosom of His Glory that we may stop here to be missionaries among our fellow men. Are we fulfilling our calling? Are we justifying the commission which Christ has laid upon us? Oh, that we were doing so to the fullest extent that is possible!

**19.***And for their sakes I sanctify Myself—*“For their sakes I set Myself apart.”—  
**19, 20.***That they also might be sanctified through the Truth. Neither pray I for these alone—*This little handful of followers gathered about Me—  
**20.***But for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.*In the glass of prevision, Christ saw us, my Brothers and Sisters, and He saw all the myriads, yet unborn, who are to be gathered to His Cross and to bow before His feet—and He prayed for them all—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word.”  
**21, 22.***That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One.*Let us, more and more, lay aside everything that divides, especially that evil heart of unbelief, and pride, and self-seeking which is the great sect-making faculty. May we get rid of that evil and come more and more to realize that all men who are really in Christ are, and must be, one. If we are members of one body, one blood courses through our veins and gives us life! One Spirit is in the one body of Christ. There cannot be two lives. There cannot be two beings within the one body of Christ. All true Believers must be one and truly, if we speak the Truth of God to one another concerning our Lord—and especially if we speak much to God together in prayer—we straightway perceive that we *are* one!  
**23-26.***I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, as You have loved Me. Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.*Here the Master ended His sweet prayer and went off to His terrible passion in Gethsemane.

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Sermon #2185 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

OUR MANIFESTO  
NO. 2185

***~~A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 25, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT AN ASSEMBLY OF MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.~~***

***~~DELIVERED ON FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 25, 1890.~~***

***~~“But I make known to you, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.”  
Galatians 1:11.~~***

To me it is a pitiful sight to see Paul defending himself as an Apostle and, doing this, not against the gainsaying world, but against coldhearted members of the Church! They said that he was not truly an Apostle, for he had not seen the Lord. And they uttered a great many other things derogatory to him. To maintain his claim to the Apostleship, he was driven to commence his Epistles with, “Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ,” though his work was a self-evident proof of his call. If, after God has blessed us to the conversion of many, some of these should raise a question as to our call to the ministry, we may count it a fiery trial—but we shall not conclude that a strange thing has happened to us. There is much more room to question *our* call to the ministry than to cast a doubt upon Paul’s Apostleship! This indignity, if it is put upon us, we can, by His Grace, cheerfully bear for our Master’s sake. We need not wonder, dear Brothers, if our ministry should be the subject of attack, because this has been the lot of those who have gone before us—and we should lack one great seal of our acceptance with God if we did not receive the unconscious homage of enmity which is always paid to the faithful by the ungodly world! When the devil is not troubled *by*us, he does not trouble *us*. If his kingdom is not shaken, he will not care about us or our work, but will let us enjoy inglorious ease. Be comforted by the experience of the Apostle of the Gentiles—he is peculiarly our Apostle—and we may regard his experience as a type of what we may expect while we labor among the Gentiles of our own day.

The treatment which has been given to eminent men while they have lived has been prophetic of the treatment of their reputations after death. This evil world is unchangeable in antagonism to true principles, whether their advocates are dead or living. They said, more than 1,800 years ago— “Paul, what of him?” They still say so. It is not unusual to hear dubious persons profess to differ from the Apostle and they even dare to say, “There, I do not agree with Paul.” I remember the first time that I heard this expression. I looked at the individual with astonishment. I was amazed that such a pigmy as he should say this of the great Apostle! Altogether apart from Paul’s Inspiration, it seemed like a cheese-mite differing from a cherub, or a handful of chaff discussing the verdict of the fire! The individual was so utterly beneath observation that I could not but marvel that his conceit should have been so outspokenly shameless. Notwithstanding this objection, even when supported by learned critics, we still agree with the Inspired servant of God. It is our firm conviction that to differ from Paul’s Epistles is to differ from the Holy Spirit—and to differ from the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mind Paul has fully expressed! It is remarkable that Paul’s writings should be so assailed! But this warns us that when we have gone to our reward, our names will not be free from aspersion, nor our teaching from opposition. The noblest of the departed are still slandered. Be not careful as to human judgment of yourself in death or in life, for what does it matter? Your real character, no man can injure but yourself, and if you are enabled to keep your garments clean, all else is not worth a thought.

To come more closely to our text. We do not claim to be able to use Paul’s words exactly in the full sense which he could throw into them, but there is a sense in which, I trust, we can each one say, “I make known to you, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.” We may not only say this, but we ought to be able to say it with thorough truthfulness. The form of expression goes as far as Paul was known to go towards an oath when he says, “I make known to you, brethren.” He means, I assure you most certainly—I would have you to be certain of it—“that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.” On this point he would have all the brethren know past all doubt.

From the context we are sure that he meant, first of all, that *his Gospel was not received by him from men*. His reception of it, in his own mind, was not after men. And next, he meant, that *the Gospel itself was not invented by men*. If I can hammer out these two statements, we will then *draw practical conclusions fro*m*them*.

**I.**First, TO US THE GOSPEL IS NOT AFTER MEN AS TO THE MODE BY WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED IT. In a certain sense we received it from men as to the outward part of the reception, for we were called by the Grace of God through parental influence, or through a Sunday school teacher, or by the ministry of the Word, or by the reading of a godly book, or by other agency. But in Paul’s case, none of these things were used! He was distinctly called by the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, speaking to him from Heaven and revealing Himself in His own light. It was necessary that Paul should not be indebted to Peter, or James, or John—even in the way in which many of us are indebted to instrumentality—so that he might truly say, “I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Yet we also can say this in another sense. We, also, have received the Gospel in a way beyond the power of man to convey it to us—men brought it to our ears, but the Lord, Himself, applied it to our *heart*. The best of the saints could not have brought it home to our hearts, so as to regenerate, convert and sanctify us by it. There was a distinct act of God, the Holy Spirit, by which the instrumentality was made effectual and the truth was rendered operative upon our souls.

So I note that *not one among us has received the Gospel by birthright*. We may be the children of holy parents, but we are not, therefore, the children of God. To us it is clear that, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing more. Only, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Yet we hear of persons whose children do not*need* conversion. They are spoken of as being free from natural corruption and *born* children of God—having a Divine Grace within which only needs to be *developed*. I am sorry to say that my father did not find me such a child. He found out early in my life that I was born in sin, shaped in iniquity and that folly was bound up in my heart! Friends and teachers soon perceived in me a natural depravity and, assuredly, I have found it in myself! The sad discovery needed no minute research, for the effect of the evil stared me in the face in my character.

This tradition as to our being born with a holy nature is gaining foothold in the professing church, though contrary to Scripture—and even to the confessions of faith which are still avowedly maintained! Certain preachers hardly dare formulate it as a doctrine, but it is, with them, a kind of chaotic belief that there may be productions of the flesh which are very superior and will serve well enough *without* the new birth of the Spirit. This tacit belief will lead up to birthright membership and that is fatal to any Christian community, wherever it comes to be the rule! Without conversion, in certain fellowships, young people may drift into the church as a matter of course, but the church becomes only a part of the world—with the Christian name affixed to it!

May we never, in our Churches, sink into that condition! That religion which is a mere family appendage is of little worth! The true seed are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We have not received our faith by tradition from our parents— and yet, some of us, if true faith could be so received, would certainly have thus received it, for if we are not Hebrews of the Hebrews, but, according to our family tree, we are Puritans of the Puritans, descended throughout many generations of Believers. Of this we make small account before God, though we are not ashamed of it before men. We have no father in our spiritual life but the Lord, Himself, and we have not received that life, or the Gospel, by any carnal parentage, but of the Lord alone!

Brothers, we have not received the Gospel, nor do we now receive it, *because of the teaching of any man, or set of men*. Do you receive anything because *Calvin* taught it? If so, you had need look to your foundations. Do you believe a doctrine because John Wesley preached it? If so, you have reason to mind what you are doing. God’s way, by which we are to receive the Truth of God, is to receive it by the Holy Spirit! It is helpful to me to know what such-and-such a minister believed. The judgment of a holy, godly, clear-sighted, gifted Divine is not to be despised—it deserves to have due weight with us. He is as likely to be right as we are and we should differ from a Grace-taught man with some hesitancy. But it is a very different thing to say, “I believe it on this good man’s authority.”

In our raw state as young Christians, it may not be injurious to receive the Truth of God from pastors and parents, and so on, but if we are to become men in Christ Jesus, and teachers of others, we must quit the childish habit of dependence on others and search for ourselves! We may now leave the egg and get rid of the pieces of shell as quickly as may be. It is our duty to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so—and more—it is our wisdom to cry for Grace to appropriate each Truth and let it dwell in our inmost nature. It is time that we should be able to say, “This Truth of God is now as personally my own as if I had never heard it from lips of man! I receive it because it has been written on my own heart by the Lord, Himself. Its coming to me is not after men.”

There is an opinion current in certain circles that you must not receive anything unless it is taught you of men—the word, “men,” being swallowed up and hidden away, but being there, after all, under the term— *“the church*.” The church is set up as the great authority! If she has sanctioned it, you dare not question it! If she decrees, it is yours to obey! But this is to receive a gospel “after man” with a vengeance. And the process involved is a strange one. You must trace a dogma as coming through a continuous visible church and this will lead you through the *Cloaca Maxima* of old Rome. Though the Truth of God is manifestly clear and pure and proves itself to be the Water of Life to you, yet you must not accept it—you must take yourself to the mudded stream which can be traced through the foul channel of a continuous church, which for ages has apostatized!

My dear Brethren, a doctrine’s being believed by what may, in courtesy, be called “the church,” is no voucher for it! The most of us would almost regard it as being a question to be raised whether teaching can be true which has been vouched for by those great worldly corporations which have usurped the name of churches of Christ. Several sects claim Apostolic succession and if any possess it, the Baptists are the most likely, since they practice the ordinances as they were delivered. But we do not even care to trace our pedigree through the long line of martyrs and of men abhorred by ecclesiastics. If we could do this without a break, the result would be of no value in our eyes, for the rag of “Apostolic succession” is not worth warehouse-room! Those who contend for the fiction may monopolize it if they will. We do *not* receive the Revelation of God because it has been received by a succession of fathers, monks, abbots and bishops! We are right glad when we perceive that certain of them saw the Truth of God and taught it—but that fact does not make it the Truth of God to us. We would, each one, say, “I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.” We never think of quoting the community of men called “the church” as the ultimate authority with conscience. “We have not so learned Christ.”

Furthermore, I hope I shall speak for all of you here when I say that *we have received the Truth of God personally by the revelation of it to our own souls by the Spirit of the Lord*. Albeit that in so large a company as this I fear there may be a Judas, and the, “Lord, is it I?” may well be passed round with holy self-suspicion, yet we can all say, unless fearfully deceived, that we have received the Truth of God which we preach by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. Let us turn to our diaries, though the dates are now far away in the long-ago. We remember when the Light of God broke in and revealed our lost estate and thus began the groundwork of our teaching. Ah, Friends, the darker doctrines which make up the foil of the priceless jewels of the Gospel—do you not remember when you received them with power? That I was guilty, I believed, for I was so taught— but then and there I *knew* in my soul that it was so! Oh, how I knew it! Guilty before God, “condemned already,” and lying under the present curse of a broken Law, I was sorely dismayed. I had heard the Law of God preached and I had trembled as I heard it, but now I felt an inward conviction of personal guilt of the most piercing character. I saw myself a *sinner*—and what a sight is that! Fearfulness took hold upon me and shame and dread. *Then* I saw how true was the doctrine of the sinfulness of sin— and what a punishment it must involve. That doctrine I no longer received of men!

The precious doctrine of peace through the precious blood of Jesus we also know by inward personal teaching. We used to hear and sing of the great Sacrifice and of the love of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But now we stood at the foot of the Cross—for ourselves we beheld that dear face and gazed into the eyes so full of pity—and saw the hands and feet that were fastened to the wood for our sakes. Oh, when we saw the Lord Jesus, as our Surety, smarting for our offense, *then* we received the Truths of Redemption and Atonement in a way that was “not after man”!

Yes, those gracious men who have gone to Heaven did preach the Gospel to us fully and earnestly—and they labored to make known Christ to us! But to reveal the Son of God in us was beyond their power! They could as easily have created a world as have made these Truths of God vital to us! We say, therefore, each one from his inmost soul, “I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man,” so far as the way by which we have come to know and feel it within our own souls!

Since our first days we have experienced a gradual opening up of the Gospel to our understanding, but in all that process, our real progress has been of *God*—not of men. Brethren, you read commentators—that is to say, if your own comments are worth hearing you read the books of godly men—that is to say, if you, yourselves, ever say anything worth reading, yet your spiritual learning, if it is true and real, is of the Lord’s imparting. Do we learn anything, in the most emphatic sense of learning, unless we are taught of the Lord? Is it not essential that God the Spirit should lay home the Truth of God which has been spoken to you, even by the ablest instructor? You have continued to be students ever since you left College, but your Tutor has been the Holy Spirit. By no other method can our spirits learn the Truth of God but by the teaching of the Spirit of God. We can receive the shell and the outer form of theology, but the real Word of the Lord, itself, comes by the Holy Spirit who leads us into all Truth.

How sweetly the Spirit has taught us *in meditation*! Have you not often been surprised and overcome with delight as Holy Scripture has opened up as if the gates of the Golden City had been set back for you to enter? I am sure that you did not, then, gather your knowledge from men, because it was all fresh to you as you sat alone with no book before you but the Bible and yourself receptive, scarcely thinking out matters, but drinking them in as the Lord brought them to you! A few minutes’ silent openness of soul before the Lord has brought us in more treasure of Truth than hours of learned research! The Truth of God is something like those stalactite caverns and grottoes of which we have heard, which you must enter and see for yourself if you would really know their wonders. If you should venture there without light or guide, you would run great risks, but with blazing torch and an instructed leader, your entrance is full of interest. Look! Your guide has taken you through a narrow winding passage where you have to creep, or go on bended knees! At last he has brought you out into a magnificent hall and when the torches are held aloft, the far-off roof sparkles and flashes back the light as from countless jewels of every hue!

You now behold Nature’s architecture and cathedrals are, therefore, toys to you. As you stand in that vast pillared and jeweled palace, you feel how much you owe to your guide and to his flaming torch. Thus the Holy Spirit leads us into all Truth and sheds the Light of God on the eternal and the mysterious! This He does in certain cases very personally. Then He fills us with complete forgetfulness of all our immediate surroundings and we commune only with the Truth of God. I can well understand how philosophers, while working out an absorbing problem, have seemed lost and oblivious to all the world besides. Have you never felt a holy absorption in the Truth while the Spirit has filled you with its glorious vision? It has been so with many of the saints while taught of God. They are not likely to give up to popular clamor what they have thus received!

How often has the Lord taught His servants His own Truth *in the school of tribulation*! We speak well of meditation—it is as silver—but tribulation is as much fine gold! Tribulation not only works patience, but patience brings experience and, in experience, there is a deep and intimate knowledge of the things of God which comes by no other means. Do you know what it is to be in such pain that you could not bear one more turn of the screw? And have you, then, in faintness fallen back upon your pillow and felt that even then you could not be more happy unless you were caught up to the third Heaven? Then has it been verified to some of us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. While lying in passive peace, it may be you have seen a Scripture come forth like a star between the clouds of a tempest, and it has shone with such luster as only the Lord God could have given to it. Depression of spirit and torture of body have been forgotten while the bright promise has made your soul full of light!

There is a place in the far-back desert which you can never forget. There grows a bush. A very unpromising object is a bush—but it is sacred to you—for there the Lord revealed Himself to you and the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed. You will never unlearn the lesson of the burning bush! Do we know any Truth of God till the Holy Spirit burns it into us—and engraves it on our soul as with an iron pen and with the point of a diamond? There are ways of learning for which we are very grateful, but the surest way of learning Divine Truth is by having the Word of God engrafted so as to take living hold upon the soul! Then we do not only *believe* it—we give our *life* to it—it lives in us and, at the same time, we live upon it! Such Truth throbs in every pulse, for it lives in us and colors our being. The devil insinuates questions, but we are not accountable for what he pleases to do, and we care the less, because he now whispers into a deaf ear. When once the soul, itself, has received the Truth of God, and it has come to permeate the entire being, we are not accessible to those doubts which before pierced us like poisoned arrows!

I may add, concerning many of the Truths of God and the whole Gospel system, that we have learned the Truth, thereof, *in the field of sacrifice and service with our Lord*, so that to us it is not after man. If you do not believe in human depravity, accept a pastorate in this wicked London and if you are true to your commission, you will doubt no more! If you do not believe in the necessity of the Holy Spirit to regenerate, take charge over a cultured and polished congregation that will hear all your rhetoric, and will remain as worldly and as frivolous as it was before! If you do not believe in the power of the atoning blood, never go and see Believers die, for you will find that they trust in nothing else! A dying Christ is the last resort of the Believer—

“ ***When every earthly prop gives way,  
He, then, is all my strength and stay.”***  
If you do not believe in the election of Grace, live where multitudes of

men come under your notice and persons most unlikely are called out from among them in surprising ways—and it will grow upon you! Here comes one who says, “I have neither father, mother, brother, sister, nor friend who ever enters a place of worship.” “How came *you* to believe?” “I heard a word in the street, Sir, quite by accident, that brought me to tremble before God.” Here is the election of Grace! Here comes another, dark in mind, troubled in soul and she is a member of a family—all of them members of your Church—all happy and rejoicing in the Lord. And yet this poor creature cannot lay hold upon Christ by faith. To your great joy, you set before her Christ in all His fullness of Grace and she becomes the brightest of the whole circle, for they never knew the darkness as she did, and they can never rejoice in the Light of God as she delights in it! To find a greatly- loving saint you must find one who has had much*forgiven*.

The woman that was a sinner is the only one that will wash Christ’s feet. There is raw material in a Publican which you seldom find in a Pharisee. A Pharisee may polish up into an ordinary Christian, but somehow there is a charming touch about the pardoned sinner which is lacking in the other. There is an election of Grace and you cannot help noticing, as you go about, how certain Believers enter into the inner circle, while others linger in the outer courts. The Lord is Sovereign in His gifts and does as He wills—and we are called to bow before His scepter within the Church as well as at its portal. The longer I live, the more sure I am that salvation is all of Grace and that the Lord gives that Grace according to His own will and purpose.

Once more, some of us have received the Gospel because of *the wonderful unction that has gone with it at times to our souls*. I hope that none of us will ever fall into the snare of following the guidance of impressions made upon us by texts which happen to come prominently before our minds. You have judgements and you must not lay them aside to be guided by impressions. But for all that and at the back of all that, there is not a man here that has led an eventful, useful life but must confess that certain of those acts of his life, upon which his whole history has hinged, are connected with influences upon his mind which were produced, as he believes, by supernatural agency! A passage of Holy Writ, which we have read a hundred times before, took us captive and became the master of every thought. We steered by it as men trust the polestar and we found that our voyage was made easy thereby. Certain texts are, to our memory, sweet as wafers made with honey, for we know what they once did for us and the recollection is refreshing. We have been revived from a fainting fit, nerved for a desperate effort, or fired for a sacrifice by a Scripture which became no longer a word in a book, but the very voice of God to our soul— even that voice of the Lord which is full of majesty!

Have you not noticed how a turn of a word in a text has made it seem all the more fitted for you? It looked a very small point, but it was essential to its effect, just as a small notch in a key may be the exact form which makes it fit the lock. How much may hang on what seems, to the unspiritual, to be nothing more than a slight verbal distinction, or an unimportant turn of expression! A thought of primary importance may turn upon the singular of plural of a word. If it is the Greek word, itself, the importance cannot be overestimated, but in an English word, in the translation, there may be well-near equal force according as the Word is true to the original. The many, who can only read our marvelous English Bible, come to prize its words because the Lord has blessed them to their souls. A simple Welsh friend believed that our Lord must have been a Welshman, because, he said, he always speaks *to me* in Welsh.

To me it has often seemed as if the Well-Beloved of my soul had been born in my native village, had gone to my school and had passed through all my personal experiences, for He knows me better than I know myself. Although I know He was of Bethlehem and Judea, yet He seems like one of London, or of Surrey. No, more—I see in Him more than manhood could have made Him—I discern in Him a Nature more than that of man, for He enters the inmost recesses of my soul, He reads me like an open page, He comforts me as one brought up with me, He dives into my deepest griefs and attends me in my highest joys! I have secrets in my heart which only He knows. Would God His secret were with me as mine is with Him up to the measure of my capacity! It is because of that wonderful power which the Lord Jesus has over us through His sacred Word that we receive that Word from Him and receive it as not of man.

What is unction, my Brothers? I fear that no one can help me by a definition. Who can define it? But yet we know where it is and we certainly feel where it is not. When that unction perfumes the Word of God, it is its own interpreter, it is its own apologist, it is it own confirmation and proof to the regenerate mind. Then the Word of God deals with us as no word of man ever did or could! We have not received it, therefore, of men. Constantly receiving the Divine Word as we do, it comes to us with an energy always fresh and forcible. It comes to us, especially, with a sanctifying power which is the very best proof of its coming from the thrice-holy God. Philosophers’ words may teach us what holiness is, but God’s Word makes us holy! We hear our Brethren exhort us to aspire to high degrees of Grace, but God’s Word lifts us up to them! The Word is not merely an instrument of good, but the Holy Spirit makes it an active energy within the soul to purge the heart from sin so that it can be said, “You are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.” When thus cleansed, you know that the Word is true. You are sure of it and you no longer need, even, the most powerful book of evidences. You have the witness in yourself, the evidence of things not seen, the seal of eternal verity.

I have taken all this time upon how we receive the Gospel and, therefore, I must be brief upon a further point.  
**II.**TO US THE TRUTH ITSELF IS NOT AFTER MEN. I desire to assert this plainly. If any man thinks that the Gospel is only one of many religions, let him candidly compare the Scripture of God with other pretended revelations. Have you ever done so? I have made it a College exercise with our Brothers. I have said—We will read a chapter of the Koran. This is the Muslim’s holy book. A man must have a strange mind who should mistake that rubbish for the utterances of Inspiration! If he is at all familiar with the Old and New Testaments, when he hears an extract from the Koran, he feels that he has met with a foreign author—the God who gave us the Pentateuch could have had no hand in many portions of the Koran!  
One of the most modern pretenders to inspiration is the Book of Mormon. I could not blame you should you laugh outright while I read aloud a page from that conglomeration. Perhaps you are familiar with the apocryphal New Testament books. It would be an insult to the judgement of the least in the Kingdom of Heaven to suppose that he could mistake the language of these forgeries for the language of the Holy Spirit! I have had several pretended revelations submitted to me by their several authors, for we have more of the prophetic clan about than most people know of, but not one of them has ever left on my mind the slightest suspicion of his sharing the Inspiration of John, or Paul. There is no mistaking the Inspired Books if you have any spiritual discernment! Once let the Divine Light dawn in the soul and you perceive a coloring and a fashion in the product of Inspiration which are not possible to mere men. Would one who doubts this write us a fifth Gospel? Would anyone among our poets attempt to write a new Psalm which could be mistaken for a Psalm of David? I do not see *why* he could not, but I am sure he *cannot*. You can give us new psalmody, for it is an instinct of the Christian life to sing the praises of God, but you cannot match the glory of Divinely-inspired songs. Therefore we receive the Scripture and, consequently, the Gospel as not after man.  
You say, perhaps, “You are comparing books and forgetting that your theme is the Gospel.” But this is only in appearance. I do not care to waste your time by asking you to compare the gospels of men. There is not another gospel that I know of that is worth the comparison for a single minute. Oh, but, they say, there is a gospel that is much wider than yours. Yes, I know that it is much wider than mine, but to what does it lead? They say that what is nicknamed Calvinism has a very narrow door. There is a word in Scripture about a strait gate and a narrow way and, therefore, I am not alarmed by the accusation. But then there are rich pastures when you enter within and this renders it worth while to enter in by the strait gate! Certain other systems have very wide doors—but they lead you into small privileges—and those of a precarious tenure. I hear certain invitations which might run as follows—“Come you disconsolate! But if you come, you will still be disconsolate, for there will be no *eternal*life made sure to you and you must preserve your own souls, or perish after all.” But I shall not enter into any comparisons, for they are odious in this case.  
The Gospel, *our Gospel, is beyond the strain and reach of human thought*. When men have exercised themselves to the very highest in original conceptions, they have never yet thought out the true Gospel. If it is such a commonplace thing as the critics would have us believe, why did it not arise in the minds of the Egyptians or Chinese? Great minds often run in the same grooves—why did not other great minds run in the same grooves as those of Moses, or Isaiah, or Paul? I think it is a fair thing to say that if it is such a commonplace form of teaching, it might have arisen among the Persians or Hindus, or, surely, we might have found something like it among the great teachers of Greece! Did any of these think out the doctrine of free and Sovereign Grace? Did they guess at the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Son of God? No, even with the aid of our Inspired Book, no Muslim, to my knowledge, has taught a system of Grace in which God is glorified as to His justice, His love and His sovereignty. That sect has grasped a certain sort of predestination which it has defaced into blind faith, but even with that to help them, and the unity of the Godhead as a powerful light to aid them, they have never thought out a plan of salvation so just to God and so pacifying to the troubled conscience as the method of redemption by the substitution of our Lord Jesus!  
I will give you another proof, which, to my mind, is conclusive that our Gospel is not after men, and it is this—that *it is immutable and nothing that man produces can be so called*. If man makes a gospel—and he is very fond of doing it, like children making toys—what does he do? He is very pleased with it for a few moments and then he pulls it to pieces and makes it up in another way—and this continually! The religions of modern thought are as changeable as the mists on the mountains! Look how often science has altered its very basis! Science is notorious for being most scientific in destruction of all the science that has gone before it! I have sometimes indulged myself, in leisure moments, in reading ancient natural history—and nothing can be more comic. Yet this is by no means an abstruse science. In 20 years’ time, some of us may probably find great amusement in the serious scientific teaching of the present hour, even as we do now in the systems of the last century. It may happen that in a little time the doctrine of evolution will be the standing jest of schoolboys. The same is true of the modern divinity which bows its knee in blind idolatry of so-called science.  
Now, we say, and do so with all our heart, that the Gospel which we preached 40 years ago, we will still preach in 40 years’ time if we are alive. [Less than two years later, Brother Spurgeon began eternity in the Presence of his Master—EO.] And, what is more, that the Gospel which was taught of our Lord and His Apostles is the only Gospel now on the face of the earth! Ecclesiastics have altered the Gospel and if it had not been of God, it would have been stifled by falsehood long ago. But because the Lord has made it, it abides forever! Everything human is, before long, moon-struck, so that it shifts with every phase of the lunar orb. But the Word of the Lord is not after men, for it is the same yesterday, today and forever.  
It cannot be after men, again, because *it is so opposed to human pride*. Other systems flatter men, but this speaks the Truth of God. Hear the dreamers of today cry up the dignity of human nature! How sublime is man! But point me to a single syllable in which the Word of God sets itself to the extolling of man. On the contrary, it lays him in the very dust and reveals his condemnation! Where is boasting, then? It is excluded—the door is shut in its face. The self-glorification of human nature is foreign to Scripture which has for its grand object the Glory of God! God is*everything* in the Gospel which I preach and I believe that He is All in All in your ministry, also. There *is* a gospel in which the work and the glory are divided between God and man—and salvation is not altogether of Grace— but in our Gospel, salvation is of the Lord! Man never could nor would have invented and devised a Gospel which would lay him low and secure to the Lord God all the honor and praise. This seems to me to be clear beyond all question and, therefore, our Gospel is not after men.  
Again, it is not after men, because *it does not give sin any quarter*. I have heard that an Englishman has professed himself a Muslim because he is charmed by the polygamy which the Arabian Prophet allows his followers. No doubt the prospect of four wives would win converts who would not be attracted by spiritual considerations. If you preach a gospel which makes allowances for human nature and treats sin as if it were a mistake rather than a crime, you will find willing hearers. If you can provide absolution at small cost and can ease conscience by a little self-denial, it will not be amazing if your religion becomes fashionable. But our Gospel declares that the wages of sin is death and that we can only have eternal life as the *gift* of God—and that this gift always brings with it sorrow for sin, a hatred towards it and an avoidance of it!  
Our Gospel tells a man that he must be born again and that without the new birth he will be eternally lost, while with it he will obtain everlasting salvation! Our Gospel offers no excuse or cloak for sin, but utterly condemns it. It presents no pardon except through the great Atonement and it will give that man no security who tries to harbor any sin in his bosom. Christ died for sin—and we must die *to* sin, or die eternally. If we preach the Gospel faithfully, we must preach the Law of God. You cannot fully preach salvation by Christ without setting Sinai at the back of the picture and Calvary in the front! Men must be made to feel the evil of sin before they will prize the great Sacrifice which is the head and front of our Gospel. This is not to the taste of this or any other age and, therefore, I am sure man did not invent it.  
We know that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is not of men because *our Gospel is so suitable for the poor and illiterate*. The poor, according to the usual fashion of men, are overlooked. Parliament has enclosed all the commons so that a poor man cannot keep a goose! I doubt not that, if it were likely to be effectual, we should soon hear of a bill for distributing freeholds of the stars among certain sky-lords! It is evident that a fine property in the celestial regions is, at the present time, unregistered in any of our courts. Well, they may sooner enclose and assign the sun, moon and stars than the Gospel of our Lord Jesus! This is the poor man’s common. “The poor have the Gospel preached to them.” Yet there are not a few, nowadays, who despise a Gospel which the common people can hear and understand! And we may be sure that a plain Gospel never came from *them*, for their taste does not lie in that direction. They want something abstruse, or, as they say, thoughtful. Do we not hear this sort of remark, “We are an intellectual people and need a cultured ministry. Those evangelistic preachers are all very well for popular assemblies, but we have always been select and require that preaching which is abreast of the times”?  
Yes, yes, and their man will be one who will not preach the Gospel unless it is in a clouded manner, for if he does declare the Gospel of Jesus, the poor will be sure to intrude themselves and shock my lords and ladies! Brothers, our Gospel does not know anything about high and low, rich and poor, black and white, cultured and uncultured! If it makes any difference, it prefers the poor and down-trodden. The great Founder of it says, “I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes.” We praise God that He has chosen the base things and things that are despised! I hear it boasted of a man’s ministry, although it gradually diminishes the congregation, that it is doing a great work among thoughtful young men. I confess that I am not a believer in the existence of these thoughtful young men—those who mistake themselves for such I have generally found to be more conceited than thoughtful. Young men are all very well and so are young women, and old women, also, but I am sent to preach the Gospel to *every creature* and I cannot limit myself to thoughtful young men! I make known to you that the Gospel which I have preached is not after men, for it knows nothing of selection and exclusiveness, but it values the soul of a sweep or a dustman at the same price as that of the Lord Mayor, or her Majesty!  
Lastly, we are sure that the Gospel we have preached is not after men, because *men do not take to it*. It is opposed, even to this day. If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out-and-out Gospel of the Grace of God, especially if that hateful word, *Sovereignty* is mentioned with it! Dare to say, “He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion,” and furious critics will revile you without stint! The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of Sovereign Grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it! He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach Election by the Father, Atonement by the Son, or Regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a Free-Grace sermon! A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men—but it needs a Divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive into his utmost soul this distasteful Gospel of the Grace of God!  
My dear Brothers, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds! Hide not the offense of the Cross lest you make it of no effect. The angles and corners of the Gospel are its *strength*—to pare them off is to deprive it of power! Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects, you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power—and when these are practically omitted, the sect is effete. Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead! If you remove Grace out of the Gospel, the Gospel is gone! If the people do not like the Doctrines of Grace, give them all the more of them! Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more of such artillery. A great general, going in before his king, stumbled over his own sword. “I see, said the king, your sword in is the way.” The warrior answered, “Your Majesty’s enemies have often felt the same.” That our Gospel offends the King’s enemies is no regret to us!  
Dear Friends, if it is so that we have not received the Gospel from man, but from God, *let us continue to receive the Truth of God by the Divinelyappointed channel of faith*. Are you sure that you always will, to the fullest, *understand* the Truth of God? With most of us, the understanding is like a narrow rear gate to the city of Mansoul, and the great things of God cannot be so cut down as to be brought in by that entrance. The door is not wide enough! But our city has a great gate called *faith*, through which even the infinite and eternal may be admitted. Give over the hopeless effort of dragging into the mind by efforts of reason, that which can so readily dwell in you by the Holy Spirit through faith! We that speak against rationalism are, ourselves, apt to reason too much—and there is nothing so unreasonable as to hope to receive the things of God by reasoning them out! Let us believe them upon the Divine testimony—and when they try us and even when they seem to grate upon the sensibilities of humanity—let us receive them, none the less, for all that. We are not to be judges of what God’s Truth *ought* to be—we are to accept it as the Lord reveals it.  
Next, let us, each one, expect opposition if he receives the Truth from the Lord, and especially opposition from one person who is both near and dear to him—namely, *himself*. There is a certain old man who is yet alive and he is no lover of the Truth of God, but, on the contrary, he is a partisan of falsehood. I heard a gracious policeman say that when he stood in Trafalgar Square and fellows of the baser sort kicked him and the other police, he felt a bone of the old man stirring within him. Ah, we have felt that bone, too often! The carnal nature opposes the Truth of God, for it is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be! Let us pray the Lord to conquer our pride, that His Truth may dominate us, despite our evil hearts! As to the outside world opposing, we are not at all alarmed by *that* fact, for it is exactly what we were taught to expect. We are now unmoved by opposition. The captain of a ship minds not if a little spray breaks over him.  
*Remember that if you did not receive the Truth except through the power of the Spirit of God, you cannot expect others to do so*. They will not believe your report unless the arm of the Lord is revealed to them. But then, if faith is the Holy Spirit’s work, we need not fear that men can destroy it. Those who attempt to change our belief may well be a little dubious as to their success in the task they have undertaken. If faith is a Divine work within our souls, we may defy all sophistries, flatteries, temptations and threats. We shall be divinely obstinate—those who would pervert us will have to give us up! Possibly they will call us bigots, or hard-shells, or even idiots—but this, too, also signifies little if our names are written in Heaven!  
Let us also conclude from our subject that *if these things come to us from God, we can safely rest our all upon them*. If they came to us of men, they would probably fail us in a crisis. Did you ever trust men and not rue the day before the sun was down? Did you ever rely on an arm of flesh without discovering that the best of men are men at the best? But if these things come of God, they are eternal and all sufficient! We can both live and die upon the everlasting Gospel! Let us deal more and more with God and with Him, only. If we have obtained Light from Him, there is more of blessing to be had. Let us go to that same Teacher, that we may learn more of the deep things of God. Let us bravely believe in the success of the Gospel which we have received. We believe *in* it—let us believe *for* it. We will not despair though the whole visible Church should apostatize!  
When invaders had surrounded Rome and all the country lay at their mercy, a piece of land was to be sold and a Roman bought it at a fair value. The enemy was there, but he would not be dislodged. The enemy might destroy the Roman State. Let him try it! Be you of the same mind! The God of Jacob is our Refuge and none can stand against His eternal power and Godhead. The everlasting Gospel is our banner and, with Jehovah to maintain it, our standard never shall be lowered! In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Truth of God is invincible! Come on, you hosts of Hell and armies of the aliens! Let craft and criticism, rationalism and priestcraft do their best! The Word of the Lord endures forever—even that Word which, by the Gospel, is preached unto men!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 4.***

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:**  
[Please note this letter is inserted in Volume 37, 1891. The sermon was preached in 1890.—EOD]  
TO MY READERS AND FRIENDS—If you accept the great Truths set forth in this “Manifesto,” please circulate it widely. I could not make the sermon shorter, so as to bring it into a single number, or I should have had to leave out some important point. It is a common saying with the opponents

of the old faith, that Mr. Spurgeon is a “pessimist,” and takes gloomy views of things. Nothing can be more untrue—and this sermon may help to show that I am full of hope and confidence. The days are evil, but the Lord is good. Men forsake the faith, but God is still faithful!

I hope soon to be lifting up my voice again. Refreshed and rested, I look up to the Lord, who can nerve my arm for the conflict, which every day demands more faith and decision. “The Church of the Future,” vainly so called, threatens to overthrow the Church of the living God! It is to run a theater and a public-house and include atheists in its membership. It is well to know where the age is driving. With its theater and public-house, it carries on its back two of the greatest instruments of evil yet known.

We have no weapon against this monster, with the double tower on its back, but the Gospel of the Grace of God! It is a sharp sword with two edges, if it is preached as it was delivered at the first. Advices to adapt it to the age are temptations to destroy its forge—and to these we can have no respect. Should I conceal those parts of Divine Truth which are obnoxious to the carnal mind, I should be unfaithful to God, untrue to my calling and guilty of the blood of souls!

Brethren, pray for me and all who are faithful to the Truth of God, that we may be upheld in our steadfastness! The Truth will conquer, for God makes it His banner—and His holy arm upholds it! And the end is not yet, unless, indeed, our Lord should suddenly appear!  
Yours in waiting hope,  
***C. H. Spurgeon.***

Mentone, Jan. 15, 1891.  
Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3202 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“IT PLEASED GOD”  
NO. 3202

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1910.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 19, 1862.~~***

***~~“It pleased God.”  
Galatians 1:15.~~***

WE will read the whole verse from which our text is taken—“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace.” You will perceive, I think, in these words, that the Divine plan of salvation is very clearly laid down. It begins, you see, in the will and pleasure of God—“when it pleased God.” The foundation of salvation is not laid in the will of man. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” It does not begin with man’s obedience and then proceed onward to the purpose of God—but here is its commencement, here the fountainhead from which the Living Waters flow—“It pleased God.” Next to the Sovereign will and good pleasure of God comes the act of separation, commonly known by the name of *election*. This act is said, in the text, to take place even in the mother’s womb, by which we are taught that it took place before our birth when as yet we could have done nothing whatever to win it or to merit it! God separated us from the earliest part and time of our being! And, indeed, long before that, when as yet the mountains and hills were not piled and the oceans were not formed by His creative power, He had, in His eternal purpose, set us apart for Himself. Then, after this act of separation came the effectual calling—“and called me by His Grace.” The calling does not cause the election—the election, springing from the Divine purpose, causes the calling! The calling comes as a *consequence* of the Divine purpose and the Divine separation, and you will note how the obedience follows the calling. The Apostle does not begin to be a preacher, according to the purpose and will of God, until first of all the Spirit of God has called him out of his state of nature into a state of Grace. So the whole process runs thus—first the sacred, Sovereign purpose of God, then the distinct and definite election or separation, then the effectual and irresistible calling and then afterwards, the obedience unto life, and the sweet fruits of the Spirit which spring from there. They err, not knowing the Scriptures, who put any of these processes before the others, out of the Scriptural order. They who put man’s will first, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, for it is not of the will of man, says the Apostle in the most peremptory and positive manner—the salvation of any soul is a display of the eternal purpose and Sovereign will of God!

And, Beloved, by this test may we know the certainty of our election, if we have obediently yielded to the call of God. If the Divine calling has produced in us the fruit of obedience, then we may assuredly believe that we were separated unto God before time began, and that this separation was according to the eternal purpose and will of God! Like golden links of a chain, any one of these will draw on the others. Am I justified? Then I was called by God’s Grace. Am I called? Then I was predestined to be called and, on the other hand, if I was predestined, then I shall be called, being called, I shall be justified, being justified, I shall be glorified! I think I have used this illustration before. On that bank of the great river of time is the massive pillar of Divine Foreknowledge and Predestination, and on the other side of the river is the equally massive pillar of Glorification. How are we to bridge these two? Both of these pillars are in the mists and clouds of eternity, but these stupendous chains stretch right across the intervening chasm—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” If I want to know what my relation is to Predestination way over yonder in the past, I think of my calling, for I have been called, and so I am linked with the past! And if I want to know whether I shall be glorified, I know that, also, by the fact that I am today justified. So, as I stand here, I am linked with both the past and the future—linked so perfectly that neither time, nor life, nor death, nor Hell shall ever be able to break the bonds that bind me equally to the Predestination in the past and the Glorification in the future! You see then, dear Friends, that from this verse, as a whole, we learn the Divine plan of salvation! And by it we may judge as to our own interest in it. But now, leaving the rest of the verse, let us consider the three words that form our text. “It pleased God.”

**I.**First, we have here THE FOUNDATION OF DIVINE GRACE. The reason why Paul was saved was this—“It pleased God.” And the only reason why you or I will ever enter Heaven must be this—“It pleased God.” You can clearly perceive, in the Apostle’s case, that *there could be no other reason*. It could not be because of any merit of his that he was saved, for what was he? A blasphemer, he says, and a persecutor—so thirsty for the blood of saints that even in his younger days, he guarded the clothes of the murderers who stoned Stephen. Afterwards, he hated men and women, and committed them to prison, and compelled them to blaspheme, “and being”—to use his own expressive words—“exceedingly mad against them,” he “persecuted them even unto strange cities.” There could be nothing in that persecuting Jew, whose very breath was full of threats, and whose heart was like a furnace of fury against the saints— there could be nothing in him which could be a reason why God should save him! If saved, it must be because “it pleased God.”  
And, most decidedly, *there was no co-action of the Apostle’s will tending to his conversion*. You remember the scene. I see him there, upon his proud charger, riding onward toward Damascus. He has in his possession letters which he treasures more than gold, for they give him the permission of the high priest to seize the saints at Damascus and carry them bound to Jerusalem. He rides on proudly, yonder is the city glittering in the sun, and he is meditating upon the deeds of blood and fury he will perform there—who can stop that man? But at midday God arrests him! “A light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun,” shines upon him. The men that are with him see the light, but they know not what it is. He falls to the ground and a Voice cries to him from Heaven, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He enquires, “Who are You, Lord?” The answer comes, “I am Jesus whom you persecute: it is hard for you to kick against the pricks,” like an ox kicking against the sharp goad. He rises blind, yet seeing more than he ever saw before! He goes into Damascus, not to hunt Christ’s disciples, but to learn from Ananias the Good News that Christ’s pardon may be given even to him! In three days’ time, he is converted, baptized into the name of Christ, comes forth to tell the little Church at Damascus what God has done for his soul and in the synagogues preaches that Christ is the Son of God! What reason can there be why this persecutor of the saints should have been saved but this—“It pleased God”?  
Do not imagine that this is an exceptional experience. On the contrary, such cases occur every day! Many come into this place of worship as skeptics and go out sincere Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have I known who have come here only to laugh and scoff, but they have remained to pray. No thought was further from their mind than that they should ever become the followers of the Lamb—but the Divine power, which was not necessarily connected with the preacher—carried the Word into their hearts, arrested them on the spot, changed their natures, made them new creatures in Christ Jesus and sent them on their way rejoicing in their newly-found Savior! And I am sure that all such persons will bear their willing witness that they can see no reason but for the Grace which was bestowed on them but this —“It pleased God.”  
There are some whose lives have proved how sinful their nature was, for their sin has taken the form of open and gross vice. They are like that woman in the city who was a sinner. And as they resemble her in their sin, I trust that they will also resemble her in their love and be ready to wash the Savior’s feet with their tears, and wipe them with the hairs of their heads! There may be some who are now truly converted, who have sinned as deeply as even Saul of Tarsus did. Then let them acknowledge, as he did, that their conversion was due to the undeserved favor of God! John Bradford’s saying has often been quoted, but it will bear repeating again and again. He lived in a house past which people used to be taken on the way to Tyburn to be hanged. And in those cruel times there were many poor wretches thus hurried out of existence—some of them for crimes which are far more leniently punished now. As the honest preacher saw them pass his house, he said, “There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God.” He felt that he was, by nature, capable of doing just what they had done, and that only Divine Grace had made him to differ from them. And when I hear or read of some atrocious sinner, I say to myself, “That man is what I might have been if God had left me to take my own course, for by nature I am no better than he is. I might not have fallen into his special form of sin, for the bent of my constitution may not be in that particular direction, but I might have committed some other sin which would have been quite as bad as his.” One vessel may leak at the bow and another may leak at the stern, but it does not much matter where the leak is—in either case the vessel will sink.  
And those of you who have been converted as the result of a regular attendance at the House of Prayer, when you come to remember how many others who are still unregenerate, who have been sitting side by side with you, you can only say, as you think who caused you to differ from them—“It pleased God.” How often one is taken and the other left! Two women come up to worship at the same time and sit under the sound of the same message—one retires impenitent, the other’s heart is broken. As we note the contrast between them, we can only stand and, holding up our hands in wonder, say, “What is the reason for this difference, Lord? There can be none except that so it seemed good in Your sight.”  
I know that there are many who the moment they hear this Doctrine proclaimed, begin to quibble at it and quarrel with it. They do not think that God should thus do as He pleases in the work of salvation! But let me tell them that it is because they care not for God that they feel as they do in this matter. Opposition to Divine Sovereignty is essentially atheism. Men have no objection to a god who is really no God! I mean by this, a god who shall be the subject of their fancy, who shall be a lackey to their will, who shall be under their control—they have no objection to such a being as that! But a God who speaks and it is done! Who commands and it stands fast! A God who has no respect for their persons, but does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world—such a God as this they cannot endure! And yet, is it not essential to the very Being of God that He should be absolute and supreme? Certainly, to the Scriptural conception of God, Sovereignty is an absolute necessity!  
Let me say, then, to those who quarrel with the Lord for doing as He pleases in the conversion of sinners that first, He has the right to do so through His own inherent Sovereignty. He made men and He has the right to do with them just as He pleases. “Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” If any man says to God, “Why have You made me thus?” The only answer is, “No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God?” Dread, mysterious and profound as the Doctrine of Divine Sovereignty is, yet it certainly must be acknowledged that He who is God has an absolute and inherent right to do as He wills with all those whom He has, Himself, created—  
***“Mortals, be dumb! What creature dares  
Dispute His awful will?  
Ask no account of His affairs,  
But tremble and be still.”***  
But some of your animosity to this Doctrine may perhaps be melted if you recollect that God’s Sovereignty is never displayed apart from His righteousness! To entrust a man with absolute power would be most dangerous, for he is fallible. But to entrust absolute Holiness and Righteousness with absolute power is the safest way of governing the whole universe. God cannot do an unrighteous thing, therefore let Him do whatever He wills! Who would wish to limit One whose acts must be from the very Character that is essential to His Being, just and true? No man who is lost will ever be able to blame God’s Sovereignty for it. The man that perishes shall justly perish because of his sins. And in Hell, this shall be to him the pang of pangs—that he cannot reproach God, but that his damnation lies at his own door since he incensed the Justice of God, which must punish him for his sin. And in like manner, the saints in Heaven, though saved as the result of Divine Sovereignty, may boast that that Sovereignty never violated Justice, for, before God would bring one of them to Heaven, He gave His Son to bleed and die that the demands of Justice might be fully met before the sinner was saved!  
I will venture to go even further than this and to say that the Sovereignty of God is never exercised apart from His mercy and His benevolence. We know that “God is Love,” and who would limit love? As “God is Love,” let Him be absolute, for He will assuredly do that which, on the whole, is the best for all His creatures, as well as most for the Glory of His own perfect Character. Then, as this is the case, how ought we to delight to think that God is free and bound by no law but His own will, which is the fountain of all law, and constrained by no necessity but the carrying out of His own eternal purpose of love and mercy!  
I feel sure that much of the opposition to the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty springs from a misunderstanding of God. I know that some misrepresent this Truth of God as though God were an almighty tyrant, but Scripture gives no warrant for such a caricature. And I again enter, as I have already often entered, my earnest protest against such an insult to my God! When any man perishes, lay not his blood at God’s door. If any man is lost, his ruin is caused by himself and not to be laid to the charge of our ever-gracious God. Yet remember, at the same time, that if any are *saved*, the glory of their salvation must be ascribed to God! I am often asked, “How do you make those two statements consistent with one another?” But that question does not perplex me, for I do not see how they are inconsistent with each other. Someone says, “But I do not understand this Doctrine.” Perhaps not, but remember that while we are bound to tell you the Truths of God, we are not bound to give you the power to understand them. And besides, this is not a subject for understanding—it is a matter for *believing* because it is revealed in the Word of God! It is one of the axioms of theology that if a man is lost, God must not be blamed for it. And it is also an axiom of theology that if a man is saved, God must have all the glory of it. That “salvation is of the Lord” is as plainly revealed in Scripture as anything that we see in nature! And that destruction is of man, is equally plain, both from the nature of things and from the teaching of Scripture! Hold the two Truths of God— do not try to run to the extreme, either of the Hyper-Calvinist or of the ultra-Arminian. There is some truth in Calvinism and some in Arminianism, and he who would hold the whole Truth of God must neither be cramped by the one system nor bound by the other, but take Truth wherever he can find it in the Bible—and leave it to the God of Truth to show him, when he gets into another world, anything that is beyond his comprehension now. At all events, I have laid this down very plainly and I think

every converted person must agree with it, that if any of us are saved, the explanation of our conversion is the same as the explanation of Paul’s—“It pleased God.”  
**II.**Now, secondly, I shall use the text in another way. We have, here, GROUNDS FOR HUMILITY.  
Paul was a preacher, but why was he a preacher? Because “it pleased God.” You are a deacon, or you are an elder, or you are a minister—is there any ground for boasting here? Who made you what you are? “It pleased God.” That is the only possible explanation! Had God willed it, you might have been sweeping a crossing. You might have been at this moment in some tavern groveling in drunkenness. You might have been a miserable wretch in prison. Any honorable office that you hold in the Church is the result, not of your meriting it, but of God’s graciousness towards you in having put you where you are. The angels in Heaven are humble because they remember who made them and kept them angels, for they would have been devils in Hell if God had not preserved them in their first estate. In like manner, office in the Church is a ground for humility, not for boasting! If we are thus favored, it is because “it pleased God.” The Apostle was also a great laborer. He could truthfully say, “I labored more abundantly than they all.” What then? Was that a reason for boasting? By no means, for he added, “yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.” Are you passionately zealous for the conversion of men? Do you labor both by night and by day to propagate the Truth of God and to bring sinners to the Cross of Christ? Then continue in your noble employment, but do not plume yourself upon this as though you deserved some praise from God for it! Remember that every virtue you possess, everything about you that is pure, and lovely, and of good report, has come to you because “it pleased God.”  
Paul was, moreover, a most successful preacher. Thousands acknowledged him as their spiritual father. Through a great part of Asia, through Greece and Italy, probably onward through Spain and, perhaps, even in Great Britain, there were found traces of the victorious march of this great soldier of the Cross! Wherever he went, he confounded the reasoner, put to silence the boaster, made the heathen feel that one had come among them who would hurl their idols from their pedestals! He came like John the Baptist, casting down the high hills and filling up the valleys to make straight a highway for his God, yet I never find him boasting of all this, but, laying all his honors at Jehovah’s feet, he said, “By the Grace of God I am what I am,” or, in the words of our text, “It pleased God.”  
There are some people in the world who are constantly warning some of us against pride and we are duly thankful for their warnings—they are, no doubt, greatly needed—and it is very generous on their part to bestow them upon us, especially as some of them sorely need the warnings themselves! I remember some time ago receiving a warning against pride from a Christian woman who told me that she would pray that I might be kept humble. I thanked her and told her that I should do the same for her, whereupon she said that she did not require it, for she had no temptation to be proud, she had nothing to be proud of and, therefore, she was quite sure she would never be proud. Then I told her gently but decidedly, that I thought she was already proud, or else she would not have uttered such a speech as that! I added that God had His own way of keeping humble those whom He calls to stand in conspicuous places—and His usual way was by chastening them in private when their people knew nothing about it. And I also said that it was quite as easy to be proud and to do nothing as to be proud and to do much. Oh, dear, the lay ministers that I have seen who seemed to have had their backs made of cast iron—idle preachers who would scarcely bring one soul to Christ in a century! Yet they were so dignified and maintained “the dignity of their profession” with such vigor that there seemed to be every reason to expect that they would die of dignity one of these days, like the Spanish monarch who perished because his chair was too near the fire! It was not according to court etiquette that he should move it, himself, or that he should ring the bell for anybody else to do it and, therefore, he sat still till he brought on a fever by which he afterwards lost his life. If we have nothing, we should be humble because of our poverty—and if we have much, we ought to be humble because we are so much in debt to God! A man who owes £10,000 has no cause to crow over his fellow debtor who owes far less than he does. He would be foolish if he said, “I have more to be proud of than you have, for I owe £10,000, but you only owe £100.” Why, that would be the reason why he should hang his head down still lower! And so should it be with the man whom God greatly honors. This should be the reason for keeping himself very humble because he knows—and God will make him remember it, too—that if there is any difference between him and other men, it is only because “it pleased God.”  
**III.**Now I am going to use our text in a third way as A REASON FOR COURAGE.  
I should like to see more of this virtue than we see nowadays. We live in an age which needs to have a large infusion of the heroic martyr spirit which enabled our forefathers to go boldly to the block or to the stake for Christ’s sake. We may well blush as we see how many professors are ashamed of the religion which they are supposed to have received. If they are called to do some work for Christ, how often do they stop and parley, and question, and hesitate and, at last, when they have summoned up enough courage to come forward, it is only with an apology upon their lips for daring to do something for Jesus! I heard one say of a certain preacher, “I greatly admired him, for he commenced his sermon by saying, ‘Permit a young man to address you.’” I said, “That is not the way God’s servants ought to talk. If God has given them anything to say for Him, they have not to ask anybody’s permission to say it, nor should they apologize to anybody for saying it as God enables them to say it.” Apologies are out of place in the pulpit! The man whom God sends to speak for Him is God’s ambassador—he has no right to apologize for delivering his Lord’s message! He who professes to be sent of God either is or is not God’s ambassador. If he is not, let him at once take himself off the pulpit! If he is his Master’s accredited representative, he needs no excuse and should make none.  
I think it will make us courageous and help us to do exploits for God if we can feel that we do our work because it pleases God. I have never approved of the warfare of the old Commonwealth days. I do not believe that, after all, England gained much by fighting. Under Cromwell, she gained liberty for a time, but it was soon lost again, as liberty always must be if it is only won by the sword. But mark you, I must say this— that which made Cromwell so mighty was the firm conviction that “it pleased God” to make him the leader of the Ironsides! And that which made his soldiers victorious on so many hard-fought fields was that they also felt that “it pleased God.” To them it was not a question as to whether it was lawful to fight—they had made up their minds about that matter. Taking out their little soldiers’ Bible, they read some fiery Psalm. And having read it, their blood boiled and, as the old Crusaders cried, “Deus vult,”—“God wills it”—they shouted their battle cry, “The Lord of Hosts,” and dashed into the fight! And they were victorious because they felt that “it pleased God.” And now, today, battling inch by inch, and contending hour by hour against the leaguered hosts of sin, you and I can never be mighty if we only stand in our own strength and question our call to be soldiers of the Cross! But if we felt that each blow that we strike pleases God—and if in every advance we make into the enemy’s territory we can say, “It pleases God,” and if our war cry as we dash to the conflict is, “It pleases God”—then we shall feel the earth shake again beneath the tramp of the heroes’ feet and we shall see the Church of God as she should be—“fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Why, even the power of the Crusaders arose from the fact that they thought the Crusaders “pleased God.”  
Brothers and Sisters, we must get back this old enthusiasm if ever our land is to be swept clear of Popery! If ever Europe is to become free with God’s freedom, if ever Africa is to have the light of the Truth of God driving away her dense darkness, if ever Asia, America and Australia are to be won for the Lord Jesus Christ, they whom God has called to the conflict must fight because it pleases God! Surely none of you who profess to be Christ’s will be content unless you do something to help toward this great end because it pleases God! As you come to the Communion Table, realize that God is within you, making your body His Throne and enabling you to carry out your great life purpose of glorifying God in your body and in your spirit which are His. Do all that you do because it pleases God! If His Spirit shall help you to feel and act thus, blessed shall it be both for the Church and for the world!  
My time has gone, yet I am not nearly done, so I must give you the rest in brief. Here is AN ARGUMENT FOR PATIENCE. “It pleased God.” The cup is bitter, the knife is sharp, the bit is hard, the bereavement is sore, but as it pleases God, we kiss the rod and patiently bow to our Father’s will.  
Then, next, we have here A SUGGESTION FOR HOPE. If it pleased God to save Saul of Tarsus—and if the only reason why He should save him was because He pleased to do it—then why cannot He save you? Have you been a drunkard? Have you dived into the foul slough of lust? Have you defiled yourself by dishonesty? Still, if it pleases God, He can save you! Now I know it pleases God to save everyone who trusts in Christ. Then if you trust in Christ, you are saved! Awake, O man! Awake, O woman and let this be your language—“I am the chief of sinners, but it pleased God to save another who called himself the chief of sinners, so— ***‘I’ll to the gracious King approach,  
Whose scepter pardon gives.  
Perhaps He may command my touch,  
And then the suppliant lives.’”***  
If you will thus cast yourself upon the Sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus, it will please God and you shall be saved!  
And then, last of all, our text is A MOTIVE FOR HOLINESS AND ZEAL. If “it pleased God” and, therefore, He saved me when there was no reason in me why I should be saved. If He loved me when I was filthy—now that I have been washed I would be filthy no more—and in holiness I will seek to show my gratitude to Him! If He loved me when I was dead, now that He has made me alive I will not be lifeless and cold, but full of zeal and fire for Him! I do not know how to press this last point unless I get back to the one I was urging upon you just now. If you feel that God has willed that you should be saved and that God wills that you should be the means of saving others—that God wills that you should become a spiritual father or mother in Israel—then I know that your heart will boil over with holy zeal and that you will go forth as a conqueror who has the certainty of victory already in his heart! God shall be with you and you shall go on conquering and to conquer! The Lord add His blessing for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *GALATIANS 1:11-24; 2.***

**Galatians 1:11-17.***But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly jealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them who were Apostles before me; but I went up to Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*Paul was intensely desirous that the Galatian Christians should understand that he was no mere repeater of other men’s doctrines, but that what he taught he had received directly from God by supernatural Revelation. They knew that he had been a most determined opposer of the Gospel. Indeed, he was a man of such great determination that whatever he did, he did with all his might! So, no sooner did God reveal Christ to him, so that he knew Jesus to be the Messiah, than he earnestly sought to learn yet more of the Truth of God, not by going up to the Apostles at Jerusalem, to borrow from them, but by getting alone in the waste places of Arabia! There, by thought and meditation upon the Word, and by communion with God, to learn yet more concerning the Divine mysteries.

**18-24.***Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But others of the Apostles I saw none, save James, the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judaea which were in Christ: but they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me*.

**Galatians 2:1, 2.***Then fourteen years later, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation—*he was sent by the Church at Antioch, but the Church there was guided by Revelation, so that Paul is correct in saying, “I went up by revelation”—

**2-4.***And communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.* There were always some among the Jewish converts who insisted that the Gentiles should come under the seal of the Old Covenant if they were to be partakers of the blessings of the Gospel. But to this Paul would never consent—

**5.***To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you*. It is impossible for us to estimate how much we owe to the Apostle Paul! Of all who have ever lived, we who are Gentiles owe more to him than to any other man! See how he fought our battles for us. When our Jewish brethren would have excluded us because we were not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, how bravely did he contend that if we were partakers of the same faith—Abraham is the father of all the faithful, that he was loved of God and the Covenant was made with him, not in circumcision, but before he was circumcised—then we are partakers of that Covenant!

**6-10.***But of these who seemed to be something, (whatever they were, it makes no matter to me: God shows personal favoritism to no man) for they who seemed to be something added nothing to me: but on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, (for He worked effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty to me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the Grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do*. [See

Sermon #99, Volume 2—THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THE POOR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] One of the first things he did,  
when there was a famine in Judaea, was to make a collection for the saints in other places, that he might aid the poor Christians.

**11-14.***But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas, also, was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compel you the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*It must have been very painful to Paul’s feelings to come into conflict with Peter, whom he greatly esteemed. But for the Truth’s sake, he knew no persons, and he had to withstand even a beloved Brother when he saw that he was likely to pervert the simplicity of the Gospel and rob the Gentiles of their Christian liberty! For this we ought to be very grateful to our gracious God who raised up this brave champion, this beloved Apostle of the Gentiles!

**15, 16.***We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*No mere man can keep the Law of God—no mere man has ever done so. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God! And as an absolutely perfect obedience is demanded by the Law, which knows nothing of mercy, we fly from the Law to obtain salvation by the Grace of God in Christ Jesus!

**17.***But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!* That would not be caused by the Gospel, but by our disregard of it.

**18, 19.***For I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.* “Through my sight of the Law, which I have seen to be so stern that all it can do is to condemn me for my shortcomings, I am driven away from it and led to come and live in Christ Jesus under the rule of Grace—not under the law of Moses.”

**20, 21.***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then*

*Christ is dead in vain* . [See Sermons #781, Volume 13—CHRISTOS ET EGO; #2370, Volume 40—“CHRIST FIRST, ME LAST—NOTHING BETWEEN BUT LOVE”; #1534, Volume 26—SALVATION BY WORKS, A CRIMINAL DOCTRINE—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #656 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRECEDING GRACE

NO. 656

[This sermon was originally titled “Prevenient Grace.”]

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

***~~“When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me,  
by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me.”  
Galatians 1:15.~~***

You all know the story of the Apostle Paul. He had been a persecutor and went armed with letters to Damascus to hail men and women and drag them to prison. On the road there he saw a light exceedingly bright— above the brightness of the sun—and a voice spoke out of Heaven to him saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” By this miraculous interposition he was converted—three days he spent in darkness. But when Ananias came to tell him of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales. He was baptized, became the most mighty of all Christian teachers, and could truly say that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.

Paul’s conversion is generally considered so very remarkable for its suddenness and distinctness and truly it is. Yet, at the same time, it is no exception to the general rule of conversions, but is rather a type, or model, or pattern of the way in which God shows forth His long-suffering to them that are led to believe on Him. It appears from my text, however, that there is another part of Paul’s history which deserves our attention quite as much as the suddenness of his conversion, namely, the fact that although he was suddenly converted, yet God had had thoughts of mercy towards him from his very birth.

God did not begin to work with him when he was on the road to Damascus. That was not the first occasion on which eyes of love had darted upon this chief of sinners. Paul declares that God had separated him and set him apart even from his mother’s womb that he might, byand-by, be called by Grace and have Jesus Christ revealed in him! I selected this text, not so much for its own sake as to give me an opportunity for saying a little this evening upon a doctrine not often touched upon, namely, that of PRECEDING GRACE, or the Grace which comes *before* regeneration and conversion.

I think we sometimes overlook it. We do not attach enough importance to the Grace of God in its dealings with men before He actually brings them to Himself. Paul says that God had designs of love towards him even before He had called him out of the dead world into spiritual life.

**I.**To begin, then, let us talk for a little while upon THE PURPOSE OF GOD PRECEDING SAVING GRACE AS IT MAY CLEARLY BE SEEN DEVELOPING ITSELF IN HUMAN HISTORY. You generally judge what a man’s purpose is by his actions. If you saw a man very carefully making

molds in the sand, then watched him take several pieces of iron and melt them down. And if you further noticed him pouring the melted iron into the molds, you might not know precisely what class of machine he was making, but you would very justly conclude that he was making some part of an engine or other machinery. Perhaps you might guess a beam, or a lever, or a crank, or a wheel—and according to what you saw the molds in the sand to be you would form your idea of what the man was intending to make.

Now, when I look at the life of a man, even before conversion, I think I can discover something of God’s molding and fashioning in him even before regenerating Grace comes into his heart. Let me give you an illustration of my course of thought. When God created man—we are told in the book of Genesis—He made him “out of the dust of the earth.” Mark him beneath his Maker’s hand, the framework of a man, the tabernacle for an immortal soul—a man made of clay, fully made I suppose, and perfect in all respects excepting one and that soon followed—for after God had formed him out of the dust, then He breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life and man became a living soul.

Now it strikes me that during the early part of the history of the people whom God means to save, though they have not received into their hearts any spiritual life, nor experienced any of the work of regeneration, yet their life before conversion is really a working of them in the clay. Let us endeavor to bring this out more distinctly. Can you not perceive God’s purpose in the Apostle Paul when you think of the singular gifts with which he was endowed? Here was a man, a rhetorician so noble that there are in his works passages of eloquence not to be equaled, much less excelled, by Demosthenes and Cicero.

As a logician his arguments are most conclusive as well as profound. Never had man such eagle eyes to pierce into the depths of a matter! Never had man such eagle wings to mount up into its sublimities! He argues out questions so difficult to understand that at all times they have been the battlegrounds of controversies! And yet he seems to perceive them clearly and distinctly and to unfold and expound them with a precision of language not to be misunderstood. All Apostles of Jesus Christ put together are not equal to Paul in the way of teaching. Truly he might have said of them all, “You are but as children compared with me.”

Peter dashes, and dashes gloriously against the adversary! But Peter cannot build up, nor instruct like the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He has to say of Paul’s writings that they, “contain some things hard to be understood.” Peter can confirm, but scarcely can he understand Paul—for where intellect is concerned, Paul is far, far above him. Paul seems to have been endowed by God with one of the most intelligent brains that ever filled human cranium and to have been gifted with an intellect which towered far above anything that we find elsewhere.

Had Paul been merely a natural man, I do not doubt but what he would take the place either of Milton among the poets, or of Bacon among the philosophers. He was, in deed and in truth, a mastermind. Now, when I see such a man as this cast by God in the mold of Nature, I ask myself— “What is God’s purpose? What is He doing here?” As every man has a purpose, so also has God, and I think I see in all this that God foreknew that such a man was necessary to be raised up as a vessel through whom He might convey to the world the hidden treasures of the Gospel. Such a man was needed so that God might speak His great things by him!

You will say, probably, that God reveals great things by fools. I beg your pardon. God did once permit an ass to speak, but it was a very small thing that he said—for *any* ass might readily have said it. Whenever there is a *wise* thing to be said, a wise *man* is always chosen to say it. Look the whole Bible through and you will find that the Revelation is always congruous to the person to whom it is given. You do not find Ezekiel blessed with a Revelation like that of Isaiah. Ezekiel is all imagination, therefore he must soar on the eagle’s wings. Isaiah is all affection and boldness and therefore he must speak with evangelical fullness.

God does not give Nahum’s Revelation to the herdsman Amos—the herdsman Amos cannot speak like Nahum, nor can Nahum speak like Amos. Each man is after his own order and a man of this masterly order of mind, like the Apostle Paul, must have been created, it seems to me, for no other end than to be the appropriate means of revealing to us the fullness and the blessing of the Gospel of peace! Mark, again, the Apostle’s education. Paul was a Jew, not half Greek and half Jew, but a pure Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, speaking the Jews’ native tongue and not a stranger to the ancient speech of Israel.

There was nothing in the traditions of the Jews which Paul did not know and understand. He was educated at the feet of Gamaliel. The best master of the age is selected to be the master of the hopeful young scholar and the school in which he is placed must be a Rabinnical one. Now, just observe in this the purpose of God. Paul’s life-long struggle was to be with Jewish superstition. In Iconium, in Lystra, in Derbe, in Athens, in Corinth, in Rome he must always be confronting the Judaizing spirit. And it was well that he should know all about it—that he should be well schooled in it. And it does strike me that God separated him from his mother’s womb on purpose that he might go forth to proclaim the Gospel instead of Law and shut the mouths of those who were constantly abiding by the traditions of the fathers, instead of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

All this, remember, was going on while as yet he was unconverted, though he was even then, as we see, being prepared for his work. Then observe the spiritual struggles through which Paul passed. I take it that mental struggles are often a more important part of education than what a man learns from his schoolmaster. What is learned here in my heart is often of more use to me than what can be put into my head by another. Paul seems to have had a mind bent upon carrying out what he believed to be right. To serve God appears to have been the great ambition, the one object of the Apostle’s life.

Even when he was a persecutor, he says he thought he was doing God service. He was no seeker after wealth—never in his whole lifetime was Paul a Mammonite. He was no mere seeker after learning—never! He was learned, but it was all held and used subject to what he deemed far more highly—the indwelling Grace of God. Even before he knew Christ he had a sort of religion and an attachment, and an earnest attachment, too, to

the God of his fathers, though it was a zeal not according to knowledge. He had his inward fights and fears and struggles and difficulties and all these were educating him to come out and talk to his fellow sinners and lead them up out of the darkness of Judaism into the light of Christianity.

And then, what I like in Paul and that which leads me to see the purpose of God in him, is the singular formation of his mind. Even as a sinner, Paul was great. He was “the chief of sinners,” just as he afterwards became, “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles.” There are some of us who are such little men that the world will never see us. The old proverb about the chips in porridge giving one pleasure either way, might apply to a great many people, but never to Paul. If there was anything to be done, Paul would do it—yes, and if it came to the stoning of Stephen, he says he gave his vote against him—and though he was not one of the actual executioners, yet we are told that “the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.”

He would do all that was to be done and was a thoroughgoing man everywhere. Believing a thing to be right, Paul never consulted with flesh and blood, but girded up his loins and worked with all the powers of his being—and that was no mean force—as his enemies felt to their cost. Why, as I see him riding to Damascus, I picture him with his eyes flashing with fanatic hate against the disciples of the Man whom he thought to be an impostor—and his heart beat high with the determination to crush the followers of the Nazarene!

He is a man all energy and all determination. And when he is converted, he is only lifted into a *higher* life—but unchanged as to temperament, nature and force of character. He seems to have been naturally constituted a thorough-going, thorough-hearted man in order that when Grace did come to him, he might be just as earnest, just as dauntless and fearless, in the defense of what he believed to be right. Yes, and such a man was needed to lead the vanguard in the great crusade against the god of this world. No other could have stood forward as Paul did, for no other had the same firmness, boldness and decision that he possessed.

“But,” I hear someone say, “was not Peter as bold?” Yes, he was. But Peter, you remember, always had the failing of being just where he ought not to be when he was needed. Peter was unstable to the very last, I think. Certainly, in Paul’s day, Paul had to withstand him. He was a great and good man, but not fitted to be the foremost. Perhaps you say, “But there is John—would not John do?” No. We cannot speak in too high terms of John, but John is too full of affection. John is the plane to smooth the timber, but not the axe to cut it down. John is too gentle, too meek. He is the Phillip Melancthon. Paul must be the Luther and Calvin rolled into one! Such a man was needed—and I say that from his very birth, God was fitting him for this position. And before he was converted, preceding Grace was engaged fashioning, molding, and preparing the man in order that byand-by there might be put into his nostrils the breath of Life.

Now what is the drift of all this? A practical one. And to show you what it is, we will linger a minute here before we go on to anything else. Some of the good fathers among us are mourning very bitterly just now over their sons. Your children have not turned out as you wish they would. They are getting skeptical, some of them, and they are also falling into sin. Well, dear Friends, it is yours to mourn. It is enough to make you weep bitterly! But let me whisper a word into your ears. Do not sorrow as those who are without hope, for God may have very great designs to be answered, even by these very young men who seem to be running so altogether in the wrong direction!

I do not think I could go so far as John Bunyan did, when he said he was sure God would have some eminent saints in the next generation because the young men in his day were such gross sinners! He thought they would make fine saints. And when the Lord came and saved them, by His mercy—they would love Him much—because they had had so much forgiven. I can hardly say as much as that, but I do believe that sometimes in the inscrutable wisdom of God—when some of those who have been skeptical come to see the Truth—they are the very best men that could possibly be found to do battle against the enemy.

Some of those who have fallen into error, after having passed through it and happily come up through its deep ditch, are just the men to stand and warn others against it. I cannot conceive that Luther would ever have been so mighty a preacher of the faith if he had not, himself, struggled up and down Pilate’s staircase on his knees when trying to get to Heaven by his penances and his good works. O let us have hope! We do not know but that God may be intending to call them and bless them! Who can tell, there may be a young man here tonight who will one day be the herald of the Cross in China, in Hindustan, in Africa and in the islands of the sea!

Remember John Williams wishing to keep an appointment with another young man who committed a certain sin. He wanted to know what time it was and so stepped into Moorefield’s Chapel. Someone saw him so he did not want to leave, and the Word, preached by Mr. Timothy East who still survives among us, fell on his ears and the young sinner was made a saint! And you all know how he afterwards perished as a martyr on the shores of Erromanga. Why may there not be another such a case tonight? There may be some young man here who has been receiving a first class education—he has no idea what for! He has been learning a multitude of things—perhaps a great deal which it would be much better if he did not know—but the Lord is meaning to make something of him.

I do not know where you are, young Man, but O, I wish I could fire you tonight with a high ambition to serve God! What is the good of my being made at all if I do not serve my Maker? What is the use of my being here if I do not bring any glory to Him who put me and keeps me here? Why, I had better have been a piece of rotten dung strewn upon the field and bringing forth something for the farmer’s use than to have been a mere consumer of bread and meat and to have breathed the air and lived upon God’s bounty and yet to have done nothing for Him! O young Man! If such an army of you as we have tonight could *all* be led by Divine Grace to say with the Apostle Paul, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” why, there would be hope for Old England yet! We would yet fling Popery back to the seven hills from where it came.

Oh that God would grant us this blessing! But if He should not be pleased to call all of us by His Grace, yet may some here live to prove that they were separated from their mother’s womb to God’s work and set apart that they might have the Son of God revealed in them and might proclaim His Gospel with power! We will now leave this point, but shall continue the same subject in another form.

**II.**You would, perhaps, say that all I have talked about as yet has been Providence rather than Grace. Very likely, but I think that Providence and Grace are very near akin. At any rate, if Providence is the wheel, Grace is the hand which turns and guides it.

But I am now about to speak of GRACE PRECEDING, CALLING IN ANOTHER SENSE. It strikes me that it is impossible to say, concerning the elect, when the Grace of God begins to deal with them. You can tell when the quickening Grace comes, but not when the Grace, itself, comes. For know, in one sense, Grace was exercised upon the chosen—

***“Before the daystar knew its place,***

***Or planets ran their round.”***  
I should say that is what I cannot call by any other name than *formative* Grace exercised upon the vessels of mercy at their very birth. It seems to me to be no small mercy that some of us were born of such parents as we were and that we were born where we were. Some of us began right and were surrounded by many advantages. We were cradled upon the lap of piety and dandled upon the knee of holiness.

There are some children who are born with a constitution which cannot escape sin, and which at the same time seems as if it inevitably led them to it. Who can deny that there are some whose passions seem naturally to be so violent that, notwithstanding almost any and every restraint, they run headlong into sin? And often those failings may be distinctly traced to their parents! It is no small blessing when we can look back and thank God, that if no blue-blood of nobility flows in our veins, yet from our very childhood we have not heard the voice of blasphemy, nor strayed into the haunts of vice—but that in the very formation of our character—Divine Grace has ever been present with us!

This formative Grace, many of you, I have no doubt, can trace in the examples and influences which have followed you from the cradle through life. Why, what a blessing to have had such a Sunday school teacher as some of you had! Other children went to schools but they had not such a teacher, or such a class as yours. What a privilege to have had such a minister as some of you had, though perhaps he has fallen asleep now! You know there were others who went to places where there was no earnestness, no life—but that good man who was blessed to you was full of anxiety for your soul—and at the very first, before you were converted, his preaching helped to form your character!

Why, it strikes me that every word I heard and everything I saw while I was yet a child or a youth, had a part in the formation of my later life. Oh, what a mercy it is to be placed where a holy example and godly conversation tend to form the man in a godly mold! All this may be, you know, without Divine Grace. I am not speaking, now, of the work of effectual calling, but of that *preceding* Grace which is too much forgotten, though it so richly deserves to be remembered.

Think, too, of the prayers which brought tears to our eyes and the teaching that would not let us sin so deeply as others. Think of the light which glowed in us, even in our childhood, and seems to have dispelled something of our natural darkness. Think of that earnest face that used to look so steadily on us when we did wrong and of that mother’s tear which seemed as if it would burn itself into our hearts when there had been something amiss that made Mother anxious. All this—though it did not *convert* us—yet it helped to make us what we now are and unto God let us give the Glory!

Furthermore, while there was this *formative* Grace, there seems to me to have gone with it very much of *preventive* Grace. How many saints fall into sins which they have to regret even *after* conversion, while others are saved from leaving the path of morality to wander in the morass of lust and crime! Why, some of us were, by God’s Grace, placed in positions where we could not well have been guilty of any gross acts of immorality even if we had tried! We were so hedged about by guardian care—so watched and tended on every side—that we would have been dashing our heads against a stone wall if we had run into any great or open sin.

Oh, what a mercy to be prevented from sinning—when God puts chains across the road, digs ditches, makes hedges, builds walls and says to us, “No, you shall not go that way, I will not let you. You shall never have that to regret. You may desire it, but I will hedge up your way with thorns. You may wish it, but it never shall be yours.” Beloved, I have thanked God a thousand times in my life that before my conversion when I had evil desires I had no opportunities! And on the other hand, that when I had opportunities I had no desires—for when desires and opportunities come together like the flint and steel—they make the spark that kindles the fire. But neither the one nor the other, though they may both be dangerous, can bring about any great amount of evil so long as they are kept apart! Let us, then, look back and if this has been our experience let us bless the preventing Grace of God.

Again, there is another form of Grace I must mention, namely, *restraining* Grace. Here, you see, I am making a distinction. There are many who *did* go into sin. They were not wholly prevented from it, but they could not go as far into it as they wanted to do. There is a young man here tonight—he will ask how I know—well, I do know—there is a young man here tonight who wants to commit a certain sin, but he cannot. Oh, how he wishes to do it, but he cannot! He is placed in such a position of poverty that he cannot play the fine gentleman he would like.

There is another! He wants to be dancing at such-and-such a place, but thank God he is lame! There is another, who, if he had had his wish would have lost his soul—but since his blindness has come upon him there is some hope for him. Oh how often God has thrown a man on a sick bed to make him well! He would have been such as he was even unto death if he had been well—but God has made him sick—and that sickness has restrained him from sin! It is a mercy for some men that they cannot do what they would and though “to will is present” with them, yet even in

sin, “how to perform that which they would, they find not.”

Ah, my fine Fellow, if you could have had your own way you would have been at the top of the mountain by now! So you think, but no—you would have been over the precipice long before this if God had you climb at all— and so He has kept you in the valley because He has designs of love towards you and because you shall not sin as others sin. Divine Grace has its hand upon the bridle of your horse. Or perhaps it is a woman and you may speak bitter words against that wife, that sister, or that mother whom God has put there to hold you back. But you cannot go on, you *shall not* go on. Another inch forward and you will be over the precipice and lost, and therefore God has put that hand there to throw your horse back on its haunches and make you pause and think—and turn from the error of your ways. What a mercy it is that when God’s people go into sin to any extent, He speaks and says, “To this point shall you go, but no further. Here shall your proud sins be stopped!” There is, then, restraining Grace.

We shall get still further into the subject when we come to what Dr. John Owen calls the *preparatory* work of Grace. Have you ever noticed that parable about the different sorts of ground and the sower of the seeds? A sower went forth to sow and some of the seed fell on stony ground. You can understand that, because all men have stones in their hearts. Some fell on the thorns and thistles. You can comprehend that, because men are so given to worldly care. Another part of the seed fell on the beaten path. You can understand that—men are so occupied with worldliness.

But how about the “good ground”? “Good ground”! Is there such a thing as “good ground” by nature? One of the evangelists says that it was “honest and good ground.” Now, is there such a difference between hearts and hearts? Are not all men depraved by nature? Yes, he who doubts human depravity had better begin to study himself. Question—If all hearts are bad, how are some hearts good? Reply—They are good *comparatively* . They are good in a *certain sense*. It is not meant in the parable that the good ground was so good that it never would have produced a harvest without the sowing of the seed—but that it had been prepared by Providential influences upon it to *receive* the seed and in *that* sense it may be said to have been “good ground.”

Now let me show you how God’s Grace does come to work on the human heart so as to make it good soil before the living seed is cast into it—so that before *quickening* Grace visits it, the heart may be called a good heart—because it is prepared to receive that Grace. I think this takes place thus—first of all, before quickening Grace comes, God often gives an attentive ear and makes a man willing to listen to the Word. Not only does he like to listen to it, but he wants to know the meaning of it. There is a little excitement in his mind to know what the Gospel tidings really are. He is not saved as yet, but it is always a hopeful sign when a man is willing to listen to the Truth and is anxious to understand it.

This is one thing which *preceding* Grace does in making the soul good. In Ezekiel’s vision, as you will recall, before the Breath came from the four winds, the bones began to stir and they came together bone to his bone. So, before the Spirit of God comes to a man in effectual calling, God’s Grace often comes to make a stir in the man’s mind so that he is no longer indifferent to the Truth but is anxious to understand what it means.

The next mark of this gracious work is an honest heart. Some persons will not hear you, or if they do, they are always picking holes and finding fault—they are not honest and good ground. But there are others who say, “I will give the man a fair and an honest hearing. I will read the Bible. I will read it honestly. I will really see whether it is the Word of God or not. I will come to it without any prejudices, or, if I have any prejudices I will throw them aside.” Now, all this is a blessed work of preparatory Grace making the heart ready to receive effectual calling.

Then, when this willingness and honesty are attended with a tender conscience, as they are in some unconverted people, this is another great blessing. Some of you are not converted, but you would not do wrong. You are not saints, but you would not tell a lie for the world! I thank God that there are some of you so excellent in morals that if you were proposed to us for Church membership, we could not raise any objection to you on that ground, at any rate. You are as honest as the day is long. As for the things of God, you are outwardly as attentive to them and as diligent in them as the most earnest and indefatigable Christians.

Now, this is because your conscience is tender. When you do wrong you cannot sleep at night. And you do not feel at all easy in being without a Savior—I know some of you do not. You have not come to any decision. The Grace of God has not really made you feel your thoroughly blind state—still you are not quite easy. In fact, to go farther, your affections, though not weaned altogether from earth, yet begin to tremble a little as though they would go heavenward. You want to be a Christian—when the communion table is spread, you dare not come downstairs—but I see you looking from the gallery and you wish you were with us.

You know you have not believed in Jesus Christ, and the world keeps you back from doing so—but still there is a kind of twitching in your conscience. You do not know what it is, but there is a something in you that makes you say at times, “O God, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.” Yes, and you even go farther than this and ask to live the righteous man’s life, too. Now, remember, this will not save you—“You must be born again.” But for all this the Church of God should feel deeply grateful—for they have seen in themselves that this is often God’s preparatory work—clearing away the rubbish and rubble and digging out the foundations, that Jesus Christ might be laid there, the Cornerstone of future hope and of future happiness!

Another work of Grace is the creation of dissatisfaction with their present state. How many men we have known who were consciously “without God and without hope in the world”! The apples of Sodom had turned to ashes and bitterness in their mouth, though at one time all was fair and sweet to their taste. The mirage of life with them has been dispelled, and instead of the green fields and waving trees and rippling waters which their fevered imagination had conjured up in the desert, they can see now nothing but the arid sand and waste of desolation

which appall their fainting spirits and promise nothing! No, not even a grave to cover their whited bones which shall remain a bleached memorial that, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

Multitudes have been brought to see the deluge of sin which has covered even the high places of the earth! They find no rest for the sole of their feet, but as yet they know not of an ark, nor of a loving hand prepared to pull them in as did Noah the dove in olden times! Look at the life of St. Augustine, how wearily he wanders here and there with a deaththirst in his soul that no fount of philosophy, or scholastic argument, or heretical teaching could ever satisfy! He was aware of his unhappy estate and turned his eye round the circle of the universe looking for peace—not fully conscious of what he wanted—though feeling an aching void the world could never fill. He had not found the center, fixed and steadfast, around which all else revolved in ceaseless change.

Now, all this appetite, this hunger and thirst I look upon as not of the devil, nor of the human heart alone—it was of God! He strips us of all our earthly joy and peace, that, shivering in the cold blast, we might flee, when drawn by His Spirit, to the “Man who is as a hiding place from the storm, a cover from the tempest, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Of course, I have not gone fully into this doctrine of preceding Grace, but I trust I have said just enough to waken the gratitude of all the saints who have experienced it and to make them sing with greater emotion than they have ever done before***—***

***“Determined to save, He watched over my path When, Satan’s blind slave, I sported with death.”***

**III.**And now we come to the last point, which is, PAUL’S ACTUAL CALLING BY DIVINE GRACE. All preparatory work of which we have spoken was not the source or origin of the vital godliness which afterwards distinguished that renowned servant of God—that came to him *suddenly*.

Beloved, there may be some here tonight who cannot discern anything in themselves of God’s work of Grace at all. I do not wonder at this. I do not suppose that the Apostle could discern it in himself, or even thought of looking for it! He was as careless of Christ as is the butterfly of the honey in the flowers. He lived with no thought of honoring Jesus and no desire to magnify Him—but with the very *reverse* passion glowing like a hot coal within his soul. And yet in a moment he was turned from an enemy into a friend! Oh, what a mercy it would be if some here tonight were turned from enemies into friends in a moment—and we are not without hope but that this will be the case!

You have hated Christ, my Friend. You have hated Him boldly and decidedly. You have not been a sneaking sort of adversary, but have opposed Him frankly and openly. Now, why did you do it? I am sorry for your sin, but I like your honesty. What is there in the Person of Christ for you to hate? Men hated Him while He was on earth and yet He died for them! Can you hate Him for that? He came into this world to gain no honor for Himself—He had honor enough in Heaven—but He gave it up for the sake of men. When He died He had not amassed a fortune, nor gathered about Him a troop of soldiers—nor had He conquered provinces—and He died naked on the Cross!

Nothing brought Him here but disinterested affection. And when He came He spent His life in deeds of holiness and good. For which of these things can you hate Him? The amazing loving-kindness of Christ Jesus towards sinners should, in itself, disarm your animosity and turn your hatred of Him to love. Alas! I know that this thought of itself will not do it—but the Spirit of God can. If the Spirit of God once comes in contact with your souls and shows you that Christ died for you, your enmity towards Christ will be over!

Dr. Gifford once went to see a woman in prison who had been a very gross offender. She was such a hardened reprobate that the doctor began by discoursing with her about the judgments of God and the punishments of Hell. But she only laughed him to scorn and called him opprobrious names. The doctor burst into tears, and said, “And yet, poor Soul, there is mercy for you, even for such as you are, though you have laughed in the face of Him who would do you good. Christ is able to forgive you, hard though you are. And I hope that He will yet take you to dwell with Him at His right hand.”

In a moment the woman stopped her laughing, sat down quietly, burst into tears and said, “Don’t talk to me in that way! I have always been told that I should be damned and I made up my mind to be! I knew there was no chance and so I have gone on from one sin to another—but oh, if there is a hope of mercy for *me*, that is another thing! If there is a possibility of my being forgiven, that is another thing!” The doctor at once opened his Bible and began to read to her these words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.” The greatest brokenness of heart followed.

In subsequent visits the doctor was gratified to find that she was brought to Christ. And though she had to undergo a sentence for many years at the time, yet years later the godly man saw her walking honestly and uprightly as a Believer in Jesus Christ. Sinner, I wish that thought would bring *you* to Christ! O that you would know that He has chosen *you*, that He has separated *you* for Himself, and to be His—even from your mother’s womb! Ah, you have played the harlot, but He will bring you back! You have sinned very greatly, but you shall one day be clothed in the white robe and wear the everlasting crown!

Oh, blush and be ashamed that you should ever have sinned as you have done! You have been a thief and a drunkard. You have brought your mother’s gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, but her prayers are going up even now to Heaven and you shall be brought in yet. O stubborn Sinner, my Master means to have you! Run as you will, you wandering sheep, the Shepherd is after you—yield, yield, yield now! O Prodigal, your Father’s heart is open! Arise! Go to your Father! You are ashamed to go, are you? Oh, let that shame make you go faster! Let it not keep you back! Jesus bled, Jesus wept, Jesus lives in Heaven. “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters. And he that has no money, let him buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” “Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.”

There is no sinner too black to be forgiven! There are no iniquities that can damn you if you believe in Jesus! All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven him who puts his trust in the shadow of Jehovah-Jesus. Look to Him! He dies! He lives! Look, He rises, He pleads above! “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.” I trust that the whole of your past mysterious life, my dear fellow Sinner, will be explained to you tonight by your believing in Jesus. That will be the golden key which will open the secret and you will say, “Now I see it. I could not tell what that mysterious hand was that kept me back from doing a certain thing. I could not understand why I was led into such a path, but now I know that it was to take me to the feet of the blessed Savior where I might be happy forever.”

As you look back and think of all the dealings of Divine Grace and Providence with you throughout your life, you will sing***—  
“Ah, who am I, that God has saved  
Me from the doom I did desire,  
And crossed the lot myself did crave,  
To set me even higher?”***

I must give one word of warning to those who are afflicting themselves with a notion that in order to a true, real, conversion they must have a long course of agonizing soul-conflict. You must mark that I am NOT teaching this! The new birth was instantaneous—at once! Saul of Tarsus calls Him Lord and it is only three days that darkness rests upon him. This is the longest case recorded in the Bible—and how short a time in darkness and anguish that is—compared with the experience of some whom you are regarding as models on which God must act in your case.

Remember that God is not the God of uniformity—though He is of union and peace. He may lead you at once into joy and peace, as Nathanael, who said as soon as he saw Christ, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.” God may, and doubtless has been, blessing you through His Grace from your birth. But He needs not to plunge you many days in the cold dark waters of conviction to wash away your sin—the blood of Christ at *once* can cleanse from all sin if you confide your soul to Him. Believe, therefore, and you are at once justified and at peace with God. May the Lord bless you all, for Jesus’ sake.

**[This sermon was originally titled “Prevenient Grace.”]**  
Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 **PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3078 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD-GUIDED MEN  
NO. 3078

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1908.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 15, 1874.~~***

***~~“I conferred not with flesh and blood.”  
Galatians 1:16.~~***

THE conversion of Paul is one of the evidences of the truth of our holy religion. So far as this life was concerned, he had nothing to gain, but everything to lose by becoming a Christian. From being a great Rabbi he came to be the companion of poor fishermen who themselves were the followers of One who was poorer even than they! It is clear that he was no fanatic and not at all likely to be carried away by any sudden impulse. He was clear-headed, thoughtful, logical and his conversion must have been worked by some very extraordinary power—there must have been, to him at least, overwhelming evidence of the truth of what he believed and of that form of faith to which he devoted his whole after life.

In addition to supplying us with valuable evidence of the truth of Christianity, Paul has left to us a most remarkable example of its force in his own person. Never was there a man more fully possessed with the Spirit of Christ than he was. He was no feeble saint with just enough Grace to enable him to go limping into Heaven—he was a spiritual athlete, wrestling with the powers of darkness, running with endurance the race set before him and “filled with all the fullness of God.” He was one who was indeed “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” He threw himself, with all his natural zeal, into the cause of Christ—that natural zeal being so sanctified by the Spirit of God as to make him a mighty and valiant servant of the Lord. I pray that we, also, Beloved, may be what Paul was. I will not even deny his bonds! He did so when he said to king Agrippa, “I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” But we might be willing even to wear his bonds if we might but have such a character as his fully developed within us!

Paul—being converted through Christ appearing to him out of Heaven, and speaking personally to him, being deeply repentant for the past and believing fully in Jesus as his Lord and Savior—had no sooner been baptized than he struck out at once an independent path for himself. He did not need to receive any commission from men, for he had received his commission direct from Heaven and, therefore, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

In our text Paul says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood.” He did not consult with good men as to what he ought to do! Why should he? Why should he ask them to countersign his commission when he had Christ’s name at the bottom of it? He did not consult his relatives, for he knew very well what they would say. They would think him ten thousand fools in one to throw up all his prospects of advancement to become the follower of what they thought to be the meanest of all superstitions. He did not consult even with his own flesh and blood, with himself. As I have already reminded you, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by becoming a Christian—but he willingly descended from being a student of Gamaliel and a member of the Sanhedrim, to earn his living as a tentmaker and to be a simple itinerant preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He descended from comparative ease and luxury to poverty and stern toil— from safety and peace to bitter persecution! And at last to death by martyrdom. And while knowing that he could never be a gainer as to temporal things, he nevertheless calmly and deliberately gave himself up to be the bondservant of that Christ who had spoken to him out of Heaven and called him into His service.

I want to show you, first, that *faith needs no warrant for its action but the command of God.*If it gets that, it need not consult with flesh and blood. I shall try to show you, in the second place, *the range of application of this principle to ourselves practically.*And then I shall show you, in the last place, that *the principle is a grand one and commends itself to our best judgment.*

**I.**First, FAITH NEEDS NO WARRANT FOR ITS ACTION BUT THE COMMAND OF GOD.  
*Believers have no need to consult with flesh and blood.*I may refer you in illustration of this Truth of God to good men in all ages. There is Noah, for instance. He is commanded by God to build an ark of gopher wood— an ark large enough to hold himself and his family and some of all beasts, birds and creeping things that were upon the face of the earth! Was it not an absurd idea to build so huge an ark upon dry land? Yet Noah did not consult with any of the people who were then living—we read, “Thus did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”  
Then, think of Abraham. He was commanded by God to leave his country, his kindred and his father’s house and to go unto a land that God would show him.” And we read, “So Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken unto him.” Further on—in his life there was that very memorable occasion when God commanded him to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham did not consult with Sarah. He knew the mother’s feelings far too well to wish to lacerate them, and she might have said, “No, my Husband, such a deed as that must not be done.” So he did not ask her, but he rose up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, prepared the wood and set out on the three days’ journey to the place of which God had told him. He did not even consult Isaac, who was, apparently, thus to die. And when Isaac said to him, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” his father replied, almost choking, I think, as he said it—“My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” He consulted not with his own flesh and blood, else had the father been too strong for the Believer, but as God had commanded him to offer his son as a sacrifice, he unsheathed the knife to slay his beloved Isaac—a glorious instance of what faith can dare to do without asking the advice or the approval of men!  
Remember, too, how Moses obeyed the Divine command to lead Israel out of the house of bondage. He certainly did not consult with his own flesh and blood, for the riches of Egypt were at his feet! Perhaps Pharaoh’s throne would have been occupied by him before long had he not counted “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,” and he gave up glittering prospects to go forth into the wilderness with the despised people of God.  
Remember David, too. He had those who wished to give him counsel, when he twice stood over his sleeping foe, the despot Saul. On the second occasion Abishai said to David, “Let me smite him, I pray you, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.” But David said to him, “Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?” He knew right well that it is not for good men to do ill actions, even though they think the best results might follow from them. So he consulted not with flesh and blood and he would not let the son of Zerniah lead him into sin. Think too, of Daniel. When the royal edict was signed that none should ask a petition of anyone except King Darius for thirty days, did he confer with flesh and blood as to what he should do under the circumstances? Did he consult with himself or with others as to how he might satisfy his conscience and yet, at the same time, save his life? Not he—he went into his house, where his windows were open towards Jerusalem, and there he prayed to God three times a day, as he had done aforetime, although the lions’ den awaited him! And think, also, of those three brave young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When Nebuchadnezzar told them that they must worship his golden image or be cast into the burning fiery furnace, they replied, “We are not careful to answer you in this matter.” Their only care was to do as God bade them—regardless of all consequences! They did not consult with flesh and blood, but obeyed the command of their God!  
This has been faith’s rule all through the ages. It was the rule of the martyrs in the old days of the Roman persecution. They knew that they might be put to death in the Coliseum—“butchered to make a Roman holiday”—yet, knowing that, they dared to confess that they were Christians. This was the glory of our Protestant ancestors in the days of Queen Mary. They went joyfully to Smithfield to be burnt for the sake of Christ and, as one of the pastors significantly said, “the young people went to see the others burn—and to learn the way when it should come to their turn.” They did learn the way, too, to stand there, not consulting with flesh and blood, but being ready to be burned to ashes rather than worship the beast, or receive his mark on their foreheads! This is still the spirit that animates true faith. God’s command is her sufficient warrant. She consults not with flesh and blood.  
I would have you also remember that *if we do ask for something over and above God’s plain command, we are virtually casting the command, itself, behind our backs.* God tells you to do a certain thing, but you say that you must first consult your advisers and friends. Then has it come to this—that a mortal man is to tell you whether you are to obey God or not? That would be making man your god and rejecting the living and true God! Suppose that in such a consultation you should be advised not to do the right thing? And if you should obey that advice, would you be relieved of your responsibility? Certainly not! It would still rest upon you. To you comes the Divine command and it is for you to obey it, whether you are advised by others to do so or not. Even to ask for such advice is to trifle with the authority of God. To hesitate to do right because of selfinterest is rebellion against God. Suppose you say, “That is plainly my duty but it would involve me in a loss”? Well, then, which shall it be—will you suffer the loss or will you commit the sin? If you choose to commit the sin, you do distinctly make your own gain to be your god, for that which has the highest place in your soul is, after all, your god. What right have you to ask, “Will such a course pay me? Will it answer my purpose? What will be the good of it to me”? Such questions contain the very essence of rebellion against the Most High! What if you are no gainer by obeying your God? He who bids you do it is your Maker and Preserver! What if you should lose everything through obeying Him? Would it not be better to lose the whole world than to lose your own soul, for what will you give in exchange for your soul? The very thought of weighing selfinterest against the authority of God should be revolting to all rightminded men!  
Further, *to consult with flesh and blood is diametrically opposed to the Character of Christ.* Flesh and blood, in the person of Peter, rebuked Him when He talked of suffering and being killed. But the Lord said to him, “Get you behind Me, Satan: you are an offense unto Me, for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men.” When Jesus said to His disciples, on one occasion, “Let us go into Judaea again,” they said to Him, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone You; and go You there again?” Yet bravely did He go where He felt that He had a commission to go. His life was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice—His rule was not, “spare yourself,” but this was His rule, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.” He knew that without the sacrifice of Himself, He could not glorify God. So, if you would be like your Master, you must not be making provision for the flesh to gratify the ease and the lusts thereof— but you must be willing, like He, to suffer! Like He you must be willing to be reproached—and like He, even to die, if so it must be for the Glory of God!  
I have generally found that *when men do consult with flesh and blood, the consultation usually leads to the neglect of duty and the forsaking of the Lord.* Had Paul conferred with flesh and blood he would probably never have been an Apostle. I pray that you, Beloved, may have the Grace to say, “My Master’s command is my only Law. My Master bids me do such-and-such—this is my reason if men say that I play the fool by doing it, if they charge me with throwing prudence to the winds—and even if they thrust me into prison and lead me forth to death. Sooner let the sun refuse to shine at the Almighty’s bidding! Sooner let the earth refuse to revolve upon her axis, or any longer to traverse her orbit! Sooner let all Nature revolt against the laws of its Maker, than ever a man of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, should dare to refuse to obey Him, let Him command whatever He may.”  
There I leave the grand and searching principle that faith needs no warrant for its action but the command of God!  
**II.**Now secondly, I am going to show you THE RANGE OF ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO OURSELVES.  
I judge that, first of all, *it applies to all our known duties.* I am not now speaking to unconverted people—I am speaking to you who profess to be converted. You say that you are saved and that you do not trust in your own works. That is well. I have preached to you the Scriptural Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, but now I am going to give you a practical principle that is inseparably associated with that Doctrine. It is this—It is the duty of every Christian to forsake every known sin, whatever it may be, and, in doing so, he is *not* to consult with flesh and blood. Many professors say, “This course is wrong, judging by the Scriptural standard. But then, society has long tolerated it. No, it has even decreed it to be right.” But will society judge you at the Last Great Day? If you are cast into Hell as a deceitful professor, will society fetch you out of the bottomless pit? If you are found at last outside the gates of Heaven, will society recompense you for your eternal loss? What have you, O man of God, to do with society? Christians are to come out from among the ungodly to daily take up their cross and follow Christ—to go outside the camp, bearing His reproach. The friend of the world is the enemy of Christ. What have you to do with doing as the world does?  
The same principle applies to the duty of consecration to Christ. Every Christian should live for Christ alone. All that we are and have belongs to Christ. Even Paul wrote, “You are not your own, for you are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Well then, do

not consult with flesh and blood to find out how far other Christians obey that command, for the pulse of the professing Christian is in a sickly state at this time and Christianity is sadly adulterated. But what have I to do with what my fellow Christians do? If they are not what they should be, is not that a reason why I should be the more consecrated to Christ? If I see others put into the scales of the sanctuary and found wanting, is that a reason why I, too, should be found wanting? I charge you people of God who are here present to try how near you can get to complete consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ! Never say, “I am as good as my minister.” You had need be much better than I am! Never say, “I am as good as such-and-such a Christian.” O Sirs, if you compare yourselves among yourselves, you are not wise! The only model for Christians is Christ Himself!  
This principle of not consulting flesh and blood also applies to *our service for Christ.* We have known ministers whose “call” to a place always depended upon the size of the salary. We have heard of others whose work for Christ depends upon whether it is to be done in respectable society and whether it is a tolerably light and easy task. If they find that it is Ragged School work, or if they will have to labor among very poor people and get no credit for it, they do not care for that kind of service—and if it involves a great deal of toil, they do not feel that they could manage it. The real difficulty is that it is not pleasing to flesh and blood! O soldiers of the Cross, has it come to this, that you must have an easy place, or you will not fight for your King? Soldiers of the Queen do not wait to ask whether it will be hot or cold in the lands to which they are ordered to go—but away they go at the royal command. And so it must be with Christians! We must not be such featherbed soldiers that we can only go where we shall be easy and comfortable. No, but in the name of Him who bought us with His blood, let us ask, “Is this my proper sphere of service for Christ? Then I will occupy it, by His Grace, cost what it may.”  
Perhaps I am addressing some Brother or Sister here who says, “I feel that I am called to service for Christ, but I am going to consult my friends to see whether they are with me or not.” That will probably put an end to your service before it begins! Nothing good will be done by a man who will not attempt it until everybody thinks it is wise. If God has called you to any work for Him, go at it at once with all your might, for if you stop to consult even good people, it is very likely that they have not the faith that you have—or if they have, they will frankly tell you that they are not judges of your call. I cannot decide whether it is a call from God to you—you must yourself be the judge as to that. And if you feel that God has called you to any work, go and do it!  
“Oh, but Christian people throw cold water over my plans!” Yes, that is a common practice, but it ought not to stop you from doing the Lord’s work! Remember how David’s brother, Eliab, said to him, “I know your pride and the naughtiness of your heart; for you are come down that you might see the battle”? I have always admired the modesty of David’s reply, “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” He had been sent down to the camp by his father and he had a further justification, a little later, when he stood before Saul with the giant’s gory head in his hand! If God bids you do any work for Him, go and do it in His strength without consulting with flesh and blood. Many a noble purpose has been strangled by a committee! Many a glorious project that might have been the means of carrying the Gospel to the utmost ends of the earth has been crushed by timid counselors who said that it was not practicable! Whereas, had it been attempted, God would have worked with the worker and great would have been the result. So go, O man of God, to the work He has called you to do—and consult not with flesh and blood!  
In the next place, this principle applies to *all necessary sacrifices.*There are sacrifices which we must make for Christ and His cause. For instance, there are persons who, if they are converted to God, must make sacrifices in their business. There are here tonight one or two men who used to be publicans. But when they became converted, they took the very first opportunity of getting out of that business, although it meant a considerable sacrifice. They have cheerfully borne the loss and they are now sitting here with clear consciences as they could not have been if they had not done what they believed to be right. There are others here who used to get a living by their Sunday trade, but they willingly gave it up for Christ’s sake when they became His. I do not think they have ever got back as much money as they gave up, but they have great peace of mind and they feel perfect satisfaction at the loss because they believe it to be right. Every Christian is bound to act thus, not considering for a moment the profit or loss of the matter. As God is God, He is to be served at all costs!  
Sometimes, however, the following of Christ involves the loss of more than money—the loss of friendships. There are separations still made in the world because of devotion to Christ. Ungodly parents drive away from them their converted children. Close friendships have been snapped and situations of influence and usefulness have had to be given up for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s. “What am I to do?” asks one who is threatened with grievous loss if he will not give up Christ. Be willing to let father and mother, or husband or wife and all else go rather than let Him go upon whom your eternal interest depends! Remember that He said, “If any man comes to Me and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters; yes, and his own life, also, he cannot be My disciple.” Some persons feel that if they become followers of Christ, they will lose prestige and position—and that is more than they can endure. There have been some who, when they had joined this Church, have henceforth had the cold shoulder in the aristocratic circles to which they belonged. And they have come to me and said, “Our former friends no longer call upon us, nor ask us to their houses.” And I have replied, “Thank God! Then you will be out of the way of the temptation to which you might be exposed from their idle chat.” They have said, by-and-by, that it was even so and that it was well. But at the first it was hard to bear. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, always do what is right! Whatever may come of it, be out-and-out for Christ. Verily I say unto you—there is no man who shall be a loser by Christ at the last! Great shall be his gain who, for Christ’s sake, can give up even all that he has!  
I want you to further notice that this principle also applies to *the confession of your faith,* if you have been converted to Christ. Very often some of those who really do believe in Jesus neglect to avow their faith in the Lord’s appointed way. Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every Believer in Christ to be baptized. It is the duty of every Christian, having first given himself to Christ, afterwards to give himself to Christ’s Church, according to the will of God. Now, my dear Friend, do your Master’s will and consult not with flesh and blood!  
Do not consult with yourself about this matter, for if you do, Self will say, “Why need you go through that trouble? You will bring a great deal of unnecessary notice upon yourself if you do. And perhaps you will not be able to hold out to the end—you may fall into sin and bring disgrace upon the name of Christ!” Self will reason in this way, but what have you to do with such reasoning? Is it not your bounden duty to do as your Master bids you? If soldiers, in the day of battle, are commanded to charge the enemy at the point of the bayonet, they must not stop to consider the danger of such a course, or to ask why their commander gave such an order. And so it must be with all the soldiers of King Jesus! And so surely it will be with every true Christian. Are you a Christian and does your Lord bid you confess your faith in Him? Then come forward and say, “According to His will, I with confess with my mouth, because with my heart I have believed in His name.” Possibly someone says, “If I were to do that, I should grieve my parents.” Do not needlessly grieve anybody, but if it is necessary for Christ’s sake, grieve *everybody*— and grieve *yourself* most that they should be grieved because you do what is right!  
Another says, “My position would become very uncomfortable if I were to be baptized.” Then find your comfort in the Presence of Christ with you in uncomfortable circumstances! “But,” says one, “I don’t see how I could be baptized at present.” Is it your duty? Then remember that the Apostle says, “Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” When I preached in the country, before I came to London, I used to have a hearer who professed to have been a Christian for many years. Whenever I spoke to him about joining the Church, he always said, “He that believes shall not make haste,” to which I replied, “Well, if you come at once, you certainly will not have made haste.” Then I tried to explain to him that the haste referred to there was the haste of fear and cowardice. And I said that a much more appropriate text was this one, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments.”  
“Well,” says one, “I don’t wish to put off joining the Church. At the same time, I cannot quite give up the world.” Then, do not join the Church! We do not want in the Church those whose hearts are still in the world, so injurious both to the world and to the Church are those who try to join the two together! If you are Christ’s, you must give up the world—but why should you hesitate about doing that? What is there in the world but vanity and vexation of spirit? You will find Christ to be infinitely preferable to the world, for in Him you will have—  
***“Solid joys and lasting treasure.”*  
III.**I see that my time has gone, but I need not dwell upon the last point— that THIS PRINCIPLE COMMENDS ITSELF TO OUR BEST JUDGMENT.  
It is *the judgment we exercise upon others.*We do not like to see halfand-half people, do we? And if we see people who are willing to suffer for their principles, we respect and honor them. Well then, let us so act that others may be able, in their inmost hearts, to respect and honor us!

*This principle will commend itself to us when we come to die.*I never heard of a Nonconformist father, when he was dying, saying to his son, “My Boy, you know that I was a Dissenter and I lost my farm for that reason. I advise you to go to the State church and get into the good books of the parson and the squire.” I never heard of a Christian, when dying, saying to his wife, “My Dear, the shutting up of our shop on the Sabbath has meant a great loss to us and I have all the less to leave you—and I regret now that we were so unwise.” No, no! I never heard and never dreamed of hearing of anyone saying such a thing as that! I never heard a dying Christian say, “I gave too much to the Lord’s cause. I worked too hard in Christ’s service. I did not really exercise sufficient prudence and look out for myself as I ought to have done.” Oh, no! Their regrets always are all the other way! Those who have denied themselves most always wish that they had done more, given more and been privileged to even *suffer* more for Christ’s sake!

And finally, *this will be our judgment at the Last Great Day.* We shall account that to have followed Christ and to have suffered loss for Christ was the right thing—but for anyone to have gotten off cheaply through consulting with flesh and blood will then seem to us to have been the meanest thing that was ever heard of—treason against the King of Love, treachery against the Christ who died! Those who have been faithful to Christ on earth shall share His Glory in Heaven and dwell with Him there forever and ever! So, if you believe in Him, come out boldly and confess that you do.

If you love not the Lord Jesus Christ, take heed that He should come against you with His rod of iron and utterly destroy you. May He, by His gracious Spirit, give to all of us faith in Him and loyalty to Him for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *JOHN 14.*  
Verse 1.***Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also*

*in Me* . [See Sermons #730, Volume 13—LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED; #1741, Volume 29—“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED” and #3076, Volume 54—THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF HEART TROUBLE—the Sermon to which this Exposition belongs—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Here is a troubled company of

disciples, very much cast down, so their Divine Master, full of infinite tenderness, talks to them in this gentle manner, “Let not your heart be troubled.” He does not like to see them troubled, for when they are, He is also troubled. Our Lord here prescribes faith as the only remedy for heart trouble. If you, poor troubled soul, can believe, you will leave off fretting. Twice our Lord uses the word, “believe.” He seems to say to His disciples, “Take another dose of faith—it will take away from you this faintness of heart from which you are suffering. ‘You believe in God, believe also in Me.’” And then He seeks to make them forget their heart trouble by talking most sweetly to them about His Father and His Father’s dwelling place. It is a great thing to divert the mind, when it is troubled, from that which bores into it and threatens to destroy it.

**2.***In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.* “You have all My heart, so I have no secrets from you. ‘If it were not so, I would have told you.’ Even in going away from you, I am going away for your good.”

**2.***I go to prepare a place for you.* [See Sermon #2751, Volume 47—“A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE”——Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at  
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I am all yours, and always yours, and everywhere yours—and I am doing everything for you.”

**3.***And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.*“I will not send an angel to fetch you, but I will Myself come for you. If you die, I will come for you in that way. But if you live on until my Second Advent, ‘I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.’”

**3.***That where I am, there you may be also.* “So do not be troubled because I am going away from you. I am going first in order that you may follow afterwards. I am going as the Pioneer into that blessed state where you shall dwell with Me forever! So do not be troubled at My departure.” How tenderly and lovingly this is all put!

**4.***And where I go, you know, and the way you know.* “I am not going to take a leap into the dark—you know where I am going, and you also know the road along which I am going.” Ah, but sometimes sorrow forgets what it knows and thus creates a cloud of unnecessary ignorance which darkens and increases the sorrow!

**5.***Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way?* It was a pity that Thomas had such a thought as this in his mind, but as it was there, it is a great mercy that he told his Lord of it. Sometimes to put your trouble down in black and white is a quick way to get rid of it—but to bring it to your Lord in prayer is a still better plan!

**6.***Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man  
comes unto the Father, but by Me.* [See Sermons #245, Volume 5—THE WAY TO GOD and #942, Volume 16—THE WAY—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] How impossible it is to fully describe our Lord in human language! He is going away, yet He is, Himself, the way! And He is, Himself, the beginning and the end—He is everything to His people— “the way, the truth, and the life.” We are obliged to have mixed metaphors when we talk of Christ, for He is the mixture of everything that is delightful and precious. All over glorious is our Lord—there is no way of setting Him forth to the full in our poor halting speech.

**7.***If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also: and from henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him.* It cheers the children of God to talk to them about their Father, and about their Father’s house, so that is what the Elder Brother did in His great kindness to His disciples—He talked to them about their Father and His Heaven.

**8-10.***Philip said unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; then how can you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works.* Christ and the Father are indissolubly One. Even when He was here in His humiliation, He was not separated from His Father except in that dread hour when He was bearing His people’s sins upon the Cross. Now He is visibly One with His Father on the Throne of Glory!

**11, 12.***Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also.*“I am going away from you; but be not dismayed, for I shall not take away My power from you—that will remain with you.”

**12.***And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.* “My very absence will let loose a greater power than you could have experienced while I was here! You will need more power when I am gone from you, and you shall have more. Therefore, ‘let not your heart be troubled.’ Besides, you will still be able to pray, and prayer will bring you greater blessings than any that I ever gave you.”

**13, 14.***And whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.* Every word in this address of Christ was full of comfort to His disciples.

**15, 16.***If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.*There was the One who would enable the disciples to meet

every trial—that other Comforter [See Sermons #4, Volume 1—THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; #5, Volume 1—THE COMFORTER; #1074, Volume 18—THE PARACLETE and #2074, Volume 35—INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] whom Christ promised to

them! Their trouble was that their Lord was going away from them. That other Comforter made amends for that and He will make amends to you, Believer, for every form of trial to which you may be exposed. Is it bodily weakness? Is it the infirmity of old age? Is it depression of spirit? Is it losses and crosses at home? Is it crooked things that cannot be made straight? Well, Christ’s promise still stands good, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.”

**7.***Even the Spirit of Truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him.* “You are on familiar terms with Him. You are intimate with Him. You know Him.”

**17-20.***For He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me: because I live, you shall live also. At that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.* These are the three wonderful mysteries of the union between God, and Christ, and His people—“I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

**21, 22.***He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world?*“Perhaps if You did manifest Yourself to the world, the world would bow down before You and worship You.” But Christ’s plan was to manifest Himself to the inner circle of His own chosen ones.

**23-27.***Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings: and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My*

*peace I give unto you.*[See Sermons #247, Volume 5—THE BEST OF MASTERS and #300, Volume 6—SPIRITUAL PEACE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He had given them peace while He was with them. His Divine Presence had been their continual comfort. But now, although He was going away from them, He would leave His peace behind Him as the most precious legacy that He could bequeath to them—“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”

**27, 28.***Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice—.*“I know that you do love Me, but if you really acted as if you loved Me, you would rejoice.”

**28.***Because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I.* The Lord Jesus, though equal with the Father, had voluntarily laid aside His Glory and taken the form and place of a Man, making Himself of no reputation, so His disciples ought to have rejoiced that He was going back to His primitive Glory!

**29, 30.***And now I have told you, before it comes to pass, that when it is comes to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me.* Still Christ would have enough to do to meet that arch-enemy and to endure all that would come upon Him during that dread encounter.

**31.***But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #99 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE DUTY OF REMEMBERING THE POOR  
NO. 99

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK~~***

***~~PREACHED ON BEHALF OF THE AGED PILGRIMS’ FRIEND SOCIETY.~~***

***~~“Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.”  
Galatians 2:10.~~***

POVERTY is no virtue. Wealth is no sin. On the other hand, wealth is not morally good and poverty is not morally evil. A man may be a good man and a rich man. It is quite certain that very frequently good men are poor men. Virtue is a plant which depends not upon the atmosphere which surrounds it, but upon the hand which waters it and upon the Divine Grace which sustains it. We draw no support for Grace from our circumstances whether they are good or evil. Our circumstances may sometimes militate against the gracious work in our breast, but it is quite certain that no position in life is a sustaining cause of the life of Grace in the soul. That must always be maintained by Divine Power which can work as well in poverty as in riches—for we see some of the finest specimens of the full development of Christianity in those who are the very meanest in temporal circumstances—far outshining those whom we would have imagined, from their position in society, would have had many things to assist their virtues and sustain their Graces. Grace is a plant which draws no nourishment from the wilderness in which it grows. It finds nothing to feed upon in the heart of man—all it lives upon, it receives *supernaturally*. It sends all its roots upwards, none downwards. It draws no support from poverty and none from riches. Gold cannot sustain Grace—on the other hand—rags cannot make it flourish. Grace is a plant which derives the whole of its support from God, the Holy Spirit, and is, therefore, entirely independent of the circumstances of man. But yet, mark you—it is an undeniable fact that God has been pleased, for the most part, to plant His Grace in the soil of poverty. He has not chosen many great, nor many mighty men of this world but He has “chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom of God.” We should wonder why, were we not quite sure that God is wise in His choice! We cannot dispute a fact which Scripture

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teaches and which our own observation supports, that the Lord’s people are, to a very large extent, the poor of this world! Very few of them wear crowns. Very few ride in carriages. Only a proportion of them have a competence. A very large multitude of His family are destitute, afflicted, tormented and are kept leaning, day by day, upon the daily provisions of God and trusting Him from meal to meal, believing that He will supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness.

Now, tonight, we shall, first of all, mention *the fact* that God *has a poor people*. Secondly, the duty—*we should remember the poor*. And then, thirdly, *the obligation for us to perform this duty—*for there are sundry reasons why we ought to be especially mindful of the poor of the Lord’s flock.

**I.**First, then, THE LORD HAS A POOR PEOPLE—a fact notorious to us all—which daily observation confirms. Why does the Lord have a poor people? This is a question that might suggest itself to us and we might not, at all times, find it easy to answer if we were poor, ourselves. God could make them all rich if He pleased. He could lay bags of gold at their doors. He could send whole rivers of supplies where now it is a desert! He could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions—as once He made the quails lie in very heaps round the camp of Israel—so now He could rain bread out of Heaven to feed them! There is no necessity that they should be poor, only as it pleases His own Sovereign Will. “The cattle upon a thousand hills are His,” He could supply them. He could make the rich men of this world give up all their wealth, if He so pleased to turn their minds. He could make the richest, the greatest and the mightiest bring all their power and riches to the feet of His children, for the hearts of all men are in His control! But He does not choose to do so. He allows them to suffer need. He allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? I believe that is a question we should not find easy to answer, if we were in the circumstances, but seeing that many of us are out of the affliction, we may, perhaps, hint at one or two reasons why the Lord God has had—has and always will have—a poor people in this world!

**I.**I think one reason is to teach us *how grateful we should be for all the comforts He bestows on many of us*. One of the sweetest meals I think I have ever eaten was after beholding a spectacle of penury which had made me weep. When we see others needing daily bread, does not our loaf at once taste very sweet? It may have been very dry—but we saw someone begging for bread in the streets—and we thanked God for what we had that day, when we knew that others wanted. When we take our walks abroad and see the poor, he must be but a very poor Christian who does not lift up his eyes to Heaven and thank his God thus—

***“Not more than others I deserve,***

***But God has given me more.”***  
If we were all made rich, alike, if God had given us all abundance, we would never know the value of His mercies—but He puts the poor side by side with us—to make their trials, like a dark shadow, set forth the brightness which He is pleased to give to us in temporal matters. Oh, you would never thank God half as much if you did not see your cause for thankfulness by marking the needs of others! Oh, you dainty ones who can scarcely eat the food that is put before you, it would do you good if you could sit down at the table of the poor! Oh, you discontented ones who are always murmuring at your households because all kinds of delicacies are not provided for you—it would do you good if you could sit down for a while to workhouse fare and sometimes eat a little less than that and fast a day or two, to find your appetites! Yes, you who never sing a song of praise to God, it would be no small benefit to you if you were, for once, made to need His bounties! Then you might be led to thank God for all His abundant supplies. Even Christians need a spur to their thankfulness. God gives us a great many mercies we never thank Him for. Day by day His mercies come, but day by day we forget them! His mercies lie—

***“Forgotten in unthankfulness,***

***And without praises die.”***  
Put you out in the cold some winter’s night and would you not thank God for the fire, afterwards? Make you thirst for a little while and how grateful would be the cup of water! Now, if God has not exposed us in this way, it is at least an instance of His wisdom that He has placed others in that position, to teach those of His family who are more highly favored in temporal matters how thankful they ought to be for the gifts of His Providence!

**2.**That, however, I take it, is but a very low view of the matter. There are other and higher and better reasons! God is pleased to always have a poor people, *that He may display His Sovereignty* in all He does. If there were no poor saints, we would not so strongly believe the Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. Or, at least, if the saints believed it as they always must and will, yet the wicked and those who despise it would not have so clear an evidence of it. Then they would not sin against such great Light of God which shines upon their poor, dark, blind eyeballs from evident displays of Sovereignty in salvation! Those who deny Divine Sovereignty, deny it in the face of all testimony—certainly in the teeth of Scripture, for it is positively affirmed there! And God, in order that there may be something besides Scripture, has made His Providence bear out the written Word and has caused many of His children to be the despised among the people. “I take whom I please,” says God. “You would have Me choose kings and queens, first—I choose their humble servants in their kitchens before I choose their masters and mistresses in their banqueting halls! You would have Me take the counselor and the wise man—I take the fool, first, that I may teach you to despise the wisdom of man! I take the poor before the rich, that I may humble all your pride and teach you there is nothing in man that makes Me choose him—but that it is My Sovereign Will, alone, which creates men, heirs of Grace.” I bless God that there are poor saints, for they teach me this lesson—that God will do as He pleases with His own. They show me manifestly that however much men may deny the Sovereignty of God, they cannot rob Him of it—that He will still exert it to the very last—as long as this earth shall stand and may find ways of exerting it, even in future ages! Certainly the existence of a poor people in the world is proof positive in the mind of the saint and a plain and bold affirmation to the most obtuse intellect of the sinner, that there is a Sovereignty of God in the choice of men.

**3.**Again—God has a poor people, I take it, *that He may display more the power of His comforting promises and the supports of the Gospel*. If all God’s saints were well-to-do in this world and never lacked, we would scarcely realize the value of the Gospel half as much, Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, when we find some that have not where to lay their heads, who yet can say, “Still will I trust in the Lord.” When we see some who have nothing but bread and water who still glory in Jesus—when we see them “wondering where the scene shall end,” seeing that, “every day new straits attend,” and yet having faith in Christ, oh, what honor it reflects on the Gospel! Let my rich friend, there, stand up and say, “I have faith in God for tomorrow with regard to my daily bread.” You would say, “My dear Friend, I do not at all wonder at it, for you have plenty of money at home to buy your bread with and a salary coming in on such a day. There is not much opportunity for faith in your case.” But when some poor Habakkuk rises and exclaims, “although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit in the vine,” and so on, “Yet will I trust in the Lord.” Ah, then that shows the power of all-supporting Grace! You know we hear of a great many different inventions that will never stand a trial. One man advertises a swimming belt. A fine thing it would be for dry land, but when it is tried at sea, I fear it will not exactly answer the purpose and really we cannot know the value of an invention unless we test it and put it through all the trials which it is supposed to be able to endure. Now, Grace is tested in the poverty of Believers—that they are still, in a great degree, an uncomplaining and unmurmuring race—that they bear up under every discouragement, believing that all things work together for their good and that out of all their apparent evils, some good shall ultimately spring! That their God will either speedily work a deliverance for them, or most assuredly support them in the trouble, as long as He is pleased to keep them there. Beloved, this is, no doubt, one reason why God puts His people in poor circumstances. “There,” says the architect, “this building is strong.” Yes, Sir, but it must be tested! Let the wind blow against it. There is a lighthouse out at sea— it is a calm night—I cannot tell whether the edifice is firm. The tempest must howl about it and *then* I shall know whether it will stand. So with religion. If it were not, on many occasions, surrounded with tempestuous waters, we would not know that the ship was strong. If the winds did not blow upon it, as they do on our poor tried Brothers and Sisters, we would not know how firm and secure it is. The masterworks of God are those that stand in the midst of difficulties—when all things oppose them, yet maintain their stand. These are His all-glorious works and so His best children, those who honor Him the most, are those who have Grace to sustain them amidst the heaviest load of tribulations and trials. God puts His people into such circumstances, then, to show us the power of His Divine Grace.

**4.**Then, again—God often allows Hs people to be a tried and a poor people, just *to plague the devil*. The devil was never more plagued in his life, I think, than he was with Job. As long as Job was rich, Job caused much envy in Satan—but he never made him so angry as when he was poor! It was then that Satan was the most incensed against him because, after all his trials, he would not curse God and die. You know, if a man thinks he can do a thing, he will always wrap himself up in his selfcomplacency till he tries to do it and then fails. So Satan thinks he may overthrow one or other of God’s children. “Now, Satan,” says God, “I will give you an opportunity of trying your skill. One of My children is very poor. I will cut off his bread and water. I will give him the water of affliction to drink and the bread of bitterness to eat. He shall be exceedingly tried. Take him, Satan, drag him through fire and water and see what you can do with him.” So Satan tries to starve out the Divine Life from his soul—but he cannot do it—and he finds, after all he has done, that he is defeated and he goes away plagued, vexed and feeling another Hell within himself, though miserable enough before, because he was foiled in all his attempts to tread out the spark of life in the heart of God’s child. God often allows Satan to test the Lord’s work. It is marvelous that the crafty devil should continue to work when it all tends to the Glory of God, after all. But he is a devil all over and will always continue so. He always will keep on meddling with God’s children—he will persevere even to the last moment—till every saint is safe across the Jordan, he will still be plaguing and vexing God’s beloved children. Ah, then let us rejoice! God will deliver us and bring us off safe at last, yes, “more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.”

**5.**Furthermore, the design of our heavenly Father in allowing a poor people in this world and keeping His people poor, when He might make them rich, is possibly *to give us some living glimpse of Christ*. A poor man is the image of Jesus Christ, if he is a Christian. All Christians are the image of Jesus Christ, for the sanctifying influence of Christ exerted on them has made them, in some degree, like their Master. But the poor man is like his Master not only in his character, but in his circumstances, too. When you look on a poor saint, you have a better picture of Jesus than you have in a rich saint. The rich saint is a member of Christ. He has the image of his Master stamped upon him and that image shall be perfected when he shall arrive in Heaven. But the poor saint has something else—he has not only the most prominent feature—but the background and the foreground all in the picture! He has the circumstances of it! Look at his brown hands, hardened by toil— such were his Savior’s once. Look at his weary feet, blistered with his journeying—such were his Savior’s many a time. He sits upon a well from weariness, as his Lord once did. He has nowhere to rest, nor had his Master—foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but He had nowhere to lay His head. He is fed by charity, so was his Master— others supplied His needs. Look! He sits down at an invited table, so did his Master—He had not one of His own! You see Christ, then. You see as much of Christ as you will see just yet—until you are taken up where you shall be like He is—and see Him as He is. He would have us always remember the Savior’s poverty—“How He was rich and yet, for our sakes, became poor.” And just as, on some memorable day, they strike medals which bear the impress of its hero, so I look upon every poor saint as being a medal struck from the Divine Mint, to be a memento of the existence of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is to make me remember my Lord, to bid me meditate upon that wondrous depth of poverty into which He stooped, that He might lift me up to light and Glory. Oh, Blessed Jesus, this is wise, for we often forget You—wise that You have given us some opportunity to remember You!

**6.**But now one more reason and I have done with this part of the subject. The Lord has a poor people in the midst of us for this reason— that He *determines to give us opportunities of showing our love to Him*. Now we show our love to Christ when we sing of Him and when we pray to Him. But if there were no poor people in the world, we would often say within ourselves, “Oh, how I wish there were one of Christ’s Brethren that I could help. I should like to give Christ something. I should like to show my Master that I love Him, not by words, only, but by deeds, too.” But if all the poor saints were taken clean away and we were all well-todo and had abundance, there would be none to require any assistance. And then, I think, we might begin to weep because there were no poor saints to help. It is one of the most healthy things in the world to help a saint! It is a great blessing to our own souls. It is a healthy exercise of the mind to visit the poor of the Lord’s flock and distribute, as we are able, of our substance to their necessities. Let us look upon it not as a mere duty but as a delight and privilege—for if we were not able to give something of our substance to Christ, we would have to go down on our knees to ask Him to give us some opportunity of showing our love to Him. Take away the saints and one channel wherein our love might flow is withdrawn at once! But that shall never be, for the poor we always shall have with us and these are some of the reasons why we will always have them.

**II.**The second thing we shall endeavor to speak of is THE DUTY here alluded to—“*They would that we should remember the poor*.” “Remember the poor.” That word, “remember,” is a very comprehensive word.

We ought to remember the poor in our *prayers*. I need not remind you to offer supplication for the rich, but remember the poor. Remember them and pray that God would comfort and cheer them in all the trials of their penury, that He would supply their needs out of the riches of His fullness! Let the angel touch you on the arm when you have nearly finished your prayers and say, “Remember the poor. Remember the poor of the flock.” Let your prayers always go up to Heaven for them.

Remember the poor, too, in your *conversation*. It is remarkable that all of us remember the rich. We talk about all men being equal, but I do not believe there is an Englishman who is not silly enough to boast if he has happened to be with a lord in his lifetime! To have seen a live lord is a most marvelous thing and there is scarcely one of us that could resist the temptation of talking about it! We may say what we like about believing in the equality of mankind—so we do, till we happen to get a little elevated—then we don’t believe it any longer! We are all ready enough to pull others down when we are in humble circumstances—but when we get a little elevated—we foolishly think it only a child’s fancy that we indulged in and that, after all, there are more differences than we imagined. We always remember the rich. You see a respectable man in Church. You always know him, don’t you? You are on the exchange, or walking down the street—you never find any difficulty in recognizing him! Somehow or other, your memory is very treacherous in remembering the poor, but very strong in remembering a rich man. Let me remind you to, “Remember the poor.” It is singular enough that there is no command to remember the rich. I suppose because there is no necessity for it, for we usually remember them. But there is a command for us to remember the poor! Now the next time you see a poor Brother coal miner, bricklayer, herdsman, or whatever he may be, talk to him, if you please. And if you see him in all his dirty garments—still talk to him! Do not forget him. Try and remember him. Next Sacrament Sunday look him in the face as though you remembered him—for the last 20 times you have seen him, you have appeared as if you did not remember him and the poor man’s mind has been hurt as much as if it were some slight on your part because he was a poor Brother! I will not say that it was so, but I am rather afraid it was, in some degree. Now, when you see him in the street, say, “Well, Brother, I know you.” And if he comes up to speak to you, do not think it will lower you to be seen speaking to him in the street. If he is your Brother, acknowledge him! If he is not, tell no lie about it, but leave the Church and make no false professions. But if you believe it, carry it out.

Now, often, when you are walking home from the House of God, you do not remember the poor, do you? If they should require to speak to you, however important their errand, they would not get attended to very frequently. If Mr. So-and-So, who is a respectable gentleman, wanted you, “Oh, yes, Sir, I can stop a moment and have a little conversation with you.” But if a poor person wants you, “Oh, I am in such a hurry. I must go home.” And you are sure to go off at once! Now, in the future, just reverse your habit—when you see a rich man, do just what you like about attending to him. I know what you will like to do. But when you see a poor man, just make it a point of conscience that you attend to him. I was very much pleased with the conduct of a Brother who is here. He may remember the circumstance and bless God that He gave him Grace to act as he did. A short time ago there stood in the aisle near his pew door a gentleman and a poor fellow in a smock frock. I thought to myself, “He will let one in, I know, but I wonder which it will be?” I did not wait long before out he came and in went the smock frock! He thought very rightly, that the gentlemen would stand a chance of getting a seat out of some of you but he thought it best to remember the poor. And it was likely that the poor man was the most tired, for he had, no doubt, had a hard week’s work and probably a long walk, for there are not many smock frocks near London! Therefore he gave in reality to the most needy. I say, again, “Remember the poor.” There is no necessity to tell you to remember the rich—to be very respectful and to speak very kindly and lovingly to those who are above you—you will take care of yourselves on that point—but it is the poor you are disposed not to attend to and, therefore, I will press on you this commandment—that you remember the poor.

But this especially means, I think, that *in the provision for their necessities*, we ought to remember the poor. Some of us have pretty good need to remember the poor. I am sure I have, for I have about ten times as many poor people come to me every day as I can possibly relieve. If I were as rich as the Mayor of London, or Her Majesty the Queen, I could scarcely accede to the immense requests sometimes made to me! There is scarcely a poor man that is hard run by his creditors, or a poor woman that cannot make up her rent, but they write to the minister. All the poor souls come to him. And I think to myself, “What can I do with you? I have really done as much as I can and here are three or four more coming.” So I am obliged to send them away and can only pity—but cannot assist—and this will be the case, unless someone shot a wagon load of gold before my door! Still, we must “remember the poor.” Some think it very hard to have so many calls on them. I do not. I only think it hard when I cannot help them. If I could, I would think it a great blessing to assist them all. If I were put in possession of great wealth, I do not say what I would do, for very frequently people’s hearts get smaller when their means get greater. But where God has given us wealth—and where there are needy children of God—we ought to remember them directly! How much of the superfluities might be given to their necessities! How many of our lavished luxuries might be bestowed on that which they crave for their very existence! You know not how poor this world is. You ride through one part of this magnificent city and you say, “Talk of poverty—there is no such thing!” You ride through another part and you say, “Talk of riches—here is no such thing! The world is poor.” Some of you should, now and then, go and search out poverty. Place you above it and your movements in life seldom bring you into contact with it. If you would have your hearts enlarged, visit the poor! Follow them into their dens, for they are but little better in some cases. Go up their creaking staircases. See the straw in the corner of the room where they sleep, yes, see worse than that—see a chair whereon a man has been for the last five years, not able to sit without being propped, obliged to be fed by others and yet living on four or five shillings a week—with nothing to support him properly—or give him sufficient bodily nutriment. Go and see such cases and if you do not put your hands in your pockets and help the aged pilgrims, I am afraid there is not much Christianity in you! Or if you do not help the one that you see has the greatest need, I am afraid the love of God dwells not in you! It is a duty we owe to the poor of the Lord’s flock—and we reap many advantages we would not have if we had not to remember the poor!

**III.**Now, allow me to press home THIS OBLIGATION—*why should we remember the poor*? I shall not urge it upon the ground of common philanthropy and charity—that were a too mean and low way of addressing Christians, although even they, perhaps, might be benefited by it. I shall urge it in another way.

“Remember the poor,” because they are your Lord’s Brethren. What? Do you not feel, like David, that you would do anything for Jonathan’s sake? And if he has some poor sick son, some Mephibosheth, lame in his feet, will you not seat him at your table, or give him a maintenance, if you can, seeing that Jonathan’s blood is in his veins? Remember, Beloved, the *blood of Jesus* runs in the veins of poor saints! They are His relatives! They are His friends and if that moves you not, remember they are your friends, too! They are your Brethren if you are a child of God. They are allied to you. If they are sons of God, so are you, and they are Brethren of yours. What? Let your Brother starve? If you can, will you not relieve your Brother’s necessity, not shield him from the cold, not ward off hunger, not provide for his needs? Oh, I know you love Jesus. I know you love the friends of Jesus and I know you love your own family and, therefore, you will love your poor Brethren, will you not? I know you will, you will relieve them. Remember, too, that you, yourself, may be like your poor Brother before long. Therefore take heed that you despise him not, for someone will despise you. Oh, remember that all you have, God has lent you! He may take it all from you if He pleases. And if He sees that you make an ill use of it, perhaps He will take it from you now! Full many a man has lost his wealth by God’s righteous judgment for his misuse of it. You are God’s steward, will you cheat Him? He has given you His wealth to distribute to the poor. Will you not supply their needs out of what He has given you? Yes, surely you will! I cannot believe you will turn them away, as long as you have anything wherewith to relieve them, but will share what you have with them. Remember, if you do not relieve them, you give great and grave suspicion that you love not Christ! If you love not Christ’s people, how can it be that you are His disciples, since it is the mark, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”? And how can you love, when you have and give not where God has made you rich and yet you do not bestow? Gravely you give cause to doubt that the love of God is in you, if the love of the Brethren is not in you, also! Oh, remember, when you give, God can give you more. You have lost nothing! You have put it in another purse and God may hand it back to you in larger measure, yet. Men lose nothing by what they give to God’s saints. It would often be a heavenly investment if they bestowed it upon God’s family. But if they retain it, God has other means to make them poor, if they will not give to His cause.

John Bunyan tells of a man who had a roll of cloth and the more he cut from it, the more he had. And he says, in his rhyming way— ***“A man there was, though some did count him mad, The more he cast away, the more he had.”***

He was not much of a madman, after all, if he had more, the more he gave away! But that is a very selfish view. Remember, it you never get it back, it is no small honor to give it to Christ! And remember, what you give to His children, you put into His palm. If Christ, Himself, should stand at the door as you pass the plate—how you would put your money in to please Him! Remember, His poor believing family are His hand—give into His hand, then, as you can, at all times and seasons! Remember the poor—you shall always have the poor to remember.

Well, now, I beg leave to commend to your attention and notice tonight the Aged Pilgrims’ Friend Society as being an especially excellent institution because it will enable you to remember the poor! Those who are relieved by it are, in the first place, all Christians, as far as man can judge. They are all examined beforehand as to their experience of a change of heart and the existence of a Divine Life within them. And none are received into the society but those who are really the members of Christ’s mystical body and give evidence of the work of Grace in their hearts. In the next place, the funds which are given to them are distributed by Christian men who visit them once a month. And when they visit them, I do not suppose they leave them without praying with them and endeavoring to cheer their hearts. I know they do. They often spend a season of prayer and have a kind conversation with them concerning their souls. And, last of all, they are all over sixty. They have a double claim on us because they are the Lord’s aged people, as well as the Lord’s poor people. And none of them have anything without they absolutely and really require it. I will just read you this very short paper to tell you what they have done—

“The Society was established in 1807 for the relief of the aged Christian poor, above 60 years, irrespective of denominational distinction, both male and female in town and country. It has extended its valuable aid to 1650 aged disciples of the Lord Jesus, among whom have been distributed upwards of £50,000. The following is a brief account of its present state, in reference both to the number relieved and the amount of income and expenditure. There are—45 Pensioners who receive 10 guineas per annum, or 17s. 6d. per month. 245 ditto 5 ditto or 8s. 9d. ditto. 130 Approved Candidates who receive 4s. per month. Total 420 among whom are distributed, monthly, at their own habitations, £172.

“The income arising from Annual Subscriptions, etc., does not exceed £1550 while the expenditure is upwards of £2000, leaving a deficiency, annually, of £450 and upwards, which the Committee has to make up by obtaining collections in various Churches and Chapels, wherever they can. Donations and Annual Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Treasurers or Secretaries at any time. Every department is filled *gratuitously*. Also, legacies will, at any time, be very thankfully received.”

Our friends had no business to have said anything about legacies, for we do not wish you to die just yet. We always wish to have your subscriptions! We are very thankful to receive legacies, but do not keep the money to leave us in the shape of legacies. We would rather have your annual subscriptions for ten years—for then we would have your living prayers, your living sympathy and your living help! Well, if you do not think this a good Society, do not give anything. But if you do, just put it on its merits. People very often give to an object just what others give, because there is a collection. But just put this upon its own merits and your ability—and give as you think the Society deserves to receive and as you believe yourselves able to bestow. May God give a blessing to you in remembering the poor!

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1599 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EVERYDAY RELIGION  
NO. 1599

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 22, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Galatians 2:20.~~***

I am not about to preach from this whole verse, for I have done that before—this single sentence will suffice me. I shall not attempt to enter into the fullness of the spiritual meaning of this very deep and fruitful passage. I am merely going to bring out one thought from it and to try to work that out, I trust, to practical ends. It has sometimes been objected, of the preaching of the Gospel, that we exhort men to live for another sphere and do not teach them to live well in the present life. Nothing can be more untrue than this! I venture to say that more practical moral teaching is given by ministers of the Gospel than by all the philosophers, lecturers and moralists put together! While we count ourselves to be ordained to speak of something higher than mere morals, we nevertheless, no, for *that very reason*, we inculcate the purest code of duty and lay down the most sound rules of conduct.

It would be a great pity, dear Brothers and Sisters, if in the process of being qualified for the next life we became disqualified for this! But it is not so. It would be a very strange thing if, in order to be fit for the company of angels, we should grow *unfit* to associate with*men*! But it is not so. It would be a singular circumstance if those who speak of Heaven had nothing to say concerning the way there. But it is not so. The calumny is almost too stale to need a new denial. My Brethren, true religion has as much to do with this world as with the world to come—it is always urging us onward to the higher and better life! But it does so by processes and precepts which fit us worthily to spend our days while here below.

Godliness prepares us for the life which follows the laying down of this mortal flesh. But as Paul tells us in the text, it molds the life which we now live in the flesh. Faith is a principle for present use. Look how it has triumphed in ordinary life according to the record of the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Godliness with contentment is great gain—it has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. The sphere of faith is earth *and* Heaven, time *and* eternity—the sweep of its circle takes in the whole of our being—spirit, soul and body. It comprehends the past and the future and it certainly does not omit the present.

The faith of Christians has to do with the things that now are and it is concerning the life that we now live in the flesh that I shall now speak, trying, by the help of God’s Spirit, to show the influence which faith has upon it. There are seven points in which faith in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us will have a distinct influence upon the life which we now live in the flesh.

**I.**To begin—FAITH INCLINES A MAN TO AN INDUSTRIOUS LIFE. It suggests *activity*. I will venture to say of any lazy man that he has little or no faith in God, for faith always works—“works by love.” I lay it down as a thesis which shall be proven by observation that a *believing* man becomes an *active* man, or else it is because he cannot act and, therefore, what would have been activity runs into the channel of patience and he endures with resignation the will of the Most High. He who *does* nothing *believes* nothing—that is to say, in reality and in truth. Faith is but an empty show if it produces no result upon the life. If a professor manifests no energy, no industry, no zeal, no perseverance, no endeavor to serve God—there is grave cause to question whether he is a Believer at all.

It is a mark of faith that whenever it comes into the soul, even in its lowest degree, it suggests activity. Look at the prodigal and note his early desires. The life of Grace begins to gleam into his spirit and its first effect is the confession of sin. He cries, “Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you and am no more worthy to be called your son.” But what is the second effect? He desires to be doing something! “Make me as one of your hired servants.” Having nothing to do had helped to make him the prodigal he was. He had wasted his substance in riotous idleness, seeking enjoyment without employment. He had plunged into the foulest vices because he was master of money but not master of himself.

It was not an evil thing for him when he was sent into the fields to feed swine—the company which he met with at the swine trough was better than that which he had kept at his banquets! One of the signs of the return of his soul’s sanity was his willingness to work, although it might be only as a menial servant in his father’s house. In actual history, observe how Saul of Tarsus, even before he had found peaceful faith in Christ, cried, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” Faith awakens the soul to action! It is the first question of believing anxiety, “Sirs, what must I *do* to be saved?”

Hence faith is such a useful thing to men in the labor and travail of this mortal life because it puts them into motion and supplies them with a motive for work. Faith does not permit men to lie upon the bed of the sluggard—listless, frivolous, idle—but it makes life to appear real and earnest and so girds the loins for the race. Everyone should follow an honorable vocation. It was a rule of the first Church and it ought to be one of the present—“If any man will not work neither let him eat.” It is good for us all to have something to do and plenty of it.

When man was perfect, God placed him in a paradise, but not in a dormitory. He set him in the Garden to “dress it and to keep it.” It would not have been a happy place for Adam if he had had nothing to do but to smell the roses and gaze at the flowers! Work was as essential to the perfect man as it is to us, though it was not of the kind which brings sweat to the face or weariness to the limbs. In the Garden of Grace, Faith is set to a happy service and never wishes to be otherwise than occupied for her Lord. The text says, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Doesn’t faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him, suggest to the redeemed man that he should be industrious and active? Assuredly it does, for it sets the Divine Savior before him as an example and where was there ever One who worked as Jesus did?

In His early youth He said, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” He was no loitering heir of a gentleman, but the toiling Son of a carpenter! In later life it was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. He says, “My Father works hitherto and I work.” His was stern labor and sore travail—the zeal of God’s House did eat Him up and the intensity of love consumed Him. He worked on until He could say, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.” Now, it is no small thing for a man to be excited by such an Example and to be made a partaker of such a spirit! True faith in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us also seeks direction of the Lord as to the sphere of its action and waits upon Him to be guided by Him in the choice of a calling.

This part of our discourse may be useful to young persons who have not settled upon what they are to do in life. Faith is a great service to us here. Much depends upon the choice of our pursuits. Very grievous mistakes have been made here—as grievous mistakes as if a bird in the air should have undertaken the pursuits of a fish, or a laboring ox should have entered into competition with a race horse. Some people, ambitious beyond their line, are trying to do what they were never made for. This is a grievous evil. There should, therefore, be a seeking unto God for guidance and direction—and faith leads us to such seeking.

This prayer may be used in many senses—“Show me what You would have me to do.” In the choice of a calling, faith helps a Christian to refuse that which is the most lucrative if it is attended with a questionable morality. If the Christian could have huge purses of that gold which is coined out of drunkenness, lust, or the ungodliness of men, he would scorn to put them among his stores! Trades which are injurious to men’s minds and hearts are not lawful callings before God! Dishonest gain is awful loss. Gold gained by deceit or oppression shall burn into the soul of its owner as the fire of Hell. “Make money,” said the worldling to his son. “Make it honestly if you can, but*make money*.” Faith abhors this precept of Mammon and, having God’s Providence for its inheritance, it scorns the devil’s bribe!

Choose no calling over which you cannot ask God’s blessing, or you will be acting contrary to the law of faith. If you cannot conceive of the Lord Jesus wishing you success in a certain line of trade, do not touch it! If it is not possible to think of your Lord as smiling upon you in your daily calling, then your calling is not fit for a Christian to follow! Callings should be deliberately chosen with a view to our own suitableness for them. Faith watches the design of God and desires to act according to His intent. It had been ill for David to have lived in retirement, or for the Prophet Nathan to have aspired to the throne. The Law of the Kingdom is—“Every man in his own order,” or, in other words, “Every man according to his ability.”

If the Lord has given us one talent, let us use it in its own market. Or if two, or five, let us trade with them where they can be most profitably employed so that we may be found faithful servants in the day of the Master’s coming. We should, also, by faith, desire such a calling as Providence evidently has arranged and intended for us. Some persons have never had a free choice of what vocation they would follow, for from their birth, by position, surroundings and connections they are set in a certain line of things, like carriages on the tram lines—and they must follow on the appointed track or stand still. Faith expects to hear the voice behind it saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” Trusting to our own judgment often means following our own whims, but Faith seeks direction from Infallible Wisdom and so she is led in a right way.

God knows your capacity better than you do! Entreat Him to choose your inheritance for you. If the flowers were to revolt against the gardener and each one should select its own soil, most of them would die through their unsuitable position, but he who has studied their nature knows that this flower needs shade and damp and another needs sunlight and a light soil. And so he puts his plants where they are most likely to flourish. God does the same with us! He has made some to be kings, though few of those plants flourish. He has made many to be poor and the soil of poverty, though damp and cold, has produced many a glorious harvest for the great Reaper. The Lord has set some in places of peril—places from which they would gladly escape—but they are there preserved by His hands! He has planted many others in the quiet shade of obscurity and they blossom to the praise of the great Husbandman.

So, then, you see, faith has much to do with the force and direction of our life in the flesh. It provides impetus by giving a man something to live for. It shows him the far-reaching influences of the thoughts and deeds of today and how they issue in eternal results. And faith also takes the helm and steers the vessel along a safe channel towards the haven of holy rest. Happy are they who, in the early days of their youth, believe in Him who loved them and gave Himself for them and so begin their life walk with Jesus! Blessed be God for converting some of us while we were yet boys and girls! O happy young people who begin life with the early dew of Grace upon them!

No prince of eastern empires was ever so richly bejeweled! You will not, in later days, have to lament scores of years spent in error, or half a life wasted in sin, or a whole 70 years frittered away in idleness! O that you who are yet young, who have the world before you, may now be led by the Spirit to follow Christ who pleased not Himself but did the will of His Father! So shall the life that you live in the flesh be lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you.

**II.**Secondly, FAITH LEADS A MAN TO LOOK TO GOD FOR HELP IN HIS ORDINARY AVOCATION. Here, again, it has a great influence over him. A Believer may seek of God the qualifications for his particular calling. “What?” you ask, “May we pray about such things?” Yes. The laborer may appeal to God for strength. The artisan may ask God for skill. The student may seek God for help to quicken his intelligence. David was a great warrior and he attributed his valor to God who taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight. We read of Bezaleel and of the women that were wise-hearted, that God had taught them so that they made all manner of embroidery and metal work for the House of the Lord. In those days they used to reckon skill and invention to be the gifts of God—this wretched century has grown too wise to honor any god but its own idolized self!

If you pray over your work, I am persuaded you will be helped in it. If for your calling you are as yet but slenderly qualified, you may every morning pray God to help you that you may be careful and observant as an apprentice or a beginner, for has He not promised that as your day your strength shall be? A mind which is trusting in the Lord is in the best condition for acquiring knowledge and getting understanding! As to your behavior in your work, there is room for faith and prayer. For, O Brethren, whether qualified or not for any particular offices of this life, our *conduct* is the most important matter! It is well to be clever, but it is essential to be pure! I would have you masters of your trades, but I am even more earnest that you should be honest, truthful and holy!

About this we may confidently go to God and ask Him to lead us in a plain path and to hold up our goings that we slip not. He can and will help us to behave ourselves wisely. “Lead us not into temptation” is one sentence of our daily prayer and we may further ask that when we *are* in the temptation, we may be delivered from the evil. We need prudence and faith remembers that if any lack wisdom he may ask of God. Godliness teaches the young prudence, the babies knowledge and discretion. See how Joseph prospered in Egypt because the Lord was with him. He was placed in very difficult positions—on one occasion in a position of the most terrible danger—but he escaped by saying, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

A sense of God’s Presence preserved him then and at all other times. He was set over all the house of Potiphar because God was with him. And so, dear Friends, engaged in service or in business, you may go to your heavenly Father and ask Him to guide you with His counsel and you may rest assured that He will order all your ways, so that your daily calling shall not hinder your heavenly calling, nor your conduct belie your profession! Faith bids you seek help from God as to the success of your daily calling. Know you not what David says?—“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He gives His beloved sleep.”

It is a most pleasant thing to be able, by faith, to consult the holy Oracle about everything, whether it arises in trade, or in the family, or in the Church. We may say with Abraham’s servant, “O Lord, I pray You send me good speed this day.” You may expect success if you thus seek it! And perhaps some of you would have prospered more if you had more believingly sought the Lord. I say, “perhaps,” because God does not always prosper even His own people in outward things, since it is sometimes better for their souls that they should be in adversity—and then the highest prosperity is a *need* of prosperity. Faith quiets the heart in this matter by enabling us to leave results in the hands of God.

Faith acts, also, in reference to our surroundings. We are all very much influenced by those about us. God can raise us up friends who will be eminently helpful to us and we may pray to Him to do so. He can put us into a circle of society in which we shall find much assistance in this life’s affairs and also in our progress towards Heaven. And concerning this, we know, “The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.” Faith will keep you clear of evil company and constrain you to seek the society of the excellent of this earth and thus it will color your whole life. If there are no friends to help him, the Believer’s dependence is so fixed upon God that he goes forward in cheerful confidence knowing that the Lord, alone, is sufficient for him. Yet, if he is encouraged and assisted by friends, he looks upon it as God’s doing as much as when David was strengthened by those who came to him in the cave.

Do you ask, “We see the connection of this with faith, but how with faith upon the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us?” I answer—Our Savior, as the Object of our faith is also the Object of our imitation and you know, Brothers and Sisters, how in all things He rested upon God. Whenever He undertook a great enterprise, you find Him spending a night in prayer. If *anybody* could have dispensed with prayer it was our Lord Jesus—if any man that ever lived could have found his own way without heavenly guidance, it was Christ, the Son of God. If, then, He was much in prayer and exercised faith in the great Father, much more should you and I bring everything before God! We should live in the flesh expecting that the Lord Jesus will be with us even to the end and that we shall be upheld and comforted by His sympathetic love and tenderness.

Faith enables us to follow Jesus as the great Shepherd of the sheep and to expect to be led in a right way and daily upheld and sustained until the Redeemer shall come to receive us unto Himself.

**III.**Thirdly, faith exercises a power over a man’s life of a remarkable kind because IT LEADS HIM TO SERVE GOD IN HIS DAILY CALLING. Never is life more ennobled than when we do all things as unto God. This makes drudgery sublime and links the poorest menial with the brightest angel! Seraphs serve God in Heaven and you and I may serve Him in the pulpit or in the kitchen and be as accepted as they are! Brethren, Christian men are helped by faith to serve God in their calling by obedience to God’s commands and by endeavoring to order everything according to the rules of love to God and love to men. In such a case integrity and uprightness preserve the man and his business becomes true worship.

Though there is no straining after eccentric unworldliness and superstitious singularity, yet in doing that which is right and just, the common tradesman is separated unto the service of the Lord. Jesus says, “If any man serves Me, let him follow Me,” as much as to say that *obedience* to the Divine Command is the true mode of showing love to Jesus. If you wish to do something great for God, be greatly careful to obey His commands, for, “to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Godly men exercise faith in God in their callings by trying to manifest a Christian spirit in all that they do. The spirit which actuates us may seem to be a small matter so long as we are outwardly right, but it is, in reality, the essence of the whole thing. Take away the flavor from the fruit, or the fragrance from the flower and what is left? Such is correct living without the savor of Grace.

The same thing can be done in several ways—you can do a right thing in so wrong a way as to make it wrong. Even in giving to the poor, a fool will trample upon their feelings in the very act of his charity! I have known others who have been unable to give, who, nevertheless, have expressed their inability in so kindly a form that they have comforted the disappointed applicant. Oh, to act in your trade and your calling as Christ would have acted had He been in your place! Hang that question up in your houses, “What would Jesus do?” And then think of another, “How would Jesus do it?” for what He would do and how He would do it may always stand as the best guide to us. Thus faith puts a man upon serving God by leading him to exhibit the spirit of Christ in what he ordinarily does, showing all courtesy, gentleness, forbearance, charity and love.

Furthermore, in all that we do, we should be aiming at God’s Glory. We should do everything as unto God and not unto men. There would be no eye service if we left off being men-pleasers and began to please God. Neither would there be impatience under injustice, for if men do not accept our service when we have done it with all our hearts, we shall comfort ourselves with the reflection that our Master in Heaven knows how little we deserve the unrighteous censure. To live as kings and priests unto God is the cream of living! Then will you be the Lord’s free men. Serve God in serving men and serve men by serving God—there is a way of working out those two sentences even to the fullest—and thus rendering life sublime. May God the Holy Spirit teach us to do this.

If we really live to serve God we shall live intensely day by day, allowing no time to waste. Sophia Cook sought Mr. Wesley’s counsel as to what she should do in life and he answered, “Live today”—a very short direction, but one that is full of wisdom. “Live today” and tomorrow you may do the same. Plans for the whole term of life many of you may not be able to construct, but mind that you work while it is called today. “Son, go work today in My vineyard “ is the great Father’s command. How would a man live if he felt that he was specially to live for God this day? Suppose that today there was a vow upon you, or some other bond, by which you felt that this whole day was solemnly consecrated to the Lord—how would you behave yourself? So ought you to behave this day and *every* day—for you belong wholly to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you!

Let the love of Christ constrain us in this matter! Let us put on the yoke of Christ and feel at once that we are His blood-bought possessions and His servants forever because by faith He has become ours and we are His. We ought to live as Christ’s men in every little, as well as in every great, matter—whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the Glory of God, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Christ Jesus. Thus, you see, faith in Him who gave Himself for us leads us to spend our energies in His service and to do our ordinary work with an eye to His Glory—and so our life is colored and savored by our faith in the Son of God.

**IV.**Fourthly, faith has a very beneficial influence upon the life that we live in the flesh, for IT RECONCILES A MAN TO THE DISCOMFORTS OF HIS CALLING. It is not every calling that is easy or lucrative, or honored among men. It is a happy circumstance when a man has espoused a business which is so congenial with his tastes that he would not change it for another if he could. But some find their trades irksome to them. This is an evil under the sun. Some employments are despised by the thoughtless and involve much self-denial and, therefore, those who follow them need much faith to enable them to live above the trials of their position. Faith teaches the humble worker to see Jesus in all His lowliness, condescending to take upon Himself the form of a Servant for our sakes.

Faith reads, “Jesus, knowing that He came forth from God and went to God, took a towel and girded Himself, and washed His disciples’ feet.” That was one of the most menial of employments and if our Lord and Master did not disdain it, why should we be ashamed of the humblest form of service? From now on let no man trouble you, but rejoice because the poor man’s Savior was a Servant even as you are and He, too, was “despised and rejected of men.” Your faith ought to help you by awakening your gratitude for deliverance from a far worse drudgery. You did for Satan things of which you are now ashamed. Any work for the devil and for his black cause would be dishonorable—to rule an empire for Satan would disgrace us—to wear the crown put on our heads by sinning would be a horrible curse!

But to wash feet for Christ is glorious service. There is no degradation in anything that is done for God. Faith in God sanctifies the man and his calling, too, and makes it pleasant for him to carry the Cross of Christ in his daily labor. There are some who hold their heads high, who, nevertheless, do things that are disgraceful to humanity, but surely you and I ought never to think *anything* a hardship which falls to our lot by the appointment of Divine Providence. Faith is a great teacher of humility, for it bids us think little of ourselves and rest only in God. And because it fosters humility, it renders a man’s task pleasant when otherwise it would be irksome.

Pride makes a man stiff in the back—there are some works which he cannot do though he would be happy enough in doing them if he had not such foolish ideas of his own importance! Hard work is no disgrace to any man—it is far more degrading to be leading the life of a fashionable donothing! When the Lord makes us feel that we are poor undeserving creatures, we do not mind taking the lowest room, or doing the meanest work, for we feel that as long as we are out of Hell and have a hope of Heaven, the meanest service is an honor to us. We are glad enough to be where God would have us be, seeing Christ has loved us and given Himself for us. Faith also removes discomforts by reminding us that they will not last long. Faith says of trial, “Bear it! The time is short. Soon the Savior comes and the poorest of His followers shall then reign with Him.” Toil on, O weary one, for the morning light will put an end to your labor, which lasts only through the hours of darkness. The glory breaks! The night is wearing away and the dawn appears. Therefore patiently wait and quietly hope, for you shall see the salvation of God!

Thus faith takes the thorns from our pillow and makes us learn in whatever state we are, to be content. Do you call this nothing? Has not Jesus done much for us when, by faith in Him, we have learned to endure the ills of life with sweet content?

**V.**Fifthly, faith has this further influence upon ordinary life—IT CASTS ALL THE BURDEN OF IT UPON THE LORD. Faith is the great remover of yokes and it does this, in part, by making us submissive to God’s will. When we have learned to submit, we cease to repine. Faith teaches us to so believe in God, Infallible Wisdom and perfect Love, that we consent unto the Lord’s will and rejoice in it! Faith teaches us to look to the end of every present trial and to know that it works together for good—thus again reconciling us to the passing grief which it causes. Faith teaches us to depend upon the power of God to help us in a trial and through the trial and in this way we are no longer tripped up by afflictions, but rise above them as on eagles’ wings.

Brothers and Sisters, if any of you are anxious, worn out and worried, stop not in such a state of mind—it cannot do you any good—and it reflects no honor upon your great Father. Pray for more faith that you may have no back-breaking load to carry, but may transfer it to the great Burden-Bearer. Pray to your great Lord to so strengthen and ease your heart that your only care may be to please Him and that you may be released from all other care. By this means will you be greatly helped, for if the burden is lightened, it comes to much the same thing as if the strength were multiplied. Content with the Divine will is better than increase of riches, or removal of affliction, for with wealth no peace may come and out of prosperity no joy in the Lord may arise—but contentment is peace, itself!

Whatever burden faith finds in her daily avocation she casts it upon God by prayer. We begin with God in the morning, seeking help to do our work and to do it well. At His hands we seek guidance and prosperity from hour to hour. We pray Him to prevent our doing any wrong to others, or suffering any wrong from them and we ask Him to keep our temper and to preserve our spirit while we are with worldly men. We beg that we may not be infected by the evil example of others and that our example may be such as may be safely followed. These are our great concerns in business—we tremble lest in anything we should dishonor God—and we trust in Him to keep us.

A Believer goes to God with the matters of each day and looks for the morning dew to fall upon him. He looks up through the day expecting the Lord to be his constant shield and at night, before he goes to rest, he empties out the gathered troubles of the day and so falls to a happy sleep. Then does a man live sweetly when he lives by the day, trusting his Lord with everything and finding God to be always near. To all this the example of the Savior leads us and His love within our hearts draws us. “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him,” and “was heard in that He feared.”

**VI.**Sixthly, faith has a happy influence upon the present life, for IT MODERATES A MAN’S FEELINGS AS TO THE RESULT OF HIS WORK. Sometimes the result of our work is prosperity and here the Grace of God prevents a dependence on worldly things. There is a keen test of character in prosperity. Everybody longs for it, but it is not every man that can bear it when it comes. True faith forbids our setting great store by worldly goods and pleasures and enjoyments, for it teaches us that our treasure is in *Heaven*. If we begin to idolize the things that are seen, we shall soon degenerate and turn aside from God.

How easily we may spoil a blessing! Two friends gathered each a rose— the one was continually smelling it, touching its leaves and handling it as if he could not hold it too fast—you do not wonder that it was soon withered. The other took his rose, enjoyed its perfume moderately, carried it in his hand for a while and then placed it on the table in water—and hours after it was almost as fresh as when it was plucked from the bush! We may dote on our worldly gear until God becomes jealous of it and sends a blight upon it! And, on the other hand, we may, with holy moderateness, use these things as not abusing them and get from them the utmost good which they are capable of conveying to us.

Many pursue wealth or fame as some eager boy hunts the painted butterfly! At last, after a long and weary run, he dashes it down with his cap and with the stroke he spoils its beauty. Many a man has reached the summit of a life-long ambition and found it to be mere vanity. In gaining all, he has lost all. Wealth has come, but the power to enjoy it has gone— life has been worn out in the pursuit and no strength is left with which to enjoy the gain. It shall not be so with the man who lives by faith, for his chief joys are above and his comfort lies within. To him, *God* is joy so rich that other joy is comparatively flavorless!

But perhaps the result of all our work may be adversity. Some men row very hard and yet their boat makes no headway. When an opportunity presents itself, the tide of trade suddenly turns against them. When they have corn in the mill the wind does not blow. Perhaps they lose all but their character and then it is that Faith comes in to cheer them under the disaster. I am deeply grieved when I hear of persons committing suicide because they were in difficulties—it is a dreadful thing to rush before one’s Creator unbidden! Faith sustains the heart and puts aside all thought of such desperate attempts to fly from present griefs by plunging into far more awful woes. We shall bear up and come through our trials triumphantly if we have faith in God.

If our heavenly Father has appointed a bitter cup for us, shall we not drink it? If the fields which we have tilled yield no harvests and the beasts that we have foddered die in the stall, shall we not bow the head and say, “The Lord has done it”? Must it not be right if the Lord ordains it? Let us still bless Him! If not, it will be our *unbelief* which hinders. How many have been happy in poverty—happier than they were in wealth! How often have the saints rejoiced *more* during sickness than in their health! Payson declared that during illness he felt happier than he had ever been, far happier than he had ever expected to be. Though bereavement has come into the family and sickness unto the household, yet Faith has learned to sing in all weathers because her God is still the same!

O Brothers and Sisters, faith is a precious preparative for anything and everything that comes! Mind that you have it always ready for action. Do not leave it at home in time of a storm, as the foolish seaman left his anchor. Faith is not a Grace to be shut up in a closet or fastened to a communion table, or boxed up in a pew! Faith is an everyday Grace which is to be our companion in the shop and in the market; in the parlor and in the kitchen; in the workroom and in the field! Yes, it may go into the workhouse with the poor as well as into the mansion with the rich! It may either cheer the dreary hours of the infirmary, or sanctify the sunny weeks of holiday.

Faith is for every place in which a good man may lawfully be found. Should fate command you to the utmost verge of the green earth, to rivers unknown to song, yet shall a childlike faith in God find you a home in every clime, under every sky. Oh, to feel the power of it, as to all that comes of our labor, that the life which we live in the flesh may be lived by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!

**VII.**Lastly, faith has this sweet influence upon our present life—IT ENABLES A MAN CHEERFULLY TO LEAVE HIS OCCUPATION WHEN THE TIME COMES. A Christian may have to quit a favorite vocation on account of circumstances over which he has no control. He may have to emigrate to a distant land, or altogether to change his mode of living, which may involve many a wrench to his feelings. It is not always easy to leave the old house and all its surroundings and to take a long journey. Nor is it pleasant to change one’s settled habits and begin life anew. Yet true faith sets loose by worldly things and is ready to haul up the anchor and make sail at the Divine bidding. The Believer says, “Command my journey, and I go.” I am but a tent-dweller and must expect to be on the move.

Like Israel in the desert, we must follow the cloud and journey or rest as the cloud ordains, for here we have no continuing city but we seek one to come. Faith has the same gracious influence upon those who enjoy unbroken prosperity. It keeps them from taking root in the soil of earth and this is a miracle of Divine Grace. Sometimes our vocations have to be given up through weakness or old age. It is a hard pinch to many a busy man when he feels that he has no more strength for business, when he perceives that other and more vigorous minds must be allowed to step into the long occupied position. The workman cannot bear to feel that his hand has lost its cunning—it is a sharp experience.

Faith is of essential service here. It helps a man to say, “My Master, I am one of the vessels of Your house. If You will use me I will be glad. But if You will put me on the shelf, I will be glad, too. It must be best for me to be as You would have me.” If faith resigns herself to the supreme Wisdom and Love and goodness of Christ and says, “Do with me even as You will! Use me, or set me aside.” Then retirement will be a release from care and no source of distress. The evening of advanced age may be spent as joyfully as the noontide of manhood if the mind is stayed on God. “They shall bring forth fruit in old age” is a promise full often realized by Believers, for all around me are venerable Brothers and Sisters who are more useful and more happy than ever, though the infirmities of years are growing upon them!

And then comes, at last, the leaving of your vocation by death which will arrive in due time to us all. Then faith displays its utmost energy of blessing! Brethren, may we meet death as Moses did, who, when God bade him climb the mountain, for there he must die, uttered no word of sorrow, but like a child, obeyed his Father, went upstairs to bed, looked wistfully out at the window upon the promised land and then fell asleep! How sweet to look upon the goodly land and Lebanon—and then to be kissed to sleep by his Father’s own mouth and to be buried, man knows not where! His work was done and his rest was come!

Beautiful are the departing words of Samuel when, laying down his office, he can challenge all men to bear witness to his character! Happy man, to depart amid universal blessing! O that each one of us may be ready to render in his account before the Judgment Seat of Christ—let the last day come when it may! Our Master, by whose love we have been endowed with faith, has taught us how to die as well as how to live! He could say, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do,” and He would have us say it. Thrice happy is the man who, in laying down the shepherd’s crook or the carpenter’s plane—in putting aside the ledger or the class book never to open them again, can exclaim—“I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith; from now on there is laid up for me a crown of life which fades not.”

Good old Mede, the Puritan, when he was very old and leaning on his staff, was asked how he was and he answered, “Why, going Home as fast as I can! Just as every honest man ought to do when his day’s work is done. And I bless God I have a good Home to go to.” Dear aged saints so near Home, does not faith transform death from an enemy into a friend, as it brings Glory so near to you? You will soon be in the Father’s House and leave me behind, and yet I cannot tell—I remember that the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher, and so, perhaps, may I! You have the start of us in years, but I may be called Home before you, for there are last that shall be first.

Let death come when it may—we shall not be afraid, for Jesus, who has loved us and given Himself for us, is the Resurrection and the Life. Living this life in the flesh by faith upon the Son of God, we are waiting for the usher of the black rod to bring a message from the King to summon us to meet Him in the upper House! Why should we be hesitant to go? What is there here that we should wait? What is there on this poor earth to detain a Heaven-born and Heaven-bound spirit? No, let as go, for He is gone in whom is our treasure, whose beauties have engrossed our love! He is not here—why should we desire to linger? He has risen! Let us rise!

Thus, from the beginning to the end of the life that we live in the flesh, faith upon the Son of God answers all things and all its paths drop fatness. O come, Lord Jesus! Come!

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2370 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“CHRIST FIRST, ME LAST—NOTHING BETWEEN BUT LOVE”  
NO. 2370

***~~A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 22, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1888.~~***

***“The faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me,” Galatians 2:20.***

Paul looks at the matter of salvation from the point of view suggested by Grace. If any man might have said, “The Son of God, whom I have loved, and to whom I have given myself,” it would have been the Apostle. On another occasion, speaking of the Lord, he said, “Whose I am, and whom I serve.” But here he thinks not of himself, or of what he had been led to do for the Lord, but only of what the Lord had done for him! He dug down to the foundation of salvation—he traced the stream of Grace back to the Fountainhead and, therefore, he spoke of “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

You will not do wrong, my Beloved Friends, if you meditate on what the Grace of God has enabled you to do—if you do it humbly and if you praise God for it. I think that we sometimes forget to give Glory to the Lord for the sanctification we have already received. I have heard persons thank God for their health and for their wealth, but I have not so often heard them express gratitude for Divine Grace. I do not know that I wish to hear them praise God for their virtue, but still, if they have any, and they know that they have, let them praise God for it—for what virtue have they which they have not received? If you have any faith, if you have any hope, if you have any love—if there is any difference between you and your fellow men, if you possess anything by which God is glorified— you ought to thank Him for it and to praise and bless His holy name. Still, there would always be a tendency, in dwelling even on what we have done by the Grace of God, to begin to get unduly exalted and, on the whole, it is far wiser to think of what Christ has done for you than of what you have done for Him!

I say, again, you may think of what you have done for Christ and give God the Glory for it, but it will not be well to dwell upon that thought to any great extent. I am sure it will not do to think upon it in the hour of deep distress of mind, or especially in the prospect of death. Then we gather up all our good works and throw them overboard! We look upon the best things that we have ever worked, even by the power of the Spirit of God, as quite secondary to what Christ has worked out for us and brought in and laid before His Father as the ground of our acceptance with Him.

I like to think of our text and I invite you to think of it in the light of Free Grace. “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” I cannot preach much at this time, but I can talk to you a little of what I have tasted, handled and felt—and I pray the Holy Spirit to help you—not so much to hear the text explained, as to feel its gracious influence moving over your spirit and awakening in your heart happy memories of gratitude for blessings received.

**I.**Our first division shall be THE FACT REMEMBERED—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”  
Paul speaks of it as a fact ascertainable and one which he had, himself, ascertained—that Jesus Christ loved him and gave Himself for him. He is not speaking, now, of the love of benevolence which the Lord Jesus Christ has towards all men, or even of that aspect of His work which bears upon every creature under Heaven. He is thinking of that special love, that discriminating Grace which had lighted upon *him*. That is the point around which our thoughts are to gather as we meditate upon Paul’s words, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for*me*.” The Apostle knew that Christ had loved him and had given Himself for him. And we, also, may know it. It is not necessary for us to go through life merely hoping and fearing, questioning and enquiring—we may come to the certain knowledge of the fact, if it is a fact, that we have an interest in the special love of Jesus Christ, that we are redeemed from among men, that we are called and separated to be the Lord’s peculiar people, that each of us may be able to say of the Lord Jesus Christ—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I would not distress the mind of anyone who is feeble in faith and who is clinging to Christ, but has never, yet, received full assurance of salvation. But I would encourage such a person never to rest until he gets rid of all questions and is able to say without the slightest trepidation, “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”  
Christ died to save sinners—the sinners who are saved by Him are those who trust Him. I trust Him, therefore He has saved me. This is a good, sound argument. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” I believe on Him, therefore I have everlasting life. This is solid ground to rest upon. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me,” of which the *evidence* is that I *trust* Him. I rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. To this will be added the evidences of a work of Grace in the heart. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” “One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.” We know this, also, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, for, “the Spirit, Himself, bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” And so, at last, we come to say with as much confidence as Paul, himself, could say it, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Away, then, with all doubts and questions! Be gone, you evil birds that pollute the Sacrifice! By a simple childlike faith we come to Jesus and we take Him to be our Savior. We know that we cannot come to Jesus unless the Father, who sent Him, draws us. Therefore we know that we are drawn by Divine Grace and that He has loved us with an everlasting love, because with loving kindness He has evidently drawn us to Himself. So, you see, Paul is speaking of a fact that is ascertainable, and a fact that, in his own case, was ascertained. If we do not get to know it for ourselves, we cannot rejoice in it.  
Now just think for a few minutes of some well-known but very blessed Truths of God which gather about this fact—“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” And first, it is *a Divine Love.*Paul speaks of “the Son of God, who loved me.” There are some persons who would be greatly delighted if they heard that some nobleman loved them! And if we were informed that some prince or princess loved us, we might feel ourselves elevated—yet there would be very little in it to make us proud. If we were informed that an angel loved us with all the great heart of an unfallen spirit, we might take comfort from the fact—but the text reminds us that it is the *Son of God* who has loved us! I cannot talk about this Divine Love as it deserves, but I want you to try and feel in your soul, “Jesus Christ *loves* me; not merely feeds me, thinks upon me, is favorably inclined to me, but He *loves* me.”  
Love is a grand word, even in its silver use among men and women, but love in its golden use with God in Heaven, what does it *not* mean? Oh, marvelous, indeed, is the love of God towards His people! I say again that I cannot worthily speak of it—words seem such poor things to express the love of God. They break their backs in trying to convey the wondrous weight of meaning. If this love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, your heart’s love will best read and understand this wondrous fact that the Divine Being, the Everlasting Father, and His everblessed Son, and the sacred Spirit, the great Trinity in Unity, loves you. Oh, delight yourselves in this glorious Truth! It is a sea of sweetness— dive into it and be filled with it!  
The language of the text also suggests to me that I should remind you that the love of Jesus was *an ancient love*. It is true that He loves us now, but Paul also truly wrote, “Who *loved*me.” The verb is in the past tense. Jesus loved me upon the Cross. He loved me in the manger of Bethlehem. He loved me before the earth was. There never was a time when Jesus did not love His people! “Before the earth was,” I said just now, and I repeat it—He saw us in the glass of His eternal purposes, He foreknew us, He looked ahead and saw *what* we would be, *who* we would be and His love went forth to us before the day-star ever began to shine! Think of it—“The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” That He should love us at all is a wonder. That He should have loved us *always* is a wonder of wonders! And this love is a part of His eternal purposes and is as old as His arrangements for the history of the universe. “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Truly, this was an ancient love!  
Note further that as this love was Divine and ancient, so it was *a preeminently practical love—*“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Jesus could not give any more than Himself. He not only gave His crown, His Throne, His Manhood, His life, His sufferings, His death, His offices, His excellences, His merits—He gave *Himself*, His Godhead, His Humanity! “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” It is not possible for you to measure the unknown depths of Christ’s sufferings, but if you could, you would not have arrived at, “Himself.” It is not merely that which He did and said that Jesus gave for us—He gave Himself. It was not simply that which belonged to Him which Jesus handed over for us, but He gave Himself—“Who loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.”  
O Beloved, I wish I had the strength and the ability to think and to speak to you upon this practical display of our Lord’s love as it deserves, but I have not. Meditate upon it, I pray you. He gave Himself for you in the Everlasting Covenant when He stood as your Surety and Representative. He gave Himself for you through the long ages in which He waited to come to earth to redeem you. He gave Himself for you when He assumed your nature and became bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. He gave Himself for you through a life of toil and righteousness. He gave Himself for you as your Substitute when He, “His own self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” In the scourging, the shame, the spitting, the bloody sweat, the Crucifixion, He gave Himself for you! Take these blessed words of the Apostle and put them in your mouth—and let them lie there as wafers made with honey till they melt into your very soul— “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” In all these wondrous senses, keeping back nothing, reserving for Himself nothing, no, not even the name of Himself, He loved me, and gave Himself for me! Truly, this was practical love.  
And I may say of it, in the next place, that it was *a love altogether immeasurable.* If you measure a love by its gifts, you have certainly an immeasurable love, here, because it was proven by an immeasurable gift! The Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ is not to be comprehended. The wondrous union of Godhead and Manhood made Him, I was about to say, something more than God, for He had added to all the Infinity of His Godhead, the capacity to suffer as a Man. But He gave Himself at His utmost—the boundless, the inconceivable, the indescribable—He gave Himself for me! There is a limit to everything else, but not to the love of God. You say to the sea, “To here shall you come, but no farther,” but you cannot say that to this boundless sea of Divine Love! You do not know by experience how much God loves you—you have only drunk a little of the sweetness of this wondrous well of Living Water—but you cannot tell the depth of it. There is no bottom to it! You cannot exhaust its supply—you may drink, and drink, and drink again, through a long life, yes, and *throughout eternity* you may go on receiving of this love, but you will never measure its heights, depths, lengths and breadths. That is quite beyond your power. You can only love, dear Mother, to a certain degree, though you love your child to the death. You can only love, dear Husband, up to a certain point, though you are willing to lay down your life to raise your spouse from a sick bed. But God stops nowhere in His love—it is as boundless and infinite as He is, Himself!  
Our Lord Jesus Christ cannot possibly or conceivably be limited in His love. I want you to try to get hold of this thought. Notice it. HE loved me! Such a one as He is, He loved *me*—  
***“Christ first, me last—nothing between but love.”***Those words are very sweet to me. I read them somewhere and they cling to my memory. “Who loved me,” the first word is, “who.” The last word is, “me,” and there is “nothing between but love.” Oh, that is a blessed position for anyone to be in! Christ shall be first—I will be glad to be anywhere, to be *nothing*, to be *last*—so long as there shall be this sweet link of love between my soul and my Savior—“Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

*[As the sermon is shorter than usual, we insert the verses referred to by Mr. Spurgeon, from which the title of the discourse has been selected. The lines can be obtained from Messrs. Penman and Co., 33 Furnival Street, London, 6d. per dozen, or 3s. per 100, post free.*

**“WHO LOVED ME”**

***~~GALATIANS 2:20  
Three blessed sunbeams, guiding all I see. Three tender chords, each full of melody. Three healing leaves, balm for my agony. HE loved me—the Father’s only Son,  
He gave Himself—the precious, Spotless One— He shed His blood and thus the work was done! HE LOVED, not merely pitied. Here I rest. Sorrow may come, I to His heart am pressed— What should I fear while sheltered on His breast? Wonder of wonders! Jesus loved me!  
A wretch! Lost, ruined, sunk in misery!  
He sought me, bound me, raised me, set me free! My soul the order of the words approve  
Christ first, me last—nothing between but love. Lord, keep me always down—Yourself above! Trusting to You—not struggling restlessly So shall I daily gain the victory.  
“I”—“yet not I, but Christ,”—WHO LOVED ME!]~~***

Let us reflect yet a moment further that this love is *an abiding love—* “Who loved me.” But He is unchanging, so that He still loves me! He cannot love me more, He will not love me less. He has loved me at no period more than He loves me, now, and if just now I may be groaning because of my imperfections, and mourning because of my tribulations, yet He loved me so as to give Himself for me—and He has never abated from that love and He never will! It is a very fine thing, no doubt, to have worldly substance, but it melts like the hoar frost in the sun. It is a very great mercy to have bodily health, but how small a thing soon takes it away and turns the joy of life into the shadow of death! But if you get this love of Christ, you have a treasure which can never be lost, a blessing that will never be exhausted. “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!” Sit down, dear child of God, and say to yourself, “Here I have something which I shall never lose. It cannot be taken from me. Oh, that by Grace I may be enabled to rejoice in it and to return the love of my poor heart to Him who ceases not to love me!”

There is a great deal that might be said of such a Savior as this, but I feel a consolation in my heart in being unable to say any new and fresh thing, tonight, for the subject, in itself, ought to be to you full of joy. And if your heart is right, it will be. If your heart is not right with God, you will be craving for fine expressions and pretty phrases. Judge your own spiritual condition, then, by this test—does this theme, in itself, touch you? “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!” I will use it as a thermometer and drop it into your heart to see the warmth of your affection to Christ. If you are as you should be, full of a devout attachment to Him, you will say, “Yes, that is all I need to feel and know—He loved me, and gave Himself for me!”

So much, then, upon the fact remembered.  
**II.**Now, secondly, Beloved Friends, let me speak to you for just a few minutes on THE FAITH CONFESSED. Paul says, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”  
Observe, first, that the faith which made Paul live was *faith in a Person—*“the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Possibly, some of you are trying to get faith and yet you do not know what *saving faith* is. You have heard a great deal about it, but it is an astonishing thing that the best definition of faith in the world does not make men see what faith is! The gas may be very bright, but a man who is blind does not see any better because of the brilliance of the light. The eyes of our soul must be opened if we are to see what faith is.  
Now, saving faith is faith in a Person, faith in the living, loving Lord who gave Himself for us. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? I do not merely mean, do you believe in His *teachings*? You *must* believe in them. But to be saved you must believe in *Him*, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” There He stands—my faith seems to see Him, even now, at the right hand of God, risen from the dead and gone into Glory—and I come and trust Him and take Him to be my Savior. If He is my Savior, it is His business to save me. I am not to save myself. I put myself into His hands that He may keep me. I bring my foul self to Him, that He may cleanse me—my dead self to Him, that He may quicken me—my naked self to Him, that He may clothe me. I bring my good-for-nothing self to Him that He may be precious to me and that I may be *made* precious in Him! He is to be everything to me! It is not merely what I read about Him that I am to believe, but I am to *trust* Him. Now, Beloved, let those of us who have believed in Jesus long ago exercise that faith afresh in this gracious loving way by now living by faith upon the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.  
This faith, you perceive, is*a faith in a clear and distinct fact—*“the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” To go, again, over the sacred ground on which we trod just now, the Apostle does not say, “I have faith in the Son of God, of whom I hope that He loved me.” He knows it! He is sure of it and there is no comfort to come out of faith until it learns to speak without stammering—and to say of the Lord Jesus, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” This either is a fact, or it is not, and if it is a fact, full of every consolation, why should I not know it? Ought you to give sleep to your eyes until you know that He loves you and that you are His? This can be proven, as I have already shown you. He that believes in Jesus has the sure token of Divine Love. If you trust Him, trust Him wholly and alone, then He loved you and gave Himself for you—for you the manger at Bethlehem, for you the Cross at Calvary, for you the empty sepulcher, for you His pleading before the eternal Throne—He loved you, and gave Himself for you, and it is for your faith to learn to speak this great Truth of God plainly!  
This faith was, next, *an appropriating faith—*“Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” No faith except a personal faith will save the soul. Another man’s faith will not save me. I must have a Christ of my own. The love that Christ has to others is pleasant to reflect upon, but it cannot give me peace. It must be love which He has to*me* if it is to save *me*— “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Somebody says that such a desire as that is selfish. I answer that it is nonsense to talk so! A wife is not thought to be selfish because she rejoices in her husband’s love. A child is not selfish because he is happy in his father’s love. How, dear Friends, can I take any joy in the love of Christ to men in general, if I have no sense, whatever, of His love to me? Of what use could it be to me? In order that I may love my fellow men, I must first come to know that Christ loves me. How can I have a blessing in the saving of the souls of others if my own soul is not, first, saved? Let your religion begin at home—and when you make sure of its presence there, then you may sing—  
***“Now will I tell to sinners round  
What a dear Savior I have found.”***  
It would be a poor occupation to go out and tell them of a dear Savior that you had *not* found, to tell them of manna that you had never gathered and of waters of which you had never drunk! No, in order to be truly useful in the Lord’s service, you must, first of all, know in your own experience the truth of Paul’s words, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Our text is the language of faith. Unbelief says, “Yes, Christ is very loving,” but if you have true faith, you will say, “He loved me.” Unbelief says, “I know that Christ loves His people, but I am afraid that He would never love me.” Such talk as this is mistrustful and ruinous to the soul! But Faith, as soon as it opens its mouth, begins to make a personal appropriation of the blessings of the Grace of God. What do you do when you come to the Communion Table? Do you come there to see other people eat bread and drink wine? No, but in Communion, you, each of you, eat, and each of you drink—that is the very essence of Communion. So must each of you take Christ to be yours, personally, and say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” This is the faith which is mentioned by the Apostle—an appropriating faith.  
And as I read the text, it looks to me as if it was *a faith full of wonderment.* Though the Apostle speaks of it as a matter of fact, yet he seems to be much astonished, as he says, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” I am sure that if the Lord will put into your soul a sense of the love of Christ, it will ravish your heart and it will carry you away with astonishment. You will go home and say to yourself, “The greatest wonder in the two worlds of Heaven and earth is this, that He loved me, and gave Himself for me!” And in consequence you will be filled with holy joy and rejoicing. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me,” will ring like marriage bells in your heart! Not all the harps of Heaven can sound out sweeter music than this text when the Holy Spirit speaks it to our soul, “the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”  
**III.**I must not tarry longer on this sweet theme, but must finish with this point—THIS FAVOR ENJOYED. There is a certain power that lies in this fact, remembered, and that grows out of this faith, confessed. Paul says that he lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved Him, and gave Himself for him.  
Beloved Friends, a sense of the love of Christ to you, personally, *will affect your whole life.* It will change it, at first, but it will *keep* it changed ever afterwards, and it will go on increasing in its power over you till, when you fully know it, every thought, every word and every action will seem to be set in the key of love—“who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” That religion which does not affect the whole life is a dead and worthless religion, but this essence of our holy faith, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me,” is Divinely operative upon the entire man. Alone, or with others in the family, or in the business, whatever his calling is, this will tincture it all with a heavenly sweetness, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”  
And this will be particularly seen in *the relieving of your griefs.*Full of pain, you will say to yourself, “Yet He loved me. He has not sent this pain for nothing. He does not afflict willingly, for He loved me and gave Himself for me.” If you are very poor, you will say to yourself, “He gave the riches to Dives, but Lazarus lay in His bosom. He loved me, and gave Himself for me, and that is better than wealth.” And if ever you come to be despised for His sake, and men cast out your name as evil, you will say, “I do not mind it at all. I can even rejoice in it, for He loved me, and gave Himself for me! And I may well give up myself, my reputation and everything else for Him.” Sorrow ceases to be sorrow when once there is in the heart a sweet sense of the infinite love of Christ!  
This thought will also help *you in your labor*. When you have something to do for Jesus that rather tries you. When you feel disappointed and baffled and the devil tempts you to give it all up and run away, you will say to yourself, “How can I? He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” By Gethsemane and Calvary you will bind yourself to the sternest labor for His dear sake. Nothing is too hot or too heavy for a man whose heart is on fire with Divine Love! When the torrents of love sweep through the soul, then every obstacle is overcome. I can go as a missionary to the Congo and joyfully die in that malarious climate when I know that He loved me, and gave Himself for me! I can try to preach in the streets of London amid the jeers and the noise of the passers-by when I know that He loved me, and gave Himself for me! You will go cheerfully to the slums, you will visit the lodging houses, you will teach the ignorant, you will look after the foul and the depraved when you get this Truth of God impressed on your heart—“He loved me, and gave Himself for me.”  
And, Beloved Friends, *this will help you in prayer*. When you are at the Mercy Seat, tremblingly asking for some great favor, tempted to fear that you will not receive it—your faith will become very strong when you hear the whisper, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” He that spared not Himself, how shall He not give me all things? We ask with great confidence and assurance when we feel the force of this blessed Truth of God.  
By-and-by we shall come to die. I am constantly reminded of this fact. During the last two or three weeks we have lost more friends than I remember being taken away in a similar period at almost any other time. We are getting old, together, and so there are more dying than there used to be when the young people first joined the Church. Well, I shall soon be going and so will you, but we shall not dread the grave, for Jesus loved us, and gave Himself for us! Will He not be with me even in my last moments? Certainly He will! I shall not dread the terrors of the Great Judgment Day, for, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Who is He that condemns, now that Christ has died, and risen again, and sits at the right hand of God to plead for us? The terrors of the world to come, the quivering earth, the burning sky, the falling stars—all these will cause no perturbation of mind when we are fully assured that He loved us, and gave Himself for us.  
Thinking of this sublime passage, one seems to feel his wings growing and is ready to take flight to the upper sky, for what, even in Heaven, is there brighter or more blessed than this Jesus, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me”? Is not this Heaven’s own song, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood”?  
O my dear Hearers, I stand here and try to talk to you in my feeble way about these great Truths of God, but do you know them yourselves? If you do, you know more than Solomon ever knew! If you know this love of Christ, you know more than all the Greek philosophers put together! You need not be ashamed in any company—the knowledge of the love of Christ is the most excellent of all the sciences—there is none that can be compared with it. But if you do not know it, I pray my Lord, in His infinite mercy, to disturb and disquiet you until you do know it! What right have you to rest without faith in Jesus? You have no safety—indeed, you have no hope! Without God, without Christ, you will die without forgiveness or hope of Heaven! God bring you to seek His face tonight, before another sun has risen! Seek Him. Seek Him! Trust in the Savior’s finished work and I hope we shall yet see you, again, as you come forward and say, “Yes, He loved me, and gave Himself for me, and here am I to confess it to the glory of His Grace.” God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”——116 (SONG II), 248, 731. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Galatians 2:16-21; 3.***

**Galatians 2:16.***Knowing that a man is not justified by the work of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*This is the primary Truth of God to be proclaimed by the Christian ministry. It is the foundation stone of all Gospel preaching and yet, somehow or other, such is the hardness of the human heart, that it is the most difficult thing to induce our hearers to build on this foundation. Many of them are always trying to lean upon their own works and so struggling to get back under the old legal dispensation, instead of rejoicing in the liberty of the dispensation of Grace. One objection to the Doctrines of Grace rather than the Doctrine of Law is this, that some think it will lead to sin. The Apostle puts it thus—

**17.***But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are also found sinners, is, therefore, Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!*For the tendency of the Gospel of Grace is to excite *gratitude* in those who receive it. If I am freely pardoned, then I must love Him who has thus generously forgiven me. Gratitude is the root of true virtue and the mainspring of all holiness. If there are base-minded men who can suck poison out of this honeycomb, is Christ to be blamed for their evil doing? God forbid! But if, on the other hand, you and I go back to trusting in works, then we are, indeed, guilty in the sight of God.

**18.***For if I build, again, the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.* If I once said I would not trust in my good works and now go back to trust in them, I have already, whatever may be my outward conduct, perpetrated a great sin!

**19, 20.***For I, through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*I do not know a better epitome of Christian experience than this. This is the daily walk of a true child of God. If he lives after any other sort, then he lives not a Christian’s life at all! Christ living in us, ourselves living upon Christ and our union to Christ being visibly maintained by an act of simple faith in Him—this is the true Christian’s life.

**21.***I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.*If a man can be saved by his own works, and willings, and doings, then Christ’s death was an unnecessary piece of torture and, instead of being the most glorious manifestation of Divine Love, it was a shameful waste, putting upon Christ a terrible burden of suffering which was totally unnecessary.

**Galatians 3:1.***O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth of God, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*These Galatians thought that they were very philosophical and very intellectual, but the Apostle says, “O foolish Galatians!” They thought that they had been led by reason and guided by the learning of their teachers—but Paul calls it witchery—“Who has bewitched you?” he asks, as if anything which led a man to trust in his own works should be as much abhorred as the incantations of a witch! “Who has bewitched you?” It is a dangerous state, it is a devilish snare to be brought into—to be led to trust to frames, feelings, experiences, works, prayers, or to anything else but Christ! It is a strange thing that those who have seen Christ should ever go back to these things! Lord, keep us every day, among our other sins, from our own selfrighteous nature! Now the Apostle is going to reason with the Galatians against their self-righteousness.

**2.***This, only, would I learn of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* “You know that the Spirit of God is necessary to salvation. You have received that. Did you get the Spirit through the works of the Law, or by simply hearing the Gospel and believing it?” The answer comes at once if we have received the Spirit! It was by the hearing of faith and not by the works of the Law.

**3.***Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?*Surely, the way in which the Christian life begins is the method in which it is to be sustained. “As you have received Christ Jesus, the Lord,” the Apostle says in another place, “so walk in Him.” If you have begun in the flesh, go on in the flesh, but if you really know that your beginning was in the Spirit, then do not go back to the flesh.

**4.***Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it is yet in vain.* This is another pertinent question.  
**5.***He, therefore, that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* They had miraculous gifts among them as a Church and the Apostle asks them whether these were works of the Law, or whether they were not exercised as the result of faith. The answer is clear. It was the believing man who worked the miracle, not the self-righteous man! Paul is now going to take the Galatians far back in Jewish history.  
**6.***Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* He was not saved by his works, but by his faith. His faith was the means of the imputation to him of the righteousness of the Savior who was yet to come.  
**7.***Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*He was called the father of the faithful, therefore the faithful, those who believe as he did, and are full of his faith, are his children.  
**8-10.***And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Now, if everyone who has once violated God’s Law is cursed forever, how mad are those who hope to enter Heaven by that very Law which is the gate to shut them out! How dare they confide in that which is their worst enemy—which is sworn to curse them in time and in eternity!  
**11.***But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* Scripture lays it down as a rule that justified men live by faith! If this is the rule, then certainly *they* should not live by works.  
**12.***And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that does them shall live in them.* So that the justified man is not justified by the Law, but by faith. He stands before God, not in what he does, not even in what the Spirit enables him to do! His own prayers, tears, communings with Christ. His own labors, his earnest and indefatigable attempts to extend the Kingdom of Christ—all count for nothing in the matter of his justification! He hangs them all upon the Cross of Christ and relies only upon the Cross, looking in no manner, whatever, to anything which comes of himself.

**13, 14.***Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*We were all under the curse of the Law, but Christ voluntarily took our place and was made a curse for us, so that the blessing might be ours.

**15, 16.***Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. Though it is but a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ.*Notice how important a single letter of the Scriptures may be! If vital Doctrine may depend upon the use of a singular or plural noun, therefore let us jealously guard the smallest jot or tittle of the Inspired Word of God.

**17-19.***And this I say, that the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot disannul the Covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, the Law, that it should make the promise of no effect. Or if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose, then, does the Law serve?*Some might argue that as the Law cannot justify, it is useless, but, on the contrary, it serves a very definite purpose, as Paul goes on to show.

**19-22.***It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the Law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*Paul constantly comes back to this point, that salvation is all of Grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**23-25.***But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up under the faith which should afterward be revealed. Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*The Apostle is not speaking of a schoolmaster as we understand that word, but of the slave or servant who took the boys to school, watched over them in school and out, and even used the rod if occasion demanded.

**26.***For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* The Fatherhood of God is common to all Believers—but there is no *universal fatherhood*, as many teach it in these days.

**27-29.***For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.*May this be true of all of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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CHRISTUS ET EGO

NO. 781

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 17, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”~~***

***~~Galatians 2:20.~~***

IN great ranges of mountains there are lofty peaks which pierce the clouds, but, on the other hand, there are, here and there, lower parts of the range which are crossed by travelers. They become national highways and afford passages for commerce from land to land. My text rises before my contemplation like a lofty range of mountains, a very Andes for elevation! I shall not attempt, this morning, to climb the summits of its sublimity—we have not the time and we fear we have not the skill for such work—but I shall, to the best of my ability, conduct you over one or two practical Truths of God which may be serviceable to us this morning, and introduce us to sunny fields of contemplation.

**I.**At once to our work! I call upon you to observe very carefully, in the first place, THE PERSONALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION as it is exhibited in the text before us. How many personal pronouns of the first person are there in this verse? Are there not as many as eight? It swarms with “I” and “me.” The text deals not with the plural at all. It does not mention someone else, nor a third party far away, but the Apostle treats of *himself—*his own inner life, his own spiritual death—the love of Christ to him, and the great sacrifice which Christ made for him. “Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

This is instructive, for it is a distinguishing mark of the Christian religion that it brings out a man’s individuality. It does not make us selfish. On the contrary it cures us of that evil, but still it does manifest in us a selfhood by which we become conscious of our personal individuality in an eminent degree. In the nocturnal heavens there had long been observed bright masses of light—the astronomers called them “nebulae”— they supposed them to be stores of shapeless chaotic matter until the telescope of Herschell resolved them into distinct stars. What the telescope did for stars the religion of Christ, when received into the heart, does for men!

Men think of themselves as mixed up with the race, or swamped in the community, or absorbed in universal manhood. They have a very indistinct idea of their separate obligations to God and their personal relations to His government. But the Gospel, like a telescope, brings man out to himself. It makes him see himself as a separate existence and compels him to meditate upon his own sin, his own salvation, and his own personal doom unless saved by Divine Grace. In the broad road there are so many travelers that as one takes a bird’s eye view of it, it appears to be filled with a vast mob of men moving without order—but in the straight and narrow way which leads to eternal life every traveler is distinct—he attracts your notice and he is a marked man.

Having to go against the general current of the times, the Believer is an individual upon whom observant eyes are fixed. He is a distinct individual, both to himself and the rest of his kind. You will very readily see how the religion of Jesus Christ brings out a man’s individuality in its very dawn. It reveals to him his own personal sin and consequent danger. You know nothing about conversion if you merely believe in human depravity and human ruin but have never felt that *you* are depraved, and that you yourself are ruined! Over and above all the general woes of the race there will be one particular woe of your own. If you have been convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, you will cry like that shrill-voiced Prophet of Jerusalem in the days of the siege, “Woe unto myself also!”

You will feel as if the arrows of God were mainly aimed at you and as if the curses of the Law would surely fall upon you if upon none else. Certainly, beloved Hearer, you know nothing about salvation unless you have personally looked with your own eye to Jesus Christ! There must be a personal reception of the Lord Jesus into the arms of your faith and into the bosom of your love. And, if you have not trusted in the Crucified while standing alone in contemplation at the foot of the Cross you have not believed unto life eternal.

Then, in consequence of a separate *personal* faith, the Believer enjoys a personal peace. He feels that if the earth were all at arms he would still find rest in Christ, that rest being peculiarly his own, independently of his fellows. He may talk of that peace to others, but he cannot communicate it. Others cannot give it to him, nor can they take it from him. Wherever the Christian religion is truly in the Son, it soon leads to a personal consecration to God. The man comes to the altar of Christ and he cries, “Here I am! O most glorious Lord, I feel it to be my reasonable service to give spirit, soul, and body unto You. Let others do as they will. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

The renewed man feels that the work of others does not exonerate him from service, and the general lukewarmness of the Christian Church cannot be an excuse for his own indifference. He stands out against error, if need be, as a lone protestor, like Athanasius, crying, “I, Athanasius, against the whole world.” Or he works for God in the building up of Jerusalem, like Nehemiah, being content to work alone if others will not assist him. He has discovered himself to have been *personally* lost, and to have been *personally* saved and now his prayer is, “Lord, show me what You would have me do. Here am I, send me.”

I believe that in proportion as our piety is definitely in the first person singular, it will be strong and vigorous. I believe, moreover, that in proportion as we fully realize our personal responsibility to God shall we be likely to discharge it. But, if we have not really understood it, we are very likely to dream of work for God by *proxy*—to pay the priest or the minister to be useful for us—and act as if we could shift our responsibility from our own shoulders to the back of a society or a Church. From its dawn up to its noonday glory the personality of true godliness is most observable. All the teaching of our holy faith bears in this direction. We preach*personal* election, *personal* calling, *personal* regeneration, *personal* perseverance, *personal* holiness and we know nothing of any work of Divine Grace which is not *personal* to the professor of it.

There is no doctrine in Scripture which teaches that one man can be saved by the godliness of another. I cannot discover anything like salvation by sponsorship, except in the one case of the sponsorship of the Lord Jesus Christ. I find no human being placed in the place of another so as to be able to take another’s burden of sin or perform another’s duty. I do find that we are to bear one another’s burdens in respect of *sympathy*, but not in the sense of *substitution*. Every man must bear his own burden and give an account for himself before God.

Moreover, the ordinances of the Christian religion teach us the same. When a man is typically buried with Christ by the public act of Baptism, he cannot be dead for another or buried for another—nor can he rise again instead of another. There is the *personal* act of immersion to show forth our personal death to the world, personal burial with Christ, and personal resurrection with Him. So also, in the Supper of the Lord, the distinct act of each man eating and drinking for *himself* most manifestly sets forth that we stand as individuals before the Lord our God in our connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I feel earnestly that nothing should ever spoil the effect of this Truth of God upon our minds. It is such a simple Truth that when I make the statement, you, perhaps, wonder that I should repeat it so often. But simple as it is, it is constantly being forgotten. How many Church members shelter themselves behind the vigorous action of the entire community? The *Church* is being increased. The *Church* opens schools. The *Church* builds new Houses of Prayer—and so the Church member flatters himself that *he* is doing something—whereas that very man may not have, either by his contributions, his prayers, or his personal teachings done anything at all!

O idle Church member, I beseech you shake yourself from the dust! Be not so mean as to appropriate other men’s labors! Before your own Master you shall stand or fall upon your own *individual* service or neglect, and if you bring forth no fruit yourself, all the fruit upon the other boughs shall not help you. “Every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” “Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away.” Common enough is it, also, for persons to shelter themselves behind a *society*. A small annual contribution has often been a cloak for gross indifference to holy *effort*.

Somebody else is paid to be a missionary and to do your missionwork—is this the Lord’s way? Is this the path of obedience? Does not our Lord say to me, “As my Father has sent Me, even so I send you”? Now the Father did not send Christ that He might procure a proxy and be a nominal Redeemer. Jesus gave Himself for us in *Personal* service and sacrifice—even so does Jesus send us forth to suffer and to serve. It is well to support the minister. It is well to pay the city missionary that he may have his time to give to necessary work. It is well to assist the Biblewoman that she may go from house to house. But remember, when all the societies have done all that is possible they cannot exonerate you from your own peculiar calling—and however large your contributions to assist others to serve the Master—they cannot discharge on your behalf one single particle of what was due from you *personally* to your Lord. Let me pray you, Brothers and Sisters, if you have ever sheltered behind the work of others, stand forth in your own proper character and remember that before God you must be estimated by what you have *felt*, what you have *known*, what you have *learned*, and what you have DONE! The worst form of the mischief is when persons imagine that family piety and national religion can ever be available in lieu of individual repentance and faith. Absurd as it may seem, yet a very common thing it is for people to say, “Oh, yes, we are all Christians—of course, we are all Christians— every Englishman is a Christian. We do not belong to the Brahmins or Mahometans—we are all Christians.”

What grosser lie can a man invent than that? Is a man a Christian because he*lives* in England? Is a rat a horse because it lives in a stable? That is just as good reasoning! A man must be born again, or he is no child of God. A man must have living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or else he is no Christian and he does but mock the name of Christian when he takes it upon himself without having part or lot in the matter. Others say, “My mother and my father always professed such a religion, therefore I am bound to do the same.” Glorious reasoning, fit most surely for idiots!

Have you never heard of that old Pagan monarch who professed conversion and was about to step into the baptismal font, when, turning round to the bishop, he said, “Where did my father go when he died, before your religion came here, and where did his father go, and all the kings that were before me who worshipped Woden and Thor? Where did they go when they died? Tell me at once!” The bishop shook his head and looked very sorrowful, and said he was afraid they were gone to a very dark place. “Ah, then,” said he, “I will not be separated from them.” Back he went and remained an unwashed heathen.

You suppose that this folly expired in the dark ages? It survives and flourishes in the present. We have known persons impressed under the Gospel who have, nevertheless, clung to the false hopes of superstition or human merit and have excused themselves by saying, “You see, I have always been brought up to it.” Does a man think because his mother was poor, or his father a pauper, that he himself must necessarily remain a beggar? If my parent was blind, am I bound to put out my own eyes to be like he? No, but if I have beheld the light of the Truth of Jesus Christ, let me follow it and not be drawn aside by the idea that hereditary superstition is any the less dangerous or erroneous because a dozen generations have been deluded by it. You must appear before God, my dear Friend, on your own feet, and neither mother nor father can stand in your place. Therefore judge for yourself! Seek for yourself eternal life! Lift up your eyes to Christ’s Cross for yourself, and let it be your own earnest endeavor that you yourself may be able to say, “He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

We are all born alone—we come as sorrowful pilgrims into this world to traverse a path which only our own feet can tread. To a great extent we go through the world alone, for all our companions are but vessels sailing with us side by side—vessels distinct and each one bearing its own flag. Into the depth of our hearts no man can dive. There are cabinets in the chamber of the soul which no man can open but the individual himself. We must die alone. Friends may surround the bed, but the departing spirit must take its flight by itself. We shall hear no tramp of thousands as we descend into the dark river. We shall be solitary travelers into the unknown land. We expect to stand before the Judgment Seat in the midst of a great assembly—but still to be judged as if no other man were there. If all that multitude is condemned, and we are in Christ, we shall be saved. And if they should all be saved, and we are found wanting, we shall be cast away.

In the balances we shall each be placed alone. There is a crucible for every ingot of gold, a furnace for every bar of silver. In the Resurrection every seed shall receive his own body. There shall be an individuality about the frame that shall be raised in that day of wonders, an individuality most marked and manifest. If I am condemned at the last, no man can be damned for my spirit. No soul can enter the chambers of fire on my behalf to endure for me the unutterable anguish. And, blessed hope, if I am saved, it will be I who shall see the King in His beauty! My eyes shall behold Him and not another in my place. The joys of Heaven shall not be *proxy* joys, but the *personal* enjoyments of those who have had personalunion with Christ.

You all know this, and therefore, I pray you, let the weighty Truth abide with you. No man in his senses thinks that another can eat for him, or drink for him, or be clothed for him, or sleep for him, or wake for him. No man is content, nowadays, with a second person’s owning money for him, or possessing an estate for him. Men long to have riches *themselves*! They wish to be *personally* happy, to be *personally* honored! They do not care that the good things of this life shall be nominally theirs while other men grasp the reality. They wish to have a real grasp and grip of all temporal goods. O let us not play the fool with *eternal* things, but let us desire to have a *personal* interest in Christ, and then let us aspire to give to Him, who deserves it so well, our personal service, rendering spirit, soul, and body unto His cause.

**II.**Secondly, our text very plainly TEACHES US THE INTERWEAVING OF OUR OWN PROPER PERSONALITY WITH THAT OF JESUS CHRIST. Read the text over again. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Here is the man, but here is the Son of God quite as conspicuously, and the two personalities are singularly interwoven.

I think I see two trees before me. They are distinct plants growing side by side, but as I follow them downward I observe that the roots are so interlaced and intertwisted that no one can trace the separate trees and allot the members of each to its proper whole. Such are Christ and the Believer. I think I see before me a vine. Yonder is a branch, distinct and perfect as a branch. It is not to be mistaken for any other—it is a branch, a whole and perfect branch—yet how perfectly is it joined to the stem and how completely is its individuality merged in the one vine of which it is a member!

Now so is it with the believer in Christ. There was one parent man who threw his shadow across our path and from whose influence we never could escape. From all other men we might have struggled away and claimed to be separate, but this one man was part of ourselves and we part of him—Adam the first. In his fallen state we are fallen with him, and are broken in pieces in his ruin. And now, glory be to God, as the shadow of the first man has been uplifted from us, there appears a second Man, the Lord from Heaven! And across our path there falls the light of His glory and His excellence from which also, blessed be God, we who have believed in Him cannot escape. In the light of that Man, the second Adam, the heavenly federal Head of all His people—in His light we rejoice. Interwoven with our history and personality is the history and Personality of the man Christ Jesus, and we are forever one with Him.

Observe the points of contact. First Paul says, I am “crucified with Christ.” What does he mean? He means a great many more things than I can tell you this morning. But briefly, he means this—he believed in the representation of Christ on the Cross—he held that when Jesus Christ hung upon the tree He did not hang there as a private Person, but as the *Representative* of all His chosen people. As the burgess in the House of Commons votes not for himself, alone, but in the name of the township which has sent him to Parliament, so the Lord Jesus Christ acted in what He did as a great public representative Person. And the dying of Jesus Christ upon the tree was the virtual dying of all His people.

Then all His saints entered unto justice what was due and made an expiation to Divine vengeance for all their sins. “I am crucified with Christ.” The Apostle of the Gentiles delighted to think that as one of Christ’s chosen people, *he died upon the tree in Christ*. He did more than believe this doctrinally, however—he accepted it confidently—resting his hope upon it. He believed that by virtue of Jesus Christ’s death, he had *himself* paid the Law its due, satisfied Divine justice, and found reconciliation with God! Beloved, what a blessed thing it is when the soul can, as it were, stretch itself upon the Cross of Christ and feel, “I am dead. The Law has killed me, cursed me, slain me, and I am therefore free from its power, because in my Surety I have borne the curse, and in the Person of my Substitute all that the Law could do, by way of condemnation, has been executed upon me, for I am crucified with Christ.”

Oh, how blessed it is when the Cross of Christ is laid upon us! How it quickens us! Just as the aged Prophet went up and stretched himself upon the dead child—put his mouth upon the child’s mouth, and his hands upon the child’s hands, and his feet upon the child’s feet and then the child was quickened—so when the Cross is laid upon my soul it puts life, power, warmth, and comfort into me! Union with the suffering, bleeding Savior, and faith in the merit of the Redeemer are soul-cheering things! O for more enjoyment of them!

Paul meant even more than this. He not only believed in Christ’s death and trusted in it, but he actually *felt* its power in himself in causing the crucifixion of his old corrupt nature. If you conceive of yourself as a man executed, you at once perceive that being executed by the Law, the Law has no further claim upon you. You resolve, moreover, that having once proven the curse of sin by the sentence passed upon you, you will not fall into that same offense again but henceforth, being miraculously delivered from the death into which the Law brought you, you will live in newness of life. You *must* feel so if you feel rightly.

Thus did Paul view himself as a criminal upon whom the sentence of the Law had been fulfilled. When he saw the pleasures of sin, he said, “I cannot enjoy these. I am dead to them. I once had a life in which these were very sweet to me, but I have been crucified with Christ. Consequently, as a dead man can have no delight in the joys which once were delights to him, so neither can I.” When Paul looked upon the carnal things of the world, he said, “I once allowed these things to reign over me. What shall I eat? What shall I drink? And with what shall I be clothed? These were a trinity of questions of the utmost importance—they are of no importance now because I am dead to these things—I cast my care upon God with regard to them. They are not my life. I am crucified to them.”

If any passion, if any motive, if any design should come into our mind short of the Cross of Christ, we should exclaim, “God forbid that I should glory in any of these things! I am a dead man. Come, world, with all your witchery. Come, pleasure, with all your charms. Come, wealth, with all your temptations. Come, all you tempters that have seduced so many! What can you do with a crucified man? How can you tempt one who is dead to you?” Now it is a blessed state of mind when a man can feel that through having received Christ, he is, to this world, as one who is utterly dead! Neither does he yield his strength to its purposes, nor his soul to its customs, nor his judgment to its maxims, nor his heart to its affections, for he is a crucified man through Jesus Christ! The world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world. This is what the Apostle meant.

Notice next another point of contact. He says, “Nevertheless I live.” But then he corrects himself, “yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” You have seen the dead side of a Believer: he is deaf, and dumb, and blind, and without feeling to the sinful world, yet he adds, “Nevertheless I live.” He explains what his life is—his life is produced in him by virtue of Christ’s being in him and his being in Christ. Jesus is the source of the Christian’s life! The sap in the vine lives even in the smallest of the tendrils. No matter how minute may be the nerve, the anatomist will tell you that the brain-life lives in its most distant extremity.

So in every Christian. Though the Christian may be insignificant and possessed of little Divine Grace, yet still, if he is truly a Believer, Jesus lives in him! The life which keeps his faith, his hope, his love in existence comes from Jesus Christ, and from Him alone. We should cease to be living saints if we did not daily receive Divine Grace from our Covenant Head. As the strength of our life comes from the Son of God, so is He the ruler and moving power within us. How can he be a Christian who is ruled by any but Christ? If you call Christ, “Master and Lord,” you must be His servant. Nor can you yield obedience to any rival power, for no man can serve two masters. There must be a master spirit in the heart—and unless Jesus Christ is such a Master Spirit to us we are not saved at all. The life of the Christian is a life which springs from Christ, and it is controlled by His will.

Beloved, do you know anything about this? I am afraid it is dry talking to you about it unless you feel it. Has your life been such during the past week? Has the life which you have lived been Christ’s living in you? Have you been like a book printed in plain letters in which men might read a new edition of the life of Jesus Christ? A Christian ought to be a living photograph of the Lord Jesus, a striking likeness of his Lord! When men look at him they should see not only what the Christian is, but what the Christian’s *Master* is for he should be like his Master. Do you ever see and know that within your soul Christ looks out of *your* eyes regarding poor sinners and considering how you may help them? That Christ throbs in your *heart*, feeling for the perishing, trembling for those who will not tremble for themselves?

Do you ever feel Christ opening your hands in liberal charity to help those who cannot help themselves? Have you ever felt that a something more than yourself was in you—a Spirit which sometimes struggles with yourself—and holds it by the throat and threatens to destroy its sinful selfishness—a noble Spirit which puts its foot upon the neck of covetousness? A brave Spirit that dashes to the ground your pride? An active fervent Spirit that burns up your sloth? Have you ever felt this? Truly, we that live unto God feel the life of God within and desire to be more and more subdued under the dominant Spirit of Christ, that our manhood may be a palace for the Well-Beloved!

That is another point of contact. Further on, the Apostle says—and I hope you will keep your Bibles open to follow the text—“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Every moment the life of the Christian is to be a life of faith. We make a mistake when we try to walk by feeling or by sight. I dreamed the other night, while musing upon the life of the Believer, that I was passing along a road which a Divine call had appointed for me. The ordained pathway which I was called to traverse was thick darkness, unmingled with a ray of light. As I stood in the awful gloom, unable to perceive a single inch before me, I heard a voice which said, “Let your feet go right on. Fear not, but advance in the name of God.”

So on I went, putting down foot after foot with trembling. After a little while the path through the darkness became easy and smooth from use and experience. Just then I perceived that the path turned. It was of no use my endeavoring to proceed as I had done before. The way was tortuous and the road was rough and stony—but I remembered what was said, that I was to advance as I could—and so on I went. Then there came another twist, and yet another, and another, and another, and I wondered why till I understood that if ever the path remained long the same I should grow accustomed to it—and so would walk by*feeling*. And I learned that the whole of the way would constantly be such as to compel me to*depend* upon the guiding voice and exercise faith in the unseen One who had called me!

All of a sudden it appeared to me as though there was nothing beneath my foot when I put it down, yet I thrust it out into the darkness in confident daring, and lo, a firm step was reached, and another and another as I walked down a staircase which descended deep, down, down, down. Onward I passed, not seeing an inch before me but believing that all was well although I could hear around me the dash of falling men and women who had walked by the light of their own lanterns and missed their foothold. I heard the cries and shrieks of men as they fell from this dreadful staircase. But I was commanded to go right on, and I went straight on, resolved to be obedient even if the way should descend into the nethermost Hell.

By-and-by the dreadful ladder was ended and I found a solid rock beneath my feet. And I walked straight on upon a paved causeway with a railing on either hand. I understood this to be the experience which I had gained, which now could guide and help me, and I leaned on this rail and walked on right confidently till, in a moment, my causeway ended and my feet sank in the mire! And as for my other comforts, I groped for them but they were gone! Still I was to know that I must go in dependence upon my unseen Friend, and the road would always be such that no experience could serve me instead of *dependence upon God*. Forward I plunged through mire and filth and suffocating smoke, and a smell as of death, for it was the way, and I had been commanded to walk there.

Again the pathway changed, though all was midnight still—up went the path, and up, and up, and up, with nothing upon which I could lean! I ascended wearily innumerable stairs, not one of which I could see, although the very thought of their height might make my brain reel. All of a sudden my pathway burst into light as I woke from my reverie, and when I looked down upon it, I saw it all to be safe, but such a road that if I had seen it, I never could have trod it. It was only in the darkness that I could have performed my mysterious journey. It was only in child-like confidence upon the Lord. The Lord will guide us if we are willing to do just as He bids us. Lean upon Him, then.

I have painted a poor picture, but still one, which, if you can understand it, it will be grand to look upon. To walk straight on—believing in Christ every moment, believing your sins to be forgiven even when you see their vileness—believing that you are safe in Christ even when you seem in the utmost danger—believing that you are glorified when you feel as if you were cast out from God’s Presence—this is the life of faith.

Furthermore, Paul notes other points of unity. “Who loved me.” Blessed be God, before the mountains uplifted their snow-crowned heads to the clouds, Christ had set His heart upon us! His “delights were with the sons of men.” In His “book all our members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Believer, get a hold of the precious Truth that Christ loved you *eternally*—the all-glorious Son of God chose you and espoused you unto Himself that you might be His bride throughout eternity! Here is a blessed Truth, indeed!

Observe the next, “and gave Himself for me.” Not only gave all that He had, but gave Himself! Not merely laid aside His glory and His splendor, and His life, but yielded up His very *Self*. O heir of Heaven, Jesus is yours at this moment! Having given Himself once for you upon the tree to put your sin away, at this moment He gives Himself to you to be your life, your crown, your joy, your portion, your All in All!

You have found out yourself to be a separate personality and individuality, but that personality is linked with the Person of Christ Jesus, so that you are *in* Christ, and *Christ* is *in* you! By a blessed indissoluble union you are knit together forever and ever!

III. Lastly, the text describes THE LIFE WHICH RESULTS FROM THIS BLENDED PERSONALITY. If you will have patience with me, I will be as brief as I can while I go over the text again, word by word. Brethren, when a man finds and knows himself to be linked with Christ, his life is altogether a new life. I gather that from the expression, “I am crucified, nevertheless I live.” Crucified, then dead. Crucified, then the old life is put away—whatever life a crucified man has must be new life.

So is it with you. Upon your old life, Believer, sentence of death has been pronounced. The carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is doomed to die. You can say, “I die daily.” Would to God the old nature were completely dead! But whatever you have of *life* was not given you till you came into union with Christ. It is a new thing, as new as though you had been actually dead and rotted in the tomb and then had started up at the sound of the trumpet to live again. You have received a life from above, a life which the Holy Spirit worked in you in regeneration. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but your Grace-life did not come from yourself—you have been born again from above.

Your life is a very strange one—“I am crucified, nevertheless I live.” What a contradiction! The Christian’s life is a matchless riddle. No worldling can comprehend it! Even the Believer himself cannot understand it. He knows it, but as to solving all its enigmas he feels that to be an impossible task. Dead, yet alive! Crucified with Christ, and yet at the same time risen with Christ in newness of life! Do not expect the world to understand you, Christian. It did not understand your Master. When your actions are misrepresented and your motives are ridiculed, do not be surprised. “If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

If you belonged to the village the dogs would not bark at you. If men could read you they would not wonder. It is because you are written in a celestial language that men cannot comprehend you and think you worthless. Your life is new. Your life is strange. This wonderful life, resulting in the blended personality of the Believer and the Son of God, is a true life. This is expressed in the text, “Nevertheless I live”—yes, live as I never lived before! When the Apostle declares himself to be dead to the world he would not have us imagine that he was dead in the highest and best sense. No, he *lived* with a new force and vigor of life. It seemed to me, Brothers and Sisters, when I woke up to know Christ, that I was just like the fly newly burst from the chrysalis—I then began *really* to live.

When a soul is startled by the thunderclaps of conviction and afterwards receives pardon in Christ, it begins to live! The worldling says he wants to see life and therefore plunges into sin! Fool that he is, he peers into the sepulcher to discover immortality! The man who truly lives is the Believer. Shall I become less active because I am a Christian? God forbid! Become less industrious? Find less opportunities for the manifestation of my natural and spiritual energies? God forbid! If ever a man should be as a sword too sharp for the scabbard with an edge which cannot be turned it should be the Christian! He should be like flames of fire burning his way! Live while you live but there is no driveling and frittering away of time. Live so as to demonstrate that you possess the noblest form of life!

Clear is it, also, that the new life which Christ brings to us is a life of self-abnegation, for Paul adds, “I live, yet not I.” Lowliness of mind is part and parcel of godliness. He who can take any credit to himself knows not the spirit of our holy faith. The Believer, when he prays best, says, “Yet not I, but the Spirit of God interceded in me.” If he has won any souls to Christ, he says, “Yet not I. It was the Gospel—the Lord Jesus worked in me mightily.” “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the praise.” Self-humiliation is the native spirit of the true-born child of God.

Further, the life which Christ works in us is a life of one idea. Is the Believer’s soul ruled by *two* things? No, he knows but one. Christ lives in me! Two tenants in the chamber of my soul? No, one Lord and Master I serve. “Christ lives in me.” An old Divine desired that he might eat and drink and sleep eternal life. Do you thus live! Alas, I mourn that I live too much in the old life, and too little does Jesus live in me. But the Christian, if he should ever come to perfection, and God grant we each may come as near to it as possible even *now*, will find that the old, “I live,” is kept under, and the new Christ-life reigns supreme.

Christ must be the *one* thought, the *one* idea, the *one* master-thought in the Believer’s soul! When he wakes in the morning the healthy Believer enquires, “What can I do for Christ?” When he goes about his business he asks, “How shall I serve my Lord in all my actions?” When he makes money he questions himself, “How can I use my talents for Christ?” If he acquires education, the enquiry is, “How can I spend my knowledge for Christ?” To sum up much in little, the child of God has within him the Christ-life. But how shall I describe that? Christ’s life on earth was the Divine mingled with the human—such is the life of the Christian. There is something Divine about it—it is a living, incorruptible seed which abides forever.

We are made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, yet our life is a *thoroughly* human life. The Christian is a man among men. In all that is manly he labors to excel, yet he is not as other men are but wears a hidden nature which no mere worldling understands. Picture the life of Christ on earth, Beloved, and that is what the life of God in us ought to be—and *will* be in proportion as we are subject to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Notice again, keeping close to the text, that the life which God works in us is still the life of a man. “The life that I now live in the flesh,” says the Apostle. Those monks and nuns who run away from the world for fear its temptations should overcome them, and seclude themselves for the sake of greater holiness, are as excellent soldiers as those who retire to the camp for fear of being defeated! Of what service are such soldiers in the battle, or such persons in the warfare of life? Christ did not come to make monks of us! He came to make *men* of us! He meant that we should learn how to live in the flesh. We are neither to give up business nor society, nor in any right sense to give up life.

“The life I live in the flesh,” says the Apostle. Look at him busy at his tent-making. What? An Apostle making tents? What do you say, Brothers and Sisters, to the Archbishop of Canterbury stitching away for his living? It is too low for a State bishop, certainly! But not too low for Paul. I do not think the Apostle was ever more apostolic than when he picked up sticks. When Paul and his companions were shipwrecked at Melita, the Apostle was of more service than all the Pan-Anglican synod with their silk aprons, for he set to work like other people to gather fuel for the fire. He wanted to warm himself as other men, and therefore he took his share at the toil.

Even so you and I must take our turn at the wheel. We must not think of keeping ourselves aloof from our fellow men as though we should be degraded by mingling with them. The salt of the earth should be well rubbed into the meat, and so the Christian should mingle with his fellow men, seeking their good for edification. We are men, and whatever men may lawfully do, we do. Wherever they may go, we may go. Our religion makes us neither more nor less than human, though it brings us into the family of God.

Yet the Christian life is a life of *faith*. “The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Faith is not a piece of confectionery to be put upon drawing room tables, or a garment to be worn on Sundays. It is a *working* principle to be used in the barn and in the field, in the shop and on the exchange. It is a Grace for the housewife and the servant. It is for the House of Commons and for the poorest workshop. “The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith.” I would have the believing cobbler mend shoes religiously, and the tailor make garments by faith! And I would have every Christian buy and sell by faith. Whatever your trades may be, *faith* is to be taken into your daily callings, and that is, alone, the truly living faith which will bear the practical test. You are not to stop at the shop door and take off your coat and say, “Farewell to Christianity till I put up the shutters again.” That is hypocrisy! The genuine life of the Christian is the life which we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God.

To conclude. The life which comes out of the blended personality of the Believer and Christ is a life of perfect *love*. “He gave Himself for me.” My question is, therefore, What can I do for Him? The new life is a life of holy *security*, for, if Christ loved me, who can destroy me? It is a life of holy *wealth*, for, if Christ gave His infinite Self to me, what can I need? It is a life of holy *joy*, for, if Christ is mine, I have a well of holy joy within my soul! It is the life of *Heaven*, for, if I have Christ, I have that which is the *essence* and soul of Heaven!

I have talked mysteries of which some of you have not understood so much as a sentence. God give you understanding that you may know the Truth. But if you have not understood it, let this fact convince you—you know not the Truth because you have not the Spirit of God—for the spiritual mind alone understands spiritual things. When we talk about the inner life, we seem like those that dote and dream to those who understand us not. But if you have understood me, Believer, go home and live out the Truth of God! Practice that which is practicable. Feed upon that which is full of savor. Rejoice in Christ Jesus that you are one with Him, and then, in your own proper person, go out and *serve* your Master with might and main, and the Lord send you His abundant blessing. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection,*Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1534 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SALVATION BY WORKS— A CRIMINAL DOCTRINE  
NO. 1534

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 18, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“I do not frustrate the Grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:21.~~***

THE idea of salvation by the merit of our own works is exceedingly insinuating. It matters not how often it is refuted, it asserts itself again and again and when it gains the least foothold it soon makes great advances. Hence Paul, who was determined to show it no quarter, opposed everything which bore its likeness. He was determined not to permit the thin end of the wedge to be introduced into the Church, for well he knew that willing hands would soon be driving it home! Therefore when Peter sided with the Judaizing party and seemed to favor those who demanded that the Gentiles should be circumcised, our brave Apostle withstood him to his face. He always fought for salvation by Grace through faith and contended strenuously against all thought of righteousness by obedience to the precepts of the ceremonial or the moral Law.

No one could be more explicit than he upon the doctrine that we are not justified or saved by works in any degree, but solely by the Grace of God. His trumpet gave forth no uncertain sound, but gave forth the clear note—“By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Grace meant Grace with Paul and he could not endure any tampering with the matter, or any frittering away of its meaning. So fascinating is the doctrine of legal righteousness that the only way to deal with it is Paul’s way—stamp it out! Cry war to the knife against it! Never yield to it! And remember the Apostle’s firmness and how stoutly he held his ground—“To whom,” he says, “we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour.”

The error of salvation by works is exceedingly plausible. You will constantly hear it stated as a self-evident truth and vindicated on account of its supposed practical usefulness, while the Gospel doctrine of Salvation by Faith is railed at and accused of evil consequences. It is affirmed that if we preach salvation by good works we shall encourage virtue—and so it might seem in *theory*—but history proves, by many instances, that as a matter of fact where such doctrine has been preached virtue has become singularly uncommon and that in proportion as the merit of works has been cried up, morality has gone down!

On the other hand, where Justification by Faith has been preached, conversions have followed and purity of life has been produced even in the worst of men. Those who lead godly and gracious lives are ready to confess that the cause of their zeal for holiness lies in their faith in Christ Jesus. Where will you meet with a devout and upright man who glories in his own works? Self-righteousness is natural to our fallen humanity and, therefore, it is the essence of all false religions. Be they what they may, they all agree in seeking salvation by our own deeds. He who worships his idols will torture his body, will fast, will perform long pilgrimages and do or endure *anything* in order to merit salvation! The Roman Catholic church holds up continually before the eyes of its votaries the prize to be earned by self-denial, by penance, by prayers, by sacraments or by some other performances of man. Go where you may, the natural religion of fallen man is salvation by his own merits.

An old Divine has well said every man is born a heretic upon this point and he naturally gravitates towards this heresy in one form or another. Self-salvation, either by his personal worthiness, by his repentance or by his resolves is a hope ingrained in human nature and very hard to remove. This foolishness is bound up in the heart of every child and who shall get it out of him? This erroneous idea arises partly from ignorance, for men are ignorant of the Law of God and of what holiness really is. If they knew that even an evil *thought* is a breach of the Law and that the Law once broken in any point is altogether violated, they would be at once convinced that there can be no righteousness by the Law to those who have already offended against it.

They are also in great ignorance concerning themselves, for those very persons who talk about self-righteousness are, as a rule, openly chargeable with fault. And if not, were they to sit down and really look at their own lives, they would soon perceive, even in their best works, such impurity of motive beforehand, or such pride and self-congratulation afterwards, that they would see the gloss taken off from all their performances and they would be utterly ashamed of them! Nor is it only ignorance which leads men to self-righteousness—they are also deceived by*pride*. Man cannot endure to be saved on the footing of mercy—he hates to plead guilty and throw himself on the favor of the great King—he cannot stand to be treated as a pauper and blessed as a matter of charity!

He desires to have a finger in his own salvation and claim at least a little credit for it. Proud man will not have Heaven, itself, upon terms of Grace! As long as he can, he sets up one plea or another and holds to his own righteousness as though it were his life. This self-confidence also arises from wicked unbelief, for through his self-conceit, man will not believe God. Nothing is more plainly revealed in Scripture than this—that by the works of the Law shall no man be justified—yet men, in some shape or other, stick to the hope of legal righteousness! They will have it that they must *prepare* for Grace, or *assist* mercy, or in some degree *deserve* eternal life. They prefer their own flattering prejudices to the declaration of the heart-searching God! The Testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the deceitfulness of the heart is cast aside and the declaration of God that there is none that does good, no, not one, is altogether denied. Is not this a great evil?

Self-righteousness is also much promoted by the almost universal spirit of trifling which is now abroad. Only while men trifle with themselves can they entertain the idea of personal merit before God. He who comes to serious thought and begins to understand the Character of God, before whom the heavens are not pure and the angels are charged with folly—he, I say, that comes to serious thought and beholds a true vision of God, abhors himself in dust and ashes and is forever silenced as to any thought of self-justification! It is because we do not seriously examine our condition that we think ourselves rich and increased in goods. A man may fancy that he is prospering in business and yet he may be going back in the world. If he does not face his books or take stock, he may be living in a fool’s paradise, spending largely when on the verge of bankruptcy.

Many think well of themselves because they never think seriously. They do not look below the surface and, therefore, they are deceived by appearances. The most troublesome business to many men is thought—and the last thing they will do is to weigh their actions, or test their motives, or ponder their ways to see whether things are right with them. Selfrighteousness, being supported by ignorance, by pride, by unbelief and by the natural superficiality of the human mind, is strongly entrenched and cannot readily be driven out of men. Self-righteousness is evidently evil, for it makes light of sin! It talks of merit in the case of one who has already transgressed and boasts of excellence in reference to a fallen and depraved creature. It prattles of little faults, small failures and slight omissions and so makes sin to be a venial error which may be readily overlooked. Not so faith in God, for though it recognizes pardon, yet that pardon is seen to come in a way which proves sin to be exceedingly sinful.

On the other hand, the doctrine of salvation by works has not a word of comfort in it for the fallen. It gives to the elder son all that his proud heart can claim, but for the prodigal it has no welcome. The Law has no invitation for the sinner, for it knows nothing of mercy. If salvation is by the works of the Law, what must become of the guilty and the fallen and the abandoned? By what hopes can these be recalled? This unmerciful doctrine bars the door of hope and hands over the lost ones to the executioner in order that the proud Pharisee may air his boastful righteousness and thank God that he is not as other men are!

It is the intense selfishness of this doctrine which condemns it as an evil thing. It naturally exalts self. If a man conceives that he will be saved by his own works, he thinks himself something and glories in the dignity of human nature! When he has been attentive to religious exercises he rubs his hands and feels that he *deserves* well of his Maker—he goes home to repeat his prayers and before he falls asleep he wonders how he can have grown to be so good and so much superior to those around him. When he walks abroad he feels as if he dwelt apart in native excellence, a person much distinguished from “the vulgar herd,” a being whom to *know* is to admire. All the while he considers himself to be very humble and is often amazed at his own condescension.

What is this but a most hateful spirit? God, who sees the heart, loathes it! He will accept the humble and the contrite, but He puts far from Him those who glory in themselves. Indeed, my Brothers and Sisters, what have we to glory in? Is not every boast a lie? What is this self-hood but a peacock feather, fit only for the cap of a fool? May God deliver us from exalting self! And yet, we cannot be delivered from so doing if we hold, in any degree, the doctrine of salvation by our own good works. At this time I desire to shoot at the very heart of that soul-destroying doctrine, while I show you, in the first place, that two great crimes are contained in the idea of self-justification. When I have brought forth that indictment, I shall further endeavor to show that these two great crimes are committed by many and then, thirdly, it will be a delight to assert that the true Believer does not fall into these crimes. May God, the Holy Spirit, help us while meditating upon this important theme.

**I.**First, then, TWO GREAT CRIMES ARE CONTAINED IN SELFRIGHTEOUSNESS. These high crimes and misdemeanors are frustrating the Grace of God and making Christ to have died in vain. The first is the frustration of the Grace of God. The word here translated, “frustrate,” means to make void, to reject, to refuse, to regard as needless. Now, he that hopes to be saved by his own righteousness rejects the Grace, or free favor, of God! He regards it as useless and in that sense frustrates it. It is clear, first, that if righteousness comes by the Law, the Grace of God is no longer required. If we can be saved by our own merits, we need *justice*, but we certainly do not need *mercy*.

If we can keep the Law and claim to be accepted as a matter of debt, it is plain that we need not turn suppliants and crave for mercy. Grace is a superfluity where merit can be proven. A man who can go into court with a clear case and a bold countenance asks not for mercy of the judge and the offer of it would insult him. “Give me justice,” he says! “Give me my rights” and he stands up for them as a brave Englishman should do. It is only when a man feels that the law condemns him that he puts in a plea for mercy. Nobody ever dreamed of recommending an innocent man to mercy. I say, then, that the man who believes that by keeping the Law, or by practicing ceremonies, or by undergoing religious performances he can make himself acceptable before God, most decidedly puts the Grace of God on one side as a superfluous thing as far as he is concerned! Is it not clearly so? And is not this a crimson crime—this frustration of the Grace of God?

Next, he makes the Grace of God to be at least a secondary thing which is only a lower degree of the same error. Many think that they are to merit as much as they can by their own exertions and *then* the Grace of God will make up for the rest. The theory is that we are to keep the Law as far as we can and this imperfect obedience is to stand good—as a sort of compromise—say a shilling in the pound, or fifteen shillings in the pound—according as man judges his own excellence. And then, what is required over and above our own hard-earned money, the Grace of God will supply—in short, the plan is every man is his own savior and Jesus Christ and His Grace just make up for our deficiencies.

Whether men see it or not, this mixture of Law and Grace is most dishonoring to the salvation of Jesus Christ. It makes the Savior’s work to be incomplete, though on the Cross He cried, “It is finished.” Yes, it even treats it as being utterly ineffectual since it appears to be of no use at all until man’s works are added to it. According to this notion, we are redeemed as much by our own doing as by the ransom price of Jesus’ blood—man and Christ go shares, both in the work and in the glory! This is an intense form of arrogant treason against the majesty of Divine Mercy! This is a capital crime which will condemn all who continue in it. May God deliver us from thus insulting the Throne of Grace by bringing a purchase price in our own hands as if we could deserve such peerless gifts of love!

More than that, he who trusts in himself, his feelings, his works, his prayers, or in *anything* except the Grace of God virtually gives up trusting in the Grace of God altogether! Don’t you know that God’s Grace will never share the work with man’s merit? As oil will not combine with water, so neither will human merit and heavenly mercy mix together! The Apostle says in Romans 11:6, “If by Grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.” You must either have salvation wholly because you deserve it, or wholly because God graciously bestows it, though you do *not* deserve it! You must receive salvation at the Lord’s hands either as a debt or as a charity—there can be no mingling of the ideas. That which is a pure gift of favor cannot also be a reward of personal merit! A combination of the two principles of Law and Grace is utterly impossible. Trusting in our own works in*any* degree effectually shuts us out from all hope of salvation by Grace—and so it frustrates the Grace of God.

There is another form of this crime, that when men preach up human works, sufferings, feelings, or emotions as the ground of salvation, they deny the sinner confidence in Christ, for as long as a man can maintain any hope in himself, he will never look to the Redeemer. We may preach forever and ever, but as long as there remains latent in any one bosom a hope that he can effectually clear himself from sin and win the favor of God by his own works, that man will never accept the proclamation of free pardon through the blood of Christ! We know that we cannot frustrate the Grace of God—it will have its way and the eternal purpose shall be fulfilled. But as the tendency of all teaching which mixes up works with Grace is to take men away from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, its tendency is to frustrate the Grace of God and every act is to be judged by its tendency even if the Lord’s Divine power prevents its working out its natural result.

No man can lay another Foundation than that which is laid, but inasmuch as they *try* to do so they are guilty of despising the Foundation of God as much as those builders of the olden times who rejected the stone which God had chosen to be the head of the corner. May the Grace of God keep us from such a crime as this, lest the blood of other men’s souls should crimson our garments. This hoping to be saved by our own righteousness robs God of His Glory. It as good as says, “We do not need Grace. We need no free favor.” It reads of the New Covenant, which Infinite Love has made, but by clinging to the Old Covenant it puts dishonor upon it. In its heart it murmurs, “What need of this Covenant of Grace? The Covenant of Works answers every purpose for us.”

It reads of the great gift of Grace in the Person of Jesus Christ and it does despite thereto by the secret thought that human works are as good as the life and death of the Son of God! It cries, “We will not have this Man to save us.” A self-righteous hope casts a slur upon the Glory of God since it is clear that if a man could be saved by his own works, he would naturally have the honor of it. But if a man is saved by the free Grace of God, then God is glorified. Woe unto those who teach a doctrine which would pluck the royal Crown from the head of our Sovereign Lord and disgrace the Throne of His glory! God help us to be clear of this rank offense against high Heaven. I grow warm upon such a subject as this, for my indignation rises against that which does dishonor to my Lord and frustrates His Grace.

This is a sin so gross that even the heathen cannot commit it! They have never heard of the Grace of God and therefore they cannot put a slight upon it—when they perish it will be with a far lighter doom than those who have been told that God is gracious and ready to pardon and yet turn on their heels and wickedly boast of innocence and pretend to be clean in the sight of God! This is a sin which devils cannot commit. With all the obstinacy of their rebellion, they can never reach to this! They have never had the sweet notes of Free Grace and dying love ringing in their ears and, therefore, they have never refused the heavenly invitation. What has never been presented to their acceptance cannot be the object of their rejection. Thus, my Hearer, if you should fall into this deep ditch, you will sink lower than the heathen, lower than Sodom and Gomorrah and lower than the devil, himself! Wake up, I pray, and do not dare to frustrate the Grace of God!

The second great crime which self-justification commits is making Christ to be dead in vain. This is plain enough. If salvation can be by the works of the Law, why did our Lord Jesus die to save us? O, You bleeding Lamb of God, Your Incarnation is a marvel, but Your death upon the accursed tree is such a miracle of mercy as fills all Heaven with astonishment! Will any dare to say that Your death, O Incarnate God, was a superfluity, a wanton waste of suffering? Do they dare think You a generous but unwise enthusiast whose death was needless? Can there be any who think Your Cross a vain thing? Yes, thousands virtually do this and, in fact, *all* do who make it out that men might have been saved in some other way, or may now be saved by their own works and doings! They who say that the death of Christ goes only part of the way and that man must *do* something in order to merit eternal life—these, I say, make this death of Christ to be only partially effective and, in yet clearer terms, *ineffectual* in and of itself!

If it is even *hinted* that the blood of Jesus is not price enough till man adds his silver or his gold, then His blood is not our redemption at all and Christ is no Redeemer! If it is taught that our Lord’s bearing of sin for us did not make a perfect Atonement and that it is ineffectual till we either do or suffer something to complete it—then in the supplemental work lies the *real* virtue and Christ’s work, is in itself, insufficient! His death cry of, “It is finished,” must have been all a mistake if it is still not finished! And if a believer in Christ is not completely saved by what Christ has done, but must do something, himself, to complete it, then salvation was *not* finished and the Savior’s work remains imperfect till we, poor sinners, lend a hand to make up for His deficiencies! What blasphemy lies in such a supposition that Christ, on Calvary, made a needless and a useless offering of Himself and any man among you can be saved by the works of the Law!

This spirit also rejects the Covenant which was sealed with Christ’s death. For if we can be saved by the old Covenant of Works, then the New Covenant was not required. In God’s wisdom the New Covenant was brought in because the first had grown old and was void by transgression. But if it is *not* void, then the New Covenant is an idle innovation and the Sacrifice of Jesus ratified a foolish transaction! I loathe the words while I pronounce them! No one ever was saved under the Covenant of Works nor ever will be—the New Covenant is introduced for that reason—but if there is salvation by the first, then what need was there of the second? Selfrighteousness, as far as it can, disannuls the Covenant, breaks its seal and does despite to the *blood* of Jesus Christ which is the substance, the certificate and the seal of that Covenant.

If you hold that a man can be saved by his own good works, you pour contempt upon the Testament of Love which the death of Jesus has put in force, for there is no need to receive as a legacy of love that which can be earned as the wage of work! O Sirs, this is a sin against each Person of the sacred Trinity! It is a sin against the Father. How could He be wise and good and yet give His only Son to die on yonder tree in anguish if man’s salvation could be worked by some other means? It is a sin against the Son of God—you dare to say that our redemption price could have been paid another way and, therefore, His death was not absolutely necessary for the redemption of the world. Or, if necessary, yet not effectual, for it requires something to be *added* to it before it can effect its purpose.

It is a sin against the Holy Spirit and beware how you sin against Him, for such sins are fatal! The Holy Spirit bears witness to the glorious perfection and unconquerable power of the Redeemer’s work and woe to those who reject that witness! He has come into the world, on purpose, that He may convict men of the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ and, therefore, if we *think* that we can be saved apart from Christ we do despite to the Spirit of His Grace. The doctrine of salvation by works is a sin against all the fallen sons of Adam, for if men cannot be saved except by their own works, what hope is left for any transgressor? You shut the gates of Mercy on mankind! You condemn the guilty to die without the possibility of remission! You deny all hope of welcome to the returning prodigal, all prospect of Paradise to the dying thief! If Heaven is by works, thousands of us will never see its gates. I know that I never shall. You fine fellows may rejoice in *your* prospects, but what is to become of us? You ruin us all by your boastful scheme!

Nor is this all. It is a sin against the saints, for none of them have any other hope except in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Remove the doctrine of the atoning blood and you have taken all away! Our foundation is gone! If you speak thus you offend the whole generation of godly men. I go further—work-mongering is a sin against the perfect ones above! The doctrine of salvation by works would silence the hallelujahs of Heaven. Hush, you choristers, what meaning is there in your song? You are chanting, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” But why do you sing so? If salvation is by works, your ascriptions of praise are empty flatteries. You ought to sing, “Unto *ourselves* who kept our garments clean, to us be glory forever and ever!” Or at least, “unto ourselves whose acts made the Redeemer’s work effectual be a full share of praise.”

But a self-lauding note was never heard in Heaven and, therefore, we feel sure that the doctrine of self-justification is not of God. I charge you— renounce it as the foe of God and man! This proud system is a sin of deepest dye against my Master, Jesus Christ! I cannot endure to think of the insult which it puts upon our dying Lord! If you have made Christ to live in vain, that is bad enough, but to represent Him as having died in vain? What shall be said of this? That Christ came to earth for *nothing* is a most horrible statement, but that He became obedient to the death of the Cross without result is profanity at its worst!

**II.**I will say no more concerning the nature of these sins, but in the second place proceed to the solemn fact that THESE TWO GREAT CRIMES ARE COMMITTED BY MANY PEOPLE. I am afraid they are committed by some who hear me this day. Let everyone search himself and see if these accursed things are not hidden in his heart and if they are, let him cry unto God for deliverance from them! Assuredly these crimes are chargeable on those who trifle with the Gospel! Here is the greatest discovery that was ever made—the most wonderful piece of knowledge that ever was revealed and yet you do not think it worth a thought! You come now and then to hear a sermon, but you hear without heart. You read the Scriptures occasionally, but you do not search them as for hidden treasure.

It is not your first objective in life to thoroughly understand and heartily to receive the Gospel which God has proclaimed—yet such ought to be the case. What, my Friend? Does your indifference say that the Grace of God is of no great value in your esteem? You do not think it worth the trouble of prayer, of Bible-reading and attention? The death of Christ is nothing to you—a very beautiful fact, no doubt—you know the story well, but you do not care enough about it to wish to be a partaker in its benefits? His blood may have power to cleanse from sin, but you do not need remission? His death may be the life of men, but you do not long to live by Him? To be saved by the atoning blood does not strike you as being half as important as to carry on your business at a profit and acquire a fortune for your family? By thus trifling with these precious things, you do, as far as you can, frustrate the Grace of God and make Christ to die in vain!

Another set of people who do this are those who have no sense of guilt. Perhaps they are naturally amiable, civil, honest and generous people and they think that these natural virtues are all that is needed. We have many such in whom there is much that is lovely, but the one thing necessary is lacking—they are not conscious that they ever did anything very wrong! They think themselves certainly as good as others and in some respects rather better. It is highly probable that you are as good as others and even better than others, but still, do you not see, my dear Friend, if I am addressing one such person, that if you are so good that you are to be saved by your goodness, you put the Grace of God out of court and make it vain? The whole have no need of the Physician—only they that are sick require His skill and, therefore, it was needless that Christ should die for such as you because you, in your own opinion, have done nothing worthy of death.

You claim that you have done nothing very bad and yet there is one thing in which you have grievously transgressed and I beg you not to be angry when I charge you with it. You are very bad because you are so proud as to think yourself righteous, though God has said that there is none righteous, no, not one! You tell your God that He is a liar! His Word accuses you and His Law condemns you but you will not believe Him and actually *boast* of having a righteousness of your own! This is high presumption and arrogant pride and may the Lord purge you from it! Will you lay this to heart and remember that if you have never been guilty of anything else, this is sin enough to make you mourn before the Lord day and night? You have, as far as you could, by your proud opinion of yourself made void the Grace of God and declared that Christ died in vain. Hide your face for shame and entreat for mercy for this glaring offense!

Another sort of people may fancy that they shall escape but we must now come home to *them*. Those who despair will often cry, “I know I cannot be saved except by Grace, for I am such a great sinner! But, alas, I am too great a sinner to be saved at all! I am too black for Christ to wash out my sins.” Ah, my dear Friend, though you know it not, you are making void the Grace of God by denying its power and limiting its might! You doubt the efficacy of the Redeemer’s blood and the power of the Father’s Grace. What? The Grace of God not able to save? Is not the Father of our Lord Jesus able to forgive sin? We joyfully sing—

***“Who is a pardoning God like Thee?***

***Or who has Grace so rich and free?”***  
And you dare say He cannot forgive you and this in the teeth of His many promises of mercy? He says, “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” “Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

You say that this is not true! Thus you frustrate the Grace of God and you make out that Christ died in vain, at least for you, for you say that He cannot cleanse you. Oh do not say this! Let not your unbelief give the lie to God. Oh, believe that He is able to save even *you* and freely, at this very moment, and put all your sin away and to accept you in Christ Jesus! Take heed of despondency, for if you do not trust Him, you will make void His Grace. And those, I think, commit this sin in a large measure, who make a mingle-mangle of the Gospel. I mean this—when we preach the Gospel we have only to say, “Sinners, you are guilty! You never can be anything else but guilty in and of yourselves—if that sin of yours is pardoned, it must be through an act of Sovereign Grace and not because of anything in you, or that can be done by you. Grace must be given to you because Jesus died and for no other reason and the way by which you can have that Grace is simply by trusting Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ you shall obtain full forgiveness.” This is pure Gospel.

If the man turns round and enquires, “Why do I have a right to believe in Christ?” If I tell him that he is warranted to believe in Christ because he feels a law-work within, or because he has holy desires, I have made a mess of it—I have put something of the man into the question and marred the glory of Grace. My answer is, “Man, your right to believe in Christ lies not in what you *are* or *feel*, but in God’s *command* to you *to believe* and in God’s *promise* which is made to every creature under Heaven that whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved.” This is our commission, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

If you are a creature, we preach that Gospel to you! Trust Christ and you are saved. Not because you are a sensible sinner, or a penitent sinner, or anything else, but simply because God, of His Free Grace, with no consideration rendered to Him on your part, but gratis and for nothing, freely forgives all your debts for the sake of Jesus Christ. Now I have not mangled the Gospel—there it is with nothing of the creature about it but the man’s faith and even that is the Holy Spirit’s gift! Those who mingle their, “ifs,” and, “buts,” and insist upon, “you must*do* this and *feel* that before you may accept Christ,” frustrate the Grace of God, in a measure, and do damage to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

And so, once more, to those who apostatize. Do I speak to any here who were once professors of religion—who once used to offer prayer in the assembly—who once walked as saints but now have gone back, breaking the Sabbath, forsaking the house of God and living in sin? You, my Friend, say by your course of life—“I had the Grace of God, but I do not care about it! It is worth nothing. I have rejected it, I have given it up! I have made it void! I have gone back to the world.” You do as good as say, “I did once trust in Jesus Christ, but He is not worth trusting.”

You have denied Him—you have sold your Lord and Master! I will not now go into the question as to whether you ever *were* sincere, though I believe you never were. But on your own showing such is your case. Take heed lest these two terrible crimes should rest upon you—that you do frustrate the Grace of God and make Christ to be dead in vain.

**III.**On my third point I shall carry with me the deep convictions and the joyful confidences of all true Believers. It is this, that NO TRUE BELIEVER WILL BE GUILTY OF THESE CRIMES. In his very soul he loathes these infamous sins. First of all, no believer in Christ can bear to think of frustrating of the Grace of God or the making it void. Come, now, honest hearts, I speak to you! Do you trust in Grace alone, or do you, in some measure, rest in yourselves? Do you, even in a small degree, depend upon your own feelings, your own faithfulness, your own repentance? I know you abhor the very thought! You have not even the shadow of a hope nor the semblance of a confidence in anything you ever were, or ever can be, or ever hope to be! You fling this away as a foul rag full of filth which you would hurl out of the universe if you could.

I acknowledge that though I have preached the Gospel with all my heart and glory in it, yet I cast my preaching away as dross and dung if I think of them as a ground of reliance! And though I have brought many souls to Christ, blessed be His name, I never dare, for one moment, to put the slightest confidence in that fact as to my own salvation, for I know that I, after having preached to others, may yet be a castaway. I cannot rest in a successful ministry, or an edified Church, but I repose alone in my Redeemer! What I say of myself I know that each one of you will say for himself. Your almsgivings, your prayers, your tears, your suffering persecution, your gifts to the Church, your earnest work in the Sunday school or elsewhere—did you ever *think* of putting these side by side with the *blood* of Christ as your hope?

No, you never dreamed of it! I am sure you never did and the mention of it is utterly loathsome to you, is it not? Grace, Grace, Grace is your only hope. Moreover, you have not only renounced all confidence in works, but you renounce it this day more heartily than ever before. The older you are and the more holy you become, the less do you think of trusting in yourself! The more we grow in Grace the more we grow in love with Grace—the more we search into our hearts and the more we know of the holy Law of God, the deeper is our sense of unworthiness and consequently the higher is our delight in rich, free, unmerited mercy—the free gift of the royal heart of God!

Tell me, does not your heart leap within you when you hear the Doctrines of Grace? I know there are some who never felt themselves to be sinners, who shift about as if they were sitting on thorns when I am preaching Grace and nothing else but Grace—but it is not so with you who are resting in Christ. “Oh, no,” you say, “ring that bell again, Sir! Ring that bell again! There is no music like it. Touch that string again, it is our favorite note!” When you get down in spirits and depressed, what sort of book do you like to read? Is it not a Book about the Grace of God? What do you turn to in the Scriptures? Do you not turn to the promises made to the guilty, the ungodly, the sinner? And do you not find that only in the Grace of God and only at the foot of the Cross is there any rest for you? I know it is so! Then you can rise up and say with Paul, “I do not frustrate the Grace of God. Some may, if they like, but God forbid that I should ever make it void, for it is all my salvation and all my desire.”

The true Believer is also free from the second crime—he does not make Christ to be dead in vain. No, no, no! He trusts in the death of Christ! He puts his sole and entire reliance upon the great Substitute who loved and lived and died for him! He does not dare to associate with the bleeding Sacrifice his poor bleeding heart, or his prayers, or his sanctification, or anything else. “None but Christ, none but Christ,” is his soul’s cry. He detests every proposal to mix anything of ceremony or of legal action with the finished work of Jesus Christ. The longer we live, I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters, the more we see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! We are struck with admiration at the wisdom of the way by which the Substitute was introduced—that God might smite sin and yet spare the sinner—we are lost in admiration at the matchless love of God, that He spared not His own Son!

We are filled with reverent adoration at the love of Christ, that when He knew the price of pardon was His blood, His pity never withdrew. What is more, we not only joy in Christ, but we feel an increasing oneness with Him. We did not know it at first, but we know it now, that we were crucified with Him, that we were buried with Him, that we rose again with Him! We are not going to have Moses for a ruler, or Aaron for a priest, for Jesus is both King and Priest to us! Christ is in us and we are in Christ and we are complete in Him and nothing can be tolerated as an aid to the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord! We are one with Him and being one with Him we realize more, every day, that He did NOT die in vain! His death has bought us real life! His death has already set us free from the bondage of sin and has even now brought us deliverance from the fear of eternal wrath.

His death has bought us eternal life, has bought us sonship and all the blessings that go with it which the Fatherhood of God takes care to bestow! The death of Christ has shut the gates of Hell for us and opened the gates of Heaven! The death of Christ has worked mercies for us—not visionary or imaginary but real and true—which this very day we enjoy and so we are in no danger of thinking that Christ died in vain. It is our joy to hold two great principles which I will leave with you, hoping that you will suck marrow and fatness out of them. These are the two principles. The Grace of God *cannot* be frustrated and Jesus Christ died not in vain. These two principles, I think, lie at the bottom of all sound doctrine. The Grace of God cannot be frustrated! Its eternal purpose will be fulfilled, its Sacrifice and seal shall be effectual—the chosen ones of Grace shall be brought to Glory!

There shall be no failures as to God’s plan in any point whatever! At the last, when all shall be summed up, it shall be seen that Grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life and the top stone shall be brought out with shouts of “Grace, Grace unto it.” And as Grace cannot be frustrated, so Christ did not die in vain! Some seem to think that there were purposes in Christ’s heart which will never be accomplished. We have not so learned Christ. What He died to do shall be done—those He bought, He will have—those He redeemed shall be free. There shall be no failure of reward for Christ’s wondrous work! He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

On these two principles I throw back my soul to rest. Believing in His Grace that Grace shall never fail me. “My Grace is sufficient for you,” says the Lord and so shall it be. Believing in Jesus Christ, His death must save me. It cannot be, O Calvary, that you should fail! O Gethsemane, that your bloody sweat should be in vain. Through Divine Grace, resting in our Savior’s precious blood, we must be saved! Joy and rejoice with me and go your way to tell it to others! God bless you in so doing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1546 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MEN BEWITCHED  
NO. 1546

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth,  
crucified among you?”  
Galatians 3:1.*

WITH very great enthusiasm the Galatians received the Gospel when Paul preached it to them. They seem to have been a very warm-hearted but fickle people and Paul found to his great grief that while he was away from them, certain false teachers came in and turned them aside from the Gospel which he had delivered to them. He spoke out very plainly about the matter. In this verse he uses very strong terms, while he says to them—“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?” I do not know that any such witchery has fallen upon any of you, but I do know that, being men, we are all subject to the same dangers and I know, also, that there is a witchery in the very air at this time so that many are to be found throughout the Churches of this land to whom these words might be justly spoken.

We can only hope to escape this evil which Paul so severely condemns by the use of right cautionary means. It is only, in fact, as the Holy Spirit shall keep us that we shall be preserved from the fascinations of error and kept true to the grand old Gospel of the blessed God. At this time I shall very briefly speak, in the first place, upon the subtle danger which is hinted at here—“Who has bewitched you?” Secondly, at more length I shall speak upon the blessed preservative—there is no way of being kept from this witchery like having Christ Jesus, evidently crucified, set forth among us. And, thirdly, a few words, in closing, upon the supreme folly of any who, having tried this Divine preservative, nevertheless become bewitched by error.

**I.**First, then, let us think of THE SUBTLE DANGER which is always around us. It was hard work to preach the Gospel, at first, among the heathen. Men had to lay down their lives to do it. They had to propound new things which the heathen mind did not readily receive. But, by the power of the Spirit of God, converts were made and Churches were formed. And now came another difficulty. Even those that were converted, or appeared to be so, became suddenly, as it were, bewitched with error of one kind or another, just as in families children are suddenly taken ill with certain complaints which seem incidental to childhood. If parents had never heard of such things before, they would be astonished! They would suppose that they must lose their children when such unaccountable diseases suddenly appeared in them and yet they survive.

In the family of Christ certain epidemics break out at times. We cannot tell why they come when they do and, at first, perhaps, we are puzzled and perplexed to think that such diseases should come at all. But they do come and, therefore, it is well to be on our guard against them. Paul calls it being *bewitched* because these people fell into strange error—error which had no argument to back it—error surprising and startling. He seems to say, “I cannot make it out. I cannot understand how you should be thus misled.” In Paul’s day the error was generally that of Judaism. They wanted to go back to circumcision and to the old sacrifices of the Law. Paul was indignant enough about this. “I testify,” he said, “to everyone of you, that if he is circumcised, he is a debtor to keep the whole Law and he has fallen from Grace. If you go back to the old beggarly elements of Judaism, you are leaving Christ and rejecting Christ and imperiling your souls.”

He declares that he could not understand how they should wish to do it. He calls it witchery, for in his day it was believed that men could cast an evil spell upon one another and thus work evil upon their fellow men. It seemed to Paul to be something like that—as if the devil, himself, were in it and came and turned men away from Christ Jesus to go back to trusting in the Law and its obsolete ceremonies. And it was not long before Paul found another kind of error in the Church. There came in among the most humble Believers certain men of education who thought themselves highly intelligent—men who knew something about Socrates and Plato—and they said, “These doctrines are too plain. The poor people understand them and they come into the Church, but no doubt they have a deeper meaning intended only for the initiated.”

So they began to spiritualize everything and, in the process, they spirited away the very Gospel itself! Paul could not endure it. He said that though he or an angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel than that which he had preached, it would be a cursed deed! Whether it were Judaism, or Gnosticism, he smote it heavily and said to those who fell into it, “Who has bewitched you?” You who read Church history know that in later ages the Church fell into Arianism. There were great disputes about the Deity of Christ and the air, for a long time, was full of that deadly plague. When that battle was over and such men as Athanasius had settled the question of our Redeemer’s Godhead, then came up all the superstitions of Rome—that awful midnight, black with murky clouds, which covered the Church for ages.

Indeed, if we look back on history, it seems like a witchcraft, that men who had the Gospel preached among them in all its glorious simplicity, should, after all, submit their minds to such debasing falsehoods as those of old Rome. They prostrated themselves before images of wood and stone after the heathen manner, even as their pagan forefathers did! At this present time it is a marvel to some of us how the Churches have been bewitched again. When I was a boy, I recollect hearing Mr. Jay say, “Puseyism is a lie!” I remember the words coming just like that from his reverend lips and everybody, or nearly everybody, fought with him. It was an amazing event if a high Church or ritualistic place was set up. Everybody was astonished at it and, if you said, “This is the Church of England and this is according to her Prayer-Book,” everybody said you were uncharitable and that it was not so. They pitied our fears and said that a dozen men were going towards Rome and that was all.

Look now, Sirs—these things are openly done! Our parish Churches are commonly turned into mass houses and the Church of England is slightly to be distinguished, in many parishes, from the Church of Rome! And yet nobody is astonished! And, if we make a remark about it, we are set down as bigoted. Who has bewitched this Protestant land? With Smithfield scarcely yet swept of the ashes of her martyrs, they set up the crucifix again! What would Oliver Cromwell say if he and his Ironsides could come back to see what they are making of this land? I know some strong things he would say and, as I cannot speak such vigorous words as he would have uttered, I leave the subject with words borrowed from Paul which well suit the case—“O foolish Englishmen, who has bewitched you, that you should thus turn aside?”

Nor is this all. You see this witchery in another way among our *dissenting* Churches. At a time not yet forgotten Unitarianism and Socinianism gradually crept into Non-conforming congregations and the pulpits lost their testimony for Christ. The Meeting Houses were deserted and true religion seemed dying out of the land. Then came Whitefield and Wesley and all their troop of Methodists and the blessed flame that was almost quenched burned up again and we, of this generation, have said one to another, “That experiment will never be repeated—the Non-conformist Churches will never go in that direction again—they know better! They see the ill-effect of this modern teaching and they will now stick to the grand old Gospel.”

So I dreamed! But I dream in that way no longer, for scarcely do I look anywhere but I find the Gospel of Christ diluted, the milk of the Word adulterated and the grand Gospel, as Luther and Calvin would have thundered it out, seldom enough to be heard! O foolish Non-conformists, who has bewitched *you* that you should not obey the Truth of God, but should seek after this novelty and the other—this refinement and the other—and let your God and Savior go? As for us, if we stand alone, God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is the peril.

**II.**Our second head is THE ONLY PRESERVATIVE. The Apostle says that the Galatians had had Christ set forth before their eyes crucified among them. Well then, if you want to be kept right and sound in the faith, the first thing is to get the right Subject fixed in the center of your hearts—Jesus Christ Crucified! Paul says that he preached that. He set Jesus forth. Whatever else he might not have made clear, he did set forth the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Beloved, settle this in your soul, that your *only* hope and the main Subject of your meditation shall always be Jesus Christ! Whatever I do not know, O my Lord, help me to know You! Whatever I do not believe, enable me to believe You and to trust You and to take Your every Word as the very Truth of God which it is!

Beloved, away with the religion that has little of Christ in it. Christ must be Alpha and Omega, First and Last. The religion that is made up of our works and our feelings and our willings is a lie! Our religion must have Christ for the Foundation, Christ as the Cornerstone, Christ as the Top Stone! And if we are not based and bottomed, grounded and settled upon Him, our religion is in vain. Paul wonders that any to whom Christ has been the chief thing should ever have been bewitched and I think that if Christ is really such to *your* souls, you will not turn aside through error, but Christ Crucified will hold you fast.

But Paul says not only that he had preached Christ to them, but that he had set Him forth, by which I understand that he had taken pains to make everything about Christ clear to them. He had preached His Person as Man and God. He had preached His work as the atoning Sacrifice. He had preached Him as risen and pleading before the Throne of God. He had preached Him as our Substitute. He had made this the main doctrine— that if we are saved, we are saved by the Righteousness of Christ and our sin is put away because Christ bore it in our place and suffered the penalty due for it that the Justice of God might be satisfied and we might be saved. That is what He means by Christ Crucified.

He had gone into details on this point and set forth the glorious doctrines which cluster about the Cross. Brothers and Sisters, if you want to be kept from the modern witcheries, think much of Christ and go into detail about Him. Be familiar with His Divine Person. Be well acquainted with His relationships and His offices—know what He is in the Covenant of Grace, what He is to the Father, what He is to you! Oh seek to know Him! He yet surpasses knowledge, but be students of Christ! Do not have a mere superficial knowledge of Him, but seek to know Christ and to be found in Him. This will keep you free from error.

When the Apostle says that He set Christ forth, he means, next, that he had done it with great plainness. The Greek word has to do with a program or a proclamation. It is as good as to say, “I have set Christ before you as plainly as if I had printed a great bill and stuck it up before your eyes. I have put the letters down in capitals, as a King, when he makes a proclamation, puts it on the walls and calls attention to it. So,” says Paul, “I have set forth Christ before you. I have not talked of Him in a mystical way, so that you did not know what I meant, but I have set Him forth. I have said of Him that He suffered in our place and was made a curse for us, as it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.’” Paul set forth Jesus plainly.

Now, you know the way in which Jesus Christ is preached by some. It was well described by old Dr. Duncan when he said, “They preach that the death of Christ, in some way or other, had some sort of connection, in some way or other, with the salvation of men.” Yes, that is it—misty, cloudy, foggy—a bottle of smoke! We do not preach Christ in that way, but we just say this, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And because He was oppressed and He was afflicted in our place, therefore does God most freely remit the sin of Believers and bid them go their way. Substitution—may we never stammer over *that*—Christ in the sinner’s place!

Beloved, if you will get a hold of that Truth and get it well worked into your soul, you will be more than a match for the ritualism or rationalism of this age. Give up that doctrine? The man who has once drunk it in and knows its sweetness cannot give it up, for he gets to feel that, having once believed it, it acts in him as a detector by which he discovers what is false doctrine and it gives him a taste which makes false doctrine loathsome to him so that he cries, “Away with it!” If anything contrary to this comes before him, he does not timidly say, “Everybody has a right to his opinion.” No! He says, “Yes, they may have a right to their opinion and so have I to mine and my opinion is that any opinion which takes away from the glory of Christ’s substitutionary Sacrifice is a detestable opinion.” Get the real Atonement of Christ thoroughly into your soul and you will not be bewitched!

Nor is this all. Paul says that Christ was set forth crucified visibly among them. Did you ever see Christ in this way? I do not ask whether you ever saw a *vision*. Who wishes for that? I do not ask whether your imagination was so worked upon that you *thought* you saw the Savior. There would be no particular use in that, for thousands *did* actually see Him on the Cross and they thrust out their tongues at Him and perished in their sins! But let me tell you that it is one of the most strengthening things to our piety to get to feel, by *faith,* as though we did behold the Savior! We do not expect to see Him until He comes, yet when we have been alone in our chamber we have as much realized His Presence without the use of our eyes as if we had literally seen Him.

He has been certainly *sensibly* crucified before us, for this is the point. He says that he had set forth Christ with such vividness—he had wordpainted so thoroughly well, he had spoken so plainly and so simply—that they seemed to say, “We see it! Christ in our place! Christ bleeding for our sin!” They seemed to see Him as if He were before them in their midst. My dear Friends, do not say, “Christ died on Calvary. That is thousands of miles off.” I know that He did, but what does it matter where He died as to locality? He loved you and gave Himself for you. Let Him be to you as though He were crucified at Newington—and as though His Cross were in the middle of this Tabernacle!

“Oh, but He died 1900 years ago.” I know He did, but the efficacy of His death is a thing of today! “He died unto sin once”—and that once pours the splendor of its efficacy all down the ages and the thing for you to do is to feel as if you saw Him dying *now*, on the Cross *now*—with you standing at the foot of the Cross and looking up and seeing Him looking down from that Cross and saying, “I did all this for *you*.” Cannot you ask the Lord to make it as vivid as that to you? I need, while I am looking upon this great throng, to forget you all and to see Jesus standing here with the nail prints! Oh, if I could see Him, how humbly I would throw myself at His feet! With what love would I embrace Him! With what reverence would I adore Him!

But, my Master, I am so sure of the fact that You *did* die in my place and that my sins were laid on You, that even now I see You discharging all my debt and bearing all my curse. Though You are gone to Glory, yet I vividly realize that You were here. This has become a fact to me. Whenever you get into company where they are talking about the Doctrines of Grace and sneering about them and whenever you get into another class of company where they say, “Away with your simple worship of God! You must have priests and incense and altars and all”—do not argue with them. Get alone and ask to see Jesus Christ over again. See if there is anything of popish finery about Him! See if there is anything of this philosophy, falsely so called, about Him!

You will determine as soon as you have seen Him that you will call everything else vanity and lies and bind His Gospel to your heart! The Cross is the school of orthodoxy. Endeavor to stay there! While I have been alone on the Continent I have, in my quiet moments, had realizations of my Master’s Presence and then I have wished that I could borrow the wings of a dove, so that I might, then and there, stand up and talk to you. I have been very sick and full of pain and depressed in spirit and I have judged myself to be, of all men, most unworthy and I judged truly. I still stand to that judgment. I felt myself only worthy to be shaken like dust from off the feet of my Lord and cast into the bottomless pit forever.

Then it was that my Substitute was my hope and in my lonely chamber at Mentone I clung to His dear garment! I looked into His wounds! I trusted myself with Him, again, and I know that I am a saved man! I tell you there is no salvation in any other, but only in Jesus! You will not be led away to any other doctrine if you will return continually to this Truth of God. Some men want a sound pummeling with affliction to get them to love Christ. And some old professors need a touch of poverty, sometimes, or a little affliction, or a rack of rheumatism and that brings them to their bearings and they begin to cry out after realities and get rid of whims and fancies!

When it comes to close dealings between God and your soul—and death stares you in the face—nothing will do but a crucified Redeemer and no confidence will do but a sinner’s childlike reliance upon the finished work of Him who suffered in our place! I speak strongly, but I feel a thousand times more strongly than I can speak.

**III.**The last point is THE SUPREME FOLLY of those who would leave Jesus for anything else. Suppose that a man should once have simply trusted in Jesus Christ and have realized the death of Christ and have come into real contact with the dying, bleeding Master. And suppose that, after that, he should begin to put his confidence in priests and sacraments. Or, suppose that he should, after that, put on his lavender kid gloves and become a philosopher—what would he be? Now, do not tell anybody, I pray you. Keep it to yourselves! The Apostle Paul did not affect the manners of a gentleman, but he spoke very plainly, indeed. Do not tell your learned neighbors that I said it, because I did not say it—it is Paul that said it! He says that a man who should do that would be A FOOL!

“Oh, *foolish* Galatians!” What are you saying, Paul? They have only been decorating their service—surely you cannot object to that! Don’t you know, Paul, that the old Jewish priest used to wear a splendid breastplate worked with jewels and he had an ephod adorned with bells and pomegranates? Surely in the worship of God *we* ought to do things decorously and properly! And on this plea these Galatians have exceedingly decked themselves out. “They are foolish Galatians!” Paul says. Very rude of him, mark you—very rude of him! But I shall not attempt to excuse him, for I fully endorse his verdict.

But here is a gentleman who has been reading Plato and, after reading Plato, he has been reading the words of Jesus Christ and he says that they do not mean what the common people think they mean—he says there is a very mysterious *philosophical* sense hidden within them. For instance, when Jesus Christ says, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” it does not mean at all what the words say! It means that they shall ultimately be restored. Now, Paul, this gentleman is a philosopher—what do *you* say of him? He says, “He is foolish!” That is all he says and all that he needs to say, for learned folly is folly at its height! “Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?”

Why do we think these people foolish? Because we should be foolish, ourselves, if we were to do the same! A good many years ago, when I was about 15 or 16 years of age, I needed a Savior and I heard the Gospel preached by a poor man who said, in the name of Jesus—“Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” It was very plain English and I understood it and obeyed it and found rest! I owe all my happiness, since then, to the same plain doctrine. Now, suppose that I were to say, “I have read a great many books and there are a great many people willing to hear me. I really could not preach such a commonplace Gospel as I did at the first. I must put it in a sophisticated way so that none but the elite can understand me”?

I would be—what would I be? I would be a FOOL, written in large capital letters! I would be *worse* than that—I should be a traitor to my God, for if I was saved by a simple Gospel, then I am bound to preach that same simple Gospel till I die so that others, too, may be saved by it! When I cease to preach salvation by faith in Jesus, put me into a lunatic asylum, for you may be sure that my mind is gone. There are hundreds of you who feel perfectly happy in Christ. You believe that all your sins are washed away, that you are justified by the Righteousness of Christ and accepted in the Beloved. Now, suppose that you give that up and say, “Instead of believing in Christ’s dying once and making an Atonement, I am going to believe in the perpetual sacrifice offered by a human being in the ‘mass’”?

You would be very foolish! Suppose that, instead of trusting in Jesus Christ for perfect pardon and justification, so that you know that there is no condemnation to you because you are in Christ Jesus, you go back to works and say, “I am going to work out my own salvation by my own good works”? You would be foolish to the last degree and you would soon discover the fact by the misery that would come over your spirit. Look again! When you have lived nearest to Christ and trusted most in Him, have you not felt most desire after holiness? Now, tell me, if you have tried the modern views, what state of mind have you been in with regard to your daily walk?

I will tell you. You could, with those modern views, frequent the theater and the music hall and feel quite easy. And you could do a sharp trick in business and feel comfortable. But you know that when you have seen Christ you cannot do anything of the kind! You are sanctified by His Presence. You feel a strong desire after perfect purity. You feel a horror and a dread of sin. You walk tenderly and cautiously and you are bowed down by distress of mind at the thought of your imperfections. Judge, then, which must be the right doctrine—that which makes you most holy must certainly be true! But if you turn away from your Lord, whose very Presence breathes sanctification and communion with Him is sure to bring holiness, you will be a fool! And we shall have to say, “Oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?”

During the last few meetings that we have had here, my dear Brothers Fullerton and Smith have been preaching the Gospel—the straight-out Gospel of Jesus Christ. And at one meeting, held afterwards, there were scores of persons who rose up to tell of what that ministry had done for their souls by God the Holy Spirit. There were thieves reclaimed, drunks reclaimed, harlots reclaimed, great sinners reclaimed! Well, now, suppose that, after all, some of you ladies and gentlemen should say, “We see what the Gospel can do, but we are going to try something else”? You would be fools! I am always ready to try a new machine—we will try the electric light one of these days instead of gas when we are sure of it—but suppose that it should all go out and leave us in the dark! I will wait till the invention has been tested!

So it may happen with the new religious lights that men bring up which are like dim rush lights compared with the blazing sun of Gospel Truth— we are *not* going to try anything new to the risk of our souls. We are going to keep to the old, old Gospel until it is worn out. When it gets worn out and will not save any more and will not comfort any more and will not draw us near to God any more, *then* will be the time for us to think of something fresh. But as that has not come to pass, I beg to say that I will drive another nail into my old colors and fasten them anew to the old mast!

What I have preached among you these 26 years I will preach again, for I am determined to know nothing among men but Christ and Him Crucified! And may neither the preacher become a fool, nor any of his hearers become fools, by being bewitched, so that they forsake the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ! Oh that you all knew its power and were all saved by it! God grant that you may be, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1705 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HEARING OF FAITH  
NO. 1705

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1883, BY C, H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“This only would I learn of you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?”  
Galatians 3:2.~~***

A GREAT delusion is upon the heart of man as to his salvation. His ways are perverse. He does not love the Law of God, no, his mind is opposed to it and yet he sets up to be its advocate. When he understands the spirituality and severity of the Law, he reckons it to be a sore burden and yet, when the Gospel is preached and set forth as the gift of Sovereign Grace and he is bid, simply, to accept it by an act of faith in Christ Jesus, the man professes great concern about the Law, lest it should be made void by the freeness of Grace! He takes the broken pieces of the two tables of the Law and hurls them at the Cross! It is not that man loves the Law of God, but that he does not love the God of the Law! Hence he will resort to any pretense to oppose that way of salvation which God has appointed.

Doubtless, if it had been possible for the Lord to have set forth another way of salvation, man would have opposed that, also, for he is determined to walk contrary to God. Be that as it may, there is a constant animosity in the minds of unregenerate men against the way of salvation by faith in Christ—and to oppose it, they set up the pretense of salvation by the works of the Law. Brothers and Sisters, in all our hearts there is this natural enmity to God and to the sovereignty of His Grace. Therefore it is that Believers have often to complain of the difficulties of faith. Faith in itself is, or ought to be, the easiest thing in the world, for a creature to believe in its Creator, for a child to believe in his father, ought to be the simplest and most natural thing in the world! But by reason of the corruption that remains, even, in the regenerate, there is always a struggling against this simple way of faith.

There are times with the best man, when, in recollection of his many sins, Conscience says, “How can you believe that you are justified and accepted while so much of evil is found in you?” Unless we cleave to the promise of God and to His free mercy in Christ Jesus it will, then, go hard with us. The soul of the most sincere and upright man may be driven to despair by a sight of his own imperfections unless he clings to that righteousness by which sinners are justified through faith in Christ Jesus. Beloved, if this warfare is discovered, even, in the minds of those who are born-again, we must not wonder that it rages in the unregenerate!

One would have thought that the moment we preached salvation by faith every sinner would have leaped up and accepted it. It is so simple, so easy, that surely every man would wish in this way to be forgiven and justified! Instead of which, all the reasoning, all the thoughtfulness, yes, all the *cunning* of unregenerate human nature is stirred up to fight against the method of deliverance by faith in Christ Jesus. “It is too good to be true,” says one. Another cries, “If this is preached, it will lead men to think little of moral excellence.” A third finds, in the Doctrines of Grace, inducements to inaction and so on, without end. These quibblings take hundreds of shapes, but, after all, they come to this—proud sinners must dictate to their offended Lord and be forgiven on their own terms.

It would appear that God does not know the best way of saving men and men are so wise that they amend His methods! Is not this a refinement of blasphemy? It is a hideous farce to see a rebellious sinner suddenly become jealous about good works and greatly concerned for public morality! Does it not make laughter in Hell to see licentious men censuring the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus and quibbling at free forgiveness because it might make men less mindful of purity? It makes one sick to see the hypocrisy of legalists! The reason of this contention lies in the fact that man is not only poor, but proud. He is not only guilty, but conceited, so that he will not humble himself to be saved upon terms of Divine charity. He will not consent to believe God—he prefers to believe in the proud falsehoods of his own heart—which delude him into the flattering hope that he may *merit* eternal life!

Against this wicked spirit our text enters the fight. Let us see how it conducts the combat. The argument of the text is a very plain and powerful one. Paul puts it thus—“The Holy Spirit has been received by you Galatians. How did you receive the Holy Spirit—by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?” They were bound to admit, each one for himself, that they received the Holy Spirit by faith and by no other means! Now, the Holy Spirit is the choicest of all the gifts of God which are received into the soul—it is by the Spirit the work of the Lord Jesus is known and received! The Holy Spirit is, Himself, the seal of Divine favor and the token that we are at peace with God. I might almost say that the reception of the Holy Spirit is salvation—for when He enters into us, we are saved from death in sin, from the love of sin, from the power of sin and from the terror of sin!

When He reigns in the heart, all the Divine Graces of a perfect character attend upon Him as courtiers upon a king. He becomes the source of life, light, love and liberty to our souls—and He even sanctifies our bodies. Know you not that your bodies are the temples of God when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in them? To whom, then, the Holy Spirit is given, salvation is given in the highest sense! But how is that Holy Spirit received? The question is soon answered. He is not received by the works of the Law, but by the *hearing of faith*. I am going to handle this fact, first, as an argument of experience for all the people of God and, secondly, as an argument, at least, of observation for those who are seeking after Christ. May the Holy Spirit graciously aid us in our discourse.

**I.**First, then, here is AN ARGUMENT OF EXPERIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Before I dwell upon the personal experience of Believers who are here present, I would remind you of the experience of the Church of God as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is a confirmation of the correct answer to my text. The disciples were met together after our Lord’s ascension and the Holy Spirit descended upon them—but in what way? Simply by their obeying the command of the Lord Jesus, “who commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, says He, you have heard of Me.”

The gift was received by the hearing of faith, which led them to united prayer and waiting. They performed no ceremonies and entered upon no labors—the watchword was, “Tarry you till you are endowed with power from on high.” The power came that they might work and not because they *had* worked! The gift of the Spirit came according to promise and *not* according to works! Very speedily the Spirit of God fell upon the people and 3,000 of them were converted and baptized. How came the Spirit of God upon Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and so forth? Was it by the works of the Law?

No, Beloved! Peter thus preached (Acts 2:38)—“Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” When the thousands believed in Christ Jesus and confessed their faith by Baptism, the Holy Spirit was given them. So was it also in Samaria—“When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” And then we read that the Apostle Peter went to them and these Believers received the Holy Spirit—certainly not by the works of the Law, but by the hearing of faith were they thus blessed! Turn to the story of Cornelius. That good man had abounded in almsgiving and prayer—and yet the Holy Spirit fell not upon him.

But, when the “hearing of faith” came, and they were assembled in the house with one accord to listen to Peter, then the Holy Spirit fell upon all them that heard the Word of God. “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles, also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit! For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?”

Was it not the same when Paul went out and preached among the Gentiles? It was, indeed, so—startlingly so—that the news came to the Hebrew Christians who were at Jerusalem and no small dissension and disputation was the consequence! Here had been no circumcision, no proselyting to Judaism, no observation of any part of the Mosaic ritual and yet they heard that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the Gentiles—and they had not even *known* the Law, much less fulfilled it! It needed all of Peter’s influence to stem the flood. Hear how he puts it—“God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel and believe. And God, which knows the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us.” The Holy Spirit was received by believing Gentiles in every place where Paul had preached and, therefore, he could refer to these Galatians and use their experience to correct their errors. The fact that the Holy Spirit is given to the hearing of faith and not as a *reward* of works, runs like a silver thread through the whole of the Acts of the Apostles! Why, then, should men look to the works of the Law for that which was never given except to faith? What an infatuation to look to the mirage when a real well is open at their feet!

Now I come to your own experience. You, beloved Friends, if you are, indeed, in Christ Jesus, have received the Holy Spirit! But how? Let us go over the list of His operations upon your minds. You received enlightenment by His means, by which you were led to understand the way of salvation and to behold the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Did you attain to that enlightenment by the works of the Law? Was it so in any one case? It has been my privilege to know many of you and to remember your confessions of faith—you told me that when you were seeking salvation by your own works you were blind and saw not the Light of God. The more you strove and the more you struggled, the more intense the midnight grew about you until you well-near despaired!

Light came by a look at the Crucified! It came only by the hearing of faith! After that, you received peace, which peace, I trust, you enjoy this morning—“The peace of God which passes all understanding.” But did you receive that peace while you were trusting in ceremonies, in baptism, or in the Lord’s Supper, or in your own works? I know you did not, for true peace of conscience comes not in at that door! Did you obtain peace while you tried to repent so much, to weep so much, to feel so much, or to do so much? No, Brothers and Sisters, not an atom of peace ever came to your spirit until you looked away from yourself to the Lord Jesus, of whom you heard that He was able to save even the chief of sinners—and in whom you, therefore, by the Grace of God, believed! When faith came, peace grew out of it as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Since then, you have received the Holy Spirit to help you in your sanctification, but you have obtained no sanctification apart from believing. If you have reached after sanctification by your own efforts, made in unbelief, you have never succeeded. Unbelief works towards sin and never towards sanctification! Our good works are *fruits* of sanctification, not *causes* of it, and if we put the fruit where the root should be, we greatly err. If you have gone out to fight against a temptation in your own strength, have you ever returned a conqueror? It has been written of all other Believers, “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb,” and this is true of you, also. Sanctification does not come to us from self-reliance, but as a work of the Spirit received by faith in Christ. Believing in Him, He is “made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”

You have had besides, dear Friends, another gift of the Holy Spirit, namely, that of communion with God. But did you ever commune with the holy God on the footing of your own goodness? Never! Abraham never spoke with Jehovah on legal terms, for when he interceded with the Lord, he said, “I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord—I that am but dust and ashes.” Yet he spoke with God in wondrous nearness and that is the point of it—to be dust and ashes in your own sight—and yet to commune with God as a friend! This is the daring of faith! This the Lord delights in! David said, “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You: You have held me by my right hand.” A beast in his own esteem, and yet upheld by God, Himself, and allowed to live in favored fellowship with Him!

Dear Friends, there is no communion with God except by faith, without which we cannot ever please God. The favorites of Heaven are, in every case, men who believe in God! Faith has the golden key of the ivory palaces. Faith opens the secret chambers of communion to those who love her. The works of the Law bring no nearness to God, in token whereof, none might come near to Sinai and if so much as a *beast* touched the mountain, it must be stoned or thrust through with a dart. And you, dear Friends, have received the Holy Spirit, often, as your Helper in prayer— “The Spirit also helps our infirmity.” And I am sure it never was by the works of the Law. When infirmity has stopped your prayers and you could not cry as you would, then you have had no room to boast of good works—and yet then the Spirit has made “intercession for you with groans that could not be uttered.” Your infirmity made you feel that it was by Grace, and by Grace, alone, that you were helped in your time of need.

Now, as to the Holy Spirit’s office of sealing the soul and working full assurance in the heart—as to the Holy Spirit’s being the earnest of the future Glory, the pledge of joys to come—in all these, Grace reigns, and not merit! He that dwells in the least degree upon any phantom merit of his own has no earnest of the inheritance whatever! In fact, for him there is no inheritance, since an inheritance does not come by works. Neither has he that trusts in his works any pledge of joys to come, for he does not know that he has done enough to secure them. Neither can he have any comfortable rest in God, for his work is not finished and, therefore, he cannot rest. You know it, you that have toiled to save yourselves! Every Christian here must confess, “It is even so—we have received everything by faith and nothing by merit.”

Well, then, the inference is this—do not pump a dry well! If there is a fountain that is always flowing and overflowing, keep to it. Do not commit the double evil of forsaking the fountain of Living Water and hewing out for yourselves broken cisterns. Wait at that door which you have received everything as yet and do not go where you have received nothing except conviction and condemnation! Look not to Moses to bring you into Canaan—that can only be done by Joshua Jesus. Now, mark this inference—let every child of God ponder it—keep to “the hearing of faith.” When you are under a sense of backsliding; when you feel unworthy to be called God’s child; when you have erred and strayed from His ways like a lost sheep, do not rush like a madman to the Law, for that would be to leap into the fire! But say, “Lord, I believe in You. As a sinner I trust the sinner’s Substitute.”

Whether you did truly come to Christ at the first, or not, is a point which you need not discuss, but begin again! Take with you, words, and come, by faith, to Jesus, and say, “Heal my backsliding. Receive me graciously and love me freely.” By faith we can be restored, but never by doubting and despairing. We can only come to Christ by faith at first, and we can only return to Him in the same way! If you begin to doubt the mercy and love of God to you, you will backslide more and more! Your hope lies in holding on to this—“Be I what I may, yet God has not changed and there is still forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. Therefore I will go with the language of the 51st Psalm upon my tongue and the penitence of David in my heart, and I will say, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.’”

Stick to your faith in Christ! Do not think that the greatness of your sin exceeds His atoning merit! Do not doubt but that He will still cleanse you and love you as before! Suppose you have not backslidden, but yet you are in the presence of a tremendous inward conflict. I will suppose that you are led to question whether you are the children of God at all, and persuaded to doubt your sonship. Now, be resolved to hold on to your faith in your heavenly Father! The devil is saying to you, “*If* you are the son of God.” Do not yield to his “if.” This is the way in which he attacked your Savior in the wilderness! A question about our sonship is the very point of the devil’s sword and it is dipped in deadly poison—therefore guard yourself with that Word of God, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.”

Say, “I believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, who died for the ungodly, and in Him I am assured of being a child of God.” You cannot resist temptation by doubting! Doubting is weakness—in *believing* is your might. “How can I believe,” asks one. The elect of God believe—those who are born from above believe their Father’s Word. If you can believe, you shall win great victories, but if you cast away your confidence, the battle is already lost. Above all, or over all, carry the shield of faith! Be sure to do this in the evil day when sin prevails. Is this too hard for you? What? Has it come to this, that when you feel you are a saint you can *then* trust to Christ? That is, you can trust Him when you can do without Him! Poor sham of faith! The genuine faith is a *sinner’s* faith which trusts the Savior when signs, evidences and marks are all hidden—and sin and temptation hold the upper seats.

To believe that I, a sinner, am forgiven by the free Grace of God—that I, a poor, imperfect being, am yet accepted of God—this is faith! May we have power to trust the Lord Jesus in earnest; to trust Him with real sin and real unworthiness. Do this, dear Friends, with regard to the whole of your life’s struggle. Some begin their religious life in the Spirit by faith, but they fancy that the rest of their spiritual life will have to be by works. They forget that the just shall *live* by faith. Those who say that though they are children of God, they may perish, after all, have not the true Gospel ring about them. If they are children of God, can they perish? How? Why? “Well, we must be watchful and prayerful.” Precisely so! But is there no provision made to secure that you shall be watchful and prayerful? If not, then I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, you will never get to Heaven!

You will fail in this watchfulness of yours and then where are you? My hope of Heaven lies in the belief that the Lord Jesus has redeemed me and will keep me! He will make me watchful and prayerful and work in me, by His Spirit, all else that is essential to my safety. “I know whom I have believed,” and I am not afraid to add, “I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.” Brothers and Sisters, it is by such faith that we receive the Spirit—not by legal works and fears. At this present moment you are saved by faith, alone, are you not? Yes. Then I would persuade you to extend that faith over the whole area of your life. Believe for *final* preservation. Believe for *complete* salvation. Is it not written “He that believes on Him has *everlasting life*”? Can that life which is ever*l*asting come to an end? Can eternal life expire? “Faithful is He that has called you, who also will do it.”

“Oh,” you say, “I am half afraid to believe so bravely, for it might make me careless.” This is a mistake—faith works by love, it never tends to sloth. My dear Friend, if you look to you*r*self in any degree your foot is beginning to slip. Put the future where you put the past, namely, into the hands of Him that is able to keep you from falling! Believe in Jesus for a life as well as for an hour, and He will keep you with spotless garments to the end! Stand on the sure rock of the Lord’s finished work and not on the dubious ground of your own carefulness. Works done by the efforts of our own strength are poor things, but the work of the Grace of God upon our spirit is precious. Let all be of Grace and nothing of self! The two will no more go together than oil and water will mix. Do not try to trust partly in Christ and partly in self—as well yoke an archangel with an ant, or a cherub with a cricket! Salvation is of the Lord, alone, from first to last!

Brothers and Sisters, let us keep in this condition when we are comparing ourselves with other saints of God. I sometimes read biographies which make me cover my face for shame because I fall so far short of the attainments of certain Believers. This humbling is good for us. What ought we to do when we feel it? To begin to doubt the Lord and imagine that the Lord Jesus cannot or will not save us? Far from it! Faith should *rise* by observing what the Lord has done for other poor sinners like ourselves, for He is able to do the same for us. Remember that the safety of the weak and of the strong Believer rests upon the same foundation!

This may be seen in a figure. On board one of the fine steamboats which flit between England and America I see a strong, hardy, vigorous man. Will he get to America safely? Yes, if the *ship* does. But look, yonder is a little child which cannot walk and has to be carried in its mother’s arms. Will it reach America safely? Yes, if the *ship* does. Both the robust man and the little infant, all being well, will reach their journey’s end—*if the ship does*. Their safety lies in the same place. Their *condition* does not affect their transit. But is there no difference between the child and the man? Assuredly, a great deal of difference as to many things—but there is no difference about the fact that their passage across the ocean depends upon the *steamboat*, rather than upon themselves!

So, if you meet with a great saint, say to yourself, “My honored Brother will get to Heaven through Jesus Christ. And I, a poor babe in Grace, shall get to Heaven in the same way.” I want you children of God to feel this. Are you on board the Covenant transport? Does the blood-red flag fly at the masthead? Then, if the weakest Believer is not safely carried into port, neither will the strongest child of God reach the fair havens! If that ship of Free Grace goes down, Peter and Paul must sink as well as ourselves, for we are at sea in the same vessel! Our confidence is in no measure or sense in what *we* are, but altogether in what *Christ* is on our behalf! We depend on Jesus and rest in Jesus by a simple faith and the brightest of martyrs and Apostles has no surer ground to rest on!

When you come to die, do not look upon death through the glass of the Law, for if so, it will be terrible for you! But believe this—that to die by faith is to enter into life! I hardly like to use the word, *death* in such a connection, for it is not dying at all, but “departing out of this world unto the Father.” By faith, to die is such sweet work as you, poor Despondency, and you, Much-Afraid, will be able to accomplish as safely as Valiant-forTruth, or Great-Heart himself! By faith we swallow up death in victory! They that have served God for 50 years faithfully and without fault, when they come to die, have, in every case gathered up their feet in the bed and said, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” But never has one of them died pleading his own religiousness and claiming a reward as due to his works! Trusting in Jesus is the universal spirit of the most praiseworthy Believers!

Well, if they flung every other hope away except that which was presented to them in Christ, you, dear Friend, need not hesitate to do the same! And as they were secure and triumphant, even so shall you be! This is the argument, then—you have obtained nothing except by the hearing of faith—therefore, keep to the way of faith even to your last hour, for wisdom teaches you to do so.

**II.**But now I want to throw all my strength into the second part of the sermon, which is this—I want to use this AS AN ARGUMENT DERIVED FROM OBSERVATION FOR THE USE OF SEEKERS. I say “observation,” but in part, it might be called an argument from *experience*, for, at any rate, on the negative side it is so. Listen, dear Hearer, you have not yet found rest, you are not yet saved—and so far you have obtained no advantage by the works of the Law. By your own honesty, generosity and righteousness, you have not been justified, nor have you received a new heart, or any other gift of the Spirit. Why continue at this unprofitable business?

Some try Church attendance, Chapel attendance, Bible-reading, sacraments, forms of prayer and the like—but nothing comes of it. Hear how they repeat their Ave Marias and their Pater Nosters! And not only Romanists, but so-called Protestants are puffed up with the hope that by formal worship they will be saved! But they make no headway and are still without salvation! Let me ask you work-trusters, have you any rest? Are you prepared to die? Would you be willing to die at once? No! Your position is one of unrest, fear and dread! Why not abandon this vain method of building, for “unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain that build it!” Instead of following out your own way of salvation by the works of the Law, why not try the Lord’s appointed way of the hearing of faith?

Has He not said, “Hear and your soul shall live”? Are willing to let me explain it? The “hearing of faith”—this is the way by which the Spirit of God comes to men. “What kind of hearing,” asks one, “is that?” Well, to begin with, it is *personal* hearing, listening to the Word of God for *yourself*. I have heard of one who had a dream in which he thought he stood at the gates of Heaven and his wife with him. She went in, but the pointer shut him out, saying, “The other day you said to your wife, ‘Mistress, you may go to Church and pray for us both,’ and now she shall go to Heaven for you both, and you must stay outside.” Is not that just? There must be a *personal* hearing! I pray you, do not absent yourselves from the hearing of the Word of God, for, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

That last sentence reminds me that the hearing must be the hearing of the *Gospel*. I wish people were more careful upon that point. You will not receive the Holy Spirit by merely hearing a man talk. He may be eloquent, he may be clever and he may be pious, but mark you, if he does not preach the Gospel, saving faith cannot come of your hearing it! Too many people go to that place of worship which is nearest to their houses and never mind what is preached so long as there is an attractive service. Oh, Sirs, do not thus play the fool with yourselves! The faith that saves you cannot come to you by hearing anything which comes first—it only comes by hearing the testimony of the Spirit to the appointed Savior!

The right kind of hearing is an attentive hearing. There is a great difference between hearing and hearing. If I were to say, “There is a ship going to sail next Tuesday for New Zealand,” the most of you would hear it and think no more of it. But suppose there should be a person here who is in great haste to reach New Zealand? He will catch at my words and be round in the vestry to make further enquiries. This is the kind of hearing which the Gospel requires! You are in one of our great stations and you hear a person say, “That train is for Exeter.” The information is lost upon you, for you are bound for Oxford and it is as though you heard it not. But suppose you were bound for Exeter? You would catch at the sound and make use of the news!

Now, I am talking about the salvation of man from the power of sin; the salvation of man from the guilt of sin; the preparation of man for a holy life on earth and an eternal life of bliss in Heaven—if you have the hearing of faith, you will feel that this subject is one which concerns yourself—you will be anxious to know more about it and you will give your mind to its consideration! This is the sort of hearing by which faith comes. Do not lend your ears to others, but hear for yourself! Go where the Gospel is preached and hear it with both your ears. Drink it in as an ox drinks at the stream. Treasure up every word as the ants store up grain. Test all as goldsmiths test gold—and then receive the Truth of God as babes drink in milk from the breast. This is “the hearing of faith.”

“But what is this faith,” asks one, “this ‘hearing of faith?’” I will try to work out the idea. You begin with hearing the Gospel and believing that it comes from God. I suppose nearly everybody here believes the Bible to be the Word of God. Very well, when you hear that teaching which is consistent with Scripture, the hearing of faith is to accept it as God’s Word and, therefore, true and worthy of your reverent attention. The Gospel is the voice of God and it comes by the Spirit of God—a belief of this Truth of God will help you to hear it reverently—and it will prepare your mind to receive it. Then remember, if it is God’s Word, a genuine faith in God knows of no difficulties whatever! A man who believes the Bible to be Inspired, just as readily believes that the whale swallowed Jonah, or that Joshua stopped the sun, as he believes that Abraham interceded for Sodom, or that Paul was a prisoner at Rome.

Knowing the Gospel to be God’s Testimony, we believe it all! That is the way in which to hear the Gospel. Say to yourself, “This is God’s Gospel. It is wonderfully grand and good, and it is not, therefore, a matter of doubt. That I may be saved in one single minute by believing in Jesus; that every sin I have ever committed, however black, may all be washed away as the clock ticks again—these are wonderful things and I believe them because the Lord has said so. It is not mine to quibble, question, or argue—if there are any difficulties in these great promises, those difficulties belong to God—not to me. Let the Lord promise what He pleases, I am ready to believe it because He is able to perform His own word.”

Then, “the hearing of faith” signifies, further, that we venture our eternal interests upon the truth of what we hear. I use the word, “venture,” advisedly. One of our hymns puts it—

***“Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.”***

I have heard critics object that it is no venture, but a *certainty*, when men trust in Christ. But I venture to assert that when a man is in trouble of spirit, faith *is* a venture to him—it appears to him to be the greatest venture possible! He that says, “This Gospel which I have heard is true and I will venture my soul upon the truth of it,” he is the man who has given to the Gospel “the hearing of faith”! Let me try to set forth faith yet again— this bridge is strong enough to carry me over the stream, therefore I am going over the stream upon it. That is real faith. Faith is a most practical principle in daily life. The most of trade hangs on trust. When a man sows wheat, he has to scatter it into the furrows and lose it. He does so because he has faith that God will send a harvest.

When the sailor loses sight of the shore, he has to sail by faith— believing in his compass, he feels safe though he may not see land for weeks! Faith is the hand which receives what God presents to us and, therefore, it is a simple child-like thing. When a child has an apple offered to him, the child may know nothing about the orchard in which the apple grew, and he may know nothing of the mechanism of his hand and arm, but it is quite enough for him to take the apple. Faith does the most effectual thing for the soul when it takes what God gives! All the rest may be or may not be, *faith* is the main thing. When God holds out to me, salvation by Christ Jesus, I need not ask anything further about it, but just take it to myself and be at once saved, for by faith the Spirit of God is received.

Once more, “the hearing of faith” is when a man hears and accepts the Gospel and then holds to it under opposition. When conscience reminds you that you are a guilty man, you must still hold to peace by the blood of Jesus. What says the Word of God? It tells you that he that believes in Jesus is not condemned and you must believe that, whatever your own judgment and feelings may say. When the devil, as the accuser of the Brethren, howls out, “You cannot be saved! Look at your imperfections and transgressions!” then reply, “But I *am* saved, whatever my imperfections and my sins may be, for it is written, ‘He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.’ I have obeyed both precepts and, therefore, I shall be saved, despite your rage.”

Poor Sinner, have you not seen that this is the way the Holy Spirit has come to others? Your Christian friends have all told you that this is the way they obtained mercy. Will you not make an attempt in the same way, and hear and believe as a little child? Believe God’s Word! Do not wish to *be* anything or to *do* anything—just trust in what Jesus is and did. You shall have the Holy Spirit and you shall feel as you have never felt before, if you will have “the hearing of faith.” I need your attention for a minute while I mention some of the points in the Gospel out of which this “hearing of faith” generally comes. What truth is it which men most readily believe? The first is this. A man says, “I cannot believe,” but he can*hear*, and he hears that God has sent forth His Son Jesus Christ to be the Savior of men. “God has sent Him,” he says, “the offended God has appointed a Mediator. Christ does not come as an amateur, but as an Ambassador authorized of Heaven.” “Then,” he says, “I will trust Him whom God has ordained to be a Savior.”

Next, while listening to the Gospel, the man hears about the Person of the Lord and sees who He is, namely, that He is God’s only-begotten Son, equal and co-eternal with the Father and yet, He is, in the fullest sense, Man, in our nature. I have known many a soul say, “I can trust Jesus, since He is God and *able* to save me, and Man, and thus *willing* to save me.” By that celestial lamp many have seen their way to faith. Oh, that faith may come to you while you are hearing me! Another very blessed nail on which faith loves to hang all its weight is the sufferings of Christ—for, being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. See Him languishing upon the cruel tree, bleeding out His life for unworthy men, His enemies, that they might live through Him!

Many and many a time that sight has turned a doubter into a Believer. Thousands have seen the Cross and felt that they must believe. Another nail of which many have learned to hang all their hope has been Christ’s risen power. They have heard of Him, that He is now in Glory, at the right hand of God, making intercession for transgressors—and this has been the star of hope to the desponding. Is it not a joy that God also has highly exalted Him, so that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him? Myriads of tremblers have felt faith leap up from their hearts like the water from the rock in the wilderness, when Christ has been set before them as exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, giving both repentance and remission of sins. They have been trying to believe, before, but now they believe without trying!

Trying to believe is a very stupid operation—you cannot do it! Minds work not so. But when a man sees a thing to be true, he believes it as a matter of course. He is convinced by the blessed fact of Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension that He is able to save, and so he trusts Him to save him. Thus he receives the Spirit. I have known many that have been led to believe by hearing of the work and Grace of the Holy Spirit. They have heard the preacher say that the Holy Spirit can raise men from their death in sin; that He can renew the heart; that He can change the will and conquer the passions. They have said, “Is it so? Is God, Himself, willing to work with me to make me holy? Then I will trust Him.” Thus faith comes.

Sometimes, also, when we have preached free forgiveness, full redemption, irreversible acceptance, infinite love, boundless Grace, unchallengeable justification—when we have declared that the Lord’s mercy endures forever and that men have but to look to Jesus and then and there find eternal life—then faith has dropped on men’s minds as dew upon the grass! Our Hearers have felt that such tidings must be true, for nobody could have invented them! The Gospel has the stamp of Deity upon it and this commends it to man’s heart. Free Grace and dying love are worthy of faith and they win faith! I pray that all of you who are seekers may give up all trying to *feel*, trying to *work*, trying to*be*, and may just come and put your trust in Jesus! Then shall you be saved and then you may work, feel and do as much as you like.

Then shall you abound in good works and the more the merrier! Then you shall fight with sin and overcome it! Then shall you set up a high standard and reach it! Then shall you strive after holiness and manifest it. But do not begin where you ought to leave off! Do not put, as the proverb has it, the cart before the horse! Do not place the top of the house where the foundation ought to be! But as you never did obtain anything by the works of the Law, come and try “the hearing of faith,” and you shall receive all that you need in Christ Jesus. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—406, 533, 516.**  
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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
NO. 178

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 5, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?”  
Galatians 3:3.~~***

YES, we are just so foolish. Folly is bound up not only in the heart of a child but in the heart of even a child of God. And though the rod may be said to bring folly out of a child, it will take many a repetition of the rod of affliction upon the shoulders of a Christian before that folly is taken out of him. I suppose we are all of us very sound as a matter of theory upon this point. If any should ask us how we hope to have our salvation worked in us we should without the slightest hesitation declare our belief that salvation is of the Lord alone. And we should declare that as the Holy Spirit first of all commenced our piety in us, we look alone to His might to continue and to preserve and at last to perfect the sacred work.

I say we are sound enough on that point as a matter of theory, but we are all of us very heretical and unsound as a matter of practice. For alas, you will not find a Christian who does not have to mourn over his selfrighteous tendencies. You will not discover a Believer who has not at certain periods in his life to groan because the spirit of self-confidence has risen in his heart—and prevented him from feeling the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit. He has then put his confidence in the mere strength of nature, the strength of good intentions, the strength of strong resolutions, instead of relying upon the might of God the Holy Spirit alone.

This one thing I know, Brethren, that while as a preacher I can tell you all that the Holy Spirit must work all our works in us and that without Him we can do nothing, yet as a man I find myself tempted to deny my own preaching, not in my words, but to deny them in fact by endeavoring to do deeds without looking first to the Holy Spirit. While I should never be unsound in the didactic part of it, yet in that part which concerns the working of it out in common with all that love the Lord Jesus but who are still subject to the infirmities of flesh and blood, I have to groan that I repeatedly find myself, having begun in the Spirit, seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. Yes, we are just as foolish as that. And, my Brethren, it is well for us if we have a consciousness that we are foolish—for when a man is foolish and knows it—there is the hope that he will one day be wise, by

God’s grace.

To know one’s self to be foolish is to stand upon the doorstep of the temple of wisdom. To understand the wrongness of any position is half way towards amending it. To be quite sure that our self-confidence is a heinous sin and folly and an offense towards God and to have that thought burned into us by God’s Holy Spirit is going a great length towards the throwing of our self-confidence away. This helps bring our souls in practice, as well as in theory, to rely wholly upon the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

This evening, however, I shall run away from my text somewhat. Having just in a few words endeavored to explain the meaning of the whole sentence, I intend only this evening to dwell upon *the doctrine which incidentally the Apostle teaches us*. He teaches us that we begin in the Spirit— “Having begun in the Spirit” I have already illustrated the whole text sufficiently for our understanding if God the Holy Spirit shall enlighten us. And I shall now, I say, confine myself to the thought that Christians begin in the Spirit—that the early part of Christianity is of God’s Spirit and of God’s Spirit only, while it is equally true that all the way through we must lean upon the same power and depend upon the same strength.

And I have selected this text for this reason. We have a very large influx of young Believers, month after month—week after week I may say. Every week we receive a considerable number of additions to the Church. Month after month these hands baptize into a profession of faith of the Lord Jesus many of those who are yet young in the faith of the Gospel. Now I am astonished to find those persons that thus come before me so well instructed in the doctrines of grace. And they are so sound in all the Truths of the Covenant, insomuch that I may think it my boast and glory, in the name of Jesus, that I know not that we have any members whom we have received into the Church who do not give their full assent and consent unto all the doctrines of the Christian religion, commonly called Calvinistic doctrines.

Those which men are likely to laugh at as being high doctrinal points are those which they most readily receive, believe and rejoice in. I find, however, that the greatest deficiency lies in this point—forgetfulness of the work of the Holy Spirit. I find them very easily remembering the work of God the Father. They do not deny the great doctrine of election. They can see clearly the great sentence of justification passed by the Father upon the elect through the vicarious sacrifice and perfect righteousness of Jesus. And they are not backward in understanding the work of Jesus, either. They can see how Christ was the Substitute for His people and stood in their place. Nor do they for one moment impugn any doctrine concerning God’s Spirit. But they are not clear upon the point. They can talk upon the other points better than they can upon those which more particularly concern the blessed work of that all adorable Person of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit.

I thought, therefore, that I would just preach as simply as ever I could upon the work of the Holy Spirit and begin at the beginning. Hoping on succeeding evenings at different times, as God the Holy Spirit shall guide me, to enter more fully into the subject of the work of the Spirit from the beginning even to the end. But let me say, it is no use your expecting me to preach a course of sermons. I know a great deal better than that. I don’t believe God the Holy Spirit ever intended men to publish three months before hand, lists of sermons that they were going to preach.

There always will arise changes in Providence and different states of mind both in the preacher and the hearer and he will be a very wise man who has got an Old Moore’s Almanac correct enough to let him know what would be the best sort of sermon to preach three months ahead. He had better leave it to his God to give him in the same hour what he shall speak and look for his sermons, as the Israelites looked for the manna, day by day. However, we now commence by endeavoring to narrate the different points of the Spirit’s work in the beginning of salvation.

And first, let me start by asserting that THE COMMENCEMENT OF SALVATION IS THE HOLY SPIRIT’S WORK. Salvation is not begun in the soul by *the means of grace*apart from the Holy Spirit. No man in the world is at liberty to neglect the means that God has appointed. If a house is built for prayer, that man must expect no blessing who neglects to tread its floor. If a pulpit is erected for the ministration of the Word, no man must expect (although we do sometimes get more than we expect) to be saved except by the hearing of the Word. If the Bible is printed in our own native language and we can read it, He who neglects Holy Scripture and ceases from its study, has lost one great and grand opportunity of being blessed.

There are many means of grace and let us speak as highly of them as ever we can. We would be far from depreciating them. They are of the highest value. Blessed are the people who have them. Happy is the nation which is blessed with the means of grace. But my Brethren, no man was ever saved by the means of grace apart from the Holy Spirit. You may hear the sermons of the man whom God delights to honor. You may select from all your Puritanical divines the writings of the man whom God did bless with a double portion of His Holy Spirit. You may attend every meeting for prayer. You may turn over the leaves of this blessed Book. But in all this, there is no life for the soul apart from the breath of the Divine Spirit. Use these means. We exhort you to use them and use them diligently.

But recollect that in none of these means is there anything that can benefit you unless God the Holy Spirit shall own and crown them. These are like the conduit pipes of the market place—when the fountain head flows with water then they are full and we derive a blessing from them. But if the stream are stopped, if the fountain head does cease to give forth its current, then these are wells without water, clouds without rain. And you may go to ordinances as an Arab turns to his skin bottle when it is dry and with your parched lips you may suck the wind and drink the whirlwind but receive neither comfort, nor blessing nor instruction, from the means of grace.

Nor is the salvation of any sinner commenced in him by *a minister or by a priest*. God forgive the man that ever called himself a priest, or suffered anyone else to call him so since the days of our Lord Jesus. The other morning at family prayer I read the case of King Uzziah, who, having the kingly office, thrust himself into the tabernacle of the Lord and took the place of the priests. You remember how the priests withstood him and said, “This is not your portion, O Uzziah.” And you remember how he seized the censer and would burn incense as a priest before the Lord God. And while they yet spoke, lo, the leprosy did rise in his face and he went out a leper, as white as snow, from the house of God.

Ah, my Brethren, it is no mean offense against God for any man to call himself a priest. Remember that all the saints have a priestly office through Christ Jesus. But when any man puts to the idea a specialty as applicable to himself above his fellows and claims to be a priest among men, he commits a sin before God. A sin which, even though it is a sin of ignorance, is indeed great and grievous and leads unto many great and deadly errors—the guilt of which must lie partly upon the head of the man who gave foothold for those errors by allowing the title to be applied to himself.

Well, there is no man—call him priest if you like, by way of ill courtesy—that can begin the work with us—no, not in the use of the ceremony. The Papist may tell us and the Papist masked—the devil in white, the Puseyite—may tell us that grace begins in the heart at the dropping of the water upon the child’s brow. But he tells a lie, a lie before God, that has not even so much as the shadow of truth to justify the liar. There is no power in man, though he were ordained by one who could most assuredly claim succession from the Apostles—though he were endowed with miraculous gifts, though he were the Apostle Paul himself—if he did assert that he had in himself power to convert, power to regenerate, let him be accursed! He has denied the truth and Paul himself would have declared him anathema, for having departed from the everlasting Gospel, one cardinal point of which is regeneration, the work of God the Holy Spirit—the new birth—a thing that is from above.

And, my Brethren, it is quite certain that *no man ever begins the new birth himself*. The work of salvation never was commenced by any man. God the Holy Spirit must commence it. Now, the reasons why no man ever commenced the work of grace in his own heart is very plain and palpable. First, because he cannot. Secondly, because he won’t. The best reason of all is because he cannot—he is dead. Well, the dead may be made alive, but the dead cannot make *themselves* alive, for the dead can do nothing. Besides, the new thing to be created as yet has no being. The uncreated cannot create.

“No,” but you say, “that man can create.” Yes, can Hell create Heaven? Then sin may create grace. What? Will you tell me that fallen human nature that has come almost to a level with the brutes is competent to rival God? That it can emulate the Divinity in working as great marvels and in imparting as Divine a life as even God Himself can give? It cannot. Besides, it is a creation. We are *created*anew in Christ Jesus. Let any man create a fly and afterwards let him create a new heart in himself. Until he has done the less he cannot do the greater. Besides, no man will.

If any man could convert himself, there is no man that would. If any man says he would, if that is true, he is already converted. For the will to be converted is in great part conversion. The will to love God, the desire to be in unison with Christ is not to be found in any man who has not already been brought to be reconciled with God through the death of His Son. There may be a false desire, a desire grounded upon a misrepresentation of the truth. But a true desire after true salvation by the true Spirit is a certain index that the salvation already is there in the germ and in the bud and only needs time and grace to develop itself. But certain it is that man neither can nor will—being on the one hand utterly impotent and dead and on the other hand utterly depraved and unwilling—hating the change when he sees it in others and most of all despising it in himself. Be certain, therefore, that God the Holy Spirit must begin, since none else can.

And now, my Brethren, I must just enter into the subject very briefly, by showing what the Holy Spirit does in the beginning. Permit me to say that in describing the work, the true work of salvation in the soul, you must not expect me to exhibit any critical nicety of judgment. We have heard of an assembly of Divines who once debated whether men did repent first or believe first. And after a long discussion, someone wiser than the rest suggested another question, whether in the new-born child the lungs did first heave, or the blood did first circulate. “Now,” said he, “when you shall ascertain the one, you may be able to ascertain the other.” You shall not know which comes first. They are, very likely, begotten in us at

the same moment. We are not able, when we mention these things in order, exactly to declare and testify that these do all happen according to the order in which we mention them. But we only, according to the judgment of men, according to our own experience, seek now to set forth what is the usual way of acting with God the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation.

The first thing, then, that God the Holy Spirit does in the soul is to *regenerate it*. We must always learn to distinguish between regeneration and conversion. A man may be converted a great many times in his life, but regenerated only once. Conversion is a thing which is caused by regeneration, but regeneration is the very first act of God the Spirit in the soul. “What?” you say, “Does regeneration come before conviction of sin?” Most certainly. There could be no conviction in the dead sinner. Now, regeneration quickens the sinner and makes him live. He is not competent to have true spiritual conviction worked in him until, first of all, he has received life.

It is true that one of the earliest developments of life is conviction of sin. But before any man can see his need of a Savior he must be a living man. Before he can really, I mean, in a spiritual position, in a saving, effectual manner understand his own deep depravity, he must have eyes with which to see the depravity. He must have ears with which to hear the sentence of the Law. He must have been quickened and made alive— otherwise he could not be capable of feeling, or seeing, or discerning at all. I believe, then, the first thing the Spirit does is this—He finds the sinner dead in sin, just where Adam left him. He breathes into him a Divine influence. The sinner knows nothing about how it is done, nor do any of us understand it. “You understand not the wind—it blows where it lists.” But we see its effects.

Now, none of us can tell how the Holy Spirit works in men. I doubt not there have been some who have sat in these pews and in the middle of a sermon or in prayer, or singing—they knew not how it was—the Spirit of God was in their hearts. He had entered into their souls. They were no longer dead in sin, no longer without thought, without hope, without spiritual capacity—they had begun to live. And I believe this work of regeneration, when it is done effectually—and God the Spirit would not do it without doing it effectually—is done mysteriously, often suddenly and it is done in many manners. But still it has always this mark about it—that the man, although he may not understand how it is done, feels that something is done. The what, the how, he does not know. But he knows that something is done. And he now begins to think thoughts he never thought before. He begins to feel as he never felt before. He is brought into a new state, there is a change wrought in him—as if a dead post standing in the street were on a sudden to find itself possessed of a soul and did hear the sound of the passing carriages and listen to the words of the passengers. There is something quite new about it.

The fact is, the man has got a Spirit. He never had one before. He was nothing but a body and a soul. But now, God has breathed into him the third great principle, the new life, the Spirit and he has become a spiritual man. Now he is not only capable of mental exercise, but of spiritual exercise. Having a soul *before*, he could repent—he could believe as a mere mental exercise. He could think thoughts of God and have some desires after Him. But he could not have one *spiritual* thought, nor one spiritual wish or desire, for he had no powers that could educe these things. But now, in regeneration, he has got something given to him and being given, you soon see its effects.

The man begins to feel that he is a sinner. Why did he not feel that before? Ah, my Brethren, he could not, he was not in a state to feel. He was a dead sinner. And though he used to tell you and tell God, by way of compliment, that he was a sinner, he did not know anything about it. He said he was a sinner. Yes, but he talked about being a sinner just as the blind man talks about the stars that he has never seen, as he talks about the light, the existence of which he would not know unless he were told of it. But now it is a deep reality. You may laugh at him, you who have not been regenerated. But now he has got something that really puts him beyond your laughter. He begins to feel the exceeding weight and evil of transgression. His heart trembles, his very flesh quivers—in some cases the whole frame is affected.

The man is sick by day and night. His flesh creeps on his bones for fear. He cannot eat, his appetite fails him. He cannot bear the sound of melody and mirth. All his animal spirits are dried up. He cannot rejoice, he is unhappy, he is miserably downcast, distressed. In some cases he is almost ready to go mad—though in the majority of cases it takes a lighter phase and there are the gentle whispers of the Spirit. But even then the pangs and pains caused by regeneration, while the new life discovers the sin and evil of the past condition of the man are things that are not to be well described or mentioned without tears. This is all the work of the Spirit.

And having brought the soul thus far, the next thing the Holy Spirit does is, *to teach the soul that it is utterly incapable of saving itself*. It knew that before, maybe, if the man sat under a Gospel ministry. But he only knew it with the ear and understood it with the mind. Now, it has become part of his very life. He *feels* it—it has entered into his soul and he knows it to be true. Once he thought he would be good and thought that would save him. The Holy Spirit just knocks the brains out of that thought.

“Then,” he says, “I will try ceremonies and see whether I cannot gain merit so.” God the Holy Spirit shoots the arrow right through the heart of that thought and it falls dead before him and he cannot bear the sight of the carcass, so that, like Abraham said of Sarah, he exclaims, “Bury the dead out of my sight.” Though once he loved it dearly, now he hates the sight of it.

He thought once that he could believe. He had an Arminian notion in his head that he could believe when he liked and repent when he liked. Now, God the Spirit has brought him in such a condition that he says, “I can do nothing.” He begins to discover his own death, now that he is made alive. He did not know anything about it before. He now finds that he has no hand of faith to lift, though the minister tells him to do it. He now discovers, when he is bid to pray, that he would, but cannot pray. He now finds that he is powerless and he dies in the hand of God like clay in the hand of the potter and is made to cry out, “O Lord, my God, unless You save me, I am damned to all eternity. For I cannot lift a finger in this matter until You first of all give me strength.”

And if you urge him to do anything he longs to be doing he is so afraid that it should only be fleshly doings and not the doings of the Spirit that he meditates and stops until he groans and cries. And feeling that these groans and cries are the real work of the Spirit and prove that he has spiritual life, he then begins in right earnest to look to Jesus Christ the Savior. But mark, all these things are by the Spirit and none of them can ever be produced in the soul of any man or woman, apart from the Divine influence of God the Holy Spirit.

This being done—the soul being now weaned from all confidence and despairing and brought to its last standing place, yes, laid prostrate on the ground, the rope being about its neck and the ashes and sackcloth on its head—God the Holy Spirit *next applies the blood of Jesus to the soul*. He gives the soul the grace of faith whereby it lays hold of Jesus and gives it an anointing of holy consolation and unction of assurance, whereby, casting itself wholly on the blood and righteousness of Jesus, it receives joy, knows itself to be saved and rejoices in pardon. But mark, that is the work of the Spirit. Some preachers will tell their people, “Believe, only believe.”

Yes, it is right they should tell them so. But they should remember it is also right to tell them that even this must be the work of the Spirit. For though we say, “Only believe,” that is the greatest “only” in the world. And what some men say is so easy is just what those who want to believe find to be the hardest thing in all the world. It is simple enough for a man that has the Spirit in him to believe when he has the written Word before him and the witness of the Spirit in him. That is easy enough. But for the poor, tried sinner, who cannot see anything in the Word of God but thunder and threat—for him to believe—ah, my Brethren, it is not such a little matter as some make it to be. It needs the fullness of the power of God’s Spirit to bring any man to such faith as that.

Well, when the sinner has thus believed, then the Holy Spirit *brings all the precious things to him*. There is the blood of Jesus. That can never save my soul unless God the Spirit takes that blood and sprinkles it upon my conscience. There is the perfect spotless righteousness of Jesus. It is a robe that will fit me and adorn me from head to foot, but it is no use to me till I have put it on. And I cannot put it on myself—God the Holy Spirit must put the robe of Jesus’ righteousness on me. There is the Covenant of Adoption whereby God gives me the privileges of a son. But I cannot rejoice in my adoption until I receive the Spirit of adoption whereby I may be able to cry, “Abba, Father.”

So, Beloved, you see—I might enlarge, but my time fails me—you see that every point that is brought out in the experience of the newborn Christian, every point in that part of salvation which we may call its beginning in the soul has to do with God the Holy Spirit. There is no step that can be taken without Him. There is nothing which can be accomplished aright without Him. Yes, though you had the best of means, the most correct of ceremonies, the most orthodox of truths and though you did exercise your minds upon all these things—and though the blood of Jesus Christ were shed for you and God Himself had ordained you from before the foundations of the world to be saved—yet still there must be that one link always inserted in the golden chain of the plan of salvation. For without that it were all incomplete. *You must be quickened by the Spirit.* You must be called out of darkness into light. You must be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Now, I wonder how many of you know anything about this. That is the practical part of it. Now my Hearer, do you understand this? Perhaps, Sir, you are exceedingly wise and you turn on your heel with a sneer and you say, “Supernaturalism in one of its phases. These Methodists are always talking about supernatural things.” You are very wise, exceeding so, doubtless. But it seems to me that Nicodemus of old had gotten as far as you and you have gotten no farther than he. For he asked, “How could a man be born again when he is old?”

And though every Sunday-School child has had a smile at the expense of Nicodemus’s ignorance, you are not wiser. And yet you are a Rabbi, Sir and you would teach us, would you? And you would teach us about these things and yet you sneer about supernaturalism? Well, the day may come—I pray it may come to you before the day of your death and your doom—when the Christ of the supernaturalists will be the only Christ for

you. When you shall come into the floods of death—where you shall need something more than nature—then you will be crying for a work that is supernatural within your heart. And it may be that then, when you first of all awake to know that your wisdom was but one of the methods of madness, you may perhaps have to cry in vain, having for your only answer, “I called and you refused. I stretched out My hands and no man regarded. I also will mock at your calamity and laugh when your fear comes.”

I hear another of you say, “Well, Sir, I know nothing of this work of God the Holy Spirit in my heart. I am just as good as other people. I never make a profession of religion. It is very rarely that I go into a place of worship at all, but I am as good as the saints, any of them. Look at some of them—very fine fellows certainly.” Stop, now, religion is a thing between yourself and your Maker and you have nothing to do with those very fine fellows you have spoken of. Suppose I make a confession that a large number of those who are called saints deserve a great deal more to be called sinners double-dyed and then white-washed—suppose I make a confession of that, what has that to do with you?

Your religion must be for yourself and it must be between you and your God. If all the world were hypocrites that would not exonerate you before your God. When you came before the Master, if you were still at enmity to Him, could you venture to plead such an excuse as this—“All the world was full of hypocrites?” “Well,” He would say, “what had that to do with you? So much the more reason why you should have been an honest man. If you say the Church was thus drifting away upon the quicksand through the evil conduct and folly of the members, so much the more reason why you should have helped to make it sound, if you thought you could have done so.”

Another cries, “Well, I do not see that I need it. I am as moral a man as I can be. I never break the Sabbath. I am one of the most punctilious of Christians—I always go to Church twice a Sabbath. I hear a thoroughly evangelical minister and you would not find fault with him.” Or perhaps says another, “I go to a Baptist Chapel, I am always found there, I am scrupulously correct in my conduct. I am a good father, a good husband. I do not know that any man can find fault with me in business.” Well certainly that is very good and if you will be so good tomorrow morning as to go into Saint Paul’s and wash one of those statues till you make it alive— then you will be saved by your morality.

But since you, even you, are dead in trespasses and sins—without the Spirit you may wash *yourself* ever so clean—but you cannot wash life into yourself any more than those statues. With all your washing those idols could never be made to walk, or think, or breathe. You must be quickened by the Holy Spirit, for you are dead in trespasses and sins.

Yes, my comely maiden, you that are everything excellent. You that are not to be blamed in anything. You that are affectionate, tender, kind and dutiful—whose very life seems to be so pure that all who see you think you are an angel. Even you, except you be born again, can not see the kingdom of God. The golden gate of Heaven must grind upon its hinges with a doleful sound and shut you out forever unless you are the subject of a Divine change—this knows no exception. And, O you vilest of the vile, you who have wandered farthest from the paths of rectitude, “you must be born again.” You, too, must be quickened by a Divine life. And it is comforting for you to recollect that the very same power which can awaken the *moral* man, which can save the man of rectitude and honesty, is able to work *in you—*is able to change *you*—to turn the lion to a lamb, the raven to a dove.

O my Hearers, ask yourselves—are you the subjects of this change? And if you are, rejoice with joy unspeakable, for happy is that mother’s child and full of glory that can say, “I am born of God.” Blessed is that man—God and the holy angels call him blessed who has received the quickening of the Spirit and is born of God. For him there may be many troubles, but there is “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” to counterbalance all his woe. For him there may be wars and fights. But let him tarry, there are trumpets of victory, there are better wreaths than the laurels of conquerors. There is a crown of immortal glory, there is bliss unfading, there is acceptance in the breast of God forever and perpetual fellowship with Jehovah. But oh, if you are not born again this night I can but tremble for you and lift my heart in prayer to God and pray for you that He may now by His Divine Spirit make you alive, give you to know your need of Him and then direct you to the Cross of Jesus.

But if you know your need of a Savior tonight, if you are this night conscious of your death in sin, hear me preach the Gospel and I have done. The Lord Jesus Christ died for you. Do you know yourself to be guilty? Not as the hypocrite pretends to know it, but do you know it consciously, sensitively—do you weep over it? Do you lament it? Do you feel that you can not save yourself? Are you sick of all fleshly ways of saving? Can you say tonight, “Unless God shall put out the hand of His mercy, I know I deserve to be lost forever and I am”?

Then, as the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, my Master bought you with His blood and those whom He bought with blood He will have. From the fangs of the lion and the jaws of the bear will He pluck them. He will save you—for you are a part of His bloody purchase. He has taken your sins upon His head. He suffered in your place. He has been punished for you. You shall not die—“your sins, which are many, are all

forgiven.” And I am the Master’s glad herald to tell you tonight what His Word tells you also—that you may rejoice in the fullness of faith—for “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and “this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.” May the Lord now be pleased to add his blessing for Jesus’ sake.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #174 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED  
NO. 174

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.~~***

***~~“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.”~~***

***~~Galatians 3:10.~~***

MY Hearer, are you a Believer, or not? According to your answer to that question must be the style in which I shall address you tonight. I would ask you as a great favor to your own soul this evening to divest yourself of the thought that you are sitting in a Chapel and hearing a minister who is preaching to a large congregation. Imagine you are sitting in your own house, in your own chair, and think that I am standing by you, with your hand in mine and am speaking personally to you and to you alone. For that is how I desire to preach this night to each of my hearers—one by one. I want you, then, in the sight of God, to answer me this all-important and solemn question before I begin—are you in Christ, or are you not? Have you fled for refuge to Him who is the only hope for sinners? Or are you yet a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, ignorant of God and of His holy Gospel?

Come—be honest with your own heart and let your conscience say yes, or no—for one of these two things you are tonight—you are either under the wrath of God, or you are delivered from it. You are tonight either an heir of wrath or an inheritor of the kingdom of grace. Which of these two? Make no “ifs” or “ahs” in your answer. Answer straight forward to your own soul. And if there is any doubt whatever about it, I beseech you rest not till that doubt be resolved. Do not take advantage of that doubt to yourself, but rather take a disadvantage from it. Depend upon it—you are more likely to be wrong than you are to be right. Now put yourself in the scale and if you do not kick the beam entirely, but if you hang between the two and you say, “I know not which,” better that you should decide for the worst, though it should grieve yourself, than that you should decide for the better and be deceived and so go on presumptuously until the pit of Hell shall wake you from your self-deception.

Can you, then, with one hand upon God’s holy Word and the other upon your own heart, lift your eye to Heaven and say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. I know that I have passed from death unto life. I am not now what I once was—‘the chief of sinners’—but Jesus died for me. And if I am not awfully deceived, I am this night, a sinner saved by blood, a monument of grace.” My Brothers and Sisters, God

bless you. The blessing of the Most High be with you. My text has no thunders in it for you. Instead of this verse, turn to the 13th verse and there read your inheritance—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” So Christ was cursed in your place and you are secure—if you are truly converted and really a regenerated child of God.

But my Hearer, I am solemnly convinced that a large proportion of this assembly dare not say so. And you tonight, (for I am speaking personally to you), remember you are one of those who dare not say this, for you are a stranger to the grace of God. You dare not lie before God and your own conscience, therefore you do honestly say, “I know I was never regenerated. I am now what I always was and that is the most I can say.” Now with you I have to deal. I charge you by Him who shall judge the quick and the dead, before whom you and I must soon appear, listen to the words I speak, for they may be the last warning you shall ever hear. And I charge my own soul also, be faithful to these dying men, lest haply on your garment at last should be found the blood of souls and you yourself should be a castaway. O God, make us faithful this night and give the hearing ear and the retentive memory and the conscience touched by the Spirit, for Jesus’ sake.

First, tonight we shall *try the prisoner*. Secondly, we shall *declare his sentence*. And thirdly, if we find him confessing and penitent, we shall *proclaim his deliverance*. But not unless we find him so. First, then, we are about to TRY THE PRISONER. The text says—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Unconverted man, are you guilty, or not guilty? Have you continued “in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them?” Methinks you will not dare to plead, “Not guilty.” But I will suppose for one moment that you are bold enough to do so. So then, Sir, you mean to assert that you have continued in “all things which are written in the book of the Law.” Surely the very reading of the Law would be enough to convince you that you are in error. Do you know what the Law is? Why I will give you what I may call the outside of it, but remember that within it there is a broader spirit than the mere words.

Hear you these words of the Law—“ *You shall have no other gods before Me*.” What? Have you never loved anything better than God? Have you never made a god of your belly, or of your business, or of your family, or of your own person? Oh, surely you dare not say you are guiltless here. “*You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth*.” What? Have you never in your life set up anything in the place of God? If you have not, I have, many times. And I know, if conscience would speak truly, it would say, “Man you have been a mammon worshipper, you have been a belly worshipper, you have bowed down before gold and silver. You have cast yourself down before honor, you have bowed before pleasure, you have made a god of your drunkenness, a god of your lust, a god of your uncleanness, a god of your pleasures!”

Will you dare to say you have never taken the name of *the Lord your God in vain*? If you have never sworn profanely, yet surely in common conversation you have sometimes made use of God’s name when you ought not to have done so. Have you always hallowed that most holy name? Have you never called upon God without necessity? Have you never read His book with a trifling spirit? Have you never heard His Gospel without paying reverence to it? Surely you are guilty here. And as for that Fourth Commandment which relates to the keeping of the Sabbath— “*Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*”—have you never broken it? Oh, shut your mouth and plead guilty, for these four commandments were enough to condemn you!

“ *Honor your father and your mother*.” What? Will you say you have kept that? Have you never been disobedient in your youth? Have you never kicked against a mother’s love and striven against a father’s rebuke? Turn over a page of your history till you come to your childhood—see if you cannot find it written there. Yes and your manhood, too, may confess that you have not always spoken to your parents as you should, or always treated them with that honor they deserved and which God commanded you to give unto them. “*You shall not kill*.” You may never have killed any, but have you never been angry? He that is angry with his brother is a murderer—you are guilty here. “*You shall not commit adultery*.” Maybe you have committed unclean things and are here this very day stained with lust. But if you have been ever so chaste, I am sure you have not been quite guiltless, when the Master says, “He that looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart.” Has no lascivious thought crossed your mind?

Has no impurity ever stirred your imagination? Surely if you should dare to say so, you would be brazen-faced with impudence. And have you never stolen? “*You shall not steal.*” You are here in the crowd tonight with the product of your theft perhaps—you have done the deed—you have committed robbery. But if you have been ever so honest, yet surely there have been times in which you have felt an inclination to defraud your neighbor. And there may have been some petty, or perhaps some gross frauds which you have secretly and silently committed on which the law of the land could not lay its hand, but which, nevertheless, was a breach of this Law. And who dares says he has not borne *false witness against his neighbor*? Have we never repeated a story to our neighbor’s disadvantage which was untrue? Have we never misconstrued his motives? Have we never misinterpreted his designs? And who among us can dare to say that he is guiltless of the last—“*You shall not covet*?” For we have all desired to have more than God has given us. And at times our wandering heart has

lusted after things which God has not bestowed upon us. Why, to plead not guilty, is to plead your own folly. For verily, my Brethren, the very reading of the Law is enough, when blessed by the Spirit, to make us cry, “Guilty O Lord, guilty.”

But one cries, “I shall not plead guilty, for though I am well aware that I have not continued ‘in all things which are written in the book of the Law,’ yet I have done the best I could.” That is a lie—before God a falsehood. You have not! You have not done the best you could. There have been many occasions upon which you might have done better. Will that young man dare to tell me that he is doing the best he can now? That he cannot refrain from laughter in the house of God? It may be possible that it is hard for him to do so, but it is just possible he could, if he pleased, refrain from insulting his Maker to His face. Surely we have none of us done the best we could. At every period and at every time there have been opportunities of escape from temptation. If we had had no freedom to escape from the sin, there might have been some excuse for it. But there have been turning points in our history when we might have decided for right or for wrong—but we have *chosen* the evil and have *eschewed* the good and have turned into that path which leads to Hell.

“Ah, but,” says another, “I declare, Sir, that while I have broken that Law without a doubt, I have been no worse than my fellow creatures.” And a sorry argument is that, for what good does it do you? To be damned in a crowd is no more comfortable than to be damned alone. It is true, you have been no worse than your fellow creatures but this will be of very poor service to you. When the wicked are cast into Hell it will be very little comfort to you that God shall say, “Depart you cursed” to a thousand with you. Remember, God’s curse, when it shall sweep a nation into Hell, shall be as much felt by every individual of the crowd as if there were but that one man to be punished.

God is not like our earthly judges. If their courts were glutted with prisoners, they might be inclined to pass over many a case lightly, but not so with Jehovah. He is so infinite in His mind that the abundance of criminals will not seem to be any difficulty with Him. He will deal with you as severely and as justly as if there were never another sinner in all the world. And besides, what have you to do with other men’s sins? You are not responsible for them. God made you to stand or fall by *yourself*. According to your *own deeds* you shall be judged. The harlot’s sin may be grosser than yours, but you will not be condemned for her iniquities. The murderer’s guilt may far exceed your transgressions, but you will not be damned for the murderer. Religion is a thing between God and your own soul, O Man. And therefore, I do beseech you, do not look upon your neighbor’s, but upon your own heart.

“Yes, but,” cries another, “I have very many times striven to keep the Law and I think I have done so for a little.” Hear you the sentence read again—“Cursed is everyone that *continues*not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Oh, Sirs! It is not some hectic flush upon the cheek of consumptive irresolution that God counts to be the health of obedience. It is not some slight obedience for an hour that God will accept at the Day of Judgment. He says, “continue.” And unless from my early childhood to the day when my gray hairs descend into the tomb I shall have continued to be obedient to God, I must be condemned. Unless I have from the first dawn of reason, when I first began to be responsible, obediently served God, until, like a shock of corn, I am gathered into my Master’s garner—salvation by *works* must be impossible to me and I must—(standing on my own footing,) be condemned. It is not, I say, some slight obedience that will save the soul. You have not continued “in all things which are written in the book of the Law,” and therefore you are condemned.

“But,” says another, “there are many things I have not done, but still I have been very virtuous” Poor excuse that, also. Suppose you have been virtuous! Suppose you have avoided many vices—turn to my text. It is not *my* word, but *God’s*—turn to it—“*all things*.” It does not say “*some things.*” “Cursed is everyone that continues not in *all things* which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” Now, have you performed all virtues? Have you shunned all vices? Do you stand up and plead, “I never was a drunkard?”—Yet shall you be damned, if you have been a fornicator. Do you reply, “I never was unclean!” Yet you have broken the Sabbath. Do you plead guiltless of that charge? Do you declare you have never broken the Sabbath?

You have taken God’s name in vain, have you not? Somewhere or other God’s Law can smite you. It is certain (let your conscience now speak and affirm what I assert)—it is certain you have not continued “in*all things* which are written in the book of the Law.” No, more—I do not believe you have even continued in any *one* Commandment of God to the full—for the Commandment is exceeding broad. It is not the overt act, merely, that will damn a man—it is the thought, the imagination, the conception of sin, that is sufficient to ruin a soul. Remember, my dear Hearers, I am speaking now God’s own Word, not a harsh doctrine of my own. If you had never committed one single act of sin, yet the *thought* of sin, the *imagination* of it would be enough to sweep your soul to Hell forever.

If you had been born in a cell and had never been able to come out into the world, either to commit acts of lasciviousness, murder, or robbery— yet the *thought* of evil in that lone cell might be enough to cast your soul forever from the face of God. Oh, there is no man here that can hope to escape! We must every one of us bow our heads before God and cry, “Guilty, Lord, guilty”—every one of us guilty—“Cursed is*everyone*that continues not in *all things* which are written in the book of the Law to do

them.” When I look into your face, O Law, my spirit shudders. When I hear your thunders my heart is melted like wax in the midst of my heart. How can I endure you? If I am to be tried at last for my life, surely I shall need no judge, for I shall be my own swift accuser and my conscience shall be a witness to condemn.

I think I need not enlarge further on this point. O you that are out of Christ and without God, do you not stand condemned before Him? Off with all your masks and away with all excuses. Let everyone of us turn our idle presences to the wind. Unless we have the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ to cover us, we must every one of us acknowledge that this sentence shuts the gates of Heaven against us and only prepares us for the flames of perdition.

**II.**Thus have I singled out the character and he is found guilty. Now I have to DECLARE THE SENTENCE. God’s ministers love not such work as this. I would rather stand in this pulpit and preach twenty sermons on the *love* of Jesus, than one like this. It is very seldom that I meddle with the theme, because I do not know that it is often necessary. But I feel that if these things were kept altogether in the background and the Law were not preached, the Master would not own the Gospel. For He will have both preached in their measure and each must have its proper prominence. Now, therefore, hear me while I sorrowfully tell you what is the sentence passed upon all of you who this night are out of Christ.

Sinner, you are cursed tonight. *You are cursed*, not by some wizard whose fancied spell can only frighten the ignorant. You are cursed—not cursed by some earthly monarch who could turn his troops against you and swallow up your house and your patrimony. Cursed! Oh, what a thing a curse is anyhow! What an awful thing is the curse of a father. We have heard of fathers, driven to madness by the undutiful and ungracious conduct of their children, who have lifted their hands to Heaven and have implored a curse, a withering curse upon their children. We cannot excuse the parent’s mad and rash act. God forbid we should exempt him from sin, but oh, a father’s curse must be awful. I cannot think what it must be to be cursed by him that did beget me.

Surely, it would put out the sunlight of my history forever, if it were deserved. But to be cursed of God—I have no words with which to tell what that must be. “Oh, no,” you say, “that is a thing of the future. We do not care about the curse of God, it does not fall upon us now.” Yes, Soul, it does. The wrath of God *abides* on you even now. You have not yet come to know the fullness of that curse, but you are cursed this very hour. You are not yet in Hell, not yet has God been pleased to shut up the heart of His compassion and cast you forever from His presence. But notwithstanding all that, you are cursed. Turn to the passage in the book of Deuteronomy and see how the curse is a present thing upon the sinner.

In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, at the 15th verse, we read all this as the sentence of the sinner: “Cursed shall you be in the city”—where you carry on your business God will curse you. “Cursed shall you be in the fields”—where you take your recreation—where you walk abroad, there shall the curse reach you. “Cursed shall be your basket and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the increase of your kine and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out.” There are some men upon whom this curse is very visible. Whatever they do is cursed. They get riches, but there is God’s curse with the riches. I would not have some men’s gold for all the stars, though they were gold. And if I might have all the wealth of the world, if I must have the miser’s greed with it, I would rather be poor than have it.

There are some men who are visibly cursed. Don’t you see the drunkard? He is cursed, let him go where he may. When he goes into his house, his little children run upstairs to bed, for they are afraid to see their own father. And when they grow a little older, they begin to drink just as he did. And they will stand and imitate him—and they, too, will begin to swear, so that he is cursed in the fruit of his body. He thought it was not so bad for him to be drunk and to swear. But oh, what a pang shoots through the father’s conscience, if he has a conscience at all, when he sees his child following in his footsteps! Drunkenness brings such a curse upon a man that he cannot enjoy what he eats. He is cursed in his basket, cursed in his store.

And truly, though one vice may seem to develop the curse more than others, all sin brings the curse, though we cannot always see it. Oh you that are out of God and out of Christ and a stranger to Jesus, you are cursed where you sit, cursed where you stand! Cursed is the bed you lie on. Cursed is the bread you eat. Cursed is the air you breathe. All is cursed to you. Go where you may, you are a cursed man. Ah, that is a fearful thought! Oh, there are some of you that are cursed tonight! Oh, that a man should say that of his Brethren! But we must say it, or be unfaithful to your poor dying souls. Oh, would to God that some poor soul in this place would say, “Then I am cursed tonight. I am cursed of God and cursed of His holy angels—cursed! Cursed! Cursed!—For I am under the Law.” I do think, God the Spirit blessing it, it wants nothing more to slay our carelessness than that one word—“cursed!” “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.”

But now, my Hearer, you that are in this state, impenitent and unbelieving, I have more work to do before I close. Remember, the curse that men have in this life is as nothing compared with the curse that is to come upon them hereafter. In a few short years, you and I must die. Come, Friend, I will talk to you personally again—young man, we shall soon grow old, or, perhaps, we shall die before that time and we shall lie

upon our bed—the last bed upon which we shall ever sleep—we shall wake from our last slumber to hear the doleful tidings that there is no hope. The physician will feel our pulse and solemnly assure our relatives that it is all over! And we shall lie in that still room, where all is hushed except the ticking of the clock and the weeping of our wife and children. And we must die. Oh, How solemn will be that hour when we must struggle with that enemy, Death!

The death rattle is in our throat—we can scarce articulate—we try to speak, the death-gaze is on the eye. Death has put his fingers on those windows of the body and shut out the light forever. The hands well-near refuse to lift themselves and there we are, close on the borders of the grave! Ah, that moment, when the spirit sees its destiny. That moment, of all moments the most solemn, when the soul looks through the bars of its cage upon the world to come! No, I cannot tell you how the spirit feels, if it is an ungodly spirit, when it sees a fiery throne of judgment and hears the thunders of Almighty wrath, while there is but a moment between it and Hell. I cannot picture to you what must be the fright which men will feel, when they realize what they often heard of!

Ah, it is a fine thing for you to laugh at me tonight! When you go away, it will be a very fine thing to crack a joke concerning what the preacher said, to talk to one another and make merry with all this. But when you are lying on your deathbed, you will not laugh. Now, with the curtain drawn and you cannot see the things of the future it is a very fine thing to be merry. When God has removed that curtain and you learn the solemn reality, you will not find it in your hearts to trifle. Ahab, on his throne laughed at Micaiah. You never read that Ahab laughed at Micaiah when the arrow was sticking between the joints of his harness. In Noah’s time, they laughed at the old man. They called him a gray-headed fool, I doubt not, because he told them that God was about to destroy the earth with a flood.

But ah, you Scorners, you did not laugh in that day when the cataracts were falling from Heaven and when God had unloosed the doors of the great deep and bid all the hidden waters leap upon the surface! Then you knew that Noah was right. And when you come to die, perhaps you will not laugh at me. You will say, when you lie there, “I remember such-andsuch a night. I strolled into Park Street. I heard a man talk very solemnly. I thought at the time I did not like it, but I knew he was in earnest. I am quite certain that he meant good for me. Oh, that I had listened to his advice! Oh, that I had regarded his words! What I would give to hear him again!”

Ah, it was not long ago that a man who had laughed and mocked at me full many a time, went down one Sabbath day to Brighton, to spend his day in the excursion—he came back that night to die! On Monday morning, when he was dying, who do you suppose he wanted? He wanted Mr. Spurgeon! The man he had laughed at always. He wanted him to come and tell him the way to Heaven and point Him to the Savior. And although I was glad enough to go, it was doleful work to talk to a man who had just been Sabbath-breaking, spending his time in the service of Satan and had come home to die. And die He did, without a Bible in his house. Without having one prayer offered for him except that prayer which I alone did offer at his bedside.

Ah, it is strange how the sight of a deathbed may be blessed to the stimulating of our zeal. I stood some year or so ago by the bedside of a poor boy, about sixteen years of age, who had been drinking himself to death in a drinking bout, about a week before. And when I talked to him about sin and righteousness and judgment to come, I knew he trembled and I thought that he had laid hold on Jesus. When I came down from those stairs, after praying for him many a time and trying to point him to Jesus and having but a faint hope of his ultimate salvation, I thought to myself, O God! I would that I might preach every hour and every moment of the day, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

For what an awful thing it is to die without a Savior. And then I thought how many a time I had stood in the pulpit and had not preached in earnest as I ought to have done. How I have coldly told the tale of the Savior—when I ought to have wept very showers of tears in overwhelming emotion. I have gone to my bed full many a season and have wept myself to sleep because I have not preached as I have desired and it will be even so tonight. But, oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!

My Hearers, the matters I now talk of are no dreams, no frauds, no whims, no old wives’ stories. These are realities and you will soon know them. O Sinner, you that have not continued in all things written in the book of the Law. You that have no Christ. The day is coming when these things will stand before you, as dread, solemn, real things. And then. Ah, then! Ah, then! Ah! Then—what will you do?—“And after death the judgment.”—Oh, can you picture—

***“The pomp of that tremendous day,  
When Christ with clouds shall come?”***

I think I see that terrible day. The bell of time has tolled the last day. Now comes the funeral of damned souls. Your body has just started up from the grave and you unwind your cerements and you look up. What is that I see? Oh, what is that I hear? I hear one dread, tremendous blast that shakes the pillars of Heaven and makes the firmament reel with fright. The trump, the trump, the trump of the archangel shakes creation’s utmost bound. You look and wonder. Suddenly a voice is heard with shrieks for some and songs for others—He comes—HE comes—HE comes! And every eye must see Him. There He is, the Throne is set upon a cloud which is white as alabaster. There He sits. ‘Tis He, the Man that died on

Calvary.

I see His pierced hands—but ah, how changed! No crown of thorns now. He stood at Pilate’s bar, but now the whole earth must stand at His bar. But hark! The trumpet sounds again. The Judge opens the Book. There is silence in Heaven, solemn silence—the universe is still. “Gather Mine elect together and My redeemed from the four winds of Heaven.” Swiftly they are gathered. As with a lightning flash, the angel’s wing divides the crowd. Here are the righteous all ingathered. And Sinner, there you are, on the left hand, left out, left to abide the burning sentence of eternal wrath. Hark! The harps of Heaven play sweet melodies. But to you they bring no joy, though the angels are repeating the Savior’s welcome to His saints, “Come you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world.”

You have had that moment’s respite but now His face is gathering clouds of wrath, the thunder is on His brow. He looks on you that have despised Him, you that scoffed His grace, that scorned His mercy, you that broke His Sabbath, you that mocked His Cross, you that would not have Him to reign over you. And with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders He cries, “Depart, you cursed.” And then—No! I will not follow you. I will not tell of quenchless flames—I will not talk of miseries for the body and tortures for the spirit. But Hell is terrible damnation—it is doleful. Oh, escape! Escape! Escape, lest haply, being where you are, you should have to learn what the horrors of eternity must mean in the gulf of everlasting perdition. “Cursed is the man that has not continued in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them.”

**III.**DELIVERANCE PROCLAIMED. “You have condemned us all,” cries one. Yes, but not I—God has done it. Are you condemned? Do you feel you are tonight? Come, again, let me take you by the hand, my Brother. Yes, I can look round upon the whole of this assembly and I can say there is not one now in this place whom I do not love as a brother. If I speak severely unto any of you, it is that you may know right. My heart and my whole spirit are stirred for you. My harshest words are far more full of love than the smooth words of soft-speaking ministers who say, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace. Do you think it is any pleasure to me to preach like this? Oh, I had far rather be preaching of Jesus. His sweet, His glorious Person and His all-sufficient righteousness. Now come, we will have a sweet word before we have done. Do you feel you are condemned? Do you say, “O God, I confess You would be just if You should do all this to me”? Do you feel you can never be saved by your own works, but that you are utterly condemned through sin? Do you hate sin? Do you sincerely repent? Then, let me tell you how you may escape.

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was crucified, dead and buried. He is now risen and He sits on the right hand of God, where He also makes intercession for us. He came into this world to save sinners by His death. He saw that poor sinners were cursed—He took the curse on His own shoulders and He delivered us from it. Now, if God has cursed Christ for any man, He will not curse that man again. You ask me then, “Was Christ cursed for me?” Answer me this question and I will tell you—Has God the Spirit taught you that you are accursed? Has He made you feel the bitterness of sin? Has He made you cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?” Then, my dear Friend, Christ was cursed for you. And you are not cursed. You are not cursed *n*ow. Christ was cursed for you.

Be of good cheer. If Christ was cursed for you, you cannot be cursed again. “Oh,” says one, “if I could but think He was cursed for me!” Do you see Him bleeding on the tree? Do you see His hands and feet all dripping gore. Look unto Him, poor Sinner. Look no longer at yourself, nor at your sin. Look unto Him and be saved. All He asks you to do is to look and even that He will help you do. Come to Him, trust Him. Believe on Him. God the Holy Spirit has taught you that you are a condemned sinner. Now, I beseech you, hear this Word and believe it. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Oh, can you say, “I believe this Word—it is true—blessed be His dear name. It is true to me, for whatever I may *not* be, I know I am a *sinner*. The sermon of this night convinces me of that, if nothing else. And, good Lord, You know when I say I am a sinner, I do not mean what I used to mean by that word. I mean that I am a *real* sinner. I mean that if You should damn me, I deserve it. If You should cast me from Your presence forever, it is only what I have merited richly. O my Lord I am a sinner! I am a hopeless sinner, unless You save me. I am a helpless sinner, unless You deliver me. I have no hope in my self-righteousness. And Lord, I bless Your name—there is one thing more—I am a sorrowful sinner, for sin grieves me. I cannot rest, I am troubled. Oh, if I could get rid of sin, I would be holy even as God is holy. Lord I believe”?

But I hear an objector cry out, “What, Sir, believe that Christ died for me simply because I am a sinner!” Yes, even so. “No, Sir, but if I had a little righteousness. If I could pray well, I should then think Christ died for me.” No, that would not be faith at all, that would be *self-confidence*. Faith believes in Christ when it sees sin to be black and trusts in Him to remove it all. Now, poor Sinner, with all your sin about you, take this promise in your hands, go home tonight, or if you can, do it before you get home—go home, I say, upstairs, alone, down by the bedside and pour out your heart, “O Lord, it is all true that that man said. I am condemned and Lord, I deserve it. O Lord, I have tried to be better and I have done nothing with it at all, but have only grown worse. O Lord, I have slighted Your grace, I have despised Your Gospel. I wonder You have not damned me years ago. Lord, I marvel at myself, that You suffer such a base wretch

as I am to live at all.  
“I have despised a mother’s teaching, I have forgotten a father’s  
prayers. Lord, I have forgotten You. I have broken Your Sabbath, taken  
Your name in vain. I have done everything that is wrong and if You condemn me, what can I say? Lord, I am dumb before Your presence. I have  
nothing to plead. But Lord, I come to tell You tonight, You have said in the  
Word of God, ‘Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.’ Lord, I  
come. My only plea is that You have said, ‘This is a faithful saying and  
worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save  
sinners.’ Lord, I am a sinner, He came to save me. I trust in it—sink or  
swim—Lord, this is my only hope. I cast away every other and hate myself  
to think I ever should have had any other. Lord, I rely on Jesus only. “Do but save me and though I cannot hope by my future life to blot out  
my past sin, O Lord, I will ask of You to give me a new heart and a right  
spirit, that from this time forth even forever, I may run in the way of Your  
Commandments. For, Lord, I desire nothing so much as to be Your child.  
You know, O Lord, I would give all, if You would but love me. And I am  
encouraged to think that You do love me. For my heart feels so. I am  
guilty, but I should never have known that I was guilty if You had not  
taught it to me. I am vile, but I never should have known my vileness,  
unless You had revealed it. Surely, You will not destroy me, O God, after  
having taught me this. If You do, You are Just, but—  
***‘Save a trembling sinner, Lord  
Whose hopes still hovering round Your Word, Would light on some sweet promise there,  
Some sure support against despair.’ ”***  
If you cannot pray such a long prayer as that, I tell you what to go  
home and say. Say this, “Lord Jesus, I know I am nothing at all. Be You  
my precious All in All”  
Oh, I trust in God there will be some tonight that will be able to pray  
like that and if it is so, ring the bells of Heaven! Sing you seraphim!  
Shout, you redeemed! For the Lord has done it and glory be unto His  
name, forever and ever! Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2093 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CURSE AND THE CURSE FOR US  
NO. 2093

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith. Yet the law is not of faith, but, the man who does them shall live by them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive~~***

***~~the promise of the Spirit through faith.”  
Galatians 3:10-14.~~***

THE Apostle tells us, in the eighth verse, that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. Very briefly, very tersely but very fully was the Gospel proclaimed to him in those words, “In you shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The true Gospel is no new thing, it is as old as the hills. It was heard in Eden, before man was driven from the garden and it has since been repeated in sundry ways and in many places, even to this day. Oh, that its very antiquity would lead men to venerate it and then to listen to its voice! It is “Gospel,” or good news—the best of news for fallen men. Oh, that they would receive it with gladness!

The Gospel blessing which was thus preached to Abraham and to his seed, came to him by faith. He was justified by his faith, as it is written, “Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” The blessing, which is the soul of Abraham’s Gospel, must come to us in the same way as it did to him, namely, by faith. And if we expect to find it in any other way, we shall be grievously mistaken. There were some in Paul’s day who were “of the works of the Law,” and expected to obtain the blessing through their own doings. But they could not find it. We have many around us who are practically looking for Gospel blessings upon legal principles.

The object of our sermon is to show them their certainty of failure. And, at the same time, to make clear that way of faith by which the curse is rolled away and the blessing comes to the chosen seed.

To begin with—our first head is this—Blessedness comes not to those who are of the works of the Law. And the second head will be, Blessedness comes to those who are of faith. We shall need no other divisions but we shall greatly need the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit that by His Grace these may be plainly and powerfully set forth before our minds. I want so to speak that you shall go with me, not in hearing only, but in *feeling* and in *believing*, practically taking home and feeling the power of the Truth of God.

When a minister is studying a sermon, his best preparation comes through his feeling, himself, the power of his subject. He rehearses his discourse before the little audience of his own heart and conscience. And in observing the effect produced, he arrives at some idea of how the Word

will operate upon others. He that has run the gauntlet of a Truth of God and felt all the heavy blows which it levels at his own conscience is likely to deliver that Truth to others with tender sympathy and full assurance. Such a preparation, I think, I have had—and I pray that you may be benefited by it.

**I.**Let us learn, at the outset, that BLESSEDNESS COMES NOT TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORKS OF THE LAW.  
First, observe the fact, as the Apostle states it very positively—“As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” You cannot be under the curse and yet be partakers of the blessing. A man cannot be in darkness and in light at the same moment—he cannot be under the curse of the Law and under the blessing of the Gospel, too. All who are of the works of the Law are under the curse and consequently none of them are blessed with faithful Abraham.  
Note well the persons spoken of—“As many as are of the works of the Law”—that is, all of you who hope, by the works of the Law, to commend yourselves to God. We are all “of the works of the Law” by *nature*, because it is our bounden duty, as creatures, to keep the Law of our Creator. He is our Benefactor, our King, our Lord and God, and He has claims upon us which we ought not to disown. He has set forth those claims in the Law of the Ten Commandments and these are binding upon all of us, without exception. Because we have disobeyed that Law and denied to God His just claims, our violation of the Law has brought us under its penalty, which is described as “the curse.”  
No man has always kept all the Law and consequently every man that is of the works of the Law has come under the curse and must remain under it unless ransomed in the one appointed fashion. If you read those Ten Commandments through, as you should do very carefully, you will have to pause at each one and say, with solemn truthfulness, “I have broken this.” Especially will this be the case if you remember the truth that the Law is spiritual and deals with thoughts, desires, imaginations, motives—yes, with your nature itself.  
Surely you will have to cry, “Guilty! Guilty!” Every way and “guilty” every day. This being the case, you are under the curse. You may have been moral and outwardly commendable. But the heart and intent are what the Lord looks at. And because you have not loved the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength—and have not loved your neighbor as yourself—you have come short of the demands of His righteous Law and you are under the curse.  
I beseech you to remember that this is a matter which concerns you *now*. “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Not only shall you be so in the day when, “Depart, you cursed,” will be the final and hopeless doom of the wicked. But *today* you are under the curse if you are of the works of the Law. If the unsaved could really understand and believe this, they would hardly keep their seats. If you are not by Christ redeemed from the curse of the Law. If you have not, by faith, appropriated His great sacrifice, you are under the present curse of God.  
Even the Gospel does not bless you, for, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” O my Hearer, I could weep to think that you are under the curse. A deathbed is a dreadful place to an unpardoned sinner. But I am not speaking of a deathbed—I am now talking of the seat where you sit in health and strength. If you are of the works of the Law, that seat now holds a man under the curse. I am not talking now of thieves and murderers and such like. I am speaking of as many as are of the works of the Law and especially of those who believe that they are keeping the Law and are looking for salvation by their obedience.  
Those who think that they are not to be numbered with the guilty and need not to be saved by Divine Grace—these are of the works of the Law by their own choice—and they are under the curse. If you come before God in your own self-righteousness, you are, by that very act and deed, proven to be under the curse. The brand of Cain is not on your brow but the curse is working in your heart. As this city of London seemed last night and this morning to lie under a cloud charged with tempest, so does the man who looks to the Law for life abide under a cloud of wrath which may burst upon him at any moment. Oh, that the gloom and oppression of spirit which comes of that cloud of threat would pain you greatly and drive you to Christ for shelter!  
That you may no longer abide in false security, I pray that you, for a few moments, weigh those words, “under the curse.” I do not feel as if I could expand them or expound them. But I must simply repeat them— “UNDER THE CURSE!” The Lord make those words to pierce your souls! This is not *my* language, remember. It is not even the word of the Apostle Paul as a man. For he speaks by inspiration when he says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” How shall I pronounce these words with sufficient solemnity? When the sermon is printed, in what type shall the printer set up these words, “UNDER THE CURSE”?  
“The curse causeless shall not come,” but this is a curse with a cause of overwhelming conclusiveness. It is a curse that was pronounced of old by the authority of the Lord and confirmed by the Amens of assembled Israel. It is, in fact, the essence of all those curses which of old were declared on Mount Ebal, the rolling thunder of threatened wrath. “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse,” even as the Shorter Catechism puts it, “They have lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse and so are made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of Hell forever.”  
Dare you sleep tonight under the curse? Will you wake tomorrow and go forth to your business under the curse? Can you sport and laugh and frolic under the curse? God grant we may be sufficiently sensible to be filled with anguish at the sound of these dreadful words—“under the curse”!  
The Apostle goes on to give a Scriptural confirmation of this fact. He says, “For it is written.” He is writing a part of the New Testament under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But he turns back to the Old and gives authority to his writing by showing that it always was the mind of the Spirit, “for it is written.” If anything is written by the pen of inspiration, it is true, and we accept it as infallible. I hope you are not among those who trifle with the inspiration of any part of Holy Writ. For if so, this text has no power with you. “It is written” is a thing of omnipotent authority with many of us.  
“It is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” This is the summary of the whole passage in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy and also of the eleventh verse of the seventh chapter of that book.  
Attend to each word of the passage quoted. There is no exemption of persons. “Cursed is *everyone* that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the Law.” Every offender comes under the curse. Is it the king, the priest, the nobleman?—he is under the curse. Or is it the poorest of the land—the slave, the beggar, the fallen woman?—sin brings them under the curse. Prince or pariah, it is all the same—if the Law is not perfectly continued in, the curse follows. The sentence is sweeping. There are no exceptions to its killing force. You may have kept the Law in many points but if you have broken it in *one*, you are under its curse.  
If you want to send a message by the telegraphic wire, it may be perfectly sound for one hundred miles but if it is only broken in one inch, no, if it is simply cut across, you cannot send the message by it. No blessing can come to a man by the Law unless the Law has been perfectly kept. But one single infraction of the Law involves the curse. The possibility of blessing on the footing of justice is gone when sin enters in. Thus, every man of every rank and grade and external character, since he has not continued in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them, has come under the curse.  
Observe that there is no limit of time. It says, “continues not.” What if a man should have kept the Law, in his own judgment, for many years? His service is not over. Men join our army for a certain number of years and then they are discharged. But a man is under the Law so long as he lives—he cannot escape from under its yoke by the mere lapse of time. And so, if we had accomplished obedience for twenty years, yet still, if in the next year we broke the Law, we should come under its curse. A thief is not excused because he was up to now honest, nor a murderer because at some prior time he had not shed blood.  
He that “continues not” comes under the lash. My conscience clearly sees the utter impossibility of my ever obtaining justification by the works of the Law. If, up till now, I had never sinned, which, alas, is very, very far from being the case, yet I should still stand in jeopardy every hour. For, being tempted, I should yet fall and perish if my footing were that of the Law. Even the just could not live by legal principles. Their only hope is to live by *faith*. As for us defiled and polluted sinners, we are, from the beginning, out of the running, if the race is by works—no lapse of time will enable us to start. And if we did start, no time would arrive when we could say, “It is finished.”  
A Methuselah would be under the Law in his nine hundredth year. Still might the curse fall on him, even though, up till then, he had stood firm. Thus says the Lord, “When the righteous turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby.” On that footing none of us could hope to remain free from the curse. But the case is worse—for if we are of the works of Law—we are already under the curse.  
Observe that there is no indulgence as to certain sins. “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things.” What a range these words have! Yet they do not so much concern ceremonial things as the moral conduct of daily life. If you will turn to Deuteronomy 27, from which Paul is quoting, you will find that the works which are mentioned in detail as bringing the curse, are not works of worship, oblation, and ritual—but of *morality* or *immorality—*works which concern the *moral* law. We must continue in the keeping of the Ten Commandments and abide in the spirit of them in “all things.” Or, if not, it is utterly impossible that the Law can ever save us—all it can do is to put us under its curse.  
Once more, here is no narrowing of the demand. It is put, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them.” If a man does nothing wrong, yet if he fails to do that which is right, he is guilty. Omission is as truly a defect as commission. He misses the mark who shoots beyond it or falls short of it. If you make a single omission of duty on the footing of Law you are a lost man. If you have omitted, at any time, to love the Lord your God with the whole force and intensity of your nature, if you have omitted in any degree to love your neighbor as yourself, you have committed a breach of the Law.  
Not to obey is to disobey. Who can plead innocence, if this is so? How cutting is the sentence, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them”! It is an awful passage! It seems to me to shut up the gate of hope by works—yes, to nail it up tight. I bless God

it does fasten this door effectually. For if there seemed to be half a chance of getting through it, we should find men still struggling for entrance.  
Salvation by self is man’s darling hope—salvation by doings, feelings, or something or other of their own, is the favorite delusion of sinners. We may bless God that He has rolled a great stone at the mouth of the grave of legal hope. He has dashed in pieces as with a rod of iron the earthen vessel which held the treasures of our conceit. “By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”  
To complete this, the Apostle gives us a piece of what I must call side evidence. He has stated the fact and confirmed it by Scripture. He now gives side evidence from other Scriptures. Some might say, “There have been just men—men have been justified in the sight of God.” Yes, says Paul, turning to one passage out of very many which he might have quoted from Holy Scripture, the Lord says by His servant Habakkuk, “The just shall live by faith.” The only just men that ever have existed since the Fall have been justified by *faith*. And that their faith was of the essence of their justification is clear, since they *lived* by faith.  
It is not said that the just shall rejoice by faith but they shall “*live* by faith.” Their very existence as just men hung upon their faith. They had no life before God except as they believed and lived. The Apostle argues that since the just men of the Old Covenant were justified by faith, it is clear *we* cannot be justified by the Law. For the Law is not of faith, since the Law says nothing of believing but speaks only of *doing*. The Law speaks nothing of Divine Grace, nothing of mercy, but only of justice and merit.  
If anything that may be called mercy is due to men, it is clearly not mercy but justice. For all that is due is of justice. The Law speaks not of believing, it speaks only of doing—“The man that does those things shall live in them.” The one teaching of the Law is—“Obey and live. Disobey and die.” Inasmuch as those who did live unto God lived by their *faith*, it is clear it was not by the works of the Law. Thus the Apostle argues, negatively and positively, showing how men were *not* justified and showing how they *were* justified. And thus he makes it plain as a pikestaff that by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. My dear Hearers, let us deal faithfully and personally with the solemn Truth of God now before us. I pray that everyone may examine himself to see whether he is of the works of the Law. Are we legal in our feelings? Are we relying upon self and its doings? Does anyone among us feel that there is not in London a more deserving person than himself? Because he is attends Church or Chapel regularly, does he think himself accepted of the Lord? Because of confirmation, or Baptism, or attendance of the sacrament, does he hope to be saved? Because of his decent and respectable life, does he reckon himself just?  
If such is the hope of anyone of you, you are confessedly, “of the works of the Law,” and it is not *my* word but the Word of the *Lord*, that you are under the curse. Think of this, you who are so very good, so free from fault! There is nothing else for you but the curse. You are not in the same way as those men who are mentioned in the Scriptures as justified. For they lived by *faith* and you hope to live by *works*. As you are not in the same way, neither will you come to the same end. It is a thought which vexes you and possibly even makes you angry—that you should be under the curse. But it will be well for you to know the truth, however black it looks. Nothing remains but a fearful judgment. For where there is even now a curse, what else can there be but fiery indignation at the last?  
We will stay no longer upon this most searching Truth of God. Alas, I cannot bring it home to the conscience! It needs a miracle of Divine Grace to get this Truth into the heart of man and to make him feel the full terror of it. It is so repugnant to our proud human nature that we incline to any error which will obscure it. Come, Holy Spirit, with Your Divine light and flash this Truth of God upon the sinner’s eyes in such a way that he must see it!  
**II.**Secondly, THIS BLESSEDNESS COMES TO THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH, even to those who look for salvation to the Lord Jesus, in whom God declares Himself to be just and the Justifier of him that believes.  
On this point I shall run on much the same lines as under the first division of the subject. Here we have a blessed fact—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” If the former tog, that we are under the curse, should make us sit uneasily, this blessed doctrine should make us dance for joy! The ransom is paid. We are free! “Christ has redeemed us.” That is, so many as believe in Him. He has “redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” “He has bought us out from under the curse.” Our deliverance from the curse is by a process similar to that by which slaves are set free, namely, by their being *bought with a price*.  
We are not merely delivered from the curse by a moral change *in* us but by a redemptive work *for* us. Christ was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood. A ransomed captive is by the ransom justly freed and has a right to his freedom which none may question. You that believe in Jesus are freed from the curse of the Law and justly freed from it. The Law cannot curse you, though you have broken it and in your own persons incurred its penalty. Since you are in Christ Jesus, the Law has not a word to say against you. The reason we will show you directly, but the fact is so, and therein you should rejoice. “He that believes in Him is not condemned.”  
So far from being condemned, the Believer is, “accepted in the Beloved,” and this is our happy privilege at this hour. Let us rejoice in God and rest in peace, being justified by faith.  
But then the Apostle goes on to show the manner of it. The fact is clear—oh, for a grip of it! The manner of our deliverance is this—“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” I do not understand language at all, unless this means substitution. Christ was made a curse for us. That is to say, in our place He bore our sins and the curse which came of it. The curse of the Law, which otherwise must have fallen upon*us*, fell upon the Anointed of the Lord, who stood Sponsor for us.  
Jesus was accursed of men. Oh, how they hated and loathed Him! How clamorously the Jews cried, “Away with Him! Crucify Him, crucify Him!” The curse of men might have been of small account, though it cost our Lord many a sorrow. But His Father hid His face from Him! Do you hear that bitterest of all bitter cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Here is the wormwood and the gall, the quintessence of woe. He was All-blessed, yet He was made a curse. In Him was no sin, yet, “He made Him to be sin for us.” He was always in Himself the Beloved of the Father. But when He stood in the sinner’s place, a voice was heard, “Awake, O sword, against My shepherd and against the man that is my Fellow, says the Lord.”  
“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” and then, “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief.” I do not like to use a word of my own, in trying to open up this mystery—I will not even try to explain it but will bid you look down into the depths of it for yourselves. He was “*made a curse for us*”—he was not such by nature. It needed a special arrangement to put Him in that condition. Not only did the curse pass over Him in its results but the word says, “He was *made* a curse.” It is wonderfully expressive. And yet more wonderfully it veils the inexpressible.  
“He was made a curse.” O You Divine Son of God! You ever-blessed One, you perfect One! You altogether lovely One, how can such words apply to You? Yet they do apply, for the Holy Spirit speaks of You in this wise. Here is our hope and here our joy, even in this abyss of woe—“He was made a curse for us.” The penal consequences of sin were so visited upon the great Substitute that He vindicated the Law of God in the highest conceivable manner. Remember those words—“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
These are the echo of that Prophetic sentence—“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “He bore the sin of many.” “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” He bore our sins that He might bear them away by the fact of bearing them Himself. This is the central doctrine of the Gospel. And although today it is slighted, here I stand, by God’s Grace, to declare it in plain terms while my tongue can move. I know no other hope for lost men but this—that the justice of God has been vindicated by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and it is by faith in Him that men are delivered from the curse of the Law, because He was made a curse for them.  
The Apostle, speaking in this second part, as it were, in the same way as in the former portion, goes on to confirm this by Scripture. He says again, “For it is written.” Beloved, that is the nail on which everything must hang—“It is written,” “It is written.” Never let us get away from, “It is written.” May we hold fast to God’s Word, if we give up everything else! “It is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Read the twenty-third verse of the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy. The instructed in Jewish manners and customs tell us that the usual way of putting to death by the Jews was by stoning and a person who committed murder was stoned to death usually and he was *afterwards* hanged upon a tree.  
He was hanged up that men might see that he was taken from the earth and that the curse of God was upon him for his crime. The Law was that he should not remain on the tree after sundown and this Law saved the Jews from that barbarity which once defaced our own country— leaving the body of the hanged in chains year after year. God’s Law stipulated a man who had committed murder was to hung up till the sun went down. And then he was buried and, if I remember rightly, they usually buried the tree and the nails and the garments of the criminal, that the memory of him might be put away and the land should not be polluted.  
This being the case, it was remarkable that our Lord should die by a death which was evidently intended in the Divine decree to exhibit Him as made a curse. The felon’s hanging, the mode of death for slaves, was adopted by the Roman governor, who knew nothing whatever of the Divine purpose but yet carried it out. By the mode of His death our Lord was exhibited as “made a curse for us.”  
Oh, look you to the Crucified! While the darkness gathers around us on this murky morning, let it remind you of the gloom which gathered around your Savior. Remember the hour when the concentrated essence of darkness and of eternal night gathered about His blessed Person while He hung exposed to death upon the tree. Darkness was the most fit surrounding for the agony which racked His soul. Our Lord endured within Him a darkness greater than that without Him.  
The darkness seemed to say that His griefs could not be seen or understood of men. He suffered within the sacred chamber of an impenetrable midday midnight. None could see the heights and depths of what was meant by His being “made a curse”—

***“There my God bore all my guilt  
This through Divine Grace can be believed. But the horrors which He felt  
Are too vast to be conceived.”***

Notice, furthermore, the consequence of all this—“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.” Our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for us that He might deliver us from the curse of the Law, and that in consequence we might be blessed. The flood of blessing was ready to flow along its channel but the riverbed was blocked by a huge rock. The stream was dammed up by our iniquity. What was to be done? The hindrance could only be moved by that great Lord, whose hands were pierced and whose feet were nailed to the Cross. He, by His great self-sacrificing act of love, lifted the rock from its place, cast it away and enabled the stream of blessing to flow freely down to us.

This day there is no *curse* for the Believer. But every *blessing* awaits him. All who are in Christ, the great seed of Abraham, are blessed with faithful Abraham. The Covenant may be summed up in this one word— Blessing, blessing, blessing—blessing for the Believer and blessing through him. What was the blessing of Abraham? It was, first, justification. It was “accounted to him for righteousness.” God counts them righteous who believe in Jesus. He not only absolves you from sin but He justifies you, accounts you as having kept the Law. Oh, rejoice in this and be glad!

The next blessing to Abraham was the promise. God had given him a great promise of a spiritual inheritance. To us the Holy Spirit is the earnest of that future inheritance—and Christ has so worked for us, “that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Wherever the Spirit of God dwells, the covenant is fulfilled—you have in the Spirit the foretaste of the promised rest, you have the initial stages of the promised perfection—you have the dawn of the promised glory. The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His Glory.

Beloved, see what has come to you, then, through the substitutionary work of Christ! Justification is yours as truly as it was Abraham’s, and you are as assuredly justified as Abraham was. The promise also comes to you even as it did to Abraham. For you are Abraham’s seed in Christ and you are blessed with faithful Abraham. You may rejoice, therefore, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. All this, you observe, is by *faith*—“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

O dear Hearers, I am very sorry for some of you—for you have no faith and therefore no Grace. Why should not my sorrow be turned into joy? May God the Holy Spirit lead you to believe in Christ Jesus today! My wonder is that *any* believe, from one point of view. And then my next wonder is that anybody should *not* believe. Is it not marvelous that God should give His own dear Son, God, like Himself? And that God should thus come among men and put on human flesh and blood—and that in His wonderfully complex Person He should bear the consequences of our sin?

It is a miracle that God should, by suffering, magnify His own Law and that the Supreme Judge should Himself bear the curse, instead of the culprit, and thus vindicate the principles of eternal rectitude. Even Hell itself could not more fully prove the displeasure of God against evil, nor make the moral government of the universe more honorable. The doctrine of Substitution must be true. It could not have been invented by human wit. Prima facie it bears the mark of the Truth of God upon it.

It is the most wonderful story that ever was told—God Himself condescends to suffer in the place of His enemies. He bears the sin of those who are rebels against His Divine authority—and without injury to His justice or taint upon His righteousness—He pardons sin and receives the sinner into favor. Herein is love, indeed! Here is justice truly vindicated and great love glorified. Love both devised the plan and carried it out and this day love makes it effectual in all who believe in Jesus.

O my Hearers, I cannot be content to preach this glorious Truth of God to you. I hunger and thirst that you may receive it! Oh, that you would now look to Jesus and live! Behold Him on the Cross! Behold your God, whom you have offended, clothed in your nature and dying in your place, that you may live! The serpent of brass is on the pole—the serpent has bitten the people, they are ready to die. And lo, on the pole another serpent is uplifted. The curse destroys you. The Lord uplifts Him who was made a curse.

Those who looked to the brazen serpent found life and healing in that look. And even so, there is life from sin by*looking* to Him who was made sin for us. Though the serpent’s poison was deadly, its bites were cured by a *look* at the brazen serpent. And even so, my Lord becomes a man and, as a man, bears our sin in His own body on the tree, that He might from that tree cry to guilty men, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends

of the earth; for I am God and there is none else.”

Oh, that you would look to Jesus by faith! I began by lamenting that we are under the curse. But if you will trust in my Lord, I shall conclude by bidding you rejoice that, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.”

I have done when I just say these two or three practical words—Humbly let us own the great evil of sin. What a horrible thing sin must be, that it should compel God to curse His creatures! God is Love but even love curses sin. God is full of pity and compassion. But this very God must curse those who hope to be saved by His Law and yet break that Law. Child of God, do you ever trifle with sin? Cease from that fatal folly. For God does not trifle with it—He curses it.

O Man, see what a polluting thing your sin must be, since there is no removing it except by the blood of the only begotten Son of God! If you have ever had faint views of your own guilt, cease from them at once. Only by the interposition of God Himself could you be saved from guilt. How great that guilt! Lie low before your Lord. Confess your sin with a broken heart. Wonder that your heart is not more broken than it is and that you have not a greater horror of its tremendous, its infinite, evil.

Next, let me say to you, heartily accept the way of salvation by faith in Christ. I cannot make out why men quarrel with justification by faith as they now do. There is an old proverb which says, “It is a pity for any man to quarrel with his bread and butter.” But to quarrel with the means of your livelihood is nothing in folly compared with laughing at God’s way of salvation. Why do you refuse a method so simple, so just to God, so safe to man? Why do men desire to find fault with it? I am very old-fashioned, so they say. But does their new fashion offer men anything better than the old way?

I am not too old to learn. But I am not so young as willingly to go further and fare worse. I cannot see what there is in the new theology which even pretends to be better than the old. I suppose that eminent Divine is eminently superior to me who is so orthodox as to say that our Lord Jesus Christ by His death did something or other, he does not know what, which in some way or other, he does not quite know how, is connected with the reconciliation of man to God. This is rather a cloudy Gospel. I do not think that such a dim statement would cheer a mouse, much less a brokenhearted, dying sinner.

I do not see that his plan, or want of plan, has any glory over that which I declare to you. But he is orthodox—very many of his Brethren go far further and altogether deny the expiatory sacrifice. I cannot pretend to have fellowship with such—they take from me my hope. I was a brokenhearted sinner, crushed under guilt, crying out in despair and expecting soon to be in Hell. And it was only when I learned that the Lord Jesus suffered in my place that I found peace of conscience.

Substitution is still the rock on which I build and I know of no other on which a man can wisely base his hope for eternity. Comfort in the Cross I have never lost, and I am not going to cast away my confidence in it to please the philosophers of the season. The old farmer would not change his horse, “For,” he said, “I have not seen a nag that will carry me better than my own.” The doctrine of the Cross has carried me so far without a stumble and I hope to enter Heaven by its means. I am glad to sing with

the children— ***“He knew how wicked we had been,  
And knew that God must punish sin—  
So, out of pity, Jesus said  
He’d bear the punishment instead.”***

Glorious atonement! Accept it, poor Soul! Do not let the devil set you laughing at your only hope. This is the available way of salvation for you, you lost one! You self-condemned one—this is a way which will suit you! If you are so very good and so very wise, I know that this gracious method will not attract you. You will kick at it. This does not make me think any the less of it. For I remember that our Lord is set to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at His Word, being disobedient. If you will not have Him, do not deceive yourselves—we never thought you would.

You do but prove that the Father has hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. You come not to Him because you are not of His sheep, as He said unto you. If you were brought low and felt your need of Him, then should we hope that Jesus reckoned you among His redeemed. If you would hear His voice and follow Him, then should we know that you belonged to the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. But as you disregard Him, you will be driven away with the goats.

Further, let us now gratefully extol our Redeemer. Join all of you to magnify the Lord your Savior. We do not praise Him half as much as we ought. I might even ask, Do we say anything about Him? Six days in the week we talk about all sorts of things and say little or nothing about Him and yet He has redeemed us. The fact of His being made a curse for us ought to fill our mouths with thanksgiving and our tongues with singing all the day long. Blessed be the Redeemer’s name! “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” Extol Him now and evermore—if you have not done so before, begin at once. Get your music ready. “O sing unto the Lord a new song.”

Then go and tell other people about your Lord’s redemption. The theme will win attention if properly set forth. Let no one within fifty miles of you be without a knowledge of this great redemption by Christ’s being made a curse for us. Men try to hide this Truth of God—therefore let us cause it to shine out everywhere. Vindicate the name of your great Lord by telling everybody that He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

If I could set you all preaching this blessed doctrine, I should rejoice, indeed. Rest in it and rejoice in it, and then repeat it till others also know and believe it. Even now the day begins to brighten up, the murky darkness is abating—I hope our hearts will rejoice in harmony with the day. The Lord send us out into a world delivered from darkness. May we make it brighter by setting before it this great Truth of God! To our glorious Substitute be glory forever and ever! Amen.

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LIFE BY FAITH  
NO. 814

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“The just shall live by faith.”  
Galatians 3:11.~~***

THE Apostle quotes from the Old Testament, from the second chapter of Habakkuk, at the fourth verse, and thus confirms one Inspired statement by another. Even the just are not justified by their own righteousness, but live by faith. It follows, then, most conclusively, that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God. If the best of men find no justification coming to them through their personal virtues but stand accepted only by faith, how much more such imperfect beings, such frequent sinners as ourselves? Men who are saved by faith become just. The operation of faith upon the human heart is to produce love, and through love, obedience, and obedience to the Divine Law is but another name for morality, or, what is the diviner form of it, holiness!

And wherever this holiness exists we may make sure that the holiness is not the *cause* of spiritual life and safety, but faith is still the wellspring of all. You saw, a few weeks ago, the hawthorn covered with a delicious luxuriance of snow-white flowers, loading the air with fragrance. Now no one among the admiring gazers supposed that those sweet May blossoms caused the hawthorn to live. After awhile you noticed the horse chestnut adorned with its enchanting pyramids of flowers, but none among you foolishly supposed that the horse chestnut was sustained and created by its bloom—you rightly conceived these forms of beauty to be the *products* of life and not the cause of it.

You have here, in nature’s emblems, the true doctrine of the inner life. Holiness is the *flower* of the new nature. It is inexpressibly lovely and infinitely desirable—no, it must be produced in its season or we may justly doubt the genuineness of a man’s profession—but the fair Graces of holiness do not save, or give spiritual life, or maintain it—these are rills from the fount, and not the fountain itself. The most athletic man in the world does not live by being athletic, but is athletic because he lives and has been trained to a perfection of animal vigor. The most enterprising merchant holds his personal property not on account of his character or merit, but because of his civil rights as a citizen.

A man may cultivate his land up to the highest point of production, but his right to his land does not depend upon the mode of culture, but rather upon his title deeds. So the Christian man should aim after the highest degree of spiritual culture and of heavenly perfection, and yet his *salvation*, as to its justness and security, depends not on his attainments, but rests upon his *faith* in a crucified Redeemer, as it is written in the text, “The just shall live by faith.” Faith is the fruitful root, the inward channel of sap, the great life-Grace in every branch of the vine.

In considering the text, this morning, we shall use it, perhaps somewhat apart from the connection in which it stands, and yet not apart from the mind of the Spirit, nor apart from the intention of the Apostle, if not here, yet in other places.

**I.**In the first place, IN THE PUREST SPIRITUAL SENSE IT IS TRUE THAT THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. It is through faith that a man becomes just, for otherwise, before the Law of God he is convicted of being unjust—being justified by faith he is enrolled among the just ones. It is through faith that he is at first quickened and breathes the air of Heaven, for naturally he was dead in trespasses and sins. Faith is the first sure sign of the spiritual life within the human breast. He repents of sin and looks to Jesus because he believes the testimony of God’s Son—and he believes that testimony because he has received a new life.

He depends upon the atoning blood of Jesus because his heart has received the power to do so by the Holy Spirit’s *gift* of spiritual life. Ever afterwards you shall judge of the vigor of the man’s inner life by the state of his faith—if his faith grows exceedingly, then his life, also, is increasing in power. If his faith diminishes, then depend upon it, the vital spark burns low. Let faith ebb out and the life-floods are ebbing too. Let faith roll in with a mighty sweep, in a floodtide of full assurance, then the secret lifefloods within the man are rising and filling the man with sacred energy. Were it possible for faith to die, the spirit-life must die, too. And it is very much because faith is imperishable that the new life is incorruptible.

You shall find men only *live* before God as they *believe* in God and rest in the merit of His dear Son. And in proportion as they do this you shall find they live in closer fellowship with Heaven. Great saints must be great Believers—Little-Faith never can be a matured saint. Observe that this truth proves itself in all the characteristics of spiritual life. The nobility of the inner life—who has not noticed it? A man whose life is hid with Christ in God is one of the aristocrats of this world. He who knows nothing of the inner life is but little above a mere animal, and is by no means comparable to the sons of God—to whom is given the royal priesthood, the saintly inheritance. In proportion as the spiritual life is developed the man grows in dignity, becoming more like the Prince of Glory, yet the very root and source of the dignity of the holy life lies in faith.

Take an instance. The life of Abraham is remarkable for its placid nobility. The man appears at no time to be disturbed. Surrounded by robber bands he dwells in his tent as quietly as in a walled city. Abraham walked with God and does not seem to have quickened or slackened his pace. He maintained a serene, obedient walk, never hastening through fear, nor loitering through sloth. He kept sweet company with his God—and what a noble life was his! The father of the faithful was second to no character in history! He was a kingly man, yes, a conqueror of kings and greater than they. How calm is his usual life! Lot, following his carnal prudence, is robbed in Sodom and at last loses all—Abraham following his *faith* abides as a pilgrim, and is safe. Lot is carried away captive out of a city, but Abraham remains securely in a tent, because he cast himself on God.

When does Abraham fail? When does that mighty eagle suddenly drop as with wounded wing? It is when the arrow of *unbelief* has pierced him— he begins to tremble for Sarah, his wife. She is fair—perhaps the Philistine king will take her from him. Then, in an unbelieving moment, he says, “She is my sister.” Ah, Abraham, where is your nobility now? The man who so calmly and confidently walked with God while he believed, degrades himself to utter the thing that is not, and so falls to the common level of falsehood.

Even so will you. So shall each of us—strong or weak, noble or fallen— according to our faith. Walking confidently with God and leaning upon the everlasting arm you shall be as a celestial prince surrounded by ministering spirits. Your life shall be happy and holy, and glorious before the Lord! But the moment you distrust your God you will be tempted to follow degrading methods of evil policy and you will pierce yourself through with many sorrows. As the *dignity*, so the *energy* of the spiritual life depends upon *faith*. Spiritual life, when sound, is exceedingly energetic. It can do all things. Take the Apostles, as an instance, and see how over sea and land, under persecutions and sufferings they nevertheless pressed forward in the Holy War and declared Christ throughout all nations.

Wherever the spiritual life fairly pervades man, it is a force which cannot be bound, fettered, or kept under—it is a holy fury, a sacred fire in the bones. Rules, and customs, and proprieties it snaps as fire snaps bonds of tinder. But its energy depends upon God the Holy Spirit—entirely upon the existence and power of *faith*. Let a man be troubled with doubts as to the religion which he has espoused, or concerning his own interest in the privileges which that religion bestows and you will soon find that all the energy of his spiritual life is gone—he will have little more than a name to live—practically he will be powerless.

Take Abraham again. Abraham finds that certain kings from the east have pounced upon the cities of the plain. He cares very little for Sodom or Gomorrah, but among the prisoners his nephew, Lot, has been carried away. Now he has a great affection for his kinsman and resolves to do his duty and rescue him. Without stopping to enquire whether his little band was sufficient, he relies entirely upon the Lord his God—and with his servants and neighbors hastens after the spoilers, nothing doubting, but *expecting* aid from the Most High God. That day did Jehovah, who raised up the righteous man from the east, give his enemies to his sword and as driven stubble to his bow—and the Patriarch returned from the slaughter of the kings laden with the spoil.

He could not but fight while he believed. It was impossible for him to sit still and yet believe in God! But if he had not believed, then had he said, “The matter must go by default. It is a sorrowful misfortune, but my nephew, Lot, must hear it—perhaps God’s Providence will interpose for him.” Faith believes in Providence, but she is full of *activity* and her activity, excited by reliance *upon* Providence leads like wheel within a wheel to the fulfillment of the Providential decree.

My Brethren, it is necessary for us to believe much in God or we shall do but little for Him. Believe that God is with you and you will have an insatiable ambition to extend the Savior’s kingdom! Believe in the power of the Truth of God, and in the power of the Holy Spirit who goes with the Truth, and you will not be content with the paltry schemes of modern Christendom—you will glow and burn with a seraph’s ardor, longing and desiring even to do more than you can do—and practically carrying out with your utmost ability what your heart desires for the glory of the Lord!

Further, it is quite certain that all the *joy* of the spiritual life depends upon faith. You all know that the moment your faith ceases to hang simply upon Jesus, or even if it suffers a little check, your joy evaporates. Joy is a welcome angel but it will not tarry where faith does not entertain it. Spiritual joy is a bird of paradise which will build its nest only among the boughs of faith. Faith must pipe, or joy will not dance. Unbelieving Jacob finds his days few and evil but believing Abraham dies an old man and full of years.

If you would anoint your head and wash your face—and put away the ashes and the sackcloth—you must trust more firmly in the faithfulness of the Lord your God. Doubts and fears never could strike so much as a spark with which to light the smallest candle to cheer a Christian. But simple trust in Jesus makes the sun to rise in his strength with healing beneath his wings—even upon those that sit in the valley of the shadow of death. In proportion as you lean on Christ—in *that* proportion shall life’s burden grow light, Heaven’s joys grow real, and your whole being more elevated!

I might thus continue to mention each point in the secret life, but I rather choose to proceed in order to observe only that all our growth in the spiritual life depends upon our faith. True life must grow in its season. You can tell the difference between two stakes which are driven into the ground—the one may happen to have life in it, and if so, before long it sprouts—while the dead one is unchanged. So with the Christian. If he is living he will grow. He must make advances. It is not possible for the Christian to sit still and remain in the same state month after month. If he is to increase in spiritual riches he must of necessity exert a constant and increasing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter cannot walk the waters except he believes—doubting does not help him—it sinks him. I fear that some of my Brothers and Sisters try to grow in spiritual life by adopting methods which are *not of faith*. Some think that they will set themselves rules of self-denial or extra devotion— these plans are lawful but they are not in themselves effective—for vows may be observed mechanically, and rules obeyed formally and yet the *heart* may be drifting away yet further from the Lord. Yes, these vows and rules may be a means of deluding us into the vain belief that all is well, whereas we are nearing spiritual shipwreck.

I have found in my own spiritual life that the more rules I lay down for myself, the more sins I commit. The habit of regular morning and evening prayer is one which is indispensable to a Believer’s life, but the prescribing of the *length* of prayer and the constrained remembrance of so many persons and subjects may gender unto *bondage* and *strangle* prayer rather than assist it. To say I will humble myself at such a time, and rejoice at such another season is nearly as much an affectation as when the preacher wrote in the margin of his sermon, “cry here,” “smile here.” Why, if the man preached his sermon rightly he would be sure to cry in the right place, and to smile at a suitable moment! And when the spiritual life is sound, it produces prayer at the right time—and humiliation of soul and sacred joy spring forth spontaneously—apart from rules and vows.

The kind of religion which makes itself to order by the almanac and turns out its emotions like bricks from a machine—weeping on Good Friday and rejoicing two days afterwards, measuring its motions by the moon— is too artificial to be worthy of your imitation! The liberty of the spiritual life is a grand thing and where that liberty is maintained constantly, and the energy is kept up, you will need much faith for the fading of faith will be the withering of devotion, liberty will degenerate into license and the energy of your life will drivel into confidence in *yourself*. Let who will, bind himself with rules and regulations in order to (as he may *think*) advance himself in Divine Grace—be it ours, like Abraham, to believe God and it shall be counted us for righteousness—and like Paul to run the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus.

Faith enriches the soil of the heart. Faith fills our treasuries with the choicest gold and loads our tables with the daintiest food for our souls. By faith we shall do valiantly, stopping lions’ mouths and quenching violent flames. Faith in Jesus, the Savior, faith in the heavenly Father, faith in the Holy Spirit—this we must have or we perish like foam upon the waters. As the other side of all this, let me notice that some Christians appear to try to live by *experience*. If they *feel* happy today they say they are saved. But if they feel unhappy tomorrow they conclude that they are lost. If they feel at one moment a deep and profound calm overspreading their spirits, then are they greatly elevated. But if the winds blow and the waves beat high, then they suppose that they are none of the Lord’s people.

Ah, miserable state of suspense! To live by feeling is a dying life! You know not *where* you are, nor *what* you are if your *feelings* are to be the barometer of your spiritual condition. Beloved, a *simple* faith in Christ will enable you to remain calm even when your feelings are the reverse of happy—to remain confident when your emotions are far from ecstatic. If, indeed, we are saved by Jesus Christ, then the foundation of our salvation does not lie within *us* but in that crucified Man who now reigns in Glory!

When *He* changes, ah, then what changes must occur to us! But since He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, why need we be so soon removed from our steadfastness? Believe in Jesus, dear Heart, when you can not find a spark of Divine Grace within yourself! Cast yourself as a sinner into the Savior’s arms when you can not think a good thought, nor uplift a good desire! When your soul feels like a barren wilderness that yields not so much as one green blade of hope, or joy, or love—still look up to the great Farmer who can turn the desert into a garden! Have confident faith in Jesus at all times, for if you believe in Him you are saved and cannot be condemned!

However good or bad your state, this shall not affect the question—you believe, therefore you shall be saved! Give up living from hand to mouth in that poor miserable way of frames and feelings, and wait only upon the Lord from whom comes your salvation. Many *professors* are even worse— they try to live by *experiments*. I am afraid a great many among Dissenters are of that kind. They must have a revival meeting once a week at least! If they do not get a grand display quite so often, they begin to fall dreadfully back and crave an exciting meeting, as drunkards long for spirits. It is a poor spiritual life which hangs on eloquent sermons and such like stimulants! These may be good things and comforting things—be thankful for them—but I pray you, do not let your spiritual life *depend* upon them!

It is very much as though a man should, according to Scriptural language, feed on the wind and snuff up the east wind—for your faith is not to stand in the wisdom of *man*, nor in the excellency of human speech, nor in the earnestness of your fellow Christians—but in your simple faith in Him who is, and was, and is to come, who is the Savior of sinners! A genuine faith in Christ will enable you to live happily even if you are denied the means of Divine Grace. A genuine faith in Christ will make you rejoice on board ship, keep Sabbath on a sick bed, and make your dwelling a temple even if yours is but a log hut in the far West, or a shanty in the bush of Australia. Only have *faith*, and you need not look to these excitements any more than the mountains look to the summer’s sun for their stability.

Shall I need further to say, by way of caution, that I am afraid many professors live anyway? I know not how otherwise to describe it! They have not enough caution to look at their inward experience. They have not enough vigor to care about excitement, but they live a kind of listless, dreamy, comatose life. I mean some of *you*. You believe that you were saved years ago. You united yourselves to a Christian Church and were baptized, and you conclude that all is right. You have written your conversion in your spiritual trade-books as a good asset—you consider it as a very clear thing. *I* am afraid it is rather *doubtful*, still *you* think it *sure*.

Since that time you have kept up the habit of prayer. You have been honest. You have subscribed to Church funds, have done your duty outwardly as a Christian—but there has been very little vitality in your godliness—it has been surface work, skin-deep consistency. You have not been grievously exercised about*sin*. You have not been bowed under the weight of inward corruption—neither have you been, on the other hand, exhilarated by a sense of Divine love and a delightful recognition of your interest in it. You have gone on dreamily, as I have heard of soldiers marching when they were asleep. O for a thunderbolt to wake you, for this is dangerous living! Of all modes of living, if you are a Christian, this is one of the most perilous!

And if you are *not* a Christian, it is one of the most seductive—for while the outward sinner may be got at by the preaching of the Gospel, you are almost beyond the reach of Gospel ministry—because you will not admit that warnings are meant for you. You wrap yourselves up and say, “It is well with me,” while you are really naked, and poor, and miserable in the sight of God. Oh, if you could but get back to live by faith!

**II.**Secondly, “the just shall live by faith”—this means that FAITH IS OPERATIVE IN OUR DAILY LIFE. It is operative in many ways, but three observations will suffice. Faith is the great sustaining energy with the just man under all his trials, difficulties, sufferings, or labors. It is a notion with some that true religion is meant to be kept shut up in Churches and Chapels as a proper thing for Sundays, which ought to be attended to, since a man is not respectable if he does not take a pew *somewhere*, even if he does not need sit in it, or, sitting in it, pays no more attention to the word preached than to a ballad singer in the street.

There is a decent show of religion which people, as a rule, must keep up or they cannot be received into polite society. But the idea of bringing religion down to the breakfast table, introducing it to the drawing-room, taking it into the kitchen, keeping it on hand in the shop, in the workshop, or the corn exchange, carrying it out to sea in your vessel—this is thought by some to be sheer fanaticism! And yet if there is anything taught by the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is just this—that religion is a matter of common, everyday life—and no man understands the Christian religion at all unless he has fully accepted it as not a thing for Sundays and for certain places and certain times, but for *all* places and *all* times, and *all* conditions and *all* forms of life.

An active, operative faith is by the Holy Spirit implanted in the Christian and it is sent to him on purpose to sustain him under trial. I shall put this to some of you as a test by which you may try whether you have obtained the faith of God’s elect. You have lost a large sum of money— well, are you distracted and bewildered? Do you almost lose your senses? Do you murmur against God? Then I ask you what are *you* better than the man who has no religion at all? Are you not an unbeliever? If you believed that all things work together for your good, would you be so rebellious? Yet that is God’s own declaration! Now is the time when your faith in God should enable you to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

What do you more than others unless you can thus speak with submission and resignation—yes, even with cheerfulness? Where is your new nature if you cannot say, “It is the Lord, let Him do as seems good to Him”? By this shall you test whether you have faith or not. Or it may be you have lost a darling child and that loss has cut you to the very quick. You are scarcely able to reconcile yourself at present to it. Yet I trust you do not so repine as to accuse your God of cruelty, but I trust your faith helps you to say, “I shall go to him, though he shall not return to me. I would not have it other than my heavenly Father has determined.” Here will be a crucible for your faith!

Those two instances may serve as specimens. In all positions of life a real faith is to the Believer like the hair of Samson in which his great strength lies. It is his Moses’ rod dividing seas of difficulty, his Elijah’s chariot in which he mounts above the earth! So, too, in difficult labors, for instance, in labors for Christ’s cause, a man who feels it his duty to do good in his neighborhood yet may say, “I do not know what I can do. I am afraid to commence so great a matter, for I feel so unfit, and so feeble.” My dear Friend, if it is your duty to do it, your not being able to do it cannot excuse you because you have only to go and tell your heavenly Father of your weakness and ask for strength, and He will give it liberally.

Some of us who can now speak with ease were once very diffident in public. Those preachers who are now most useful were poor stammer’s before their gifts were developed. And those who are our best teachers and most successful soul-winners were not always so. But they had faith and they pressed forward, and God helped them. Now, if your religion is not worth an old song you will not persevere in holy work. But if it is real and true you will press forward through all difficulties, feeling it to be an essential of your very existence that you should promote the Redeemer’s cause. I would quite as soon not be, as live to be a useless thing. Better, far, to fatten the fields with one’s corpse than to lie rotting above ground in idleness. To be a soldier in Immanuel’s ranks, and never fight, never carry a burden, nor uphold a banner, nor hurl a dart—yes, better that the dogs should eat my worthless carrion than that such should be the case!

Feeling this, then, you will press forward with the little power you have and new power will come upon you—and so you will prove that your faith is sincere because it comes to your support in the ordinary work of Christian life. Under all difficulties and labors, then, the just shall live by faith.

Furthermore, faith in ordinary life has an effect upon the dispensations of Divine Providence. It is a riddle which we cannot explain how everything is eternally fixed by Divine purpose, and yet the prayer of faith moves the arm of God. Though the enigma cannot be explained, the fact is not to be denied. My Brothers and Sisters, I may be thought fanatical, but it is my firm belief that in ordinary matters, such as the obtaining of your living, the education of your children, the ruling of your household—you are to depend upon God as much as in the grand matter of the salvation of your soul! The hairs of your head are all numbered—go to God, then, about your trifles. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father— cast upon the Lord your minor trials.

Never think that anything is too little for your heavenly Father’s love to think upon. He who rides upon the whirlwind walks in the garden at evening in the cool breath of the zephyr! He who shakes the avalanche from its Alp also makes the sere leaf to twinkle as it falls from the aspen! He whose eternal power directs the spheres in their everlasting marches guides each grain of dust which is blown from the summer’s threshing floor! Confide in Him for the *little* as well as for the great and you shall not find Him to fail you. Is He God of the hills only, and not the God of the valleys?

“Are we to we expect *miracles,* then?” says one. No, but we expect the same *results* as are compassed by miracles. I have sometimes thought that for God to interpose by a miracle to accomplish a purpose is a somewhat clumsy method, if I may be allowed such a word. But for Him to accomplish the very same thing without interfering with the wheels of His Providence seems to me the more thoroughly God-like method. If I were hungry today and God had promised to feed me, it would be as much a fulfillment of His promise if my friend here brought my food unexpectedly as if the ravens brought it! And the bringing of it by ordinary means would all the better prove that God was there—not interrupting the machinery of Providence—but making it to educe the end which He designed.

God will not turn stones into bread for you, but perhaps He will give you stones to break and you will thus *earn* your bread. God may not rain manna out of Heaven and yet every shower of rain falling upon your garden brings you bread. It will be the better for you to earn your food than to have it brought by ravens, or better that Christian charity should make you its care than that an inexhaustible barrel and cruse should be placed in your cupboard. Anyhow, your bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure.

My witness is, and I speak it for the honor of God, that God is a good provider! I have been cast upon the Providence of God ever since I left my father’s house, and in all cases He has been my Shepherd, and I have known no lack. My first income as a Christian minister was small enough in all conscience, never exceeding 40 pounds, yet I was as rich then as I am now, for I had enough! And I had no more cares, no, not half as many, then, as I have now! And when I breathed my prayer to God then, as I do now, for *all* things temporal and spiritual, I found Him ready to answer me at every pinch—and pinches I have had full many.

Many a monetary trial since then have I had in connection with the college work which depends for funds upon the Lord’s moving His people to liberality. My faith has been often tried, but God has always been faithful and sent supplies in hours of need. If any should tell *me* that prayer to God was a mere piece of excitement and that the idea of God’s answering human cries is absurd, I should laugh the statement to scorn, for my experience is not that of one or two singular instances—but that of *hundreds* of cases in which the Lord’s interposition for the necessities of *His* work has been as manifest as if He had rent the clouds and thrust forth His own naked arm and bounteous hand to supply the needs of His servant.

This, my testimony, is but the echo of the witness of the Lord’s people everywhere. When they look back they will tell you that God is good to Israel and that when they have walked by faith they have never found that God has failed them. The Red Sea of trouble has been divided! The waters have stood upright as a heap, and the depths have been congealed in the heart of the sea! As for their doubts and their difficulties, like the Egyptians the depths have covered them, there has not been one of them left. And standing on the further shore to look back upon the past, the redeemed of the Lord have shouted aloud, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” for faith has conquered all their difficulties and brought supplies for all their needs.

Do not let me be misunderstood, however. Faith is never to be regarded as a *premium* for idleness. If I sit down and fold my arms, and say, “The Lord will provide,” He will most likely provide me a summons to the County Court and a place in the parish workhouse. God has *never* given any promise to idle people that He will provide for them, and therefore they have no right to believe that He will. To trust in God to make up for our laziness is not *faith*, but wicked *presumption*.

Neither does the power of faith afford ground for fanaticism. I have no right to say, “I should like to have so-and-so, and I will ask for it, and shall have it.” God has never promised to give to us everything which our whimsies may select. If we really want any good thing we may plead the promise, “No good thing will I uphold from them that walk uprightly,” but we must never dream that God will pander to our fooleries. The God of Wisdom will not be part and parcel with our mere whims. Nor is faith to be a substitute for prudence and economy. I have known some who have, to a great degree, abstained from energetic action because they feared to interfere with the Lord! This fear never perplexes me. My faith never leads me to believe that *God* will do for me what *I can do for myself*.

I do *not* believe that the Lord works needlessly. Up to the highest pitch that my own prudence, and strength and judgment can carry me, I am to go depending upon Divine guidance. Then I stop, for I can go no further— and I plead with my Father thus—“Now, Lord, the promise reaches further than this. It is Your business to make up the deficiency.” There I pause, and God is as good as His word. But if I stop short when *I*might advance—how dare I ask the Lord to pander to my sloth? I believe, in Christian work, we ought for God to exert ourselves to the utmost, both in the giving of our substance and in the collecting help from our fellow Christians—and come in faith and prayer to the Lord for help.

Faith is operative in the land of the unseen, not in the seen. Faith is to come to your help where creature-power fails you. Up to the point at which you *can* work, you *must* work, and with God’s blessing upon it your work will not hinder your faith but be an exhibition and display of it. Thus with a simple faith in God, not fanatical, not idle, but going on in the path of prudence—desiring to glorify God—you shall find that all difficulties will vanish and your doubts and fears shall fly away.

Do understand that even faith itself will be no guarantee against trials and against poverty, for it is good for God’s people to be tried and there are some of them who would not glorify God if they were not poor. Therefore, you are not to suppose that you have no faith because you are in need—neither are you to *expect* that in answer to prayer God will necessarily keep you in easy circumstances. If it is best for you that you should not be poor, He will keep you from it. But if it is better that you should be, He will sustain you in it. Resignation should walk hand-in-hand with faith, and they each will minister to the other’s beauty.

**III.**Lastly, THIS IS ALSO TRUE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS A WHOLE. The Christian Church lives by faith. She lives by faith in opposition to speculation. Every now and then a fit of speculative philosophy seizes the Church and then her vitality withers. In the days of the school-men, just before Luther’s time, good men were fighting and squabbling from morning to night—gathered like so many carrion crows around the dead body of Aristotle—fighting about nobody knows what. It is said that they held sage discussions upon how many angels could poise themselves upon the point of a needle!

While such foolish and unlearned questions as these were being raised, the poor people in the Christian Church were starved and the Church lost all its energy. Sinners were not converted, fundamental Truths of God were despised. Then came Luther and the notable revival. In more modern days, in the period after Doddridge and Watts, among Dissenters the habit of philosophizing upon the Trinity was common. Brethren tried to be very exact and precise, as exact and precise as the Athanasian creed—while others combated their dogmatism and the result was that a large proportion of the Dissenting Churches fell asleep practically—degenerated doctrinally, and Socinianism threatened to eat out the very life of evangelical Dissent.

Speculation is not the life of the Christian Church, but *faith*, a reception of the Bible Truth in its sublimity and authority—an obedient belief in Revelation, not because we understand all its teachings, but because, not understanding, we nevertheless receive the Lord’s Word upon the *ipse dixit* of the Most High. Whenever the Church is simple-minded enough to require no outworks to her faith, to care very little about evidences, *internal* or*external—*but just to fight the battle on the ground of Divine authority, saying, “This is of God, and at your peril reject it”—she has been “fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.” Let her begin to split hairs, try to move away objections and spend all her time upon her outworks, and then her glory departs.

In the next place, faith is the life of the Church in opposition to reliving despondency. In our own Churches it used to be the habit for our friends to be very well content if they built a Chapel in the lowest part of a town, down two courts, three alleys, and a turning. And as to attendants, the members appeared to be particularly anxious to avoid anything like the excitement of a crowd. They were a most retiring people as a rule, but as to coming out into the forefront to set their city on a hill and make their light shine by evangelizing the masses, that was a forgotten business! At the present hour, from other quarters you constantly hear expressions defiled with the most dastardly timidity, denoting the most shameful cowardice. For instance, lately we have heard that, “The Church is in danger!” “The Church is in danger!” Christians with their Bibles and all the Truths in the Bibles! Christians with their ministers and all their earnestness! Christians with the Holy Spirit, with God’s promises, with the foundations against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail—and yet in *danger*! Really, such remarks and such fears are quite unworthy of the manhood of those who believe in the Divinity of the Christian faith.

No Church can make progress till she believes enough in her God to be sure that in Him she is strong! While she *imagines* that she is weak she *is* weak. Fear paralyzes her. Dread kills her energies. But when she believes in the Divine strength with which she is encountered as with a golden girdle, then she marches on with certainty of triumph! May we as a Church always believe that as long as we are resting upon the strength of God nothing can hurt us! I defy the House of Lords, the House of Commons, the Pope, the Turk and all the nations in all the world and all the devils in Hell to put this Church in danger! I do not know anything that they could take away from us, for I know of nothing which they have given

us. If *they* had endowed and established us, they could take away what they gave, but as they have not given us a thread to a shoelace, they can do whatever they please and we shall not even call a Church meeting to consider it. Yet here are other Churches, with Lord Bishops, and deans, and prebends and I know not what beside, which are horribly shaken because an arm of flesh is failing them! The pay of their preachers will byand-by, by a gradual process, be withdrawn and they tremble for the ark of the Lord! Shame on your little minds, to be thus afraid! Surely you have lost confidence in the Truth of God and in God or you would not fear because of the talents of gold which will be justly withheld from you!

Remember that the Truth of God allied with *earthly* power has often been defeated by error—but the Truth of God alone has always *defeated* error—even when that error has had physical might upon its side. Let Truth have her fair chance and stand alone! She is most strong when least hampered with human strength, and most sure to be victorious when she has no might but that which dwells in herself or comes from her God!

In the next place, the Christian Church lives by faith, that is, faith in opposition to a squeamishness which I see springing up nowadays as to the selection of instruments. Let me be understood. I hear it is said, “Why allow these men to preach in the street? Is it not a pity that illiterate persons should preach at all? Some of them are very ungrammatical, and really, what they say at the very best is very so-so. Is it not better that none should go out but the best trained men?” Then, for missions, it is said the very best picked men, only, should be sent forth. As to young men, full of zeal, not having had experience and not having learned all the classics and being well up in mathematics—it is of no use thinking to send them!

Many a Church, indeed, thinks that all her officers ought to be rich, all her ministers learned, all her agents Masters of Arts, at least—if not Doctors of Divinity. This was not so in olden times. Thus it was not when the Church of God grew mightily, for of old the Church of God had FAITH—in what? Why, faith in *weakness*! Faith in the things that *were not*! Did not she believe, “Not many noble, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised”?

It is very memorable that in the catacombs of Rome among those remarkable inscriptions which are now preserved with so much care as the memorials of the departed saints—it is rare to find an inscription which is all of it spelt correctly—proving that the persons who wrote them, who were no doubt the very pick of the Christian flock, could neither write nor

spell correctly! And yet *these* were the men that turned the world upside down. When Wesley began *his* career, our Churches were nearly dead with the disease called, “proprieties,” but Mr. Wesley employed men, some of whom were quite unlettered, to go about to preach—and by those men this *nation* was revived!

To this day, our Primitive Methodist friends are doing a great and noble work for which God be thanked, because they use almost every man they have, and they use the men till they become fit to be used, trained and tutored by *practice*. In this Church I thank God I have always encouraged every Brother and Sister to do all they can—and I do still urge all so to do. I trust there is not a young man here who can say that I ever held him back in desiring to serve his Master. If I have, I am sure I am very sorry for it. Oh, all of you do all that you can—for this Church, at any rate—has faith in you all, that though you make a thousand blunders, yet it is better to have the Gospel preached blunderingly than not at all!

And while three millions and more in London are perishing for lack of knowledge, it is better that you spoil the Queen’s English and make ever such mistakes than that you should not preach Jesus Christ! God will not be angry with you for all your ignorance if you are not ignorant of the one thing necessary! So, Brethren, it comes to this—that we must not, as a Christian Church, calculate our resources, nor take out our note books and count up how much we have to rely upon. The treasury of the Church is the liberality of God! The power of the Church is the Omnipotence of Jehovah! The persuasions of the Church are the irresistible influences of the Holy Spirit! The destiny of the Church is an ultimate conquest over all the sons of men!

Advance then, every one of you to the fray, for you advance also to conquest! Rely upon Him who has said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!” and you shall find that as the just you *shall* live by faith! If you sit down and waste your time, or turn your backs and retire from the battle, you shall be written among the cowards whose memorial is in the dust. But if you stand fast and are immovable, “always abounding in the work of the Lord,” your record shall be on high and your portion shall be at the right hand of the Father, where Christ sits, and where you shall also sit forever and ever. God bless these words for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE CURSE REMOVED  
NO. 3254

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1911.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY AGO.~~***

***~~“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” Galatians 3:13.~~***

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #873, Volume 15— CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US—  
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]

THE Law of God is a Divine Law, holy, heavenly, perfect. Those who find fault with the Law, or in the least degree depreciate it, do not understand its design and have no right idea of the Law itself. Paul says, “We know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.” In all that we ever say concerning justification by faith, we never intend to lower the opinion which our hearers have of the Law, for the Law is one of the most sublime of God’s works. There is not a commandment too many—there is not one too few! The Law of the Lord is so incomparable that its perfection is a proof of its Divinity. No human lawgiver could have given forth such a Law as this which we find in the Decalogue. It is a perfect Law, for all human laws that are right are to be found in that brief compendium and epitome of all that is good and excellent toward God, or between man and man.

But while the Law is glorious, it is never more misapplied than when anyone attempts to use it as a means of salvation! God never intended men to be saved by the Law. When He proclaimed it on Sinai, it was with thunder, lightning, clouds, fire and smoke, as if He would say, “O Man, hear My Law, but tremble while you hear it! It is proclaimed with the blast of the trumpet exceedingly loud, even as the great Day of Destruction will also be of which it is the herald, if you offend against it and find none to bear your doom for you.” It was written on stone, as if to teach us that it was a hard, cold, stony Law—one which would have no mercy upon us, but which, if we go against it, would fall upon us and grind us to powder! O you who are trusting in the Law for your salvation, you have erred from the faith—you do not understand God’s designs—you are ignorant of the Truths of God that He has revealed to us by His Holy Spirit! In the Chapter from which our text is taken, the Apostle says, “If there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith, of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.” The Law was intended, by its terrors, to crush every hope of self-righteousness and, by its lightning, to scathe and demolish every tower of our own works—that we might be brought humbly to accept a finished salvation through the one Almighty Mediator who has magnified the Law and made it honorable, and brought in an everlasting righteousness wherein we stand complete in Christ if, indeed, we are in Him by a living faith. So you perceive that all that the Law does is to curse—it cannot bless. In all the pages of Revelation, you will find no blessings that the Law ever gave to one who had offended it. There were blessings for those who kept it completely—though none ever did—but no blessing is ever written for one offender. Blessings we find in the Gospel, curses we find in the Law.

This afternoon we shall briefly consider, first, *the curse of the Law.* Secondly, *the curse removed.*Thirdly,*the great Substitute who removed it* by “being made a curse for us.” And then, lastly, we shall solemnly ask one another whether we are included among the innumerable multitude for whom Christ was “made a curse.”

**I.**First, then, let us consider “THE CURSE OF THE LAW.”All who sin against the Law are cursed by the Law—all who disobey its commands are cursed, cursed instantly, cursed terribly.

We shall regard that curse, first, as being *a universal curse*resting upon everyone of the seed of Adam. Perhaps some here will be inclined to say, “Of course, the Law of God will curse all those who are loose in their lives or profane in their conversation. We can all of us imagine that the swearer is a cursed man, cursed by God. We can suppose that the wrath of God rests upon the head of the man who is filthy in his life, the man who is degraded and under the ban of society.” But, my Friends, the real Truth is that the curse of God rests upon everyone of us as by nature we stand before Him! You may be the most moral man in the world, yet the curse of God is upon you! You may be lovely in your life, modest in your carriage, upright in your behavior, almost Christ-like in your conduct, yet if you have not been born-again—if you have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit—the curse of God still rests upon your head! If you have committed but one sin in your life, God’s Justice is so inexorable that it condemns you for that one solitary offense! And though your life should henceforth be one continued career of holiness, if you have sinned but once, unless you have a saving interest in the blood of Christ, the thunders of Sinai are meant to terrify you and the lightning of Divine Vengeance flash all around you!

Ah, my Hearers, how humbling is this truth to our pride—that the curse of God is upon everyone who is of the seed of Adam, that every child born into this world is born under the curse since it is born under the Law! Then, in addition to the curse that rests upon us because we are children of Adam, there is the further curse that comes through our own transgression. The first moment that I sin, though I sin but once, I come beneath the curse quoted in the 10th verse of this Chapter, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them”—cursed without hope of mercy apart from that blessed Savior who “has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” It is a dreadful thought that the trail of the serpent is over the whole earth, that the poison of sin is in the fountain of every human heart, that the blood in all our veins is corrupt, that we are all condemned already, that each one of us, without a single exception, whether he is a philanthropist, senator, philosopher, Divine, prince, or monarch, is under the curse unless he has been redeemed from it by Christ!

The curse, too, while it is universal, *is also just*. There are many persons who think that the curse of God upon those who are undeniably wicked is, of course, right, but that the curse of God upon those who, for the most part, appear to be excellent, and who may have sinned but once, is an act of injustice! But when God pronounces the curse, He does it justly. He is a God of Justice and just and right are all His ways. And mark you, Man, if you are condemned, it shall be by the strictest Justice. Even if you have sinned but once, the curse is a righteous one when it lights upon your head! Do you ask me how this is? I answer—You say that your sin is little. Then, if it is but little, how little trouble it might have taken you to have avoided it! If your transgression is but small, at how small an expense you might have refrained from it! Some have said, “Surely the sin of Adam was but a little one—he did but take an apple and eat it.” Yes, but in its littleness was its greatness! If it was but a little thing to take the forbidden fruit, with how little trouble might the sin have been avoided! And because it was so small an act, there was couched within it the greater malignity of guilt. So, too, you may never have blasphemed your God, you may never have desecrated His Sabbath, yet insomuch as you have committed a little sin, you are justly condemned, for a little sin has in it the essence of all sin—and I know not but that what we call little sins may be greater in God’s sight than those which the world universally condemns and against which the hiss of the curse of humanity continually rises! I say that God is just even though He should pronounce a curse upon all His creatures! So tremble, O Sinners, and “kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

So the curse is universal and it is just.  
But, next, the curse of the Law is also *fearful*. There are some who seem to think that it is a little matter to be under the curse of God, but, oh, if they knew the fearful consequences of that crime, they would realize that it is indeed a terrible one! It were enough to make our knees knock together, to chill our blood and to cause every hair of our head to stand on end if we did but know what it is to be under the curse of God! What does that curse include? It involves the death of the body and that is by no means an insignificant portion of its sentence. It also includes spiritual death—the death of that inner life which Adam had—the life of the spirit which can only be restored by the Holy Spirit who quickens whom He will. And it includes, last of all and worst of all, eternal death— that second death which can only be described by that awful—I had almost said, unutterable word, “Hell.” This is the curse which rests upon every man by nature. We make no exception for rank or degree, for God has made none. We offer no hope of exception for character or reputation, for God has made none. The whole of us are shut up to this, that as far as the Law is concerned, we must die—die here, and die in the next world the death which never dies, “where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched,” even by a flood of tears of penitence if they could be shed! There we must be forever lost! Could we estimate all the consequences of that curse, we might well afford to ridicule all the torments that tyrants could inflict upon us—we might well despise any injuries that this body might sustain—when we compare them with that awful avalanche of threats which rushes down with resistless force from the mountain of God’s Truth!

We hasten from this point, Beloved, for it is fearful work to speak upon it. Yet we must not depart from it entirely until we have hinted at one more thought, and that is that the curse of God which comes upon sinful men is *a present curse*. O my dear Hearers, could I lay hold of your hands, if you are not converted, I would labor with tears and groans, to get you to grasp this thought! It is not merely damnation in the future that you have to dread—it is condemnation NOW that is your portion! Yes, my Hearer, sitting where you are, if you are out of Christ, you are already condemned! Your death warrant has been sealed with the great seal of the Majesty on High, and the angel’s sword of vengeance is already unsheathed over your head this afternoon! Whoever you may be, if you are out of Christ there hangs a sword over you, suspended by a single hair which death shall cut, and then that sword shall descend, dividing your soul from your body, and dooming both to eternal pains! You might well start up from your seats in terror if you did but realize your true condition in God’s sight! You are reputable, you are respectable, you are honorable—perhaps right honorable—yet you are condemned men, condemned women! On the walls of Heaven your names are written up there among the Deicides who have slain the Savior, among the rebels against God’s government who have committed high treason against Him! And perhaps even now the dark-winged Angel of Death is spreading his pinions upon the blast, hastening to hurry you down to destruction! Say not, O Sinner, that I frighten you! Say rather that I would bring you to the Savior , for whether you believe this or not, you cannot alter the truth thereof—that you are now, if you have not given yourself to Christ— “condemned already.” Wherever you sit, you are but in the condemned cell, for to the unconverted, the unrenewed, the unrepentant, this whole world is but one huge prison wherein the condemned one does drag along a chain of condemnation till death takes him to the scaffold where the fearful execution of terrific woe must take place upon him! This, then, is “the curse of the Law.”

**II.**But now I must speak, in the second place, of THE REMOVAL OF THAT CURSE. This is a sweet and pleasant duty. Some of you, my dear Friends, will be able to follow me in your experience while I remind you how it was that in your salivation, Christ removed the curse from you.

First, you will agree with me when I say that the removal of the curse from us is done in a moment. *It is an instantaneous thing.*I may stand here one moment under the curse and then, if the Spirit shall quicken me, and I breathe a prayer to Heaven—if by faith I cast myself on Jesus— in one solitary second, before the clock has ticked, my sins shall be all forgiven! Hart sang truly—

***“The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives,  
Redemption in full through His blood.”***

You will remember in Christ’s life that most of the cures He worked—yes, I believe all—were instantaneous cures. Look! There lies a man stretched upon his couch from which he has not risen for years. “Take up your bed and walk,” said Christ in majesty—and then, without the intervention of weeks of convalescence, “immediately he rose up before them and took up that where he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.” There is another man! He is deaf and practically dumb. Christ said to him, “Ephphatha, that is, Be opened, and immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.” Yes, and even in the case where Christ healed death, itself, he did it instantaneously. When that beautiful young creature lay asleep in death upon the bed, Jesus went to her and though her dark ringlets covered up her eyes, which were glazed in death, Jesus did but take her clay-cold hand in His and say to her, “Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto you, arise,” then, “straightway the damsel arose and walked.”

It is true that in conversion, Christ commences a work which is to be carried on through life in sanctification, but the justification of the sinner, the taking away of the curse, is done in a single moment. “Unwrite the curse,” says God, and it is done! The acquittal is signed and sealed— it takes not long. I may stand here at this moment and I may have believed in Christ but five minutes ago—still, even if I have believed in Christ for only that short time, I am as fully justified, in God’s sight, as I would be should I live until these hairs are whitened by the sunlight of Heaven, or as I shall be when I walk among the garden lamps of the city of palaces! God justifies His people at once! The curse is removed in a single moment. Sinner, hear that! You may be now under condemnation, but before you can say, “now,” again, you may be able to say, “There is therefore now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus.”

Mark, Beloved, in the next place, that this removal of the curse from us, when it does take place, is *an entire removal*. It is not merely a part of the curse which is taken away. Christ does not stand at the foot of Sinai and say, “Thunders, diminish your force!” He does not catch the lightning, now and then, and bind its wings. But when He comes, He blows away all the smoke! He puts aside all the thunder, He quenches all the lightning—He removes it all! When Christ pardons sin, He pardons all sin! You may be old and gray-headed, and hitherto unpardoned, but though your sins exceed in number the stars of the sky, one moment suffices to take them all away! Mark that—*all!* That sin of midnight, that black sin which, like a ghost, has haunted you all your life! That hideous crime! That unknown act of blackness which has darkened your character. That awful stain upon your conscience—they shall all be taken away in a moment! And though you have a stain upon your hands which you have often sought in vain to wash out with the mixtures which Moses can give you, you shall find, when you are bathed in Jesus’ blood, that you shall be able to say, “All clean my Lord! All clean! Not a spot, all is gone! I am completely washed from head to foot, the stains are all removed.” It is the glory of this removal of the curse, that it is all taken away! There is not a single atom off it left! Hushed now is the Law’s loud thunder—the sentence is completely reversed and there is no fear of it left!

We must also say upon this point, that when Christ removes the curse, *it is an irreversible removal*. Once let me be acquitted by God and who is he that can condemn me? There are some, in these days, who teach that God justifies, and yet, after that, condemns the same person whom He has justified! We have heard it asserted pretty boldly that a man may be a child of God today—hear it, you heavens, and be astonished—and be a child of the devil tomorrow! We have heard it said, but we know it is untrue, for we find nothing in Scripture to warrant it! We have often asked ourselves—Can men really believe that after having been begotten again by God unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead—that new birth can fail and die? We have asked ourselves, Can men imagine that after God has once broken our chains, and set us free, He will call us back and bind us once again, like Prometheus, to the great rocks of despair? Will He once blot out the handwriting that is against us and then record the charge again? Once pardoned, then condemned? We know that if Paul had met with such teachers, he would have said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also make intercession for us.” There is no condemnation now to us who are “in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is a sweet thought to me that even Satan himself can never rob me of my pardon. I may lose my copy of it, and lose my comfort from it, but the original pardon is filed in Heaven! It may be that gloomy doubts may arise, and I may fear that I am not forgiven, yet I can say—

***“O my distrustful heart,  
How small your faith appears!  
But greater, Lord, You are  
Than all my doubts and fears!  
Did Jesus once upon me shine?  
Then Jesus is forever mine!”***

I love, at times, to go back in thought to that hallowed hour when I first realized that my sins were all forgiven for Christ’s sake. There is much comfort in recalling that blessed hour when first we knew the Lord—

***“Do mind the place, the spot of ground***

***Where Jesus did you meet!”***  
Perhaps you do. Perhaps you can look back to the very place where Jesus whispered to you that you were His. Can you do so? Oh, what comfort it will give you! For remember, once acquitted, you are acquitted forever! So says God’s Word. Once pardoned, you are clear forever! Once set at liberty, you shall never be a slave again! Once Sinai’s wrath has been appeased, it shall never thunder against you again! Blessed be God’s name, we have been brought to Calvary and we shall be brought to Zion, too! At last we shall stand before God and even there we shall be able by Grace to say—

***“Great God, we are clean!  
Through Jesus’ blood we are clean.”***

**III.**Now we are brought, in the third place, to observe THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE by whom the curse is removed.  
“The curse of the Law” was not easily taken away. In fact, there was but one way whereby it could be removed. The lightning was in God’s hand—it must be launched—He said it must. The sword was unsheathed. Divine Justice must be satisfied, God vowed that it must. Vengeance was ready. Vengeance must fall! God had said that it must. How, then, was the sinner to be saved? The only answer was this. The Son of God appears and He says, “Father, launch Your thunderbolts at Me! Here is My breast, plunge the sword of Justice in here! Here are My shoulders, let the lash of vengeance fall on them!” Thus Christ, our Substitute, came forth and stood for us, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” It is our delight to preach the Doctrine of Substitution because we are fully persuaded that no Gospel is preached where Substitution is omitted. Unless sinners are plainly and positively told that Christ stood in their place to bear their guilt and carry their sorrows, they never can see how God can “be just and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.”  
We have heard some preach a Gospel something after this order—that, though God is angry with sinners, yet, out of His great mercy, for the sake of something that Christ has done, He does not punish them, but remits the penalty. Now we hold that this is not God’s Gospel, for it is neither just to God nor safe for man! We believe that God never remitted the penalty, that He did not forgive the sin without punishing it, but that He exacted the full penalty without the abatement of a solitary jot or tittle—that Jesus Christ, our Savior, did drink the veritable cup of our redemption to its very dregs—that He did suffer beneath the crushing wheels of Divine Vengeance, the same pains and sufferings which we ought to have endured! Oh, the glorious Doctrine of Substitution! When it is preached fully and rightly, what a charm and what a power it has! Oh, how sweet is the work to be able to tell sinners that although God has said, “The soul that sins, it shall die,” their Maker has Himself bowed His head to death in their place, and thus God is righteously able to pardon all Believers in Jesus because He has met all the claims of Divine Justice on their account!  
Should there be one here who does not yet understand the Doctrine of Substitution, let me repeat what I have said. Sinner, the only way in which you can be saved is this. God *must* punish sin. If He did not, He would unDeify Himself. But if He has punished sin in the Person of Christ for you, you are fully absolved, you are quite clear! Christ has suffered what you ought to have suffered, and you may well rejoice in that. “Well,” you say, “I ought to have died.” But Christ has died! “I ought to have been sent to Hell.” But Christ has suffered that which is a full equivalent, and which completely satisfies God’s demands. The cup which His Father gave Him, He drank to its dregs—  
***“At one tremendous draft of love  
He drank damnation dry”****—*  
for all who believe in Him! All the punishment, all the curse was laid upon Him—now it is all gone forever. Yet it had not gone without having been taken away by the Savior**.** The thunder has not been reserved, the lightning has been launched at Him! Divine Justice is satisfied because Christ has endured the full penalty of all His people’s guilt.  
**IV.**Now we come to answer that last question, HOW MANY OF US CAN SAY THAT CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, HAVING BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US?  
The first part of our discourse has been entirely doctrinal, some of you have not cared for it because you did not feel that you were interested in it. It was natural that it should be so. At the reading of a will, does the servant stay to listen? No, for there is nothing for her. But if a man is a son of the testator, how eagerly does he open his ears to catch every sound, that he may know whether the estate has been left to him or not? However badly the lawyer may read the will, he is anxious to hear every word that he may learn if he is to have a portion among the children. Now, Beloved, let us read the will again to see if you are among those for whom Christ was the Substitute. The usual way with most of our congregations is this—they write themselves down as Christ’s long before they know whether God has done so or not. You make a profession of religion, you wear a Christian’s cloak, you behave like a Christian, you take a seat in a church or a chapel, and you think you are Christianized at once. Yet many in our congregation who fancy that they are Christian, have made a great mistake! Let me beg you not to suppose that you are Believers in Christ because your parents were, or because you belong to an orthodox church. Religion is a thing which we must have for ourselves, and it is a question which we all ought to ask—whether we are savingly interested in the Atonement of Christ and have a portion in the merit of His agonies?  
Come, then, my Friend, let me put a question or two to you. And fist let me ask you this—*Were you ever condemned by the Law in your own conscience?*“No,” you say, “I know not what you mean.” Of course you do not, and you have therefore no true hope that you are saved. But I will ask you yet again—Have you ever been condemned by the Law in your conscience? Have you ever heard the Law of God saying in your soul, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them”? And have you felt that you were thus cursed? Did you ever stand before God’s bar, like a poor condemned criminal before his judge, ready for execution? Have you, as John Bunyan would have put it, ever had the rope around your neck? Have you ever seen the black cap placed upon the head of your Judge? Have you even *thought* yourself about to be turned to the gallows? Have you ever walked the earth as if, at every step, it would open beneath your feet and swallow you up? Have you ever felt yourself to be a worthless, ruined, sin-condemned, Law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinner? Have you ever fallen down before God and said, “Lord, You are just. Though You slay me, I will say that You are just, for I am sinful and deserve Your wrath”? As the Lord lives, if you have never felt and spoken like that, you are still a stranger to His Grace, for the man who acquits himself, God condemns! And if the Law condemns you, God will acquit you! So long as you have felt yourself condemned, you may know that Christ died for condemned ones and shed His blood for sinners. But if you fold your arms in self-security, if you say, “I am good, I am righteous, I am honorable,” be you warned of this—your armor is the weaving of a spider and it shall be broken in pieces! The garments of your righteousness are light as feathers and shall be blown away by the breath of the Eternal in that day when He shall unspin all that Nature has ever woven! Yes, I bid you now take heed of this—if you have never been condemned by the Law, you have never been acquitted by Divine Grace!  
Now I will ask you another question—*Have you ever felt yourself to be acquitted by Grace?* “No,” says one, “I have never expected to feel that. I thought that we might perhaps know it when we came to die, or that a few eminent Christians might possibly then know themselves to be forgiven, but I think, Sir, you are very enthusiastic to ask*me* whether I have ever felt myself forgiven.” My dear Friend, you make a great mistake. If a man had been a galley slave, chained to an oar for many a year, and if he were once set free, do you think that he would not know whether he were free or not? Do you think that a slave who had been toiling in bondage for years, when once he trod the land of freedom, if you should say to him, “Do you know that you are emancipated?” do you think that he would not know it? Or if a man who has been dead in his grave were to be awakened to life, do you think he would not know it? He will know himself to be alive as the emancipated slave will know that he is a free man! If you have never felt your chains fall off you, then your chains are still on you, for when God breaks our chains off us, we know ourselves to be free! The most of us, when God set us free from our prison camp, leaped for very joy! And we remember that the mountains and the hills did break forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the field did clap their hands! We shall never forget that gladsome moment! It is indelibly impressed upon our memory—we shall remember it to life’s last hour! I ask you again—Did you ever feel yourself to be forgiven? And if you say, “No,” then you have no reason to think that you *are* forgiven! If the Lord has never whispered in your ear, “I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions”—you have no right to think yourself pardoned! Oh, I beseech you, examine yourself and know whether you have been condemned by the Law, and whether you have been acquitted by Grace!  
And, lastly, my dear Friends, I may have, and doubtless do have, many here present who have simply come to spend an hour, but who have no care, no interest, no concern about their souls, who are perhaps, utterly careless as to whether they are condemned or not. If I could speak to you as I could wish, I would speak—  
***“As though I never might speak again,  
And as a dying man to dying men.”***

When I remember that, likely enough, I shall never see the faces of many of you again, I feel that there is a deep and an awful responsibility lying upon me to speak to such of you as are careless. There are some of you who are putting off the evil day, or you are saying, “If I am condemned, I care not for it.” Ah, my Friend! If I saw you asleep upon your bed when the flames were raging in your chamber, I would shout in your ear, or I would drag you from your couch of slumber. If I knew that while you had a fatal disease within you, you would not take the medicine which alone could cure you, I would, upon my knees implore you to take that medicine! But, alas, here you are, many of you, in danger of eternal destruction—and you have a disease within your souls that must soon destroy them forever! Yet what careless, hardened, thoughtless creatures you are, just caring for the body and not seeing Christ to be the Savior of your souls! As the angels laid hold upon Lot, and said to him, “Escape for your life! Look not behind you, neither stay you in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed,” so would I do to you. I would come to each one of you and say, “My brother, carelessness may be of use to you now, but carelessness will not stop the voice of death when *he* speaks! Indifference may silence *my* voice in your conscience now, but when that grim skeleton tyrant comes to address you, indifference will not do then! You may laugh now, you may dance now, you may be merry now, your cup may be full to the brim now—but what will you do in that day when the heavens are clothed with Glory, when the books are opened, when the Great White Throne is set, and when you come before your Maker to be acquitted or condemned? I beseech you, prepare for that day! I beg of you, for Christ’s sake, to picture yourself before your Judge—conceive of Him there in yonder heavens seated upon His Throne—imagine that you are now looking upon Him. O my Hearer, what will you do? You are before the Judgment Seat without Christ as your Savior**!** “Rocks, hide me, for I am naked!” But you are dragged out, Sinner, naked before your Judge! What will you do now? I see you bend your knees. I hear you cry, “O Jesus, clothe me now!” “No,” says Jesus, “that robe can never be worn by you now.” “Savior, have mercy upon me even now.”“No,” says He, “I called, but you refused. I stretched out My hand, but no man regarded; you set at nothing all My counsel, and would none of My reproach, so now I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes.”

Am I talking realities or mere fictions? Why, realities, and yet, if I were reading a novel to you, you would be lost in tears! But when I tell you God’s Truth that soon His Throne shall be set and we shall all appear before Him, you sit unmoved and remain careless concerning that great event! But be it known to every careless sinner that death and judgment are not the unimportant things that they may have fancied! Everlasting wrath and eternal severance from God are not such light things to endure as they may have conceived. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Have I one here who is saying, “What must I do to be saved, for I feel myself condemned?” Hear Christ’s own words—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Do you ask me what it is to believe? Hear, then, the answer. To believe is to look to Jesus! That little word, “look,” beautifully expresses what a sinner is to do. There is little in its appearance, but there is much in its meaning. Believing is letting the hands lie still and turning the eyes to Christ. We cannot be saved by our hands—but we are saved when we look to Jesus by faith. Sinner, it is no use for you to try to save yourself! To believe in Christ is the only way of salvation—and that is throwing self behind your back and putting Christ right before you! I can never find a better description than that of the Negro—“to believe is to fall flat down upon the promise, and to lie there.” To believe is to do as one might do in a stream. It is said that if we were to fold our arms and lie motionless upon the water, we would not sink. To believe is to float upon the stream of Grace. I grant you that there will be much that you will *do*afterwards, but you must *live*before you can do! The Gospel is the reverse of the Law. The Law says, “Do, and live.” The Gospel says, “Live first, then do.” The thing for you to say, poor Sinner, is just this, “Lord Jesus, here I am. I give myself to You.”

I never had a better idea of believing in Jesus then I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before, but it struck me very forcibly at the time and I cannot help repeating it. Speaking about faith, he said, “The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately, but I told him that he must not say anything to me about my sins—he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to Him— bad debts and all.” That is believing in Jesus! Believing is giving up all we have to Christ and taking all that Christ has to ourselves! It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for His righteousness, changing our sins for His merits. Execute the transfer, Sinner, or rather, may God’s Grace execute it and give you faith in it! And then the Law will no longer be your condemnation, but it shall acquit you! May Christ add His blessing! May the Holy Spirit rest upon us and may we all at last meet in Heaven! Then will we sing “to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #873 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US  
NO. 873

***~~DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written,  
Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”~~***

***~~Galatians 3:13.~~***

The Apostle had been showing to the Galatians that salvation is in no degree by works. He proved this all-important Truth of God, in the verses which precede the text, by a very conclusive form of double reasoning. He showed, first, that the Law could not give the blessing of salvation, for, since all had broken it, all that the Law could do was to curse. He quotes the substance of the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.” And as no man can claim that he has continued in all things that are in the Law, he pointed out the clear inference that all men under the Law had incurred the curse.

He then reminds the Galatians, in the second place, that if any had ever been blessed in the olden times, the blessing came not by the Law, but by their faith—and to prove this, he quotes a passage from Habakkuk 2:4 in which it is distinctly stated that the just shall live by faith—so that those who were just and righteous did not live before God on the footing of their obedience to the Law, but they were justified and made to live on the ground of their being Believers. See, then, that if the Law inevitably curses us all, and if the only people who are said to have been preserved in gracious life were justified not by works, but by *faith*—then is it certain beyond a doubt that the salvation and justification of a sinner cannot be by the works of the Law, but altogether by the Grace of God through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

But the Apostle, no doubt feeling that now he was declaring that doctrine he had better declare the foundation and root of it, unveils in the text before us a reason why men are not saved by their personal righteousness, but saved by their faith. He tells us that the reason is this—that men are not saved by any personal merit but their salvation lies in Another—lies, in fact, in Christ Jesus, the representative Man who alone can deliver us from the curse which the Law brought upon us. And since works do not connect us with Christ, but faith is the uniting bond, faith becomes the way of salvation.

Since faith is the hand that lays hold upon the finished work of Christ—which works *could* not and *would* not do, for works lead us to boast and to forget Christ—faith becomes the true and only way of obtaining justification and everlasting life. In order that such faith may be nurtured in us, may God the Holy Spirit this morning lead us into the depths of the great work of Christ! May we understand more clearly the nature of His substitution and of the suffering which it entailed upon Him. Let us see, indeed, the truth of the stanzas whose music has just died away—

**“*He bore that we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

**I.**Our first contemplation this morning will be upon this question, WHAT IS THE CURSE OF THE LAW HERE INTENDED? It is the curse of God. God who made the Law has appended certain penal consequences to the breaking of it and the man who violates the Law becomes at once the subject of the wrath of the Lawgiver. It is not the curse of the mere Law of itself—it is a curse from the great Lawgiver whose arm is strong to defend His statutes. Therefore, at the very outset of our reflections, let us be assured that the curse of the Law must be supremely just and morally unavoidable.

It is not possible that our God, who delights to bless us, should inflict an atom of curse upon any one of His creatures unless the highest right shall require it. And if there is any method by which holiness and purity can be maintained without a curse, rest assured the God of Love will not imprecate sorrow upon His creatures. The curse then, if it falls, must be a necessary one—in its very *essence* necessary for the preservation of order in the universe and for the manifestation of the holiness of the universal Sovereign.

Be assured, too, that when God curses, it is a curse of the most weighty kind. The curse causeless shall not come, but God’s curses are never causeless and they come home to offenders with overwhelming power. Sin must be punished and when by long continuance and impenitence in evil, God is provoked to speak the malediction, I know that he whom He curses is cursed, indeed. There is something so terrible in the very idea of the Omnipotent God pronouncing a curse upon a transgressor that my blood curdles at it and I cannot express myself very clearly or even coherently. A father’s curse, how terrible! But what is that to the malediction of the great Father of Spirits?

To be cursed of men is no mean evil, but to be accursed of God is terror and dismay! Sorrow and anguish lie in that curse! Death is involved in it and that second death which John foresaw in Patmos and described as being cast into a lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). Hear the Word of the Lord by His servant Nahum and consider what His curse must be—“God is jealous and the Lord revenges. The Lord revenges and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries and He reserves wrath for His enemies...The mountains quake at Him and the hills melt and the earth is burned at His Presence, yes, the world and all that dwell herein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire and the rocks are thrown down by Him.”

Remember, also, the prophecy of Malachi: “For behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Let such words, and there are many like they, sink into your hearts that you may fear and tremble before this just and holy Lord! If we would look further into the meaning of the curse that arises from the breach of the Law, we must remember that a curse is, first of all, a sign of displeasure.

Now, we learn from Scripture that God is angry with the wicked every day. Though towards the persons of sinners God exhibits great longsuffering, yet sin exceedingly provokes His holy mind. Sin is a thing so utterly loathsome and detestable to the purity of the Most High, that no *thought* of evil, or an ill word, or an unjust action, is tolerated by Him. He observes every sin and His holy soul is stirred thereby. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He cannot endure it. He is a God that will certainly execute vengeance upon every evil work. A curse implies something more than mere anger. It is suggested by burning indignation, and truly our God is not only *somewhat* angry with sinners, but His wrath is great towards sin.

Wherever sin exists, there the fullness of the power of the Divine indignation is directed. And though the effect of that wrath may be, for awhile, restrained through abundant longsuffering, yet God is greatly indignant with the iniquities of men. We wink at sin, yes, and even harden our hearts till we *laugh* at it and take *pleasure* in it. But oh, let us not think that *God* is such as we are! Let us not suppose that sin can be beheld by Him and yet no indignation be felt. Ah, no, the most holy God has written warnings in His Word which plainly inform us how terribly He is provoked by iniquity, as, for instance, when he says, “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.”

“Therefore, says the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries and avenge Me of My enemies.” “For we know Him that has said, Vengeance belongs to Me, I will recompense, says the Lord.” And again, the Lord shall judge His people. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Moreover, a curse imprecates evil and is, as it comes from God, of the nature of a *threat*. It is as though God should say, “By-and-by I will visit you for this offense. You have broken My Law which is just and holy and the inevitable penalty shall certainly come upon you.”

Now, God has, throughout His Word, given many such curses as these—He has threatened men over and over again. “If he turns not, He will whet his sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready.” Sometimes the threat is wrapped up in a plaintive lamentation. “Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?” But still it is plain and clear that God will not suffer sin to go unpunished—and when the fullness of time shall come and the measure shall be filled to the brim and the weight of iniquity shall be fully reached and the harvest shall be ripe, and the cry of wickedness shall come up mightily into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth—then will He come forth in robes of vengeance and overwhelm His adversaries.

But God’s curse is something more than a threat. He comes at length to blows. He uses warning words at first, but sooner or later He bares His sword for execution. The curse of God, as to its actual infliction, may be guessed at by some occasions where it has been seen on earth. Look at Cain, a wanderer and a vagabond upon the face of the earth! Read the curse that Jeremiah pronounced by the command of God upon Pashur— “Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. And they shall fall by the sword of their enemies and your eyes shall behold it.” Or, if you would behold the curse upon a larger scale, remember the day when the huge floodgates of earth’s deepest fountains were unloosed and the waters leaped up from their habitations like lions eager for their prey!

Remember the day of vengeance when the windows of Heaven were opened and the great deep above the firmament was confused with the deep that is beneath the firmament and all flesh were swept away—except only the few who were hidden in the ark which God’s Covenant mercy had prepared. Consider that dreadful day when sea-monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of ancient kings! When millions of sinners sank to rise no more! When universal ruin flew with raven wings over a shoreless sea vomited from the mouth of death! Then was the curse of God poured out upon the earth!

Look, yet again, further down in time. Stand with Abraham at his tent door and see towards the east the sky all red at early morning with a glare that came not from the sun—sheets of flames went up to Heaven—which were met by showers of yet more vivid fire received the curse of God, and Hell was rained upon them out of Heaven until they were utterly consumed! If you would see another form of the curse of God, remember that bright spirit who once stood as servitor in Heaven—the son of the morning, one of the chief of the angels of God!

Think how he lost his lofty principality when sin entered into him! See how an archangel became an archfiend and Satan, who is called Apollyon, fell from his lofty throne, banished forever from peace and happiness—to wander through dry places, seeking rest and finding none—to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the Last Great Day. Such was the curse that it withered an angel into a devil! It burned up the cities of the plain! It swept away the population of a globe!

Nor have you yet the full idea. There is a place of woe and horror—a land of darkness as darkness itself and of the shadow of death—without any order and where the light is darkness. There those miserable spirits who have refused repentance and have hardened themselves against the Most High, are forever banished from their God and from all hope of peace or restoration. If your ear could be applied to the gratings of their cells. If you could walk the gloomy corridors wherein damned spirits are confined, you would, then, with chilled blood and hair erect, learn what the curse of the Law must be—that dread malediction which comes on the disobedient from the hand of the just and righteous God!

The curse of God is to lose God’s favor, and, consequently, to lose the blessings which come upon that blessing—to lose peace of mind, to lose hope, ultimately to lose life itself—for “the soul that sins, it shall die.” And that loss of life and being cast into eternal death is the most terrible of all, consisting as it does in everlasting separation from God and everything that makes existence truly life. It is a destruction lasting *forever.* According to the Scriptural description of it, it is the fruit of the curse of the Law.

Oh, heavy tidings have I to deliver this day to some of you! Hard is my task to have to testify to you the terrible justice of the Law! But you would not understand or prize the exceeding love of Christ if you heard not the curse from which He delivers His people—therefore hear me patiently! O unhappy men, unhappy men, who are under God’s curse today! You may dress yourselves in scarlet and fine linen. You may go to your feasts and drain your full bowls of wine. You may lift high the sparkling cup and whirl in the joyous dance, but if God’s curse is on you, what madness possesses you! O Sirs, if you could but see it and understand it, this curse would darken all the windows of your mirth!

O that you could hear, for once, the voice which speaks against you from Ebal, with doleful repetition—“Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the increase of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out.” How is it that you can rest while such sentences pursue you? Oh, unhappiest of men are those who pass out of this life still accursed! One might weep tears of blood to think of them! Let our thoughts fly to them for a moment, but O, let us not continue in sin, lest our spirits be condemned to hold perpetual companionship in their grief! Let us fly to the dear Cross of Christ, where the curse was put away, that we may never come to know, in the fullness of its horror, what the curse may mean!

**II.**A second enquiry of great importance to us this morning is this— WHO ARE UNDER THIS CURSE? Listen with solemn awe, O sons of men! First, especially and foremost, the Jewish nation lies under the curse, for such I gather from the connection. To them the Law of God was very peculiarly given beyond all others. They heard it from Sinai and it was to them surrounded with a golden setting of ceremonial symbols and enforced by solemn national Covenant. Moreover, there was a word in the commencement of that Law which showed that in a certain sense it peculiarly belonged to Israel. “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Paul tells us that those who have sinned without Law shall be punished without Law. But the Jewish nation, having received the Law, if they broke it, would become peculiarly liable to the curse which was threatened for such breach. Yet further, all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth are also subject to this curse for this reason—that if the Law were not given to all from Sinai, it has been written by the finger of God, more or less legibly, upon the conscience of all mankind. It needs no Prophet to tell an Indian, a Laplander, a South Sea Islander, that he must not steal—his own judgment so instructs him. There is that within every man which ought to convince him that idolatry is folly, that adultery and unchastity are villainies, that theft and murder and covetousness are all evil.

Now, inasmuch as all men in some degree have the Law within, to that degree they are under the Law. The curse of the Law for transgression comes upon them. Moreover, there are some in this House this morning who are peculiarly under the curse. The Apostle says, “As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.” Now, there are some of you who choose to be under the Law—you deliberately choose to be judged by it. How so? Why, you are trying to reach a place in Heaven by your own good works! You are clinging to the idea that something you can *do* can save you! You have therefore elected to be under the Law and by so doing you have chosen the curse—for all that the law of works can do for you is to leave you still accursed—because you have not fulfilled all its commands. O Sirs, repent of so foolish a choice, and declare from now on that you are willing to be saved by Divine Grace and not at all by the works of the Law!

There is a little band here who feel the weight of the Law, to whom I turn with brightest hope, though they themselves are in despair. They feel in their consciences today that they deserve from God the severest punishment. This sense of His wrath weighs them to the dust. I am glad of this, for it is only when we come consciously and penitently under the curse that we accept the way of escape from it. You do not know what it is to be redeemed from the curse till you have first felt the slavery of it. No man will ever rejoice in the liberty which Christ gives him till he has first felt the iron of bondage entering into his soul.

I know there are some here who say, “Let God say what He will against me, or do what He will to me, I deserve it all. If He drives me forever from His Presence and I hear the Judge pronounce that awful sentence, ‘Depart, accursed one,’ I can only admit that such has been my heart and such my life that I could expect no other doom.” O you dear Heart, if you are thus brought down, you will listen gladly to me while I now come to a far brighter theme than all this! You are under the curse as you now are, but I rejoice to tell you that the curse has been removed through Jesus Christ our Lord! O may the Lord lead you to see the plan of substitution and to rejoice in it!

**III.**Our third and main point, this morning, is to answer the question, HOW WAS CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US? The whole pith and marrow of the religion of Christianity lies in the doctrine of “Substitution,” and I hesitate not to affirm my conviction that a very large proportion of Christians are not Christians at all, for they do not understand the fundamental doctrine of the Christian creed. And alas, there are preachers who do not preach, or even *believe* this cardinal truth.

They speak of the blood of Jesus in an indistinct kind of way and descant upon the death of Christ in a hazy style of poetry—but they do not strike this nail on the head and lay it down that the way of Salvation is by Christ’s becoming a Substitute for guilty man! This shall make me the more plain and definite. Sin is an accursed thing. God, from the necessity of His holiness, must curse it. He must punish men for committing it. But the Lord’s Christ, the glorious Son of the everlasting Father, became a Man and suffered, in His own proper Person, the curse which was due to the sons of men, that so, by a vicarious offering, God, having been just in punishing sin, could extend His bounteous mercy towards those who believe in the Substitute.

Now for this point. But, you enquire, how was Jesus Christ a *curse*? We beg you to observe the word “made.” “He was *made* a curse.” Christ was no curse in Himself. In His Person He was spotlessly innocent, and nothing of sin could belong personally to Him. In Him was no sin. “God made Him to be sin for us.” And the Apostle expressly adds, “who knew no sin.” There must never be supposed to be any degree of blameworthiness or censure in the Person or Character of Christ as He stands as an Individual. He is in that respect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—the immaculate Lamb of God’s Passover.

Nor was Christ made a curse of necessity. There was no necessity in Himself that He should ever suffer the curse—no necessity except that which His own loving suretyship created. His own intrinsic holiness kept Him from sin and that same holiness kept Him from the curse. He was made sin for us, not on His own account—not with any view to Himself— but wholly because He loved us and chose to put Himself in the place which we ought to have occupied. He was made a curse for us not, again, I say, out of any personal want, or out of any personal necessity, but because He had voluntarily undertaken to be the Covenant Head of His people and to be their Representative and as their Representative to bear the curse which was due to them.

We must be very clear here because very strong expressions have been used by those who hold the great Truth of God which I am endeavoring to preach, which strong expressions have conveyed the Truth they meant to convey, but also a great deal more. Martin Luther’s wonderful book on Galatians, which he prized so much that he called it his Catherine Born (that was the name of his beloved wife and he gave this book the name of the dearest one he knew)—in that book he says plainly, but be assured did not mean what he said to be *literally* understood, that Jesus Christ was the greatest sinner that ever lived—that all the sins of men were so laid upon Christ that He became all the thieves and murderers and adulterers that ever were, in one.

Now, he meant that God treated Christ as if He had been a great sinner—as if He had been all the sinners in the world in one—and such language teaches that Truth very plainly. But Luther, in his boisterousness, overshoots his mark and leaves room for the censure that he has almost spoken blasphemy against the blessed Person of our Lord. Christ never was and never could be a *sinner—*and in His Person and in His Character, in Himself considered, He never could be anything but well-beloved of God, and blessed forever and well-pleasing in Jehovah’s sight! So that when we say, today, that He was a curse, we must lay stress on those words, “He was *made* a curse.” He was constituted a curse, set as a curse.

And then, again, we must emphasize those other words, “ *for us*”—not on His own account at all—but entirely out of love to us that we might be redeemed. He stood in the sinner’s place and was reckoned to be a sinner and treated as a sinner, and *made* a curse for us. Let us go farther into this Truth of God. *How* was Christ made a curse? In the first place, He was made a curse because all the sins of His people were actually laid on Him. Remember the words of the Apostle—it is no doctrine of mine, mark you, it is an Inspired sentence, it is *God’s* doctrine—“He made Him to be sin for us.”

And let me note another passage from the Prophet Isaiah, “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And yet another from the same Prophet, “He shall bear their iniquities.” The sins of God’s people were lifted from off them and imputed to Christ—and their sins were looked upon as if Christ had committed them. He was regarded as if He had been the sinner! He actually and in very deed stood in the sinner’s place. Next to the imputation of sin came the curse of sin. The Law, looking for sin to punish, with its quick eye detected sin laid upon Christ and, as it must curse sin wherever it was found, it cursed the sin as it was laid on Christ. So Christ was made a curse.

Wonderful and awful words, but as they are Scriptural words, we must receive them. Sin being on Christ, the curse came on Christ and in consequence our Lord felt an unutterable horror of soul. Surely it was that horror which made Him sweat great drops of blood when He saw and felt that God was beginning to treat Him as if He had been a sinner. The holy soul of Christ shrunk with deepest agony from the slightest contact with sin. So pure and perfect was our Lord, that never an evil thought had crossed His mind, nor had His soul been stained by the glances of evil. And yet He stood in God’s sight a *sinner* and therefore a solemn horror fell upon His soul.

The heart refused its healthful action and a bloody sweat bedewed his face. Then He began to be made a curse for us, nor did He cease till He had suffered all the penalty which was due on our account. We have been accustomed in divinity to divide the penalty into two parts, the penalty of loss and the penalty of actual suffering. Christ endured both of these. It was due to sinners that they should lose God’s favor and Presence and therefore Jesus cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” It was due to sinners that they should lose all personal comfort—Christ was deprived of every consolation and even the last rag of clothing was torn from Him and He was left like Adam, naked and forlorn. It was necessary that the soul should lose everything that could sustain it, and so did Christ lose every comfortable thing. He looked and there was no man to pity or help. He was made to cry, “But I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people.”

As for the second part of the punishment, namely, an actual infliction of suffering, our Lord endured this, also, to the uttermost, as the Evangelists clearly show. You have read full often the story of His bodily sufferings. Take care that you never depreciate them. There was an amount of physical pain endured by our Savior which His body never could have borne unless it had been sustained and strengthened by union with His Godhead. Yet the sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings. That soul of His endured a torment equivalent to Hell itself. The punishment that was due to the wicked was that of Hell and though Christ suffered not Hell, He suffered an equivalent of it.

And now, can your minds conceive what that must have been? It was an anguish never to be measured, an agony never to be comprehended. It is to God and God, alone, that His griefs were fully known. Well does the Greek liturgy put it, “Your unknown sufferings,” for they must forever remain beyond guess of human imagination. See, Brothers and Sisters, Christ has gone thus far—He has taken the sin, taken the curse and suffered all the penalty. The last penalty of sin was death, and therefore the Redeemer died. Behold, the mighty Conqueror yields up His life upon the tree! His side is pierced! The blood and water flows forth and His disciples lay His body in the tomb.

As He was first numbered with the transgressors, He was afterwards numbered with the dead. See, Beloved, here is Christ bearing the curse instead of His people. Here He is, coming under the load of their sin, and God does not spare Him but smites Him as He must have struck us. He lays His full vengeance on Him. He launches all His thunderbolts against Him. He bids the curse wreak itself upon Him and Christ suffers all, sustains all.

**IV.**And now let us conclude by considering WHAT ARE THE BLESSED CONSEQUENCES OF CHRIST’S HAVING THUS BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US. The consequences are that He has redeemed *us* from the curse of the Law. As many as Christ died for, are forever free from the curse of the Law, for when the Law comes to curse a man who believes in Christ, he says, “What have I to do with you, O Law? You say, ‘I will curse you,’ but I reply, “You have cursed Christ instead of me. Can you curse twice for one offense?”

Behold how the Law is silenced! God’s Law, having received all it can demand, is not so unrighteous as to demand anything more. All that God can demand of a believing sinner, Christ has already paid, and there is no voice in earth or Heaven that can accuse a soul that believes in Jesus. You were in debt, but a Friend paid your debt! No writ can be served on you. It matters nothing that *you* did not pay it, it is paid and you have the receipt. That is sufficient in any court of equity. So with all the penalty that was due to us, Christ has borne it. It is true I have not borne it—I have not been to Hell and suffered the full wrath of God—but Christ has suffered that wrath for me and I am as clear as if I had myself paid the debt to God and had myself suffered His wrath.

Here is a glorious foundation to rest upon! Here is a rock upon which to lay the foundation of eternal comfort! Let a man once get to this—my Lord outside the city’s gate bleeding and dying for me as my Surety on the Cross—He discharged my debt. Why, then, great God, Your thunders I no longer fear! How can You strike me now? You have exhausted the quiver of Your wrath—every arrow has been already shot forth against the Person of my Lord and I am in Him clear and clean and absolved and delivered— even as if I had never sinned! “He has redeemed us,” says the text.

How often I have heard certain gentry of the modern school of theology sneer at the Atonement, because they charge us with the notion of its being a sort of business transaction, or what they choose to call, “the mercantile view of it.” I hesitate not to say that the mercantile metaphor expresses rightly God’s view of redemption, for we find it so in Scripture. The Atonement is a *ransom*—that is to say, a price paid. And in the present case the original word is more than usually expressive—it is a payment for, a price instead of.

Jesus did, in His sufferings, perform what may be forcibly and fitly described as the payment of a ransom, the giving to justice, a *quid pro quo* for what was due on our behalf for our sins. Christ, in His Person, suffered what we ought to have suffered in *our* persons. The sins that were ours were made His—He stood as a sinner in God’s sight, though not a sinner in Himself. He was punished as a sinner and died as a sinner upon the tree of the curse. Then having exhausted His imputed sinnership by bearing the full penalty, He made an end of sin and He rose again from the dead to bring in that everlasting righteousness which at this moment covers the persons of all His elect, so that they can exultingly cry, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

Another blessing flows from this satisfactory Substitution. It is this, that now the blessing of God, which had been up to then arrested by the curse is made most freely to flow. Read the verse that follows the text— “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” The blessing of Abraham was that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. Since our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the curse due to sin, a great rock has been lifted out from the riverbed of God’s mercy and the living stream comes rippling, roiling, swelling on in crystal tides— sweeping before it all human sin and sorrow and making glad the thirsty who stoop down to drink there.

O my Brothers and Sisters, the blessings of God’s Grace are full and free this morning! They are as full as your necessities. Great Sinners, there is great mercy for you! They are as free as your poverty could desire them to be, free as the air you breathe, or as the cooling stream that flows along the water brook. You have but to trust Christ and you shall live! Be you who you may, or *what* you may, or *where* you may—though at Hell’s dark door you lie down to despair and die—yet the message comes to you, “God has made Christ to be a propitiation for sin. He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ has delivered us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

He that believes, has no curse upon him. He may have been an adulterer, a swearer, a drunkard, a murderer, but the moment he believes, God sees none of those sins in him! He sees him as an innocent man and regards his sins as having been laid on the Redeemer and punished in Jesus as He died on the tree. I tell you, if you believe in Christ this morning, my Hearer, though you are the most damnable of wretches that ever polluted the earth, yet you shall not have a sin remaining on you after believing! God will look at you as pure! Even Omniscience shall not detect a sin in you, for your sin shall be put on the Scapegoat, even Christ, and carried away into forgetfulness so that if your transgression is searched for, it shall not be found.

If you believe—there is the question—you are clean! If you will trust the Incarnate God, you are delivered! He that believes is justified from all things. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” for, “he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved. And he that believes not shall be damned.”

I have preached to you the Gospel—God knows with what a weight upon my soul and yet with what holy joy! This is no subject for gaudy eloquence and for high-flying attempts at oratory. This is a matter to be put to you plainly and simply. Sinners—you must either be cursed of God, or else you must accept Christ as bearing the curse instead of you. I do beseech you, as you love your souls, if you have any sanity left, accept this blessed and Divinely-appointed way of salvation! This is the Truth of God which the Apostles preached and suffered and died to maintain. It is this for which the Reformers struggled. It is this for which the martyrs burned at Smithfield. It is the grand basic doctrine of the Reformation and the very Truth of God.

Down with your crosses and rituals! Down with your pretensions to good works and your crouching at the feet of priests to ask absolution from them! Away with your accursed and idolatrous dependence upon yourself! Christ has finished salvation-work, altogether finished it! Hold not up your rags in competition with His fair white linen—Christ has borne the curse—bring not your pitiful penances and your tears all full of filth to mingle with the precious fountain flowing with His blood! Lay down what is your own and come and take what is Christ’s! Put away, now, everything that you have thought of being or doing by way of winning acceptance with God! Humble yourselves and take Jesus Christ to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end of your salvation.

If you do this, not only shall you *be* saved, but you *are* saved! Rest, you weary one, for your sins are forgiven. Rise, you lame man, lame through lack of faith, for your transgression is covered. Rise from the dead, you corrupt one, rise, like Lazarus from the tomb, for Jesus calls you! Believe and live. The words in themselves, by the Holy Spirit, are soul-quickening. Have done with your tears of repentance and your vows of good living until you have come to Christ! Then take them up as you will.

Your first lesson should be none but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus! O come to Him! See, He hangs upon the Cross. His arms are open wide and He cannot close them, for the nails hold them fast. He tarries for you. His feet are fastened to the wood, as though He meant to tarry, still. O come to Him! His heart has room for you. It streams with blood and water—it was pierced for you. That mingled stream is***—***

***“Of sin the double cure,***

***To cleanse you from its guilt and power.”***  
An act of faith will bring you to Jesus. Say, “Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.” And if you do so, he cannot cast you out, for His Word is, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

I have delivered to you the weightiest Truth of God that ever ears heard, or that lips spoke—put it not from you! As we shall meet each other at the last tremendous day, when Heaven and earth are on a blaze and the trumpet shall ring and raise the dead—as we shall meet each other then— I challenge you not to put this from you. If you do, it is at your own peril and your blood is on your own heads. I plead with you to accept the Gospel I have delivered to you. It is Jehovah’s Gospel. Heaven itself speaks in the words you hear today! Accept Jesus Christ as your substitute. O do it now, this moment, and God shall have Glory, but *you* shall have SALVATION. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 22.***  
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THE USES OF THE LAW  
NO. 128

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 19, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.~~***

***~~“What purpose then does the Law serve?”  
Galatians 3:19.~~***

THE Apostle, by a highly ingenious and powerful argument, had proved that the Law was never intended by God for the justification and salvation of man. He declares that God made a Covenant of Grace with Abraham long before the Law was given on Mount Sinai. He says that Abraham was not present at Mount Sinai and, therefore, there could have been no alteration of the Covenant made there by his consent— that, moreover, Abraham’s consent was never asked as to any alteration of the Covenant, without which consent the Covenant could not have been lawfully changed. And besides that, the Covenant stands fast and firm, seeing it was made to Abraham’s *seed*, as well as to Abraham himself. “This I say, that the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise—but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Therefore, no inheritance and no salvation ever can be obtained by the Law. Now, extremes are the error of ignorance. Generally, when men believe one truth, they carry it so far as to deny another. And very frequently, the assertion of a cardinal truth leads men to generalize on other particulars and so to make lies out of truth. The objection supposed may be worded thus—“You say, O Paul, that the Law cannot justify. Surely then, the Law is good for nothing at all—‘What purpose then does the Law serve?’ If it will not save a man, what is the good of it? If, of itself, it will never take a man to Heaven, why was it written? Is it not a useless thing?” The Apostle might have replied to his opponent with a sneer—he might have said to him, “Oh, fool and slow of heart to understand! Is it proved that a thing is utterly useless because it is not intended for very purpose in the world? Will you say that because iron cannot be eaten, therefore, iron is not useful? And because gold cannot be the food of man, will you, therefore, cast gold away and call it worthless dross? Yet on your foolish supposition you *must* do so, for because I have said the Law cannot save, you have foolishly asked me what is the use of it? And you foolishly suppose God’s Law is good for nothing and can be of no value whatever.”

This objection is generally brought forward by two sorts of people. First, by mere cavilers who do not like the Gospel and wish to pick all sorts of holes in it. They can tell us what they do *not* believe. But they do not tell us what they *do* believe. They would fight with everybody’s Doctrines and sentiments, but they would be at a loss if they were asked to sit down and write their own opinions. They do not seem to have got much further than the genius of the monkey which can pull everything to pieces but can put nothing together! Then, on the other hand, there is the Antinomian who says, “Yes, I know I am saved by Grace alone.” And then breaks the Law—says it is not binding on him—even as a rule of life. He asks, “What purpose then does the Law serve?” He throws it out of his door as an old piece of furniture only fit for the fire because it is not adapted to save his soul. Why, a thing may have many uses, if not a particular one. It is true that the Law cannot save. And yet it is equally true that the Law is one of the highest works of God and is deserving of all reverence and extremely useful when applied by God to the purposes for which it was intended!

Yet, pardon me, my Friends, if I just observe that this is a very natural question, too. If you read the Doctrine of the Apostle Paul you find him declaring that the Law condemns all mankind. Now let us for one single moment take a bird’s-eye view of the works of the Law in this world. Lo, I see the Law given upon Mount Sinai! The very hill does quake with fear. Lightning and thunder are the attendants of those dreadful syllables which make the hearts of Israel to melt! Sinai seems altogether on fire. The Lord came from Paran and the Holy One from Mount Sinai—“He came with ten thousand of His saints.” Out of His mouth went a fiery Law for them. It was a dread Law even when it was given and since then from that Mount of Sinai an awful lava of vengeance has run down to deluge, to destroy, to burn and to consume the whole human race! If it had not been that Jesus Christ had stemmed its awful torrent and bid its waves of fire be still, we would have all been lost forever! If you could see the world without Christ in it, simply under the Law, you would see a world in ruins, a world with God’s black seal put upon it—stamped and sealed for condemnation! You would see men, who, if they knew their condition, would have their hands on their loins and be groaning all their days—you would see men and women condemned, lost and ruined. And in the uttermost regions you would see the pit of Hell that is dug for the wicked into which the whole earth would have been cast if the Law had its way, apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Redeemer! Yes, Beloved, the Law is a great deluge which would have drowned the world with worse than the water of Noah’s flood. It is a great fire which would have burned the earth with a destruction worse than that which fell on Sodom! It is a stern angel with a sword, thirsty for blood and winged to slay. It is a great destroyer sweeping down the nations. It is the great messenger of God’s vengeance sent into the world. Apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Law is nothing but the condemning voice of God thundering against mankind. “What purpose then does the Law serve?” seems a very natural question. Can the Law be of any benefit to man? Can that Judge who puts on a black cap and condemns us all—this Lord Chief Justice Law—can he help in salvation? Yes, he did! And you shall see how he does it, if God shall help us while we preach. “What purpose then does the Law serve?”

**I.**The first use of the Law is *to manifest to man his guilt*. When God intends to save a man, the first thing He does with him is to send the Law to him to show him how guilty, how vile, how ruined he is and in how dangerous a position he is. You see that man lying there on the edge of the precipice? He is sound asleep and just on the perilous verge of the cliff. One single movement and he will roll over and be broken in pieces on the jagged rocks beneath and nothing more shall be heard of him. How is he to be saved? What shall be done for him—what shall be done? It is our position. We, too, are lying on the brink of ruin, but we are insensible to it. God, when He begins to save us from such an imminent danger, sends His Law, which, with a stout kick, wakes us up and makes us open our eyes. We look down on our terrible danger, discover our miseries and then it is we are in a right position to cry out for salvation and our salvation comes to us! The Law acts with man as the physician does when he takes the film from the eyes of the blind. Self-righteous men are blind men—though they think themselves good and excellent. The Law takes that film away and lets them discover how vile they are and how utterly ruined and condemned if they are to abide under the sentence of the Law.

Instead, however, of treating this doctrinally, I shall treat it practically and come home to each of your consciences. My Hearer, does not the Law of God convict you of sin this morning? Under the hand of God’s Spirit, does it not make you feel that you have been guilty, that you deserve to be lost, that you have incurred the fierce anger of God? Look here, have you not broken these Ten Commandments? Even in the letter, have you not broken them? Who is there among you who has always honored his father and mother? Who is there among us who has always spoken the truth? Have we not sometimes borne false witness against our neighbor? Is there one person here who has not made unto himself another god and loved himself, or his business, or his friends, more than he has Jehovah, the God of the whole earth? Which of you has not coveted your neighbor’s house, or his manservant, or his ox, or his donkey? We are all guilty with regard to every letter of the Law! We have, all of us, transgressed the Commandments. And if we really understood these Commandments and felt that they condemned us, they would have this useful influence on us of showing us our danger and so of leading us to flee to Christ! But, my Hearers, does not this Law condemn you because even if you should say you have not broken the letter of it, yet you have violated the spirit of it. Though you have never killed, yet we are told, he that is angry with his brother is a murderer! As a slave said once, “Sir, I thought me no kill—me innocent there. But when I heard that he that hates his brother is a murderer, then me cry guilty, for me have killed 20 men before breakfast very often, for I have been angry with many of them very often.” This Law does not only mean what it says in words, but it has deep things hidden in its heart. It says, “You shall not commit adultery,” but it means, as Jesus has it, “He that looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” It says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” it means that we should reverence God in every place and have His fear before our eyes and should always pay respect unto His ordinances and evermore walk in His fear and love. Yes, my Brethren, surely there is not one here so foolhardy in self-righteousness as to say, “I am innocent.” The spirit of the Law condemns us. And this is its useful property. It humbles us, makes us know we are guilty and so are we led to receive the Savior!

Mark this, moreover, my dear Hearers, *one breach of this Law is enough to condemn us forever*. He that breaks the Law in one point is guilty of the whole! The Law demands that we should obey every command and one of them broken, the whole of them are broken. It is like a vase of surpassing workmanship—in order to destroy it you need not shiver it to atoms—make but the smallest fracture in it and you have destroyed its perfection. As it is a perfect Law which we are commanded to obey and to obey perfectly, make but one breach thereof and though we are ever so innocent we can hope for nothing from the Law except the voice, “You are condemned, you are condemned, you are condemned!” Under this aspect of the matter, ought not the Law to strip many of us of all our boasting? Who is there that shall rise in his place and say, “Lord, I thank You I am not as other men are”? Surely there cannot be one among you who can go home and say, “I have tithed mint and cummin. I have kept all the Commandments from my youth”? No, if this Law is brought home to the conscience and the heart, we shall stand with the publican, saying, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” The only reason why a man thinks he is righteous is because he does not know the Law. You think you have never broken it because you do not understand it! There are some of you who are most respectable people. You think you have been so good that you can go to Heaven by your own works. You may not exactly say so, but you secretly think so! You have devoutly taken the Sacrament, you have been mightily pious in attending your Church or Chapel regularly, you are good to the poor, generous and upright and you say, “I shall be saved by my works.” No, Sir, look to the flame that Moses saw and shrink and tremble and despair—the Law can do nothing for us except condemn us—the utmost it can do is to whip us out of our boasted self-righteousness and drive us to Christ! It puts a burden on our backs and makes us ask Christ to take it off. It is like a lancet, it probes the wound. It is, to use a parable, as when some dark cellar has not been opened for years and is full of all kinds of loathsome creatures. We may walk through it not knowing they are there. But the Law comes, opens the shutters, lets light in and then we discover what a vile heart we have and how unholy our lives have been. And, then, instead of boasting, we are made to fall on our faces and cry, “Lord, save or I perish. Oh, save me for Your mercy’s sake, or else I shall be cast away!” Oh, you self-righteous ones now present who think yourselves so good that you can mount to Heaven by your works—blind horses, perpetually going round the mill and making not one inch of progress—do you think to take the Law upon your shoulders as Sampson did the gates of Gaza? Do you imagine that you can perfectly keep this Law of God? Will you dare to say you have not broken it? No, surely, you will confess, though it is in but an under tone, “I have revolted.” Then, know this—the Law can do nothing for you in the matter of forgiveness. All it can do is just this—it can make you feel you are nothing at all. It can strip you. It can bruise you. It can kill you, but it can neither quicken, nor clothe, nor cleanse— it was never meant to do that!

Oh, are you this morning, my Hearer, sad because of sin? Do you feel that you have been guilty? Do you acknowledge your transgression? Do you confess your wandering? Hear me, then, as God’s ambassador! God has mercy upon sinners! Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! And though you have broken the Law, He has kept it. Take His righteousness to be yours. Cast yourself upon Him. Come to Him now, stripped and naked and take His robe as your covering! Come to Him, black and filthy in sin, and wash yourself in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And then you shall know, “what purposes then does the Law serve?” That is the first point.

**II.**Now, the second. *The Law serves to slay all hope of salvation by a reformed life*. Most men, when they discover themselves to be guilty, swear that they will reform. They say, “I have been guilty and have deserved God’s wrath, but for the future I will seek to win a stock of merits which shall counterbalance all my old sins.” In steps the Law puts its hand on the sinner’s mouth and says, “Stop, you cannot do that, it is impossible!” I will show you how the Law does this. It does it partly by reminding the man that *future obedience can be no atonement for past guilt*. To use a common metaphor so that the poor may thoroughly understand me—you have run up a score at your shop. Well, you cannot pay it. You go off to Mrs. Brown, your shopkeeper, and you say to her, “Well, I am sorry, Ma’am, that through my husband being out of work, and all that, I know I shall never be able to pay you. It is a very great debt I owe you, but, if you please, Ma’am, if you forgive me this debt I will never get into your debt any more. I will always pay for all I have.” “Yes,” she would say, “but that will not square our accounts. If you pay for all you have, it would be no more than you ought to do. But what about the old bills? How are they to be receipted? They won’t be receipted by all your fresh payments.” That is just what men do towards God. “True,” they say, “I have gone far astray, I know, but then I won’t do so any more.” Ah, it is time you threw away such child’s talk! You do but manifest your rampant folly by such a hope! Can you wipe away your transgression by future obedience? Ah, no, the old debt must be paid somehow—God’s justice is inflexible and the Law tells you all your requirements can make no atonement for the past! You must have an Atonement through Christ Jesus the Lord! “But,” says the man, “I will try and be better and then I think I shall have mercy given to me.” Then the Law steps in and says, “You are going to try and keep me, are you? Why, Man, you cannot do it!” *Perfect obedience in the future is impossible*. And the Ten Commandments are held up and if any awakened sinner will but look at them, he will turn away and say, “It is impossible for me to keep them.” “Why, Man, you say you will be obedient in the *future?* You have not been obedient in the past and there is no likelihood that you will keep God’s Commandments in time to come! You say you will avoid the evils of the past? You cannot—‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good that are accustomed to do evil?’ ” “But,” you say “I will take greater heed to my ways.” “Sir, you will not. The temptation that overcame you yesterday will overcome you tomorrow. But, mark this, even if you could, you could not win salvation by it.”

The Law tells you that unless you perfectly obey, you cannot be saved by your doings. It tells you that one sin will make a flaw in it all, that one transgression will spoil your whole obedience. It is a spotless garment that you must wear in Heaven. It is only an unbroken Law which God can accept! So, then, the Law answers this purpose—to tell men that their acquirements, their talk and their doings—are of no use whatever in the matter of salvation! It is theirs to come to Christ, to get a new heart and a right spirit—to get the evangelical repentance which needs not to be repented of—that so they may put their trust in Jesus and receive pardon through His blood! “What purpose then does the Law serve?” It serves this purpose, as Luther has it—the purpose of a hammer. Luther, you know, is very strong on the subject of the Law. He says, “For if any are not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief and outwardly refrain from sin, as the Pharisee did, which is mentioned in the Gospel, he would swear that he is righteous and, therefore, he conceives an opinion of righteousness and presumes of his good works and merits. Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he may acknowledge his misery and damnation but by the Law—for that is the hammer of death, the thundering of Hell and the lightning of God’s wrath that beats to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites! For as long as the opinion of righteousness abides in man, so long there also abides in him incomprehensible pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of His Grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The preaching of free remission of sins, through Christ cannot enter into the heart of such an one, neither can he feel any taste or savor thereof. For that mighty rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed, does resist it. Therefore the Law is that hammer, that fire, that mighty strong wind and that terrible earthquake rending the mountains and breaking the rocks” (1 Kings 19:11, 12, 13). That is to say, the proud and obstinate hypocrites. Elijah, not being able to abide these terrors of the Law, which by these things are signified, covered his face with his mantle. Notwithstanding, when the tempest ceased, of which he was a beholder, there came a soft and a gracious wind in the which the Lord was. But it behooved that the tempest of fire, of wind and the earthquake should pass before the Lord should reveal Himself in that gracious wind.”

**III.**And now, a step further. You that know the Grace of God can follow me in this next step.*The Law is intended to show man the misery which will fall upon him through his sin*. I speak from experience, and many of you who hear me will hear this with ears of attention because you have felt the same. There was a time with me, when but young in years, I felt with much sorrow the evil of sin. My bones waxed old with roaring all day long. Day and night God’s hand was heavy upon me. There was a time when He seared me with visions and frightened me by dreams. By day I hungered for deliverance, for my soul fasted within me—I feared lest the very skies would fall upon me and crush my guilty soul. God’s Law had got hold upon me and was showing me my misery. If I slept at night, I dreamed of the bottomless pit and when I awoke I seemed to feel the misery I had dreamed! Up to God’s House I went. My song was but a groan. To my chamber I retired and there with tears and groans, I offered up my prayer without a hope and without a refuge. I could then say with David, “The owl is my partner and the bittern is my companion,” for God’s Law was flogging me with its ten-thronged whip and then rubbing me with brine afterwards! I did shake and quiver with pain and anguish and my soul chose strangling rather than life, for I was exceedingly sorrowful. Some of you have felt the same. The Law was sent on purpose to do that. But, you will ask, “Why that misery?” I answer that misery was sent for this reason—that I might then be made to cry to Jesus! Our Heavenly Father does not usually make us seek Jesus till He has whipped us clean out of all our confidences! He cannot make us in earnest after Heaven till He has made us feel something of the intolerable tortures of an aching conscience which is a foretaste of Hell!

Do you not remember, my Hearer, when you used to awake in the morning and the first thing you took up was *Alleine’s Alarm*, or Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted*? Oh, those books, those books in my childhood—I read and devoured them when under a sense of guilt. But they were like sitting at the foot of Sinai. When I turned to Baxter, I found him saying some such things as these—“Sinner, do you know within an hour you may be in Hell? Do you know you may soon be dying? Death is even now gnawing at your cheek. What will you do when you stand before the bar of God without a Savior? Will you tell Him you had no time to spend on religion? Will not that empty excuse melt into thin air? Oh, Sinner, will you, then, dare to insult your Maker? Will you, then, dare to scoff at Him? Think! The flames of Hell are hot and the wrath of God is heavy. Were your bones of steel and your ribs of brass, you might still quiver with fear. Oh, had you the strength of a giant, you could not wrestle with the Most High. What will you do when He shall tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you? What will you do when He shall fire off His ten great guns at you? “The first Commandment shall say, ‘Crush him! He has broken me!’ The second shall say, ‘Damn him! He has broken me!’ The third shall say, ‘A curse upon him! He has broken me!’ And so shall they all fly upon you—and you without a shelter, without a place to flee to and without a hope.”

Ah, you have not forgotten the days when no hymn seemed suitable to you but the one that began—  
***“Stoop down my soul that used to rise  
Converse awhile with death!  
Think how a gasping mortal lies,  
And pants away his breath!”***

Or else—

***“That awful day shall surely come,  
The appointed hour makes haste,  
When I must stand before my Judge,  
And pass the solemn test.”***

Yes, that was why the Law was sent—to convict us of sin—to make us shake and shiver before God! Oh, you that are self-righteous, let me speak to you this morning with just a word or two of terrible and burning earnestness. Remember, Sirs, the day is coming when a crowd more vast than this shall be assembled on the plains of earth. When on a great White Throne the Savior, Judge of Men, shall sit. Now He is come. The Book is opened. The glory of Heaven is displayed, rich with triumphant love and burning with unquenchable vengeance! Ten thousand angels are on either hand. And you are standing to be tried. Now, self-righteous Man, tell me *now* that you went to Church three times a day! Come, Man, tell me *now* that you kept all the Commandments! Tell me now that you are not guilty! Come before Him with a receipt of your mint and your anise and your cummin! Come along with you! Where are you? Oh, you are fleeing! You are crying, “Rocks hide me! Mountains fall on me!” Where are you going, Man? Why, you were so fair on earth that none dare spoke to you! You were so good and so comely—why do you run away? Come, Man, pluck up your courage! Come before your Maker—tell Him that you were honest, sober, excellent and that you deserve to be saved! Why do you delay to repeat your boasts? Out with it—come—say it! No, you will not. I see you still fleeing, with shrieks, away from your Maker’s Presence. There will be none found to stand before Him, then, in their own righteousness. But look! Look! Look! I see a man coming forward out of that motley throng. He marches forward with a steady step and with a smiling eye. What? Is there any man found who shall dare to approach the dread tribunal of God? What? Is there one who dares to stand before his Maker? Yes, there is one—he comes forward and he cries, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Do you not shudder? Will not the mountains of wrath swallow him? Will not God launch that dreadful thunderbolt against him? No—listen while he confidently proceeds—“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died. Yes, rather, that has risen again.” And I see the right hand of God outstretched—“Come, you blessed, enter the Kingdom prepared for you.” Now is fulfilled the verse which you once sweetly sang—

***~~“Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who anything to my charge shall lay? While, through Your blood, absolved I am From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”~~***

***~~IV. And now, my dear Friends, I am afraid of wearying you. Therefore, let me briefly hint at one other thought. “What purpose then does the~~***

Law serve?” *It was sent into the world to show the value of a Savior*. Just as foils set off jewels and as dark spots make bright tints more bright, so does the Law make Christ appear the fairer and more Heavenly! I hear the Law of God curse and how harsh its voice. Jesus says, “come unto Me.” Oh, what music! All the more musical after the discord of the Law. I see the Law condemn. I behold Christ obeying it. Oh, how ponderous that price—when I know how weighty was the demand! I read the Commandments and I find them strict and awfully severe—oh, how holy must Christ have been to obey all these for me! Nothing makes me value my Savior more than seeing the Law condemn me! When I know this Law stands in my way and like a flaming cherubim will not let me enter Paradise, then I can know how sweetly precious must Jesus Christ’s righteousness be—which is my passport to Heaven and gives me Grace to enter there!

**V.**And, lastly, “What purpose then does the Law serve?” *It was sent into the world to keep Christians from self-righteousness*. Christians—do they ever get self-righteous? Yes, they do. The best Christian in the world will find it hard work to keep himself from boasting and from being selfrighteous. John Knox, on his deathbed, was attacked with selfrighteousness. The last night of his life on earth he slept some hours during which he uttered many deep and heavy moans. Being asked why he moaned so deeply, he replied, “I have during my life sustained many assaults of Satan. But at present he has assaulted me most fearfully and put forth all his strength to make an end of me at once. The cunning serpent has labored to persuade me that I have *merited* Heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of*my* ministry. But blessed be God who has enabled me to quench this fiery dart by suggesting to me such passages as these—‘What have you that you have not received?’ And, ‘By the Grace of God I am what I am.’” Yes, and each of us have felt the same. I have often felt myself rather amused at some of my Brothers and Sisters who have come to me and said, “I trust the Lord will keep you humble,” when they, themselves, were not only as proud as they were high, but a few inches over! They have been most sincere in prayer that I should be humble, unwittingly nursing their own pride by their own imaginary reputation for humility! I have long since given up entreating people to be humble because it naturally tends to make them proud. A man is apt to say, “Dear me, these people are afraid I shall be proud. I must have something to be proud of.” Then we say to ourselves, “I will not let them see it.” And we try to keep our pride down but after all we are as proud as Lucifer within! I find that the most proud and most self-righteous people are those who do nothing at all and have no shadow of presence for any opinion of their own goodness. The old truth in the book of Job is still true. You know in the beginning of the book of Job it is said, “The oxen were plowing and the asses were feeding beside them.” That is generally the way in this world. The oxen are plowing in the Church—we have some who are laboring hard for Christ—and the asses are feeding beside them on the finest livings and the fattest of the land! These are the people who have so much to say about self-righteousness! What do they do? They do not do enough to earn a living and yet they think they are going to *earn Heaven*. They sit down and fold their hands and yet they are so reverently righteous because they sometimes dole out a little in charity. They do nothing and yet boast of self-righteousness! And with Christian people it is the same. If God makes you laborious and keeps you constantly engaged in His service, you are less likely to be proud of your self-righteousness than you are if you do nothing! But at all times there is a natural tendency to it. Therefore, God has written the Law that when we read it, we may see our faults—that when we look into it, as into a mirror—we may see the impurities in our flesh and have reason to abhor ourselves in sackcloth and ashes and still cry to Jesus for mercy! Use the Law in this fashion and in no other.

And now, says one, “Sir, are there any here that you have been preaching at?” Yes, I like to preach *at* people. I do not believe it is of any use to preach *to* people—preach right *into* them and right *at* them. I find in every circle a class who say, in plain English, “Well, I am as good a father as is to be found in the parish. I am a good tradesman. I pay twenty shillings in the pound. I am no Sir John Dean Paul. I go to Church, or I go to Chapel—and that is more than everybody does. I pay my subscriptions—I subscribe to the infirmary. I say my prayers. Therefore I believe I stand as good a chance of Heaven as anybody in the world.” I do believe that three out of four of the people of London think something of that sort. Now, if that is the ground of your trust, you have a rotten hope! You have a plank to stand upon that will not bear your weight in the day of God’s account! As the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” And if you think the best performance of your hands can save you—know this—that “Israel, which followed after the Law of righteousness, has not attained to the Law of righteousness.” Those who sought not after it have attained it! Why? Because the one has sought it by faith, the other has sought it by the deeds of the Law—where justification never was to be found. Hear, now, the Gospel, Men and Women—down with that boasting form of your righteousness—away with your hopes, with all your trusts that spring from this—

***“Could your tears forever flow, Could your zeal no respite know!  
All for sin could not atone  
Christ must save and save alone!”***

If you would know how we must be saved, hear this—you must come with nothing of your own to Christ. Christ has kept the Law. You are to have His righteousness to be your righteousness! Christ has suffered in the place of all who repent. His punishment is to stand instead of your being punished! And through faith in the sanctification and Atonement of Christ you are to be saved! Come, then, you weary and heavy laden, bruised and mangled by the Fall. Come then, you Sinners. Come then, you Moralists. Come then, all you that have broken God’s Law and feel it—leave your own trusts and come to Jesus—He will take you in, give you a spotless robe of righteousness and make you His forever! “But how can I come?” asks one. “Must I go home and pray?” No, Sir, no! Where you are standing now, you may come to the Cross. Oh, if you know yourself to be a sinner, now—I beseech you, before your feet shall leave the floor on which you stand—now, say this—

***“Myself into Your arms I cast—  
Lord, save my guilty soul at last.”***  
Now, down with you, away with your self-righteousness! Look at me—

look, now. Say not, “Must I mount to Heaven and bring Christ down?” “The Word is near you, on your mouth and in your heart. If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe with your heart, you shall be saved.” Yes, you—*you*—YOU!

Oh, bless God, we have heard of hundreds who have in this place believed on Christ! Some of the blackest of the human race have come to me but even lately and told me what God has done for them! Oh, that you, too, would now come to Jesus! Remember, he that believes shall be saved, be his sins ever so many. And he that believes not, must perish, be his sins ever so few! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would lead you to believe—so should you escape the wrath to come and have a place in Paradise among the redeemed!

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #2180 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

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***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” Galatians 3:20.~~***

THE text does not strike you as difficult, but it is exceedingly perplexing to the interpreter. I was looking at one very old commentator who is a great favorite of mine and I noticed that he said that there were 250 different meanings given by expositors to this verse. John Prime, in 1587, called it, “an endless labyrinth.” “Oh,” I thought, “here is a nice wood to lose oneself in! Two hundred and fifty meanings!” Turning to a more modern author—a great reader, however—he said he believed that more than 400 different interpretations had been put upon the passage. This was getting from a wood into a forest—a black forest, where one might lose himself hopelessly! Should I preach from such a text? Yes, but I must not worry you with these many interpretations. Some of them cannot be correct. Some of them are, no doubt, nearly accurate. What does the passage mean? I will not venture to say that I know, but I will venture to say that I know how to use it for a practical purpose. If the Spirit of God will help us, we shall find our way, by a very simple clue, to the practical meaning and make use of the words for our soul’s profit.

A mediator! What is a mediator? A mediator is a middleman, a gobetween—one who comes in between two parties who otherwise could not commune with each other. Take the case of Moses. God’s voice was very terrible and the people could not bear it, so Moses came in and spoke on the behalf of God. The Presence of Jehovah upon the mountain was so glorious that men could not climb the hill and endure that great sight—so Moses went up for men to God. He was a mediator, speaking for the Lord, and making intercession for the people. This is what Paul alludes to when he speaks of the Law being, “ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” And here the Apostle lets slip a sort of general statement—a Truth of God which does not seem to be in connection with anything that goes before, or anything that follows after.

He lays this down as a general rule—“A mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” Paul has gold dust—his every thought is precious. He is looking at one object, and talking about it, and meanwhile he strikes a stone with his foot and lays bare a vein of gold! As if he did not notice the treasure, he passes on and leaves that vein of gold for you and for me. He is very fond of digression. It is the style of Paul and the style of every man who is very full and running over. He keeps to one argument, but he sees many others. While he is running towards the goal, he lets fall

golden apples in the form of general principles which occur to him at the time.

I understand Paul here, not as going on with any argument, but as letting fall a general principle which I—taking it out of its connection— hope to use for our profit tonight. A mediator, a go-between, an interposer, is not a mediator of one, that is clear—but God is one. What shall we learn from this?

**I.**First, A MEDIATOR IS NOT FOR GOD ALONE. A mediator deals with *two* persons—with God and man. A mediator does not come because God needs, Himself, any kind of mediator. He is eternally One and if you view Him as the sacred Trinity, yet He is a Trinity in Unity. God is One. Some persons call themselves Unitarians who have no exclusive right to the name. All Trinitarians are Unitarians—though we believe that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, yet we confess that there are *not* three gods, but one God. Now, between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit there is no difference, no ground for contention—and therefore no mediator is needed to reconcile the Divine Persons. God is One—therefore our God does not need the mediator for Himself.

Who is the mediator needed for, then? Why, for somebody else! That somebody else is here tonight and I want to find him out. A mediator! Blessed be God, there is a Mediator, but God does not need Him for His personal purposes! *There is another person for whom the Mediator is required*. Where is that other person? In the very gift of Christ as a Mediator, in the sending of Him in His Divine and Human Nature—in Christ’s life, in Christ’s death—God had an eye to another party. God, looking out beyond Himself to somebody else, provided a Mediator. That ought to be a great thought to you, for if God is looking out of Himself, why should He not look at *you*? If God has so looked out of Himself as to provide a Mediator, that must mean that He is thinking of a creature who needs one. O my Soul, may He not be thinking of you? Though you have wandered from Him and lived for many years without Him, may it not be that as there is a Mediator and that Mediator cannot be for God alone—for God is One—that Mediator may be intended to meet my need and bring me back to God?

Now, according to the run of the text and according to the run of Scripture, *that other party, for whom a Mediator is sent, is man*. Man has fallen out with God. Man is at enmity with God and God is necessarily angry with man, for He cannot but hate sin and He must punish evil. God, therefore, is looking out on man—and here am I tonight, sitting in the House of Prayer—is He looking on me? God desires fellowship with men! God would have men brought near to Him—why should not I, then, be brought near? Why should I live at a distance? Here is a Mediator— that Mediator cannot be for God alone, for God is One—He must be meant for a second person. May not I be that person?

Let me lift my eyes to Heaven, and say, “O gracious Lord, grant that I may be that other person for whom this Mediator is concerned!” For a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One, and would have me to be the second, that there may be work for a Mediator to do! That is clear enough.

**II.**Now go a step further. In the second place, A MEDIATOR IS NOT FOR PERSONS WHO ARE AGREED WITH EACH OTHER. A mediator is not needed for persons of one heart and of one soul. I need no mediator between myself and my brother, between myself and my son, between myself and my wife. We are perfectly at one already and no mediator is needed. So, then, it is clear that if there is a mediator, it is for two persons between whom *there is some ground of difference*. Mark well this Truth of God and understand it. I am not going to say pretty things, or use fine words, yet I say to those of you who long to be saved—Understand what I am saying, for it will help you!

A Mediator! That must be for persons between whom them and God there is ground of quarrel. Sinner! Sinner, this is good news for you! A Mediator is not for a man who is perfectly at one with God, but for *you*, who has by many sins provoked God! For you who by the sinfulness of your nature stand at a distance from Him! There is need of a Mediator between you and the thrice-holy God—and it is for such as *you* that a Mediator has appeared! Do you understand this Truth of God? A mediator is not a mediator between those who are at one. He is a mediator between persons who differ—and that is the case with you as to your God!

**III.**A mediator also comes when THERE IS A GROUND OF DIFFERENCE WHICH CANNOT READILY BE RESOLVED, for if the ground of difference is trivial and the two parties are willing to be agreed, they soon settle the matter. A mediator, an arbitrator, is brought in when the case is hard. Such is your case and mine by nature. We have sinned. God is just. He is full of compassion and willing to forgive as far as the slight is against His Person, but He is also King and Judge of all the earth and He must punish sin. If He does not punish sin, He will be unjust and the injustice which does not punish sin is cruelty to all righteous men.

If our judges were tomorrow to say to every thief, housebreaker, murderer, “Go your way, you are forgiven,” it would be kindness to *them*, but it would be cruelty to *us*. It would not be true mercy on the part of God to pass by sin without punishment. He could not occupy His Throne as the Guardian of right and the Protector of virtue if He did not execute judgment upon sin. Here, then, we perceive a barrier between God and the guilty—God must punish offenders—and man has offended. How can these two be brought together? Here steps in the Mediator, one of a thousand, who can lay His hand upon both—settle this deadly feud and make eternal peace! A mediator is not for those who are at one, but for those who have a ground of difference which cannot be readily removed.

**IV.**In this case, if there is any wish on the part of the offending one to be reconciled, it may be done, for the offended God is willing to be at peace. THERE WOULD BE NO USE IN A MEDIATOR UNLESS THE PARTIES WERE BOTH WILLING TO BE RECONCILED TO EACH OTHER. A mediator who comes in between two who have a continued hatred simply wastes his time. But in our case God is willing to be reconciled.

“Fury is not in Me,” He says. But man is not willing to be reconciled to God until Divine Grace changes his heart. If there is, on your part, a wish to end your quarrel and to be friends with God, you will be happy to know that there is a Mediator. Jesus stands waiting to remove the barrier that divides you from God and to reconcile you to God by His own death.

There must, however, in order for a mediator, an umpire, be *a willingness on both sides to leave the matter in his hands*. There must be a difference which they cannot remove, a difference which they wish to have removed and a difference which they are willing to leave in the umpire’s hands. God is willing to leave our matter with Christ. He has done so. He has laid help on One that is mighty. He has qualified and commissioned Him to come as an Ambassador and make peace between Him and guilty men. On your part, are you willing to hand the matter over to Christ entirely, to do what He bids you, to admit to what He would have you confess, to repent wherein He tells you you are wrong, to seek to be right wherein He warns you that you have failed? Will you give your case over to the Mediator and make Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be your Representative in the business?

God trusts His honor in the hands of His Son Jesus. He is not afraid to leave everything that concerns His moral government and His royal Character in the hands of the Well-Beloved. Will you trust your soul’s eternal interests in those same dear pierced hands? If so, rejoice that there is a Mediator between two parties that have long been alienated—a Mediator between God and you! Take Him to your heart tonight!

**V.**Now we will go a step further. A mediator is not a mediator of one, but HE STUDIES THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES. Such is our Lord Jesus Christ. Coming here on earth, did He come to save men? Yes. Did He come to glorify His Father’s name? Yes. For which of these two purposes did He chiefly come? I will not say. He came for both and He blends the two. He looks after the interests of man and pleads the causes of his soul—He looks after the interests of God and vindicates the honor of God even unto death. Is He obedient that He might magnify the Law of God and make it honorable? Yes, but He is Mediator that He may deliver us from the curse of the Law.

Beloved, our blessed Mediator is not a Mediator for one! An umpire must not take sides, and a mediator that did not understand more than one side and was not concerned for but one side, would be unworthy of the name. Our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, has both Natures. Is He God? Verily, He is very God of very God. Is He Man? Assuredly, of the substance of His mother, as truly Man as any man among us! Is He more God, or is He more Man? This is a question not to be asked, and, therefore, not to be answered. He is my Brother. He is God’s Son. Yes, He is Himself, God. What better Umpire can we want than this Divine Human Being who can lay His hands upon us both?

He counts it not robbery to be equal with God and yet calls man His brother! Our Mediator is not a Mediator of one since He wears both Natures and espouses both causes. Oh, how dear to the heart of Christ is the Glory of God! He lives, He dies, He rises again to glorify the Father! Oh, how dear to Christ is the salvation of men! He lives, He dies, He rises again and pleads for the salvation of sinners! He has the enthusiasm of humanity, but He has the enthusiasm of Divinity as well. God must be glorified—our Mediator will die to do it! Man must be saved—He will die to do it! What a splendid Mediator, who is not a Mediator of one, but a Mediator who takes up the cause of both sides!

**VI.**In this capacity, OUR BLESSED MEDIATOR PLEADS FOR BOTH WITH BOTH—for He is not a Mediator of one. A mediator, when he would make peace, goes to this one and he states the case. And he urges him and pleads with him. When he has done that, he returns to the other party and states the other side. He pleads with the one on the behalf of the other. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ comes in between God and man. Oh, how wonderful! He pleads with God for sinners, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And then he turns round and pleads with sinners for God and bids them turn to Him and be reconciled to Him, since He is their Father and their Friend!

A mediator is not a mediator of one. He who should come in and pretend to be a mediator and then throw all the blame on one party, and care only for the interests of the other party, would not be a mediator, but a partisan! But, in this case, here is One who has something to say, not in vindication, or excuse for sin, but in pleading for mercy to the sinner! He has something to say to magnify the justice of God and yet He cries for mercy. He prays, “Have mercy, O God! Have mercy upon the guilty!” I think that I have got the run of this text, somehow, if I cannot give you the exact meaning of the words. This meaning lies hidden within the words—a mediator is not for one, but he studies the interests of both.

**VII.**It is, then, most clear that A MEDIATOR MUST HAVE TWO PARTIES TO DEAL WITH or else his office is a mere name. An umpire is chosen to keep order between two sets of people, but if only one set shall put in an appearance, you may go home, Mr. Umpire. There is evidently nothing for you to do. “A mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.”

Now, tonight my Lord is here to be a Mediator. God is willing to be reconciled to men, but if there is nobody here to be reconciled—if the preaching of tonight has no relation to anybody here—then it is quite clear that the office of Christ cannot be exercised. He cannot be a Mediator unless there is a sinner here to be reconciled. Where is he? My Lord the Mediator holds His court, tonight, and sits here as an Ambassador—but what can He do unless there is another party? Unless I can discover the offender, the guilty one—and unless, discovering him, the Spirit of God shall bring him to say, “I wish to be reconciled to God and I put my case into the hands of the great Interposer”—if there is no sinner in the world, then there is no Savior in the world!

How can He save if men are not guilty and do not need saving? I tell you, Sinner, you are necessary to Christ’s doing any business! A man is a surgeon and puts a brass plate outside his door. Go and tell him that

there is nobody ill in the parish. Prove to him that within 10 miles there is nobody who has so much as a cold or a toothache—the good man may take down his brass plate and go and spend a month in the country! It breaks a doctor up if everybody remains healthy! Now, if tonight everybody here has kept God’s Law and is innocent, guiltless and fully at one with God, my Master has no mission here, nor have I. I have no need to speak of Him to you, for, “they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.”

Therefore I come forth in the name of the Mediator to ask whether there is not some sinner here who will confess his guilt—some enemy of God who will ask for peace! Is there not here some giddy young man who has lived without God, until now, who will pray to be reconciled to Him? If so, you make work for my Master! You give Him something to do in that Divine office of Mediator in which He takes such a delight. And mark you this—in the case of a mediator, or umpire, the more difficult the case, the greater is the honor that comes to him if he can settle it. If there is a very stiff quarrel between you and God, I commend to you my Lord as Mediator, for He never failed yet to settle any dispute and at this time He says, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Solomon was great in handling hard matters, but a greater than Solomon is here! If your life is all in a tangle and a snarl, He can put it straight! If your differences with God are too solemn and weighty to be stated in words. If they press your life out of you. If they rob you of sleep. If they bring you down to Hell’s door—yet still my Lord the Mediator can settle every difference and make peace between your soul and God! Are you willing that He should exercise His office for you? If so, the worse your case the greater will be the credit that will come to my Lord as Mediator when He has removed every difficulty for you!

Do not be afraid because there are so many sinful ones here and such great numbers of you are still the enemies of God! I do not only invite *one* of you to come, but I would say—Come all, and the more the merrier! My Lord will have the greater honor if He composes this quarrel in hundreds of cases, all varying and all grievous! You may come, the whole of you, and He will not shut His door against you! If you go to see some eminent doctors of this city, you must get there early in the morning and wait almost till night before your turn comes round—but there will be no waiting with my Lord and Master! If you wish to be friends with God, the Mediator is ready to settle the difference and to send you away happy in the love of the Most High.

“But may I come?” asks one. May you come? When Christ sets up to be a Mediator, why should you not use Him as a Mediator? I do not ask the doctor’s pardon when, feeling ill, I knock at his door! He has put up his name as one that is willing to deal with the sick and therefore I seek him. I take no liberty in coming. If he has undertaken an office, let him do his office. Poor guilty Wretch, afraid to come to God? Behold Christ puts up the name of Mediator with intent that He should be used as such! He is the way of access to the Father! Come and use Him for what He professes to be. Believe that He is able to do what, by His name and His official title, He claims to do! Now come and be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, His Son the Mediator!

I have been nearly 40 years now trying to preach. I cannot get at it yet. Oh, that I knew how to put this so as to move every soul to come to God and sue for peace! How willing must God be to be at peace with men when He provides a Mediator between Himself and them! How readily ought you to come when Christ’s honor and Glory depend upon men’s trusting their problems in His hands! I ask again, what is a mediator if no case is trusted to him? A king without a crown, a shepherd without a flock, a farmer without land, a physician without sick people—these are all in a poor plight. And Christ without sinners, where is He? His name is an empty thing and His Glory gone! Come, then, you chief of sinners, come to Christ and leave your problems with Him!

**VIII.**But I close by noticing that, although it is necessary, when the mediator begins, that there should be two parties—for he is not a mediator of one, and God is one—yet when the case ends, A MEDIATOR MUST MAKE THE TWO ONE OR HE HAS NOT SUCCEEDED. Our Lord Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition. He has really reconciled those who stood apart. Christ has done this for so many that I should like you, sitting in the gallery to ask, “Why should not He do it for me?” Hung up in Christ’s private chamber there is a record of millions of quarrels between men and God that He has settled. Why should He not have your name among them? Why should He not end the quarrel between you and God? Why should He not reconcile you to the Father so that the Father should give you the kiss of peace? He has never failed in a case yet!

Some of the very worst cases have been submitted to His arbitration and He has always succeeded. They know not in Heaven of a single defeat of our Lord—and the gloomy shades of Hell cannot reveal a single failure on the part of Christ, in the case of one poor, condemned, guilty soul, that came to Him and said, “Make my peace with God.” He was never obliged to say, “I cannot do it.” There is no such instance! Come, my Friend, if you have lived to be 80, an enemy to God, you may yet become His friend through this Mediator! Come, my Hearer, if you are young and full of vigor, and if your passions have led you far away from purity so that God may well quarrel with you, you may come at once, just as you are, and Christ will make up the quarrel between you and God!

His pardoning blood can take away the guilt that angers God and the water which flowed with the blood from His dear pierced side can take away the propensity to rebellion within your own bosom! Surely I ought, by such words as these, to comfort some souls and lead them to Jesus! Reconciliation, worked out by Christ, is absolutely perfect! It means eternal life! O my Hearer, if Jesus reconciles you to God now, you will never quarrel with God again, nor God with you! If the Mediator takes away the ground of feud—your sin and sinfulness—He will take it away forever! He will cast your iniquities into the depths of the sea, blotting out

your sins like a cloud and like a thick cloud your transgressions. He will make such peace between you and God that He will love you forever and you will love Him forever—and nothing shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I have heard of some mend-all which so puts the pieces of broken plates together that the articles are said to be stronger than they were before they were broken. I know not how that may be. This I know—the union between God and the sinner reconciled by the blood of Jesus—is closer and stronger than the union between God and unfallen Adam! That was broken by a single stroke—but if Christ joins you to the Father by His own precious blood, He will keep you there by the inflowing of His Divine Grace into your soul—for who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?

One thing more I have to say. Remember, if you refuse the Mediator whom God appoints, you do peremptorily refuse to be at peace with God. *You* could not have found a mediator—*you* cannot discover another now. There can be no other so every way suitable to come between us and God as the God-Man, Christ Jesus bleeding on the Cross to put away our sin and risen from the dead to proclaim that we are justified! Now, if God takes out of His own bosom His own Son, and gives Him up to die that He may make peace with us—and we*refuse* Him—we mean endless war with God! That is what it comes to. If you will not have Christ, you are baring your arms for an eternal conflict with the Almighty God! You are putting on your helmet and girding your sword to fight with your Maker.

You are rejecting peace when you reject Christ. I am sure that it is so. You are choosing war with the Lord of Hosts. Well, Sirs, if you will have it, you must have it—but I would implore you to repent at once of your insane choice! HOW can you fight with God? WHY should you fight with God? To battle with God is to battle against your own best interests and to ruin your soul! Heaven, the only Heaven that a creature can have, is to be at peace with his Creator. There is no peace unto the wicked. HOW can there be? The only hope that we can have is to be agreed with God. If He has made me, He has made me for a purpose. If I fulfill that purpose, I shall answer the end of my being and I shall be happy.

If I do not fulfill that purpose, I must be unhappy—and in choosing to be the foe of God I have chosen my own eternal damnation! God help us to repent of such a choice and may we now lay hold on Christ the Mediator and trust ourselves with Him, that He may make peace between us and God—and to His name shall be glory forever and ever! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—433, 384, 369.** Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1145 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREAT JAIL AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT  
NO. 1145

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 30, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Galatians 3:22.~~***

IN every work which we undertake it is most important that we should act upon right principles, for if we are misled upon essential points, our efforts will be wasted since success cannot possibly be the result. A man may study the stars as long as he pleases, but he certainly will not come to right conclusions if he calculates their courses upon the theory that they daily revolve around the earth as a center. The alchemists were earnest even to enthusiasm, but the object of their pursuit was unattainable and the theories which guided their investigations were absurd, and, therefore, they exhibited a sorrowful spectacle of misapplied perseverance and labor thrown away.

In mechanics the most ingenious contriver must fail if he forgets the Law of gravitation. You must proceed upon right principles, or disappointment awaits you. If a man in London believed that he would reach the city of York by traveling rapidly to the south, he would certainly fail, even though he had a special express attached to his carriage. If another should be sincerely of the opinion that by drinking a strong poison he would restore himself to health, his friends and survivors would have to regret his infatuation. The earnestness of his belief will not alter the fact— the principles which make the deadly drug so murderous will not yield because the man is sincere—and he will certainly die for his obstinacy.

Now, the greatest matter of concern for any one of us is the eternal salvation of our soul. We need to be saved, and, according to the Scriptures, there is but one way of salvation—but that way does not happen to be in favor among the sons of men. The great popular principle, popular all over the world, no matter whether the people happen to be Protestant or Catholic, Parsee or Muslim, Brahminist or Buddhist, is self-salvation— they would reach eternal life by merit! There are differences about what is to be done, but the great universal principle of unregenerate man is that he is, somehow or other, to save himself. This is his principle, and the further he goes in it, the less likely is he to be saved.

My objective, this morning, is to bring before you the much despised principle which God has revealed as the only true one, namely, salvation by the Grace of God, through Jesus Christ, by simple faith in Him. We preach, at God’s command, the way of salvation by *mercy*, not by merit—

by *faith*, not by works—by *Grace*, not by the efforts of men. May God help us so to set forth that principle that many may accept it! I do not care one snap of my finger about preaching so that the style shall please your ears! I long to reach your *hearts*. I want you to receive the only sure method of salvation, and I pray the Holy Spirit to baptize my words in His own mighty fire and make them to burn their way into your hearts and subdue you to the obedience of faith.

The text divides itself into two parts, but my sermon will not end there, for I shall try to enforce its great Truths of God. Upon two points we will speak at once. The first is a crowded prison—“The Scripture has confined all under sin.” And the second is a glorious jail delivery—“that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” After that we will try to show how excellent is that plan which God has marked out—the plan of deliverance from sin by the promise of faith in Christ Jesus.

**I.** Behold THE CROWDED PRISON—“The Scripture has confined all under sin.” The Jailer is the Scripture—a lawful Authority, for the Scripture is not the word of man, but of the Spirit of God. If any man reject the Scripture, I have little to say to him at this moment, for I am speaking mainly to those who accept the Bible as having been written by an Infallible pen. If the Scriptures, then, which you admit to be written by God, confine you in sin, you are shut up by a lawful Authority against which you cannot rebel! God has done it! God’s own voice has declared you to be a prisoner under sin.

No Authority is more powerful than that of Scripture, for it is not only true, but it has force to support it. Where the Word of the God is, there is power. The Scripture, when it comes home to the heart like a hammer, breaks in pieces, and like a fire burns its way. We need not be alarmed when judged of men, but the voice of the Lord is full of terrible majesty and awes the spirit which it condemns. But how does the Scripture confine all men under sin? I reply, first, it has been well observed by Martin Luther that the very promises of Scripture confine all mankind under sin.

To begin with the first—that morning star of promise which shone over this world when first our parents left the gates of blighted Eden—“The Seed of the women shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Since such a promise was needed, it is clear that the blessing could only come to men through the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman. And that in the case of all men the serpent’s head must be broken, or they would remain under his dominion. When a blessing is promised, there must have been a *need* for it. Where a Deliverer is predicted, there must have been a necessity for Him. If a blessing could come to men by the way of merit, or in the course of Nature, there would be no need of a promise—a promise implies a need and the very first promise of deliverance by the woman’s Seed from the power of the serpent implies that men were under that evil power.

The promise of Grace is clear in the Covenant with Noah, in which the Lord declared that He would no more destroy the earth with a flood. Had the race of man been holy, God would not have destroyed it with a flood, for He would have violated Justice by destroying an innocent race. To a pure race there could be no necessity for a Covenant of preservation, for there would be no conceivable reason for the destruction of the innocent. The very making of a Covenant that the earth should not again be swept with an overwhelming flood implies that, apart from such a gracious Covenant, the earth might justly be destroyed at any time.

The lovely rainbow, while it comfortably reminds us of the Divine faithfulness, is also a memorial of that universal depravity of our race which necessitated a Covenant of Grace to stand as a barrier for our protection lest the righteous wrath of God should break forth upon us. The yet more explicit Covenant which God made with Abraham plainly shows men to be shut up under sin, because it runs thus, “In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” proving that the nations were not originally in a blessed state and could only be blessed through the promised seed. If some of them were blessed, already, or could be blessed by their works, then the words of the promise would not be true.

The Covenant blessing comes to the nations only through Jesus Christ, the Seed, and, consequently, it is clear that the nations were in need of a blessing. The fact is that the very existence of the Gospel, and its provisions of Grace, pardon, and so on—the coming of a Savior, His death upon the tree and His intercession in Heaven—all prove that men were confined in sin. If you had not been so, what need of you, O Cavalry? What need of Your five wounds, O Son of God? Surely all this vast machinery for redemption is ridiculous if men are not slaves! This wondrous filling of a fountain with blood is a vain superfluity if men are not foul. So the very Scripture which is brightest with life to the sons of men carries within it convincing evidence that men, apart from the Grace of God, are shut up under sin.

I have no doubt the Apostle alluded more immediately to that part of Scripture which deals with Law. Turn, I pray you, to the 20th chapter of Exodus, which I hope you carry in your memories. Let me ask you to read those Ten Commandments with deep solemnity, and see whether they do not shut you up under sin. What man can read them and then say, “I am clear of all these”? The Ten Commandments surround us on all sides and encompass all the movements of body, soul, and spirit—comprising under their jurisdiction the whole range of moral action. They hold us under fire from all points and nowhere are we out of range.

These 10 precepts are condensed into two comprehensive precepts, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.” Can you listen to those two precepts, which are the essence of the 10, without feeling that you have *not* loved God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, but very far from it, and that you have *not* loved your neighbor as yourself, but have gone far aside? A man who can read the Law and not tremble, if he is out of Christ, must be dead in his sin! He must be ignorant, altogether, of its meaning, or else

he must have hardened his heart against its terrible import.

The awakened conscience knows that the Law curses every one of us, without exception, for we have broken it. The Law as given on Sinai does that—and let us remember that the Law as repeated by Mosaic command upon Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, at the time of the entrance of Israel into the Holy Land, is not less express than the thunders of the mount which might not be touched. Read the passage in Deuteronomy 27:26. Perhaps of all the verses of the Word of God this is the most sweeping and utterly crushing to self-righteous hopes. “Cursed be he that confirms not all the Words of the Law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.”

The Apostle quotes in another form, in the New Testament—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” The Law roars like a lion upon us in this sentence! If there is, in any one of us a solitary violation of the command of God, we are cursed by Him! If we have, at any time throughout life, in any measure or degree, in deed, word, or thought, by omission or commission, diverged from absolute perfection, we are cursed! Such is the statement of God, Himself, by the mouth of His servant Moses, in this book of Deuteronomy! There is no exception made whatever—all sins are included in it, and we are, all of us, included—“Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

Right well does our text say that the Scripture has shut all of us up under sin. We are putting no strain upon the Scripture, for such was the understanding of the Law by the saints of old. Turn to Psalm 143:2 and remember, while I quote this, that this is by no means a solitary passage, but only selected as one of many. There David says, “Enter not into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.” He stood before God, a man whose heart was sincere and true, but he did not dare to bring his works into judgment. And, speaking by the Spirit of God as a Prophet, he declared that in God’s sight no man could be clear of guilt.

And yet further, Brothers and Sisters, the Law of God shuts us up, not only as it was delivered from Sinai, as it was repeated at Gerizim, as it was understood by the saints, but especially as it was expounded by the Savior. He did not come to break the bars of this prison, nor to remove this Jailer from being its marshal—His deliverance is not by violence, but by fair legal process. He came to strengthen, rather than to weaken the Law, for what does He say concerning it? He does not merely forbid adultery, but He expounds the command by saying, “He that *looks* upon a woman to lust after her commits adultery with her already in his heart.”

He shows what had been so much forgotten by the Jews, that the Commandments are *spiritual* and that they reach infinitely further than mere outward actions. That, for instance, “You shall not kill,” does not merely mean, “You shall do no murder,” but is to be understood in the sense given it by the Lord Jesus—“I say unto you that whoever is angry with his brother without shall be in danger of the judgment.” As Christians understand it, the Law forbids our doing anything whereby the natural or *spiritual* life of another may be placed in jeopardy. Now, since the Law is to be so understood, its commandments are exceedingly broad. Since it touches our thoughts, our imaginations, and our casual wishes, who among us can stand before it?

Verily the Law confines us as in a terrible Bastille and we are, each one of us, prisoners under sin. Here will be the time for us to say that not only do the Scriptures of promise and the Scriptures of Law shut us up, but so do *all* the Scriptures of the old ceremonial Law of the Jews. “Oh,” you say, “how is that?” I reply, “When the destroying angel went through Egypt on that memorable night, not one man, woman, or child was delivered except through the sprinkling of the blood upon the doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they dwelt. What did that mean? Why, that they were *all* under sin—and had it not been for the *blood*, the same angel who smote the first-born of Egypt must have smitten every one of them, God’s people, as they were, for they were all under sin!

When they reached the wilderness, there were different rites and ceremonies, but it is remarkable that everything under the Law was sprinkled with blood, because the people and all that they did were polluted with sin before God and needed to be cleansed by an atonement. When an Israelite came to worship God at the Tabernacle, he could not come without a *sacrifice*. Atonement for sin was the way to God—the altar and the slaughtered lamb were the way of approach. There must be *blood* to cleanse the comer because every comer was, in himself, unclean.

Note, also, that the Holy Place in the Tabernacle in the wilderness was closed, and into it no man went but the High Priest, and he but once every year. This was a most solemn declaration of God that no man was fit to come near to His infinite holiness—that every man, even of the chosen people—was so polluted that there must be hung up a veil between him and God. And the one man who did come near at all must approach with sprinkled blood and smoking incense, typical of the coming Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus! There was nothing about the Mosaic economy to say to man, “You are good, or you can be good, and you can save yourself.” But everywhere the declaration was—“You have rebelled and have not served the Lord. You cannot come near unto Him until you are purged by the blood of the great Sacrifice. God cannot accept you as you are, you are polluted and defiled.”

The sinfulness of all men is abundantly taught in Scripture. Indeed, it is to be found on every page of it. I have spoken of the Jailer. Now notice His prisoners. “The Scripture has concluded all under sin”—all, all. The heathen? Yes, for the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans tells us, that though they have not God’s written Law, they have sufficient of it upon their consciences to accuse them if they do wrong, and every heathen has violated the Law of God by sinning against the light of Nature. To us who have heard that Law the, “all,” of the text is very emphatic. But you have been very moral, you say. Yes, but you are shut up under sin, for, outwardly moral as you have been, you dare not say that you have never thought of evil so as to long for it. That you have never indulged wrong imaginations. That you have never a rash word, that you have never sinned in action. Surely you dare not say that you have loved God with all your heart and all your soul, and all your strength? Nor that you have always loved your neighbor as yourself? My Friend, you, who are so fair to look upon when you look in the glass of your own selfadulation—if you could see yourself as God sees you, would discover that you are leprous from head to foot—your sins are abundant and loathsome though you perceive them not!

And this is true of the most religious of those men who are resting in outward observances. They have prayed every night and morning since they were children. They have never absented themselves from assemblies for worship. They have attended to Baptism and Communion, and the like. Ah, Sirs, but the Law takes no account of this! If you have not kept its Ten Commandments *perfectly*, it accepts no ceremonies as a recompense. God requires of His creatures that they obey His Law completely, without flaw—and one sin of omission or commission will bring down that dreadful sentence which I have already quoted, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” Religious or irreligious, the broken Law confines all men in the same prison!

Now, notice for a minute, the prison itself. It is one from which we cannot escape by any efforts of our own. Brothers and Sisters, if we say, “We will never sin again,” we shall sin. And our never sinning again would make no atonement for *past* offenses. Suppose we were to resolve, from this time forth, that we would suffer mortifications of body and sorrow of heart, to make atonement for sin? It would be useless, for the Law speaks nothing of *repentance*. When a man has broken the Law, he must he punished for it—there is no space left for repentance under the Law—and the sure result of our being shut up in the prison of the Law, apart from the Grace of God, is to be taken from that prison to execution—and to be destroyed forever by the wrath of God.

There is the prison of the text. There is the Jailer and his prisoners. **II.** It is our great happiness to know that we are not shut up in this way with a view to our hopeless destruction, but in order that the Grace of God may come to us, and so we have to speak of A GLORIOUS JAILDELIVERY. The jail-delivery which I have to speak of is evidently of those who are shut up in the prison. “The Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Christ came into this world to save those who have broken the Law, those whom the Law curses and those who have no means, whatever, of escaping from the curse, unless Jesus opens the way.  
He has not come to save the righteous. If there are any among you who will not believe that you are shut up in the prison of the Law, I have no Gospel to preach to you. Why send a physician to a man who is not sick? And why offer alms to a man who is not poor? If you can save yourselves by your works, go and do so, fools that you are, for you might as well hope to drink dry the Atlantic! If you believe in self-salvation, I am hopeless of doing you any good till you are exhausted of your strength. When you are weak and sick, and ready to die, *then* will you be willing to accept the free salvation of Christ! Remember, Christ came to save the ungodly—the guilty, alone, are objects mercy.  
The Lord Jesus Christ has come to bring to all those who believe in Him a complete deliverance from the bondage of the Law. The man who believes in Jesus is forgiven. The very moment he believes, all his transgressions are blotted out and from that moment he is just in the sight of God. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Having believed, he becomes, at once, a child of God, a son of the Most High. And since God will never cast away His children, nor reject those whom He has loved, the man is then and there saved, and saved eternally. He was a slave before, and deserved the lash and felt it. He is a child now, and is no longer under the Law, but under Grace.  
The principle which guides him now is not, “This do and you shall live,” but this—“I am saved and now I love to serve my God.” Now he does not work for wages and expect to win a reward by merit—he is a saved man and he has all that he needs—for Christ is his and Christ is All. Now a higher principle burns within his bosom than that of self-salvation! He loves God and is selfish no longer. Observe that this jail-delivery comes to men by promise. It is salvation according to *promise*. The promise is given, says the text. Now, if any man is saved on the Bible plan of salvation, it is not the result of anything he has done—he has never deserved it—it is not the result of a bargain between him and God.  
No, the Lord says freely, “I will blot out your sins. I will accept you. I will hear your prayer. I will save you.” He does this because He chooses to do it of His own Sovereign good will and pleasure. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” “So, then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” The promise is not made to works, but only to faith. It is “the promise of faith by Christ Jesus.” If God had made His promise to a certain measure of holiness, or a certain amount of feeling, then, Brothers and Sisters we might have despaired—but the promise is to *faith*. If you *believe*, you are *saved*!  
You poor harlot, if you believe, you are saved! You thief, you murderer, you vilest of wretches, however far you may have gone, if you believe in Jesus Christ, your transgressions are forgiven you and you are a child of God. It is your *believing*, not your doing. Your *trusting*, your *relying upon* Christ, not your prayers, tears, preaching, hearing, or anything else you can do, or be, or feel! You are saved by giving up self, entirely, and resting wholly on Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation, namely, the crucified Redeemer.  
Observe that the faith spoken of in the text is faith in Christ Jesus. It must not be faith in *yourself*, nor faith in a *priest*, nor faith in *sacraments*, nor faith in a set of *doctrines—*the praise is to faith in Christ Jesus. That is to say, you must believe that Christ, the Son of God, came on earth and became a Man, took your sins upon His shoulders, bore them up to the tree and suffered what was due for your sins in His own Person on the Cross—and you must trust yourself with Him, with Him fully, with Him, alone, and with all your heart—and if you do, the promise is given to faith in Christ Jesus, and it will be fulfilled to you, and you shall be blessed and saved! This promise of faith in Christ Jesus is given to all Believers, weak as well as strong, young as well as old.  
Dear Friend, if you have only believed in Jesus during the present service, you are as certainly forgiven as if you had been a Believer 50 years! If you only believed in Jesus when the last word escaped my lips, yet still your faith has saved you! Go in peace. Faith is the vital matter. “But there must be works,” says one, “to follow.” Brother, there *will* be works to follow. There was never a true faith which did not*produce* works—but the *works* do not save us—faith, alone, saves! How strong is the Apostle Paul upon this point! Read the Epistle to the Romans, carefully, and the Epistle to the Galatians, and you will see that they come down like a Nasmyth hammer upon all notion of salvation by our own doings.  
No reasoning could be more cogent, no expressions more plain. “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” says the Apostle! And he puts it over again—“If by Grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.” He will have it that we are saved as poor sinners by the Sovereign Grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, and not by works, or forms, or ceremonies, or anything whatever of our own doing! Now, there is the plan of salvation! I put it before you, and I pray through Jesus Christ that many may receive it, for it is not a matter of human opinion, but of Divine ordinance. I am not setting up the dogma of a sect—I am preaching to you the very Truth of God. If there is salvation by any other way than by Jesus Christ I am a false prophet among you, and this Bible, also, is false. But if there is salvation to Believers in Jesus, I am a saved man, and all of you who have believed in Jesus are saved, also, effectually and eternally!  
Having thus spoken upon the text itself, I desire to say a few things upon the subject in general. Objections are continually raised to this plan of salvation. The world’s plan of salvation is, “Do.” The Bible plan of salvation is, “It is all done. Accept it as a free gift.” The Gospel way of salvation is, Christ has saved His people and as many as trust in Him *are* His people, and are saved. Just think for a minute—is not this way of salvation which we have preached to you the only one which would be suited to all sorts and conditions of men? Dear Sir, you, yourself, may be a man of excellent disposition and of admirable habits. I will suppose that the salvation to be preached by us was exactly such as would be suitable to such a person as you believe yourself to be—would not this be a very misfortunate thing for many others?  
Are there not living within your observation many persons who are far below you in moral character? Do you not know of whole swarms of your fellow creatures whose outward life is utterly defiled? Some of these are conscious of their degradation and would gladly rise out of it—would you have them left to despair? A way of salvation suited to the righteous, it is clear, would not suit *them*—are they to be overlooked? Would you have salvation put up to an examination like a place in the Civil Service and only those allowed to pass who are as good as you are? Are all beneath your level to perish? I am speaking to you on your own ground—I feel sure that you love your fellow men enough to say, “No, let the plan of salvation be such as to save the most reprobate of men.”  
Then, I ask you, what plan could there be but this one, that God freely forgives for Christ’s sake, even the greatest offenders, if they turn to Him and put their trust in His dear Son? We have here a Gospel which reaches to the lowest depths and saves to the uttermost. But I shall put another argument. Would any other salvation than that which I have preached suit *any* man? O excellent Sir, would any other, after all, suit *you*? I admit, and I admire your excellences. I would that all men were such as you are rather than dissolute and depraved. But, Sir, can you really sit down in the quietude of your chamber and as a thoughtful man weigh your own character in the scales, and say that it is so perfect that you could die with it in perfect peace and stand before your Maker without fear?  
I am sure it is not so! It is very remarkable that some persons who have been exceedingly moral have never seen their sinfulness till they have been on the borders of the grave—and then they have realized eternity— and have abhorred themselves in dust and ashes! I have heard of some, who, in the very hour of imminent peril of death by drowning, have in the act of sinking seen the whole panorama of their lives pass before them and they have seen, as they never saw before, the evil nature of that which they before thought so excellent. Then they have said, “I must be saved by the merits of Jesus! I cannot be saved by my own.”  
My dear Friend, whoever you may be, I am not about to condemn you, but I must believe God’s Word before I believe your estimate of yourself! And as God’s Word has declared that you have sinned and are condemned, I am sure that for you, as well as for the rest of your fellow men, there is no plan of salvation at all available but that of salvation by the free mercy of God through Jesus Christ His Son. Now, observe a few of the beauties of the plan of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. It prevents men from having low thoughts of sin, because if a man says, “I have not kept this Law of God perfectly, but I still have done very well. And any mistakes I have made are little sins—God is merciful—He will wipe them out,” he is sure to be a believer in self-salvation. It is always connected with narrow thoughts of sin.  
A man knows he has sinned, but he thinks little of the wrong. He cannot believe that sin is such a great evil that men should be cast into Hell for it. He kicks against the doctrine of damnation. He will not believe it just because he does not know and will not admit that sin is a great and tremendous evil. So long as the idea of self-salvation exists, sin is lightly thought of. But oh, when we see that sin could not be put away till the Incarnate God, Himself, did hang upon the tree and bleed to death for men—then we see sin in its true colors and loathe it as a deadly thing— and with our joy for pardoned guilt we mingle abhorrence of the sin which required such an atoning Sacrifice.  
The plan of salvation by Grace has this beauty about it, that it gives men high thoughts of God. In the other system, their idea of God is that He is very much like themselves. Look at the Catholic’s god. He is pleased with candles and delights in incense—he is a god who likes show and gewgaws, garments of blue and scarlet, and dolls dressed up, and flowers on his altars. I know not what kind of god to call him. However, that is their notion of him. They try to save themselves, and they pull down their god to their standard. And every man who is a self-saver, even if he is a Protestant, lowers God in some manner.  
He fancies that God will accept something short of perfection. Each man has a different standard. That miserly old gentleman—his standard is that he will build a row of almshouses with his moldy leavings and that will content the Most High. Another says, “I never open my shop on Sunday.” Perhaps he cheats enough on Monday to make up for it, but Sunday’s rest—that will do for his god. Another, who is living a wicked life in private, believes the doctrines of Grace and that will satisfy his god.  
But the man who is saved by the Grace of God says, “My God is infinitely just. Nothing will content Him but a perfect righteousness. As a moral Lawgiver, He will not put away sin till He has laid punishment upon One who stood in the sinner’s place. He is so loving that He gave His Son. He is so just that He slew His Son on my behalf.” All the Divine attributes flame with splendor before the eyes of the man who is saved by faith and he is led to reverence and to adore God. The way of salvation by Grace, Beloved, is the best promoter of holiness in all the world. “There,” says yonder gentleman, “I went to hear Spurgeon in the Tabernacle this morning and he was crying out against salvation by good works. Of course, the worst results will come of such teaching.”  
Ah, that has been the cuckoo-cry from the very first, whereas salvation by Grace *promotes* good works far better than the teaching of salvation by works ever will—for those who hope to be saved by their works have generally very scanty works to be saved by—and those who put works aside altogether as a ground of hope, and look to Grace, alone, are the very people who are most zealous to perform good works and I will tell you why! Who loved Christ best at the Pharisee’s feast? Simon, the Pharisee, who had kept the Law? Ah, no! He was to be saved by his doings, and yet Jesus said to him, “You gave Me no kiss. You gave Me no water to wash My feet.”  
Simon did not love the Master. He did what he did because he thought he ought to do it and must do it. But there was a poor woman there who was a sinner. And she had had much forgiven—and she, it was, that washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Simon shows how the self-righteous, then, love the Savior—they do not even wash His feet or kiss His cheeks—but those who are saved by Grace love Jesus, and therefore kiss His feet and bathe them with their tears— and would willingly lay down their lives for Him.  
Law! There is no power for holiness in it! Law drives our spirits to rebellion, but love has magic in it. Has God forgiven me? Did Christ die for me? Am I God’s child? Has He forgiven me, not because of anything I did, but just because He would do it out of love to my poor guilty soul? O God, I love You! What would You have me to do? There speaks the man who will perform good works, I guarantee you, Sir, and while he will tread under foot with the deepest detestation any idea that he can merit anything of God's, he is the man who will lay himself out, as long as he lives, for the honor of that dear Lord and Master by whose precious blood he has been redeemed.  
The Law does not furnish me with a constraining principle, but the Gospel does. The Law treats me like a mere hireling, and a hireling can never serve with the zeal which is born of love. There is a better place with double wages, and naturally enough, the servant leaves your house, but your child will not. You do not give your child wages and you do not bind him by indentures or agreements. He loves you and his sense of your love leads him to a tender obedience, and what he does is doubly sweet to you. Missionaries and martyrs have done and borne, for love’s sake, what Law could not have forced from them.  
Oh yes, the doctrine of salvation by Grace, by teaching men to love, transforms them and makes new creatures of them. I have seen it hundreds of times. There are some here, but I will not speak of them, but of cases parallel to theirs. They have been to a place of worship and they have been preached to about their duty. And they have read the Bible and have thought it was all about what was required from their own efforts. But all the while they have felt no obedience of heart, no love to Christ and no joy in God. But those same persons have heard the Gospel and found that there is nothing to do, that Jesus Christ has done it all! That sin was put away by His death and righteousness was worked out. And they have taken what God has presented to them and believed in Jesus and been saved!  
And from that very moment the difference has been evident. They have cried, “I never felt any love to God before, but now I do. I love Him with all my soul for what He has done for me.” You hear them say, “I used to go to the House of God as a matter of duty, and I might almost as well have been away, for it was no enjoyment to me. But now I go as a matter of privilege and I take my Bible with me and sing God’s praises, with all my soul, because He has done so much for me.” Those people will tell you that whereas they resolved to be good, and to give up vice, and to practice virtue, they never did it till they believed in Jesus—and when they believed in Him, love to Him made service easy, and sin hateful—and they became new creatures in Christ Jesus by the Spirit’s power.  
There is the heart of it all. If you want to get rid of the guilt of sin, you must believe in Jesus. But equally, if you would be rid of the chains of sin, the tyranny of your passions, the domination of your lusts, you must believe in Him. From His side there flows not merely blood but water— blood to take away your criminality, and water to take away your tendencies to sin—so that from now on you shall not serve sin, or live any longer in it. It is all there in that pierced heart. It is all there in that crimson fount opened on Calvary’s bloody tree. Look to Jesus and you shall be saved! This is it in a nutshell. “There is life in a look at the crucified One.”  
I may never have an opportunity of preaching this Gospel to some of you again. It may be the first time you have heard it, and perhaps the last. O Sirs, I charge you accept it, and may the Spirit of God constrain you to do so! We will meet in Heaven if it is so, but if you put it from you, you are like a man who flings away the only lifebelt that can keep him alive in the angry flood. You put from you the only medicine under Heaven that can heal your soul, for I am holding up before you the only Gospel in the world! If any man preaches any other Gospel, let him be accursed! Intolerant? I am content to be as intolerant as my Master and He bade me say, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.”  
“But may I not be saved some other way?” No, Sir. “But may I not reject with impunity this which you have preached?” No, Sir. At your peril is it and before God I will put it right plainly before you. You must believe in Jesus, and if you reject Him your blood is upon your own head, for there are no other ways of salvation. The Lord grant that you may receive it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 3.**  
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UNDER ARREST  
NO. 2402

***~~INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 3, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING MARCH 3, 1887.~~***

***~~“But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”  
Galatians 3:23.~~***

THIS is a condensed history of the Jews before the Gospel was fully preached to them. Before the clear and plain revelation of the way of salvation—that is to say, before Jesus Christ, Himself, actually appeared among the sons of men—the Hebrew nation was put under the tutorship and governance of the Mosaic Law. So far as salvation was to be obtained by it, that Law was a total failure. It did not make the Jews a holy people—whenever they reached any point of excellence, they soon went back from it, for they were bent on backsliding. Whatever the influence of that blessed Law might be supposed to be, the actual net result was very poor, indeed, for, when Christ came to the chosen people, they were in a most miserable condition, and there was no hope for them at all apart from the promised Messiah. They were shut up to the alternative of receiving Him, or else being put away as a nation for a long time of banishment and exile. This, indeed, they have actually endured through their rejection of the one and only Savior.

I am not going to preach at this time about the Jews, but I want to show you that the history of every soul chosen of God is very like the history of the chosen nation. I have heard of masses of crystal which assume certain forms and, if they are split up, again and again, however small the particles may be, the same crystalline shape remains—the crystals are still of one form! So, if you take a nation as a mass, its spiritual history will be found in each individual and often every experience of that individual will still bear the same shape and outline. I take this text, therefore, as being, I am sure, a picture of myself. Before faith came, I was, “kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” And my impression is that this is the history of *all* the people of God, more or less. We are not all alike in every respect. We differ greatly in certain particulars, yet the main features of all the children of God will be found to be the same—and their Christian experience will resemble that of the other members of the Lord’s family.

So I shall leave the text as a matter of history of the Jews and use it as the life-story of many here present! Perhaps while I am explaining the experience of the child of God, there may be some, here, who are passing through the darker stages of that experience, who may gather hope from that fact and say, “I see that my spot is the spot of the Lord’s children. Possibly, my soul-trouble, being like theirs, may be producing in me the same result as it produced in them.” And thus, I trust, while I am speaking, some may be led into a clearer light and may even come into the full light of God’s reconciled Countenance!

There are three things that I am going to talk about as the Holy Spirit shall guide me. The first is, *the unhappy period*—it was long ago with some of us—the unhappy period “before faith came.” Secondly, I shall describe*the custody we were in at that time—*“we were kept under the Law, shut up.” That is where we were when the spirit of bondage was holding us in captivity “before faith came.” Then, thirdly, I shall have a little to say upon *the revelation which set us free—*“the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”

**I.**First, then, I have to say something about THE UNHAPPY PERIOD. “Before faith came.” As I said just now, this period was long ago with some of us, but it was not so far back with others of you, “before faith came.”

We remember, some of us, when we *had no idea of faith.* We were, in a measure, religiously inclined, and in a certain way, sincere and devout. As a matter of duty, we went to Church, or we went to the Meeting House, and we felt easy in our mind because we had been there. As a matter of duty, we read our Bibles and, sometimes, we felt a pleasure in getting through the chapter—perhaps we had all the more pleasure if the chapter was not a long one! We did not object to family prayer—it may be that we had been used to it from our childhood. The less we had of it, the better we liked, it but still, we kept to it, although it was always only a matter of duty.

As to *saving* faith, we had not an intelligent idea of it. Our notion was that good people would get to Heaven and that we must do our best to make ourselves fit to be in that holy place. We had a great many shortcomings and failures, no doubt, but in some mysterious way we fancied that all would get rectified and we would be all right if we were only sincere. Many still seem to imagine that it does not matter what persons believe as long as they are sincere, nor what they do so long as they are conscientious in doing it. That was our notion, but as to any idea of there being a faith peculiar to God’s elect, a faith which saves the soul by linking us to the Savior—if anyone had talked to us in *that* fashion—we would have said, “Yes, that is, no doubt, orthodox teaching—we have heard that Martin Luther taught that doctrine at the time of the Reformation, but what he meant by it, we have not the slightest idea!” We did not know. We had not formed any idea of that which, had we known it, would have been the chief joy of our minds and hearts—in that unhappy period we had no idea of faith.

Some of us used to hear the Gospel. Some of us did not. But, whether we heard the Gospel or not, “*before faith came*,”*we did not know what it was*. I have no doubt that I heard, hundreds of times, such texts as these—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” But I still had no intelligent idea of what faith meant. When I first discovered what faith really was, and exercised it, for with me these two things came together, I believed as soon as I knew what believing meant. And then I thought I had never heard that Truth of God preached before! But, on looking back, I am persuaded that the Light of God often shone in my eyes, but I was blind and, therefore, I thought that the Light had never come. The Light was shining all the while, but there was no power to receive it—the eyeballs of the soul were not sensitive to the Divine beams!

Perhaps some of you did *not* hear the Gospel, for it is by no means a difficult thing to attend a place of worship year after year, and yet not hear the Gospel. I am sorry that it should be so, but I know that it is so— there is a great deal of preaching that may be edifying to Christians, a great deal that is morally excellent—but the way of salvation by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often regarded by the preacher as a Truth of God too elementary to be introduced to the notice of a congregation so intelligent and so experienced as the one he is privileged to address! This is a great mistake for any minister to make. The Lord’s command to Moses was, “With all your offerings you shall offer salt,” and His injunction to all His servants, now, is, “With all your teaching, preach the simple doctrine of faith in Christ Crucified.” I delight to cry, with the Apostle Paul, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and it is my constant joy to preach that simple doctrine of, “Believe, and live.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” But whether people heard the Gospel or did not hear it, I know that it has often been the case that “before faith came” no idea of what faith is had penetrated the soul! Much was heard *about* it, but nothing was understood. Much, in some respects, was understood about the doctrine, but faith, itself, was still unknown.

And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, as it is that before faith comes we have no idea of it, and we do not understand it, so *we have been puzzled to think of what it could be when we have seen it in others*. We have heard of others, we have read of others and the most of us have seen others who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And we have wished that we could do the same. We have looked upon their experience as some extraordinary secret, some marvelous mystery, some special manifestation—and we have said to ourselves, “We can never reach that height on which those people stand.” So we have continued our Chapel going, our Bible reading and so forth, under the notion that faith was something quite impossible for us.

We have thought of it as if it were some precious diamond that kings and queens might buy, but it was not for poor people like us. Though we have been told over and over again, that—

***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One,”***we have said, “Yes, life for a look, ah, yes! No doubt that is true, but I cannot look.” And so we have still turned away from the one hope of salvation! Perhaps we have been still further pressed by some earnest spirit and the Truth has been made as plain as a pikestaff, yet we still could not think that the speaker really meant what he said—there must be some strange mystery at the back of it all. We asked ourselves—“How do people obtain faith? Of course, it is simple enough to those who understand it, but as for us poor souls who do not comprehend it, how can we get to know what it means and how can we obtain it for ourselves?” That was the puzzled condition in which we were “before faith came.” We were just in that kind of state, so that, even when we*wished* to believe, it seemed to us as if it was something altogether beyond our reach.

There was also a time with us, dear Friends, when “before faith came” in its healing and comforting power, *a measure of faith came to wound, cut and kill*. We saw our sin, we felt our need of a Savior and we believed so far as this—that Christ was a Savior, that He was *the* Savior, and that He could save us. But our difficulty was like that of the woman in the crowd who tried to touch the hem of Christ’s garment—how could we get in *contact* with Him? What could we *do* to be saved? Oh, the many times that I have wished the preacher would tell me something to *do* that I might be saved! Gladly would I have done it, if it had been possible. If he had said, “Take off your shoes and stockings, and run to John O’Groat’s,” I would not even have gone home, first, but would have started off that very night, that I might win salvation! How often have I thought that if they had said, “Bare your back to the scourge and take 50 lashes!” I would have said, “Here I am! Come along with your whip and beat as hard as you please, so long as I can but obtain peace and rest, and get rid of my sin.”

Yet that simplest of all matters—believing in Christ Crucified, accepting His finished salvation, being*nothing* and letting Him be *everything*, *doing* nothing but *trusting* to what He has done—I could not get a hold of it at all! I might truthfully say that I have known many who, after years of what I think was very sincere and earnest hearing, still remain just the same, apparently willing, but really *unwilling* to believe! They wish to know the way of salvation—and the road is open right straight before them—yet they no not experimentally know the way of life, the only way by which a man can be eternally saved! I am speaking, at this time, I do not doubt, to many who are still in that fog, still bewildered, and knowing not which way to turn, albeit that from this platform there sounds forth that clarion note and nothing else, “Look to Jesus and live! Believe in Him. Trust in Him and you shall be saved at once, yes, saved *eternally*, from the moment that you have done with self and, by faith, have laid hold on Christ!”

Why is it that people do not believe? I suppose it is, partly, because they are so proud. You, my Friend, have a proud notion in your head that there is, after all, something due from God to you! In truth, there is nothing due from God to you but that He should let you perish in your sin—that is all He owes you! You have so sinned against Him that if He should, at this moment, cast you into the lowest Hell, it is all that you have any right to expect! And He will have you know this and make you feel it before He will speak a word of blessing to your soul. You are too high and mighty to be saved as you are—you must come down from that lofty position. This, then, is one reason why men do not “believe and live,” because they are too proud to be saved by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!  
Besides, salvation by believing seems so strange, so amazing, so contrary to the usual run of human opinion and, in addition, it is so *spiritual* that the natural man rebels against it. If it were but a carnal thing, something to be done with the hands, or performed with the feet, we could do *that*—but the*spiritual* action of *believing*, the action which honors God by taking salvation as the free gift of His Grace and mercy—we cannot bend our backs and stoop so low as that! The fact is that it is difficult because it is easy! It is difficult because there is no difficulty in it and it seems obscure simply because it is so clear! There is nothing for you to do, O lost Sinner, but to yield yourself up to your God and accept His Sovereign Mercy which He freely gives you in the Person of His dear Son! Still, though I have said all this so plainly, you do not believe me— you do not yet understand what I mean, unless you have been taught of the Spirit! That, then, is how we were in the unhappy period “before faith came.”

**II.**Now I want to show you, in a few words, THE CUSTODY WE WERE IN. “Before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up.” The word for, “kept,” means that we were arrested and given in charge, or that we were taken under the care of a garrison. The Ten Commandments of God, like ten armed legionaries, took us into custody and held us fast. “Before faith came, we were kept under the Law.” How was that?

When the Spirit of God began to deal with us, we found that *we were always within the sphere of Law—*we could not get out of it. We woke in the morning—there was the Law right in front of us. All during the day— there was the Law right before our eyes. If we went to sleep at night— there was the Law—we were everywhere under the Law. We said, with David, “Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence?” When once we recognized God and realized the fact that we were His creatures, there came into our startled conscience the remembrance of the universality of Law!

I remember that experience and how I thought of what was said of the old Roman empire that, under the rule of Caesar, if a man once broke the law of Rome, he was in prison everywhere! The whole *world* was one vast prison to him, for he could not get out of the reach of the imperial power—and so did it come to be in my awakened conscience! Wherever I went, the Law of God had a demand upon my thoughts, upon my words, upon my rising, upon my resting. What I did and what I did not do, all came under the cognizance of the Law—and then I found that this Law so surrounded me that I was always running against it! I was always breaking it! I seemed as if I were a sinner and nothing else but a sinner. If I opened my mouth, I spoke amiss. If I sat still, there was sin in my silence. I remember that when the Spirit of God was thus dealing with me, I used to feel myself to be a sinner, even, when I was in the House of God! I thought that when I sang, I was mocking the Lord with a solemn sound upon a false tongue! And if I *prayed*, I feared that I was sinning in my prayers, insulting Him by uttering confessions which I did not feel and asking for mercies with a faith that was not at all true, but only another form of unbelief! Oh, yes, some of us know what it is to be given into custody to the Law! Perhaps some here are now in this condition without quite understanding it.

At that time, when I was in the custody of the Law, *I did not take any pleasure in sin*! Alas, I sinned, but my sense of the Law of God kept me back from a great many sins. I could not, as others did, plunge into profligacy, or indulge in any of the grosser vices, for that Law had me well in hand! I sinned enough without acting like that. Oh, I used to tremble to put one foot before another, for fear I would do wrong! I felt that my old sins seemed to be so many that it were well to die rather than commit any more! The Law of God, when it gets a man into its charge, makes him feel just like that.

Then, *I could not find any rest* while under the custody of the Law. If I wanted to sleep a while, or to be a little indifferent and careless, then some one or other of those Ten Commandments roughly awakened me and, looking on me with a frowning face, said, “You have broken me!” I thought that I would do some good works but, somehow, the Law always broke my good works in the making. I fancied that if my tears flowed freely, I might make some recompense for my wrongdoing, but the Law held up the mirror and I soon saw my face all smeared and made more unhandsome by my tears. The Law of God shut me up in all directions and would not let me rest anywhere when I was under its custody.

Then, also, *the Law seemed to blight all my hopes*. I hoped this and I hoped that—but then the Law said, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” And I knew I had not continued in all those things, so I saw myself accursed, turn which way I might! I had offended against the justice of God! I was impure and polluted! And I used to say, “If God does not send me to Hell, He ought to.” I sat in judgment upon myself and pronounced the sentence that I felt would be just. I could not have gone to Heaven with my sin unpardoned, even if I had had the offer to do it, for I knew that it would not be right that I should do so—I justified God in my own conscience while I condemned myself!

One thing I found concerning the Law, that *it would not even let me despair*. If I thought I would give up all desire to do right and just go and drown my conscience in sin, the Law said, “No, you cannot do that, there is no rest for you in sinning. You know the Law too well to be able to sin in the blindness of a seared conscience.” So the Law worried and troubled me at all points—it shut me up as in an iron cage—every way of escape was effectually blocked up!

I am talking now, not only of my own experience, but also of the experience of many another child of God. I will tell you one or two of the things that shut me up dreadfully. One was when I knew the spirituality of the Law. If the Law said, “You shall not commit adultery,” I said to myself, “Well, I have never committed adultery.” Then the Law, as interpreted by Christ, said, “Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her, already, in his heart.” The Law said, “You shall not steal,” and I said, “Well, I never stole anything.” but then I found that even the *desire* to possess what was not my own was guilt! The spirituality of the Law astounded me! What hope could I have of escaping from such a Law as this which in every way surrounded me with an atmosphere from which I could not possibly escape?

Then, as I have already reminded you, the Law informed me that I was cursed unless I continued in all things that were written in the Book of the Law, so that, if I had not committed one sin, that made no difference if I had committed another sin, for I was under the curse. What if I had never blasphemed God with my tongue? Yet, if I had coveted, I had broken the Law. He who breaks a chain might say, “I did not break that link, or the other link.” No, but if you break *one* link, you have broken the chain! Ah, me, how I then seemed shut up!

Then I remembered that, even if I kept the Law perfectly, and kept it for ten, twenty, or thirty years without a fault, yet if, at the end of that time, I should *then* break it, I must suffer its dread penalty! Those words spoken by the Lord to the Prophet Ezekiel came to my mind—“If he trusts to his own righteousness and commits iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he has committed, he shall die for it.” So I saw that I was, as the text says, “shut up.” I had hoped to escape this way, or that way, or some other way. Was I not “christened” when I was a child? Had I not been taken to a place of worship? Had I not been brought up to regularly say my prayers? Had I not been an honest, upright, moral youth? Was all this nothing? “Nothing,” said the Law, as it drew its sword of fire! “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” So there was no rest for my spirit, no, not even for a moment.

What was I to do? I was in the custody of one that showed no mercy whatever, for Moses never said, “Mercy.” The Law has nothing to do with mercy! That comes from another mouth and under another dispensation. But before I turn to that other point, I would like to say that if any of you are passing through all that I have been describing, do not be at all discouraged! I rejoice that it is so with you, for this breaking down of the idols is the way to set up the true God in your heart! This cleaning out of your refuges of lies is a blessed work of God who loves you, though He seems, now, to be dealing out to you the blows of a cruel one! This is the way in which He is severing you from your deceptions, freeing you from your delusions so that He may bring you to His Truth and to Himself! That is my last point.

**III.**THE REVELATION WHICH SET US FREE—“We were shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”  
Now let me tell the story. It was on a day, never to be forgotten, when I first understood that *salvation was in and through Another—*that my salvation could not be of *myself—*but must be through One better and stronger than I. And I heard—and oh, what music it was that the Son of God had taken upon Himself our human nature and had, by His life and death, worked out a perfect salvation, finished from top to bottom, which He was ready to give to every soul that was willing to have it—and that salvation was all of Grace from first to last, the free gift of God through His blessed Son, Jesus Christ! Oh, the melody of that doctrine! “But I have heard that lots of times,” says one. Have you ever heard it at all? “Why, I heard you say it just now!” Again I put the question—Have you heard it? It has passed your ears, but have you ever *heard* it? Have you ever caught the meaning of it?  
Then I had this vision—not a vision to my eyes, but to my heart. *I saw what a Savior Christ was—*Divine as well as Human! I saw what sufferings His were, what a righteousness His was. I saw the fullness of Christ, the Glory of Christ, the Love of Christ, the Power of Christ to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him!  
Now I can never tell you how it was, but I no sooner saw whom I was to believe than *I also understood what it was to believe* and I believed in one moment! As much as if it had never been revealed to any mortal man, or written in this blessed Book, it was revealed to me by the Spirit of God that I, guilty wretch as I was, was then and there to fall at those dear feet that once were nailed to the Cross, and to take Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior—and that the moment I did so, I would be saved!  
I did take Him as my Savior and I am saved! And I come to tell you, again tonight, *the reason why I took Him for my Savior.* To my own humiliation, I must confess that I did it because I could not help it—I was shut up to it. That Law-work, of which I told you, had hammered me into such a condition that if there had been 50 other saviors, I could not have thought of them! I was driven to this One—I needed a Divine Savior—I needed One who was made a curse for me to expiate my guilt! I needed One who had died, for I deserved to die. I needed One who had risen again, who was able, by His life, to make me live! I needed the exact Savior that stood before me in the Word of God, revealed to my heart—and I could not help having Him!  
And, what is more, I cannot help still having Him as my Savior—I am shut up to it! I think I have told you of an American Brother who sat in one of the pews behind me, one Sunday night. When I went out, I said to him, “What? You, here again?” He said, “Yes, it is 20 years since I sat in this pew. I wondered if you would remember me.” I said, “Oh, yes, I do remember your face right well!” He said, “You are still hitched in the old place, I see.” “Yes,” I replied, “and if God spares you to come in another 20 years’ time, and I have not gone to Heaven, meanwhile, you will find that I am hitched in the same old place, then, too!”  
I have nothing to tell of but Christ Crucified! Nothing to say to the sinner but, “Away, away, away from all other confidences, to Him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin!” I want the Law to shut you right up to this one course. If a man were to ask, “Why do you go out of the Tabernacle by the right hand door?” it would be a very good answer if you had to say, “Because all the rest are bricked up.” That would be a valid reason, would it not? You had no choice in the matter—and that is the reason why we come to Christ—because we have tried, and proved, and known that there is none other salvation, for, “there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The Law has shut us up to this one road! It has stopped up every other opening and gangway—and we are driven to stand here, and say— ***“You, O Christ, are all I need!  
More than all, in You I find.”***

Now, if there are any of you who have gotten into that position, I am right glad of it! This proves that you are God’s child! He has chosen you, He loves you, He has given His Son to save you! Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be everything to you and go on your way rejoicing! “Before faith came,” you were shut up, but you were shut up to faith in Christ! And now you have that faith, you are shut up no longer, you have received the liberty with which Christ makes His people free! Go home and enjoy it—and if you meet any other poor soul shut up as you were, tell how you came out to liberty! Do not be satisfied to go to your bed, tonight, without having told somebody of how the Lord Jesus came, dressed in garments dipped in blood, and with His pierced hands broke the bars of brass and cut the doors of iron in two—and set your soul at liberty, and said, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins.” God bless you, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

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

Paul, writing, to those changeable Galatians, who had so soon deserted the faith, says to them in this chapter.  
**Verse 1.***O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you*? Paul does not compliment them on being a very “thoughtful,” “educated,” “cultured” people—he does not care one atom about that matter but, because they had forsaken the simple Truth of the Gospel, he says, “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?” Those are hard words, Paul! Why did he not say, “Who has led you forward into more advanced views?” Not he! He calls it witchery, the work of the devil, and it is nothing better—and the wisdom of it is no better than the trickery of some old witch. If you take your eyes off Christ, it must be witchcraft that makes you do it! There is such glory, such beauty, such perfection, such wisdom, such divinity in Christ Crucified that if you turn from that sight to anything else, no matter how scientific and learned it may be, you are foolish, indeed, and somebody has “bewitched you.”  
**2.***This only would I ask of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?*They had gone off into legality. They were trying to be saved by ceremonies and by works of their own. “Well,” asks Paul, “how did you receive the Spirit—the Spirit by which miracles were worked among you, the Spirit by which you spoke with unknown tongues—the Spirit which changed and renewed your hearts? If you did, indeed, receive Him, did you receive Him by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?” There was only one reply to the question—the Spirit came to them as the result of *faith*!  
**3.***Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?*If the very beginning of your religion was spiritual, a work of the Spirit received by faith, are you now going to be perfected by the flesh, by outward rites and ceremonies, or by efforts of your own?

**4.***Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it is yet in vain.* You had to struggle and endure much contention within your own spirit to get upon the ground of faith at all—are you going to throw all that away? Is all the experience of your past life to go for nothing and are you now going to begin on a lower and baser platform?

**5.***Therefore He that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?* He knew that they must reply that it was faith and not the works of the Law, that gave those miraculous powers!

**6.***Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* That is the old way, the way of faith! It is not here recorded that Abraham *did* anything, though he did much, but the one thing that was “accounted to him for righteousness” was this, that he “believed God.”

**7.***Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*Not this nation or that, as Anglo-Israelites might say, but those that are of *faith*—these are the children of Abraham! Abraham is the father of the faithful, the Believers, and Believers are all the children of Abraham! Race has nothing to do with this matter—an end has been put to all that. God is not the God of the Jews, only, but also of the Gentiles, and here is a new race whose distinction is not that they were born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man,

but by the *will of God*! This is the token by which they are known—they*believe God* and it is accounted to them for *righteousness*—even as it was accounted to Abraham!

**8.***And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in you shall all nations be blessed.*That is the Gospel! And we are blessed by it, because we believe in Christ, and so become the children of believing Abraham.

**9, 10.***So then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.*All the people in the world who think themselves good. All the mere moralists. All those who, however amiable they may be, however excellent and religious they may be, are trusting to be saved by *good works*, are all under the curse, as surely as the drunkard, the liar, or the swearer is under the curse!

**10.***For it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.*That is all that Moses can say to you, and all that the Old Testament can reveal to you. Apart from faith in Christ, all its rites and ceremonies, all its Laws and precepts, if you are resting in them, can only land you under the curse because you cannot continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them! You have not so continued thus far—you will not so continue—and nothing but an absolutely *perfect obedience to the Law* could save a man by the way of works! And as that obedience is not possible, we come under the curse if we come under the Law.

**11.***But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident, for, The just shall live by faith.* Here Paul again quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures—“The just shall live by faith.” Even the just man lives by faith! Then how can you, who are not just, expect to live in any other way?

**12.***And the Law is not of faith, but, The man that does them shall live in them.* The very spirit of Law is the spirit of works and, as life only comes by faith, it cannot come by the works of the Law, for they are not of faith! Now comes the Gospel, clear and bright, like the sun rising out of a thick fog!

**13.***Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.*Here is Substitution—what else can the words mean? Christ hung on a tree for us, bearing our curse, in our place!

**14.***That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* Christ was made a curse for us that the blessing might come upon us. He took our curse that we might take the blessing from His own dear hands and might possess it forever!

**15.***Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it is but a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto.*A covenant is a covenant—whatever happens, it cannot be altered—it stands, though it were only made by men.

**16.***Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to your seed, which is Christ.*Quoting from the Old Testament, we may believe in the absolute plenary Inspiration of that Sacred Book because the Apostle founds an argument upon the singular of a noun having been used rather than the plural!

**17.***And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.*Is not that splendid argument? The Covenant was made with Abraham that God would bless him and his seed. Well now, 430 years later, the Law was given on Sinai, but that could not affect a covenant made 430 years before! The argument goes to prove that the Covenant of Grace is not affected by any Law of rites and ceremonies, no, not even by the Moral Law, itself! The Covenant made with Abraham and his seed must stand—the seed signifies those who believe, therefore, the Covenant stands fast with Abraham and all other Believers.

**18.***For if the inheritance is of the Law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*All through the Book of Genesis, it is promise, promise and promise! Isaac was an heir of the promise and Jacob was an heir of the promise. In fact, Isaac was born *by* promise and Ishmael, the elder brother, did not inherit the blessing because he was born after the flesh. They who believe in Christ are heirs according to the promise! Now, a promise takes us out of the region of Law.

**19.***Why, then, serve the Law?* What is the use of it?  
**19, 20.***It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One.* The Law had its uses, blessed uses. The Law should be used for its own purposes and then it is admirable—it is Divine. Take it out of its own proper use—make it a *master* instead of being a *servant*—and it is something like fire, which, in your grate, will comfort you, but if it masters you, it burns your house and destroys you!  
**21, 22.***Is the Law, then, against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*It shuts you all up as in a dungeon, that by the one and only door of *faith in Christ* you might come out into a glorious liberty!  
**23, 24.***But before faith came we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster*—This is an unfortunate translation! It should be, “The Law was our pedagogue.” That was a slave who was employed by the father of a family, to take his boy to school and bring him home, again. He often was also permitted to whip the boy if he did not learn his lessons well. “The Law was our pedagogue”  
**24, 25.***To bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*We have outgrown him! God has given us power, now, to go to Christ’s school, ourselves, joyfully and cheerfully! I remember and I daresay you do, also, when that pedagogue whipped us very sorely! I am glad that I am no longer under his power.  
**26, 27.***For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*You set forth that Truth of God in your Baptism—you then confessed that you were dead to sin—and declared that you were risen again in Christ to newness of life. Whatever you had to do with the Law before, you were dead and buried to it and to everything but Christ!  
**28, 29.***There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*That settles the question! If you belong to Christ, you are the children of Abraham! Come, then, and, without the least hesitation, claim all the privileges that belong to Abraham’s seed! If you have come under the promise, enjoy its blessing, and do not go back to trusting in rites and ceremonies—or in works of your own performing—but live a life of joyous faith in Jesus Christ your Lord!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1196 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE STERN TEACHER  
NO. 1196

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***~~“Therefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.  
But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” Galatians 3:24-26.~~***

NEITHER the Jewish Law of Ten Commandments, nor its Law of ceremonies were ever intended to save anybody. It was not the intent of the ceremonial Law, in itself to effect the redemption of the soul—by a set of pictures it set forth the way of salvation—but it was not, itself, the way. It was a *map*, not a country. It was a model of the road, not the road itself. The blood of bulls and goats, nor the ashes of a heifer could take away sin! These sacrifices and offerings were but *types* of the great Sacrifice which, in due time, was presented by the true Priest. There was no inherent virtue in the victims that were slain, or in the services that were observed by the worshippers! Those sacred rites were intended to portray to the minds of the people the real Sacrifice, which was, in the fullness of time, to be offered by our Lord Jesus Christ—but they could do nothing more.

The king’s *portrait* is not himself, the king! The engraving of a banquet is not the feast, itself, and so the grand old ceremonial Law was but a *shadow* of good things to come. It did not contain the substance of spiritual blessings. Neither was the moral Law of the Ten Commandments proclaimed on Mount Sinai ever given with the view of sinners being saved by it. When that Law was announced by God, He knew that everyone to whom He gave that Law had already broken it and that, consequently, they could not keep its precepts or claim justification by their conformity to its requirements. He never intended it to be a way of salvation!

Hundreds of years before He had revealed His Covenant of Grace and the way of faith to His servant, Abraham, and the Law was not meant to disannul the ancient promise. To look at the Law as a Savior is to place Sinai in the place of Zion and so to misuse and abuse the Law. It was sent with quite a different purpose, as we shall presently try to show you. It was sent to be our *schoolmaster* till Christ came—the schoolmaster of a world in its minority that had need to be under tutelage until it attained full age—which would not happen until Christ should be born of a woman and the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Him should be fully preached and known.

Now I shall try and show, first, the office of the Law. Then, secondly, the design of that office—“to bring us to Christ.” And, thirdly, the termination of that office—“After faith has come, we are no longer under a

schoolmaster.”  
**I.**We begin with THE OFFICE OF THE LAW. It is to be a schoolmaster.  
Here I must endeavor to explain the figure. A schoolmaster nowadays is  
not at all like the personage Paul intended. He speaks of a *pedagogue*, an  
official, seldom, if ever, now seen among men. This was not a person who  
actually officiated as master in the school and gave instruction in the  
school itself, but one—a slave, generally—who was set to take the boys to  
school and to watch over them. He was to be a sort of general supervisor  
of them, both in school and out of school and, in fact, at all times. A pedagogue was very generally employed in the training of the young.  
Indeed, it was a common and customary thing for the sons of the Greek  
and Roman nobility to have appointed over them some trustworthy servant of the family who took them in charge. The boys were entirely under  
these servants—and thus had their spirits broken in and their vivacity restrained. As a rule, these pedagogues were very stern and strict—they  
used the rod freely, not to say *cruelly—*and the condition of the boys was  
sometimes no better than slavery.  
The boys, (as it was supposed to be for their good), were kept in perpetual fear. Their recreations were restricted—even their walks were under  
the surveillance of the grim pedagogues. They were sternly held in check  
in all points and were thus disciplined for the battle of life. As for the  
young women, they, also, had some elderly Roman of grim appearance  
who tried to keep them out of mischief and suppress anything like cheerfulness or girlish glee. It was considered necessary for young people that  
they should suffer from rigid discipline and bear the yoke in their youth.  
Therefore they were all put under pedagogues, whoever they might be—  
pedagogues armed with penalties and devoid of sympathies. Now Paul, taking up this thought, which was his idea in the word,  
“schoolmaster,” says the *Law* was our pedagogue, our guardian, our custodian, ruler, tutor, governor until Christ came. Well, then, what is the  
business of the Law as a pedagogue? The business of the Law is, first, to  
teach us our *obligations* to God. Let us ask ourselves if we have ever heard  
the Law teaching us in that way. Brothers and Sisters, read the Ten  
Commandments and study each separate precept—you will find that in  
those 10 short precepts you have all the moral virtues, the full compass of  
your accountability to God and of your relationship to your fellow men. It is a wonderful condensation of morals. The essence of all just decrees  
and statutes lies there. Perfection is photographed there and holiness  
mapped out. No one has ever been able to add to it without creating an  
excrescence. Not a word could be taken from it without causing a serious  
omission. It is the perfect Law of God and tells us exactly what we ought  
to be—if we are in any degree deficient—we are to that extent guilty before  
God. When the Law comes to a man’s conscience, it reveals to him the Divine standard of right—holds it up before him—makes him look at it and apprises him that the Commandments do not merely refer to acts and deeds, but with equal force to the words and thoughts from where they  
proceed.  
I guarantee you it is a humbling day when a man gets to understand  
that for every idle word he has spoken he will be brought to account—and  
that even his *desires* and *imaginations* will all come under Divine scrutiny!  
How startled is the purest mind when it understands that whoever looks  
upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already  
in his heart—so that even *glances* of the eyes and *thoughts* of the heart  
are offenses of the Law of God! The Law of God takes cognizance of the entire nature and reveals the evil which lurks in every faculty. The mere  
*imagination* of sin is sinful—the very conception of it, albeit that we  
should reject it and never carry it into act—would still be a stain upon our  
minds and render us impure before the thrice holy God! This is one of the  
first works of the Law—to show us what spotless purity it demands and to  
reveal to us the matchless perfection which alone can meet its requirements. He who has once gazed upon the blinding light of legal holiness  
will tremble at the memory of it—and abhor himself in dust and ashes as  
he feels how far short of it he falls!  
Having done that, the Law acts as a schoolmaster, next, by showing us  
our sinfulness. We are naturally prone to account ourselves very good.  
Our own opinion of ourselves is seldom too low—most generally it is a  
rather high one—but just as a stern pedagogue would say to a boy who  
was getting a little proud, “Come along, Sir, I must take you down a little,”  
so the Law takes us down. It says, “Look at that precept. You have not  
kept that! And consider this other precept, for you appear to have forgotten it.” “Look,” says the Law, “you talk about your holiness, but have you  
loved the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all  
your might? And have you loved your neighbor as yourself?” And then, when Conscience, who is a great friend of this pedagogue,  
replies, “Indeed I have done nothing of the kind,” the conviction of sin  
comes home to the soul and sadness reigns! You will tell me, “This is very  
unpleasant—to be made to feel that you are sinful.” Yes, but it is very  
*necessary—*there is no getting to Christ in any other way! Christ died for  
*sinners* and if you are *not* sinners, what interest can you have in His  
death? Why should you think that He died for you? You must be convinced of your sinfulness before you can possibly realize the value and  
need of salvation! It is the business of the Law to lay before you the  
straight line—that you may see your crookedness—and put before you the  
pure gold. The Law is there that you may discern the humbling fact that  
what you *thought* to be pure metal is only so much worthless dross! It is  
the part of this pedagogue to bring you down—to humble you and make  
you feel how sinful you have been.  
When the Law has carried our education this far, its next business is to  
sweep away all our excuses and stop our mouths as to all self-justifying pleas. Did you ever know a boy without an excuse? I never did! I think I never knew a girl, either! We all make excuses readily enough. But those rough, surly pedagogues always answered the boy’s idle apologies by giving the offender an extra stroke of the whip for daring to impose upon his guardian! And that is what the Law does with us. We say to it, “We have not done *exactly* as we ought, but then think of poor human nature!” Ah, how often we make that excuse! But the Law answers, “I have nothing to do with the poverty of human nature. This is what God commands and if  
you do not obey you will have to be cast away forever from His Presence.” The Law makes no diminution of its claims because of fallen human  
nature! And what is more, when the Law comes with power to a man’s  
conscience, he does not, himself, dare to plead human nature—for of all  
pleas that is one of the most fallacious. A man will say, “Well, I know I  
drank to intoxication, but that is merely gratifying an instinct of human  
nature.” Now, just suppose that this drunk, when he gets sober, falls into  
the hands of a thief—will he not turn the rogue over to a policeman? But  
what if the defense is set up that it was human nature that robbed him?  
See what he will say about it. Says he, “I will get human nature locked up  
for 12 months if I can.” He does not recognize soft speeches about human  
nature when anyone does wrong to *him—*and he knows, in his own soul,  
that there is no valid defense in such a plea when he does wrong to God! What if human nature is bad? That only proves that the man ought to  
be punished more! A man stands before my Lord Mayor tomorrow morning. He is brought up for a thief, charged with having picked somebody’s  
pocket. He says, “My Lord Mayor, I ought to be forgiven, for the fact is, it  
is my *nature* to steal! I have stolen so long that whenever I see a pocket I  
feel a disposition, at once, to put my hand into it—such is the infirmity of  
my nature.” What does the Lord Mayor say? He replies very gravely, “Why,  
I see that it is not merely in actions that you are guilty, but your very nature is poisoned with dishonesty. I shall give you a *double* punishment—  
your plea is not an excuse, but an aggravation.” So when the Law comes,  
it sweeps all excuses away and makes us see how hollow, false and even  
wicked they are! Men, like boys, will say that circumstances were such  
that they could not help doing amiss—but the Law, like a stern pedagogue, says—“I have nothing to do with circumstances. Whatever your  
circumstances are, there is your duty and you have not done it, and, not  
having done it, you must be punished for your offense.”  
Where does Moses, in the 20th chapter of Exodus, speak about exonerating or even extenuating circumstances? God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of  
Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before  
Me. You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of  
anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that  
is in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down yourself to them,  
nor serve them.” That is to say, not under *any* circumstances! “You shall not steal,” not under *any* circumstances. *Circumstances* are not taken into account! The Law sweeps that excuse away and makes men speech  
less before the Judgment Seat.  
Many transgressors argue, “Well, but I have not done worse than other  
people.” To which the Law replies, “What have you to do with other people? Each individual must stand or fall on his own account before the  
Law. The Law is to *you*. If another has broken it, he shall be punished  
even as you shall, inasmuch as you have broken it.” Then the man cries,  
“But I have been better than others!” “But,” says the Law, “If you have not  
perfectly walked in all the ways of the Lord your God to do them, I have  
nothing to do with comparing you with others. This is my sentence,  
‘Cursed is every man that continues not in all things that are written in  
the Book of the Law to do them.’”  
Now, my dear Hearers, these are not *my* words, they are the Words of  
God by His servant Moses! And there they stand like a flaming sword,  
turning every way, and blocking up the legal road to the Tree of Life. Conscience, when it is really awakened by the Law, confesses herself condemned and ceases to uphold her plea of innocence. How can it be otherwise, when the Law is so stern? Then, Perhaps, the man will say, “I mean  
to do better in the future”—to which the Law replies, “What have I to do  
with that? It is already due that you should be perfect in the future—and  
if you should be perfect, in what way would that wipe out your *old* offenses? You have only done what you ought to have done.”  
But the man cries, “I repent of having done wrong.” “Yes,” says the Law,  
“but I have nothing to do with *repentance*.” There is no provision in the  
Ten Commandments for repentance! Cursed is the man that breaks the  
Law—and that is all that the Law says to him. Over the top of Sinai there  
were flames exceedingly bright and a trumpet sounded exceedingly loud—  
but there were no drops of the rain of pity there! Storm and tempest,  
thunder and lightning appalled the people so that they trembled in the  
camp—and such must be the sights and sounds we witness as long as we  
are under the Law!  
Having thus swept away excuses, this pedagogue does the next thing  
which pedagogues did to boys. It begins to chide us and to chasten us.  
And it will chide, too! I know it. I had the Law frowning and shaking its  
fist at me for years before I got from under it. Glad enough was I to escape  
from it, for well do I remember the weight of its club—that crab tree club  
of which John Bunyan speaks! I guarantee you it can give you such sore  
bones that you cannot lie down upon the bed of your self-confidence to  
take a rest. “Why,” says the Law, “you have done this and that, and the  
other, and you know you have! You have sinned against light and against  
knowledge—and against conscience, love and against mercy.” And each of  
these brings another blow from the great rod till we are all wounds and  
bruises—and we seem to ourselves to be covered with putrefying sores. The Law will serve us as the pedagogue did the boy—it will accompany and follow us everywhere. The old pedagogue went with the boy to the playground—he did not let him play in peace. He went upstairs to bed with him—he did not let him go to sleep without a frown—and he woke him up in the morning much earlier than he liked to be awakened, and made him come out of his bed, whether he liked it or not. He could never go anywhere without this pedagogue with him, poor child. And so it is when the Law gets hold of a man—really gets hold of him. Does he go to the theater to find pleasure in sin? The Law will go with him and make him feel more wretched than when he was at home! He may get among the frivolous and try to sing some old song to get rid of his feelings, but the more he tries to drown his misery, the more the dark forebodings come  
before his mind.  
He cannot rest. The Law keeps on saying, “What are you doing, now?  
Why, you are only going from bad to worse.” The Law also smites the  
awakened conscience, again and again—and frightens him with what is  
soon to come. “Suppose you were to die where you now are,” says the  
Law. “Suppose you were now to appear before your Maker, unforgiven,  
where would you be?” Perhaps in this kind of feeling a man goes to the  
House of God. The Law follows him there. If the preacher preaches a contorting sermon, the Law says, “This is not for you. You have nothing to do  
with that. You are under *my* government, not under Christ.” The sweeter  
the promise, the more bitter will be the taste of the sermon in the poor  
sinner’s mouth, for the Law says, “You have broken my injunctions. You  
have violated my statutes. There is nothing for you but eternal punishment—to be driven forever from the Presence of God.”  
“Hard lines,” you say. You do not like this pedagogue. No, nor did I,  
when I was under him. I was glad when the day came that I was of age.  
Do you see what the drift of all this is? Why, the drift of it is to make you  
despair of being saved by your good works—and to make you feel that you  
can do *nothing* right, apart from Jesus! You are forced by the Law to cry  
out, “Why, I cannot do anything right! I have tried and failed! I have tried  
again and have failed! I thought I was going to improve myself into an angel, but I seem to be worse every day! I thought surely the Law would have  
smiled on me and said, ‘That is well done,’ but when I have done my best I  
am still condemned, I am allowed no peace!”  
No, dear Soul, and if God means to save you, you never will have any  
peace till you come to Christ! The man whom God does *not* intend to save  
is often left *without* the Law—to enjoy his portion in this life as best he  
may. What is the use of worrying *that* man? He may as well have peace in  
*this* life, for he will never see the face of the Lord in Heaven. But the Lord’s  
*elect* are made to feel the rod and by that rod they are so beaten that they  
are driven out of all heart and confidence in themselves—and made to  
turn to Jesus—to find salvation by

ome better method than by their own  
works! The Law is our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ—our pedagogue to flog us and beat us till we are heartily sick of *self*—and look for our  
hope and confidence in some other source.  
**II.**Thus I have shown you the office of the Law and I will proceed to the  
second head, which is, THE DESIGN OF THIS OFFICE. The Law is *not* intended to conduct any man to despair. “But did not you say it was, just  
now?” No, I did not! I said it was sent to drive a man to despair of *himself*.  
That is the despair which hails the Gospel—and the sooner we have it the  
better—it would be quite another matter if we were driven to absolute despair. Brothers and Sisters, the Law says, “You shall not indulge the hope  
of being saved by me. I will whip it out of you.” And it does this effectually,  
but it is not meant that the man should say, “Well, if I cannot be saved by  
my works there is no hope of my being saved at all.”  
Oh, no! It is that he may ask, “What must I do to be saved?” And may  
get this answer—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be  
saved.” Its office is not to urge us to make an amalgam of works and faith,  
as some suppose. There are those who say, “I cannot keep the Law, but if  
I believe in Jesus, then the blood of Jesus will make up for my sins and  
deficiencies.” That is *not* the way of salvation! Nobody will ever get to  
Heaven that way! If you have any engagements with the Law, you must  
pay it 20 shillings in the pound. It will not take a composition of any sort  
whatever—you must satisfy its utmost demands or it will give you no  
rest—either in time or in eternity!  
If you say to the Law, “I will give you so much in works and so much in  
Grace,” the Law does not deal in that way—it must be paid by a legal tender of current coin of the king’s realm. It demands *works* and it will have  
nothing but works—and those absolutely perfect and in full tale and  
measure. The Law repudiates amalgamation and so does the Gospel of  
Free Grace. If you have anything to do with Jesus, you must get right  
away from your own good works—I mean from all reliance upon them—  
and come to rest in Him, and Him alone, for it can never be Christ *and*  
company. He will save from top to bottom, from first to last, or else not at  
all. Not a drop of His blood and then a drop of your tears! Not a work from  
Christ and then a work from you! Oh no! Such hideous patchwork cannot  
be endured. It is not the object of the Law to drive you to a *compromise*.  
Its object is this—to make you accept salvation as the *free gift* of God—to  
make you stand and admit that you are a *sinner*, and accept a free, full,  
perfect forgiveness—according to the infinite Grace of the eternal Father.  
The Law is meant to keep you always holding on to salvation by Divine  
Grace.  
For my part, I cannot bear that preaching which is partly Law and  
partly Grace. I have had enough of the Law! If you had known five years of  
its rigor—five years of discipline of the pedagogue—you would never want  
to see even his back again! When a man once knows what law-work is in  
his soul, he knows the difference between that and the Gospel—and he  
will not have linsey-woolsey! He needs to have the pure white linen all of one material—and that material Free Grace! It must not be, “Yes, no,” but, “Yes, yes”—Grace, Grace, all Grace, nothing but Grace, and not Grace and works, not Moses and Christ, but Jesus only! The Grace must  
be pure and unadulterated!  
It is a grand thing when this schoolmaster makes a man stick to Divine  
Grace and so flogs and whips him that he never wants to go back to the  
Law any more for, Brothers and Sisters, nobody is so happy in the liberty  
of Christ as the man who has thoroughly known the bondage of the Law! I  
think I have repeated to you a story my old friend, Dr. Alexander Fletcher,  
once told me. He said he was passing by the Old Bailey, or some other of  
our jails, and he saw a couple of boys turning somersaults, standing on  
their heads, making wheels of themselves and all sorts of things. He  
stopped and said, “Why, boys, whatever are you doing? You seem to be  
delighted.” One of them said, “Yes, and you would be delighted, too, if you  
had been locked up in that jail three months! You would jump when you  
came out.” And the good old doctor said he thought it was very likely he  
should. If he had been a prisoner there he should hardly know how to express his delight in getting out.  
Now, if a man has been once pummeled by the Law. If he has felt his  
sin and misery—and the impossibility of obtaining any relief by the way of  
human merit. When he comes to see that Christ has kept the Law *for him.*  
When he comes to know that he is saved, and saved perfectly by an act of  
*faith* in Jesus Christ—when he realizes all this—it is then that he lives  
under new conditions and is not under the Law but under Divine Grace!  
He is the man to know the sweets of liberty because before the iron had  
entered into his soul! He is the man to kiss the Emancipator’s feet, for  
was he not heavily ironed in the days of his former estate? This, then, is  
the design of the Law—to make us sick of self and fond of Christ—to condemn us that we may accept Free Grace. To empty us that God may fill  
us, to strip us that God may clothe us—in a word—to kill us that Christ  
may make us alive!  
**III.**Now to our last point—TERMINATION OF THE LAW’S OFFICE.  
When does it terminate? The text says, “But after faith has come, we are  
no longer under a schoolmaster.” We come to believe in Jesus and then  
the pedagogue troubles us no more. No, there is a great change in the  
pedagogue’s behavior. When the young Roman, or we will say a young  
Hebrew, who had come under the Greek law, was under thirteen and ahalf years old, this pedagogue was always beating, cuffing and buffeting  
him for his faults. But when he was a day over the time, then, according  
to the Law, he was free from the tutelage of the pedagogue.  
Do you think the pedagogue struck him that morning? He knew better!  
He had whipped him yesterday, but now he must know his master and  
render him another sort of service. The lad is come to his full age and is  
under other regulations. Under the old Roman law a man was not of full  
age till he was twenty-five. According to that law the pedagogue might be insulting and domineering over him when he was 23 or twenty-four. But when his young master had come of age, he changed his talk altogether— matters wore another phase. And so when a man becomes a Believer, he has come of age and the schoolmaster’s rule is over. He is no longer under his former tutors and governors, for his time of liberty appointed by the  
Father is come!  
He is not under the pedagogue of the Law any longer, for Christ’s work  
has set him entirely free. Certainly, a man sees the office of the Law as  
pedagogue ended when he ascertains that Christ has fulfilled it! I read the  
Ten Commandments and say, “These thundered at me and I trembled at  
them, but Christ has kept them, kept them for me! He was my Representative in every act of His obedient life and death—and before God it is as if  
I had kept the Law—and I stand accepted in the Beloved! When Jesus  
Christ is seen of God, God sees His people in Him, and they are justified  
through His righteousness because they have faith in Him. “He that believes in Him is not condemned.”  
Oh, is it not a thousand mercies in one that the grand old cannons of  
the Law are no longer turned against us? Christ has either spiked them or  
else turned them on our enemies by fulfilling the Law so that they are on  
our side instead of against us. The Law ceases its office as schoolmaster  
when it comes to be written on our hearts. Boys have their lessons on  
slates, but men have their laws in their minds! We trust a man where we  
should carefully watch a boy. When the child becomes a man, his father  
and mother do not write down little rules for him as they did when he was  
a child—neither do they set servants over him to keep him in order. He is  
trusted. His manliness is trusted. His honor is trusted. His best feelings  
are trusted.  
So now, Brothers and Sisters, we who have believed in Jesus have the  
Law written, *here*, in our hearts and it corresponds with what is written  
there in the Scriptures! And now we do not say of a sin, “I am afraid to do  
that, for I should be lost if I did.” We do not desire to do it. We loathe it.  
And of a virtue, we do not say, “I must do that, or else I shall not be a  
child of God.” No, we *love* to do it—we want to do it! The more of holiness  
the better! We love the Law of the Lord and desire to keep its statutes  
unto the end. We no longer have, “You shall,” and, “You shall not,” constantly sounding in our ears as we did when we were children. We are  
men in Christ Jesus and now our sacred passions delight to run in the  
way of God’s Commandments—and if the old nature rebels, Grace is given  
to put it down! There is a daily conflict, but the new life that is within us  
cannot sin because it is born of God! And it keeps down the old nature so  
that we walk in the ways of righteousness after the example of our Lord. A warfare goes on, but we are no longer children. When faith has come,  
we are no longer under a schoolmaster. This is not Antinomianism, for we  
are not *against* the Law, but the Law that once was on the stone tablets  
and there was broken, is now written on the fleshy tablet of a renewed heart—and the Lord sweetly inclines us to keep His Testimonies and observe His Statutes. Moreover, we get free from the Law when we take up our heirship in Christ. I am afraid some Christians have never fully done this. Can you say, Beloved, “I have believed in Jesus and therefore I am one with Him—whatever Christ is before God, that I am—for I am a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”?—  
***“So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be, For in the Person of His Son I am as near as He. So dear, so very dear to God, I cannot dearer be The love wherewith He loves His Son,  
Such is His love to me.”***  
Can you say, “He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered  
in all things and sure? As long as Jesus lives I cannot die, for it is written,  
‘Because he lives, I shall live, also”?—  
***“My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity cannot erase,  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible Grace.”***  
When a man gets there and knows that his standing does not depend on  
himself, but that he is what he is in Christ—when he knows that Christ  
has done everything for him and has saved him so that he can challenge  
every accuser in the words of Paul—“Who shall lay anything to the charge  
of God’s elect? It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns?”—when  
he gets *there*, then he can truly say that he is no longer under a schoolmaster! O Brothers and Sisters, read the eighth and ninth chapters of  
Romans! Get into the spirit of the Apostle when he rejoiced and triumphed  
in the complete salvation of Christ—get away from all beliefs that you  
have something to do in order to save yourself!  
If there are any unconverted persons here, and I am afraid there are a  
great many, I beseech you do not abide under the Law, for the Law can do  
nothing for you but curse you! Give up all hope of being saved by anything that *you* can do and agree to be saved by what Christ has done.  
Plead guilty! Plead guilty, and then God will say, “I absolve you.” Plead  
guilty and plead the blood of Jesus and, this done, you are accepted in the  
Beloved!—  
***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for you,”***  
and for every soul that will confess its guiltiness and renounce all hope of  
self-salvation! Only fly away to the wounds of Jesus!  
And how shall I urge *you*, O Christian, never to go back to the Law? Do  
not begin to judge yourself as if you were under the Law. What if you are a  
sinner? It is true you are! Confess your sin and mourn over it, but remember there is a Fountain open for sin and for uncleanness in the house  
of David. That sin of yours was laid on Christ before you committed it! It  
was laid on the Scapegoat’s head of old and put away—and at this moment you are still clean in the sight of God through that great washing  
which you have received in the precious blood! Do not imagine that God will change His mind about you! He never did and never can change His mind! He has said concerning each soul that believes in His dear Son, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” You are complete in Christ Jesus! In Him you have righteousness and strength. In Him you may even glory! Get away from legal doctrines and stand upon the Gospel rock—and you  
will be happy and holy all your days!  
Let me speak to those of you who are engaged in Christian service.  
When you try to teach others, always keep the Law in its proper place. I  
remember hearing a sermon from this text, “They that sow in tears shall  
reap in joy,” in which the preacher so thoroughly missed the mark as to  
leave the inference upon the minds of his hearers that, after all, our good  
works and repentance would save us! Now, that is not the Gospel! Neither  
ought it to be preached as such. We preach up good works with all our  
might as the *result* of faith, as the *outgrowth* of faith—but *not* as the  
*groundwork* of salvation! We tell you that the tree of human nature must  
be altered, first, or the fruit cannot be good. There will be no pears upon  
that crabapple tree till you change the stock! Do not, therefore, go preaching to crab trees and tell them to bear pears and apples!  
We testify that *Christ* is able to change a man’s nature—and then good  
fruits will come as a matter of course—but I am afraid that in many Sunday schools the children are taught a different doctrine—somewhat after  
this fashion. “Now, dear Children, be very good and obey your parents,  
and love Jesus, and you will be saved.” That is *not* the Gospel and it is not  
true! Often do I hear it said, “*Love* Jesus, dear Children.” That is not the  
Gospel. It is, “Trust Him”—“Believe.” Not *love*, but *faith* is the Saving  
Grace! That love of Jesus of a sentimental kind, which does not spring out  
of faith in Him, is a spurious emotion, a counterfeit love—not at all the  
love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit! The root of the  
matter is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved”—that  
is the Gospel for a child of two years of age—and the Gospel for a man of a  
hundred! There is only one Gospel for all that are born on the face of the  
earth—“Believe in Jesus.” Not your *doing*, not your *obeying* the Law—you  
have broken that—you have put yourself out of all possible hope in that  
direction! But your acceptance of what *Christ* has done will save you at  
once, save you forever!  
But why should I multiply words? I do not know how to put the whole  
matter in a simpler form, or to commend it more plainly to your understanding. It is not the mere exposition of a few verses of Scripture, or the  
clearing up of some small critical difficulty. Rather would I have you consider it a direction of vital importance to every seeking soul—a counsel of  
thrilling interest to every tried and exercised heart! Oh, how anxious I am  
to make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out  
of the way! I wish that all of you, especially our young friends, would learn  
and often repeat that hymn of Dr. Watts till it becomes indelibly fixed on  
their memory—

***“The Law commands and makes us know  
What duties to our God we owe.  
But ‘tis the Gospel must reveal  
Where lies our strength to do His will.  
The Law discovers guilt and sin,  
And shows how vile our hearts have been. Only the Gospel can express  
Forgiving love and cleansing Grace.  
What curses does the Law denounce  
Against the man that sins but once!  
But in the Gospel, Christ appears  
Pardoning the guilt of numerous years.  
My Soul, no more attempt to draw  
Your life and comfort from the Law.  
Fly to the hope the Gospel gives,  
The man that trusts the promise lives.”***

And remember, last of all, that the Law which is so sharp and terrible to men when it only deals with them for their good, will, if you and I die without being brought to Christ, be much more terrible to us in eternity, when it deals with us in *justice* for our punishment! Then it will not be enshrined in the body of Moses, but, terrible to tell, it will be incarnate in the Person of the Son of God sitting upon the Throne! He will be at once the Lawgiver, the Judge and the Savior—and you that have despised Him as the Savior will have to appear before Him as your Judge! And His justice will be clear and undiluted now that His mercy has been scorned.

Oil is soft—but set it on fire and see how it burns! Love is sweet—but curdle it to jealousy and see how sour it is! If you turn the Lamb of Zion into the Lion of the tribe of Judah, beware, for He will tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you! Rejected love will change its hand. The pierced hands were stretched out with invitations of mercy—but if these are rejected—! O Sinners, I am telling you the solemn truth! Please hear it, I pray you, before I send you away—if from those hands that were pierced you will not take the perfect salvation which He is prepared to give to all who confess their guilt, you will have to receive from those same hands the blows of that iron rod which shall break you in pieces as a potter’s vessel.

Fly now and kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little! Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 4.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—567, 647, 565.** Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1815 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREAT BIRTHDAY AND OUR COMING OF AGE  
NO. 1815

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 21, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son~~***

***~~into your hearts, crying, “Abba, Father.”  
Galatians 4:3-6.~~***

THE birth of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world is a wellspring of pure, unmingled joy. We associate with His Crucifixion much of sorrowful regret, but we derive from His birth at Bethlehem nothing but delight. The angelic song was a fit accompaniment to the joyful event and the filling of the whole earth with peace and good will is a suitable consequence of the condescending fact. The stars of Bethlehem cast no baleful light—we may sing with undivided joy, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” When the Eternal God stooped from Heaven and assumed the nature of His own creature who had rebelled against Him, the deed could mean no harm to man. God, in our nature, is not God against us but God with us! We may take up the young Child in our arms and feel that we have seen the Lord’s salvation—it cannot mean destruction to men.

I do not wonder that the men of the world celebrate the supposed anniversary of the great birthday as a high festival with carols and banquets. Knowing nothing of the spiritual meaning of the mystery, they yet perceive that it means man’s good and so, in their own rough way, they respond to it. We who observe no days which are not appointed of the Lord, rejoice *continually* in our Prince of Peace and find in our Lord’s Manhood a fountain of consolation. To those who are truly the people of God, the Incarnation is the subject of a thoughtful joy which always increases with our knowledge of its meaning, even as rivers are enlarged by many trickling brooks. The Birth of Jesus not only brings us hope, but the certainty of good things. We do no merely speak of Christ’s coming into relation with our nature, but of His entering into *union* with ourselves, for He has become one flesh with us for purposes as great as His love! He is one with all of us who have believed in His name.

Let us consider by the light of our text the special effect produced upon the Church of God by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh. You know, Beloved, that His coming a *second* time will produce a wonderful change upon the Church. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.” We are looking forward to His Second Advent for the lifting up of the Church to a higher platform than that upon which it now stands. Then shall the militant become triumphant and laboring become exultant! Now is the time of battle, but the Second Advent shall bring both victory and rest. Today our King commands us to conflict, but soon He shall gloriously reign upon Mount Zion with His ancients! When He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Then shall the bride adorn herself with her jewels and stand ready for her Husband!

The whole waiting creation which now groans and travails together in harmony with the birth pangs of the Church shall then come to her time of deliverance and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is the promise of the Second Advent—but what was the result of the First Advent? Did that make any difference in the dispensation of the Church of God? Beyond all doubt it did! Paul here tells us that we were children in bondage under the elements of the world until the fullness of time was come, when, “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law.” Some will say, “He is speaking here of the Jews,” but he expressly warns us in the previous chapter against dividing the Church into Jews and Gentiles. To Paul, it is only *one* Church, and when he says we were in bondage, he is talking to the Galatian Christians who were, many of them, Gentiles.

But in truth he regards them neither as Jews nor Gentiles, but as part of the one and indivisible Church of God. In those ages in which election mainly embraced the tribes of Israel, there were always some chosen ones beyond that visible line. And in the mind of God, the chosen people were always regarded as neither Jews nor Gentiles, but as one in Christ Jesus. So Paul lets us know that the Church, up to the time of the coming of Christ, was like a child at school under tutors and governors—or like a young man not yet arrived at years of discretion and, therefore, most fitly kept under restraint. When Jesus came, His great birthday was the day of the coming of age of the Church—then Believers remained no more children but became *men* in Christ Jesus!

Our Lord, by His First Advent, brought the Church up out of her nonage and her pupilage into a condition of maturity in which she was able to take possession of the inheritance and claim and enjoy her rights and liberties. It was a wonderful step from being under the Law as a schoolmaster, to come from under its rod and rule into the freedom and power of a full-grown heir! And such was the change for Believers of the old time and, in consequence, there was a wonderful difference between the highest under the Old Testament and the lowest under the New. Of them that are born of woman there was not born a greater than John the Baptist and yet the *least* in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he!

John the Baptist may be compared to a youth of 19, still an infant in law, still under his guardian, still unable to touch his estate. But the least Believer in Jesus has passed his minority and is, “no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” May the Holy Spirit bless the text to us while we use it thus. First, let us *consider in itself the joyful mission of the Son of God.* And then let us consider the *joyful result which has come of that mission*, as it is expressed in our text.

**I.**I invite you to CONSIDER THE JOYFUL MISSION OF THE SON OF GOD. The Lord of Heaven has come to earth! God has taken upon Himself human nature. Hallelujah! *This great transaction was accomplished at the right time—*“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.” The reservoir of time had to be filled by the inflowing of age after age and, when it was full to the brim, the Son of God appeared! Why the world should have remained in darkness for 4,000 years—why it should have taken that length of time for the Church to attain her full age, we cannot tell, but this, we are told, that Jesus was sent forth when the fullness of time was come. Our Lord did not come before His time nor behind His time! He was punctual to His hour and cried at the moment—“Lo, I come.”

We may not curiously pry into the reasons why Christ came when He did, but we may reverently muse thereon. The birth of Jesus is the grandest light of history, the sun in the seasons of all time. It is the pole-star of human destiny, the hinge of chronology, the meeting place of the waters of the past and the future. Why did it happen at just that moment? Assuredly it was so predicted! There were many prophecies which pointed *exactly* to that hour. I will not detain you, just now, with them, but those of you who are familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures well know that, as with so many fingers, they pointed to the time when the Shiloh would come and the great Sacrifice would be offered. He came at the hour which God had determined. The infinite Lord appoints the date of every event— *all times* are in His hands.

There are no loose threads in the Providence of God, no stitches are dropped, no events are left to chance. The great clock of the universe keeps good time and the whole machinery of Providence moves with unerring punctuality. It was to be expected that the greatest of all events should be most accurately and wisely timed and so it was that God willed it to be when and where it was—and that will is, to us, the ultimate reason! If we might suggest any reasons which can be appreciated by ourselves, we should view the date in reference to the Church, itself, as to the time of her coming of age. There is a measure of reason in appointing the age of 21 as the period of a man’s majority, for he is, then, mature and full grown. It would be unwise to make a person to be of age while only ten, 11, or twelve. Everybody would see that such boyish years would be unsuitable. On the other hand, if we were detained from being of age till we were 30, everyone would see that it was a needless and arbitrary postponement.

Now, if we were wise enough, we should see that the Church of God could not have endured Gospel Light earlier than the day of Christ’s coming and, neither would it have been well to keep her in gloom beyond that time. There was a fitness about the date which we cannot fully understand because we have not the means of forming so decided an estimate of the life of a Church as of the life of a man. God alone knows the times and seasons for a Church and, no doubt to Him, the 4,000 years of the old dispensation made up a fit period for the Church to abide at school and bear the yoke in her youth.  
The time of coming of age of a man has been settled by law with reference to those that are round about him. It were not meet for servants, that the child of five or six should be master. It were not meet in the world of commerce that an ordinary boy of 10 or 12 should be a trader on his own account. There is a fitness with reference to relatives, neighbors and dependents. So was there a fitness in the time when the Church should come to her age with regard to the rest of mankind. The world must know its darkness, that it might value the Light of God when it should shine forth! The world must grow weary of its bondage, that it might welcome the great Emancipator! It was God’s plan that the world’s wisdom should prove itself to be folly—He meant to permit intellect and skill to play themselves out and then He would send His Son. He would allow man to prove his strength to be perfect *weakness*—and then *He* would become his righteousness and strength. Then, when one monarch governed all lands and when the temple of war was shut after ages of bloodshed, the Lord whom the faithful sought suddenly appeared! Our Lord and Savior came when time was full and, like a harvest ready for it reaping, so will He come again when, once more, the age is ripe and ready for His Presence.

Observe, concerning the First Advent, that *the Lord was moving in it towards man*. “When the fullness of the time was come, God *sent* forth His Son.” We moved not towards the Lord, but the Lord towards us! I do not find that the world, in repentance, sought its Maker. No, but the offended God, Himself, in infinite compassion, broke the silence and came forth to bless His enemies! See how spontaneous is the Grace of God! All good things begin with Him. It is very delightful that God should take an interest in every stage of the growth of His people—from their spiritual infancy to their spiritual manhood. As Abraham made a great feast when Isaac was weaned, so does the Lord make a feast at the coming of age of His people. While they were as minors under the Law of ceremonial observances, He led them about and instructed them. He knew that the yoke of the Law was for their good and He comforted them in the bearing of it. But He was glad when the hour came for their fuller joy.

Oh, how truly did the Psalmist say, “How precious are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!” Tell it out with joy and gladness that the blessings of the new dispensation under which we dwell are the spontaneous gifts of God, thoughtfully bestowed in great love, wherein He has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence! When the fullness of time was come, God Himself interposed to give His people their privileges, for it is not His will that any one of His people should miss a single point of blessedness. If we are babes, it is not His wish—He would have us men! If we are famished, it is not by His desire—He would fill us with the Bread of Heaven.

*Mark the Divine interposition* —“God sent forth His Son.” I hope it may not seem wearisome to you if I dwell upon that word, “sent”—“God *sent* forth His Son.” I take great pleasure in that expression, for it seals the whole work of Jesus. Everything that Christ did was done by commission and authority of His Father. The great Lord, when He was born at Bethlehem and assumed our nature, did it under Divine authorization. And when He came and scattered gifts with both His hands among the sons of men, He was the Messenger and Ambassador of *God*. He was the Plenipotentiary of the Court of Heaven! At the back of every word of Christ there is the warrant of the Eternal. At the back of every promise of Christ there is the oath of God. The Son does nothing of Himself, but the Father works with Him and in Him!

O Soul, when you lean on Christ, you rely upon no amateur Savior, no uncommissioned Redeemer, but upon One who is sent of the Most High and, therefore, is authorized in everything that He does! The Father says, “This is My Beloved Son; hear Him,” for in hearing Him you are hearing the Most High! Let us find joy, then, in the coming of our Lord to Bethlehem because He was *sent*!

Now run your eyes to the next word—“When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth *His Son.*” *Observe the Divine Person who was sent*. God sent not an angel, nor any exalted creature, but, “His Son.” How there can be a Son of God we know not. The eternal filiation of the Son must forever remain one of those mysteries into which we must not pry. It were something like the sin of the men of Bethshemesh if we were to open the Ark of God to gaze upon the deep things of God. It is quite certain that Christ is God, for here He is called, “His Son.” He existed before He was born into this world, for God, “sent” His Son! He was *already in being* or He could not have been “sent.” And while He is One with the Father, yet He must be distinct from the Father and have a personality separate from that of the Father—otherwise it could not be said that God sent His Son.

God the Father was not made of a woman, nor made under the Law, but only God the Son. Therefore, while we know and are assured that Christ is One with the Father, yet is His distinctness of personality most clearly to be observed. Admire that God should have only one begotten Son and should have sent Him to lift us up. The Messenger to man must be none other than God’s own Son. What dignity is here! It is the Lord of angels that is born of Mary! It is He without whom nothing was made, who deigns to hang at a woman’s breast and to be wrapped in swaddling cloths! Oh, the dignity of this and, consequently, oh the efficiency of it! He that has come to save us is no weak creature like ourselves! He that has taken upon Himself our nature is no being of limited strength, such as an angel or a seraph might have been—He is the Son of the Highest! Glory be to His Blessed name! Let us dwell on this with delight—

***“If some Prophet had been sent  
With salvation’s joyful news,  
Who that heard the blest event  
Could their warmest love refuse?  
But ‘twas He to whom in Heaven  
Hallelujahs never cease!  
He, the mighty God, was given—  
Given to us—a Prince of Peace!  
None but He who did create us  
Could redeem from sin and Hell.  
None but He could reinstate us  
In the rank from which we fell.”***

Press on, still keeping to the very words of the text, for they are very sweet. *God sent His Son in real humanity—*“made of a woman.” The Revised Version properly has it, “born of a woman.” Perhaps you may get nearer to it if you say, “Made to be born of a woman,” for both ideas are present—the *factum* and the *natum—*the being made and the being born. Christ was really and truly of the substance of His mother, as certainly as any other infant that is born into the world is. God did not create the Human Nature of Christ by itself and then transmit it into mortal existence by some special means. His Son was made and born of a woman! He is, therefore, of our race, a Man like ourselves, and not man of another stock. You are to make no mistake about it—He is not only *of* humanity, but of *your* humanity—for that which is born of a woman is brother to us, be it born when it may.

Yet there an omission, I doubt not intentional, to show how holy was that Human Nature, for He is born of a woman, not of a man. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin and, “that Holy Thing” was born of her without the original sin which pertains to our race by natural descent. Here is a pure humanity though a true Humanity—a true Humanity though free from sin. Born of a woman, He was of few days and full of trouble. Born of a woman, He was compassed with our physical infirmities but, as He was not born of man, He was altogether without tendency to evil or delight therein. I beg you to rejoice in this near approach of Christ to us! Ring out the glad bells, if not in the spires and steeples, yet within your own hearts, for gladder news did never greet your ears than this— that He who is the Son of God was, also, “made of a woman.”

Still further it is added that God sent His Son, “ *born under the Law*,” or *made* under the Law, for the word is the same in both cases. And by the same means by which He came to be of a woman, He came under the Law of God. And now admire and wonder! The Son of God has come under the Law. He was the Law*maker* and the Law*giver*—and He is both the *Judge* of the Law and the *Executioner* of the Law—and yet He, Himself, came under the Law! No sooner was He born of a woman than He came under the Law—voluntarily and yet necessarily. He willed to be a Man and, being a Man, He accepted the position and stood in the place of man as subject to the Law of the race. When they took Him and circumcised Him according to the Law, it was publicly declared that He was under the Law of God.

During the rest of His life you will observe how reverently He observed the Commandments of God. Even to the ceremonial Law, as it was given by Moses, He had scrupulous regard. He despised the traditions and superstitions of men, but for the rule of the dispensation He had a high respect. By way of rendering service unto God on our behalf, He came under the Moral Law. He kept His Father’s Commandments. He obeyed to the full, both the First and the Second Tables, for He loved God with all His heart and His neighbor as Himself. “I delight to do Your will, O My God,” He says, “yes, Your Law is within My heart.” He could truly say of the Father, “I do always those things that please Him.” Yet it was a marvelous thing that the King of kings should be under the Law—and especially that He should come under the *penalty* of the Law as well as the service of it!

“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” As our Surety and Substitute He came under the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. Having taken our place and espoused our nature, though without sin, Himself, He came under the rigorous demands of justice and, in due time, He bowed His head to the sentence of death. “He laid down His life for us.” He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! In this mystery of His Incarnation—in this wonderful substitution of Himself in the place of sinful men—lies the ground of that wonderful advance which Believers made when Jesus came in the flesh! His Advent in human form commenced the era of spiritual maturity and freedom.

**II.**I ask you, therefore, in the second place, to CONTEMPLATE THE JOYOUS RESULT WHICH HAS COME OF OUR LORD’S INCARNATION. I must return to what I have said before—*this coming of Christ has ended the minority of Believers*. The people of God among the Jews were, before Christ came, the children of God, but they were mere babes or little children. They were instructed in the elements of Divine knowledge by types, emblems, shadows and symbols. When Jesus was come there was an end of that infantile teaching! The shadows disappear when the Substance is revealed! The symbols are not needed when the Person symbolized is, Himself, present!

What a difference between the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ when He shows them plainly of the Father and the teaching of the priests when they taught by scarlet wool and hyssop and blood! How different the teaching of the Holy Spirit by the Apostles of our Lord and the instruction by meats and drinks and holy days. The old economy is dim with smoke, concealed with curtains, guarded from too familiar an approach—but now we come boldly to the Throne of God and all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass, the Glory of God! The Christ has come and now the Kindergarten school is quitted for the College of the Spirit, by whom we are taught of the Lord to know even as we are known! The hard governorship of the law is over!

Among the Greeks, boys and youths were thought to need a cruel discipline. While they went to school, they were treated very roughly by their pedagogues and tutors. It was supposed that a boy could only imbibe instruction through his skin and that the Tree of Knowledge was originally a birch! And, therefore, there was no sparing the rod and no mitigation of self-denials and hardships. This fitly pictures the work of the Law upon those early Believers. Peter speaks of it as a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (Acts 15:10). The Law of God was given amid thunder and flaming fire—it was more fit to inspire a wholesome *dread* than a loving *confidence*. Those sweeter Truths of God which are our daily consolation, were hardly known, or but seldom spoken. Prophets *did* speak of Christ, but they were more frequently employed in pouring out lamentations and denunciations against children that were corrupters.

I think one day with Christ was worth a half century with Moses! When Jesus came, Believers began to hear of the Father and His *love*, of His abounding *Grace* and the kingdom which He had prepared for them. Then the doctrines of eternal love and redeeming Grace and covenant faithfulness were unveiled—and they heard of the tenderness of the Elder Brother, the Grace of the great Father and the indwelling of the everblessed Spirit. It was as if they had risen from servitude to freedom, from infancy to manhood! Blessed were they who in their day shared the privilege of the old economy, for it was wonderful light as compared with heathen darkness. Yet, for all that, compared with the noontide that Christ brought, it was mere candlelight. The Ceremonial Law held a man in stern bondage—“You must not eat this and you must not go there. And you must not wear this and you must not gather that.” Everywhere you were under restraint and walked between hedges of thorns. The Israelite was reminded of sin at every turn and warned of his perpetual tendency to fall into one transgression or another. It was quite right that it should be so, for it is good for a man that, while he is yet a youth, he should bear the yoke and learn obedience—but it must have been irksome.

When Jesus came, what a joyful difference was made! It seemed like a dream of joy, too good to be true! Peter could not, at first, believe in it, and needed a vision to make him sure that it was even so. When he saw that great sheet let down, full of all manner of living creatures and four-footed things—and was bid to kill and eat—he said, “Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” He was startled, indeed, when the Lord said, “What God has cleansed, call you not that common.” That first order of things “stood only in meats and drinks, and different washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” “But,” Paul says, “I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.” Prohibition upon mere ceremonial points and commands upon carnal matters are now abolished—and great is our liberty! We shall be foolish, indeed, if we suffer ourselves to be again entangled with the yoke of bondage! Our minority was ended when the Lord, who had before spoken to us by His Prophets, at last sent His Son to lead us up to the highest form of spiritual manhood!

Christ came, we are told next, to redeem those who are under the Law. That is to say, the birth of Jesus and His coming under the Law—and His fulfilling the Law—have set all Believers free from it as a yoke of bondage. None of us wish to be free from the Law as a rule of life. We delight in the commands of God, which are holy, just and good. We wish that we could keep every precept of the Law, without a single omission or transgression. Our earnest desire is for perfect holiness, but we do not look in that direction for our justification before God. If we are asked, today, are we hoping to be saved by ceremonies, we answer, “God forbid!”

Some seem to fancy that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper have taken the place of circumcision and the Passover—and that while Jews were saved by one form of *ceremony* we are to be saved by another. Let us never give place to this idea—no, not for an hour! God’s people are saved not by outward rites, nor forms, nor priestcraft, but because, “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law.” And He has so kept the Law that, by faith, His righteousness covers all Believers and we are not condemned by the Law. As to the Moral Law, which is the standard of equity for all time, it is no way of salvation for us! Once we were under it and strived to keep it in order to earn the Divine favor, but we have now no such motive. The Word was, “This do and you shall live,” and we, therefore, strived like slaves to escape the lash and earn our wages—but it is so no longer.

Then we strove to do the Lord’s will that He might love us and that we might be rewarded for what we did. But we have no design of purchasing that favor, now, since we freely and securely enjoy it on a very different ground. God loves us out of pure Grace and He has freely forgiven us our iniquities—and this out of gratuitous goodness. We are already saved and that not by works of righteousness which we have done, or by holy acts which we hope to perform, but wholly of Free Grace! If it is of Grace, it is no more of works—and that it is *all* of Grace from first to last is our joy and glory! The righteousness that covers us was worked out by Him that was born of a woman—and the merit by which we enter Heaven is the merit, not of our own hands or hearts, but of Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. Thus are we redeemed from the Law by our Lord’s being made under the Law—and we become sons and no more servants because the great Son of God became a servant in our place.

“What?” asks one, “then do you not seek to do good works?” Indeed we do! We have *talked* of them before, but we actually *perform* them, now! Sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under Law, but under Grace. By God’s Grace we desire to abound in works of holiness and the more we can serve our God, the happier we are! But this is not to save *ourselves*, for we are already saved! O sons of Hagar, you cannot understand the freedom of the true heir, the child born according to promise! You that are in bondage and feel the force of legal motives, you cannot understand how we should serve our Father who is in Heaven with all our heart and all our soul—not for what we get by it—but because He has loved us and saved us, irrespective of our works! Yet it is even so—we would abound in holiness to His honor, praise and Glory because the love of Christ constrains us! What a privilege it is to cease from the Spirit of bondage by being redeemed from the Law! Let us praise our Redeemer with all our hearts!

We are redeemed from the Law in its operation upon our mind—it breeds no fear within us. I have heard children of God say, sometimes, “Well, but don’t you think if we fall into sin we shall cease to be in God’s love and so shall perish?” This is to cast a slur upon the unchangeable love of God! I see that you make a mistake and think a child is a *servant*. Now, if you have a servant and he misbehaves, you say, “I give you notice to quit. Here is your wage—you must find another master.” Can you do that to your *son*? Can you do that to your *daughter*? “I never *thought* of such a thing,” you say. Your child is yours for life. Your boy has behaved very badly—why did you not give him his wages and fire him? You answer that he does not serve you for wages and that he is your son and cannot be otherwise. Just so. Then always know the difference between a servant and a son—and the difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace.

I know how a base heart can make mischief out of this, but I cannot help it—the Truth of God is the truth. Will a child rebel because he will always be a child? Far from it! It is this which makes him feel love in return. The true child of God is kept from sin by other and better forces than a slavish fear of being turned out of doors by his Father. If you are under the Covenant of Works then, mind you, if you do not fulfill all righteousness you will perish! If you are under that Covenant, unless you are *perfect,* you are lost! One sin will destroy you! One sinful *thought* will ruin you! If you have not been perfect in your obedience, you must take your wages and be gone. If God deals with you according to your works, there will be nothing for you but, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” But if you are God’s child, that is a different matter—you will still be His child even when He corrects you for your disobedience.

“Ah,” says one, “then I may live as I like.” Listen! If you are God’s child, I will tell you how you will like to live. You will desire to live in perfect obedience to your Father and it will be your passionate longing from day to day to be perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect! The nature of sons which Grace imparts is a law unto itself—the Lord puts His fear into the hearts of the regenerate so that they do not depart from Him. Being born again and introduced into the family of God, you will render to the Lord an obedience which you would not have thought of rendering to Him if you had only been compelled by the idea of law and penalty! Love is a master force and he that feels its power will hate all evil. The more salvation is seen to be of Grace, the deeper and more mighty is our love—and the more does it work towards that which is pure and holy.

Do not quote Moses for motives of Christian obedience! Do not say, “The Lord will cast me away unless I do this and that.” Such talk is of the bondwoman and her son—and it is very unseemly in the mouth of a trueborn heir of Heaven! Get it out of your mouth! If you are a son, you disgrace your Father when you think that He will repudiate His own—you forget your spiritual heirship and liberty when you dread a change in Jehovah’s love. It is all very well for a mere babe to talk in that ignorant fashion—and I don’t wonder that many professors know no better, for many ministers are only half-evangelical! But you that have become men in Christ and know that He has redeemed you from the Law ought not to go back to such bondage. “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law.”

What else has He come for? Notice further, “ *That we might receive the adoption of sons*.” The Lord Jesus Christ has come in human flesh that His people might, to the fullest, realize, grasp and enjoy, “the adoption of sons.” I want you, this morning, to see if you can do that. May the Holy Spirit enable you! What is it to receive the adoption of sons? Why to feel, “Now I am under the mastery of love, as a dear child who is both loved and loving. I go in and out of my Father’s house not as a casual servant, called in by the day or the week, but as a child at *home*. I am not looking for hire as a servant, for I am always with my Father and all that He has is mine. My God is my Father and His Countenance makes me glad. I am not afraid of Him, but I delight in Him, for nothing can separate me from Him. I feel a perfect love that casts out fear and I delight myself in Him.” Try and enter into that spirit this morning. That is why Christ has come in the flesh—on purpose that you, His people, may be, to the fullest, the adopted children of the Lord—acting out and enjoying all the privileges which sonship secures to you.

And then, next, exercise your heirship! One who is a son and knows he is an heir of all his father’s estates, does not pine in poverty, nor act like a beggar. He looks upon everything as his own. He regards his father’s wealth as making him rich. He does not feel that he is stealing if he takes what his father has made, to be his own, but he knows it is his. I wish Believers would realize the promises and blessings of their God are theirs! Help yourselves, for no good thing will the Lord withhold from you! All things are yours—you only need to use the hand of faith. Ask what you will. If you appropriate a promise, it will not be pilfering—you may take it boldly and say, “This is mine.” Your adoption brings with it large rights— be not slow to use them. “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Among men, sons are only heirs, heirs in possession, when the father is *dead*. But our Father in Heaven lives and yet we have full heirship in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ was made of a woman on purpose that His dear people might, at once, enter into their heirship!

You ought to feel a sweet joy in the perpetual relationship which is now established between you and God, for Jesus is still your Brother. You have been adopted and God has never cancelled an adoption yet. There is such a thing as regeneration, but there is *not* such a thing as the life, then received, ever dying out! If you are born unto God, you are born unto God! The stars may turn to coals and the sun and moon may become clots of blood, but he that is born of God has a life within him which can never end—he is God’s child and God’s child he always is! Therefore let him walk at large like a child, an heir, a prince of the blood royal who bears a relationship to the Lord which neither time nor eternity can ever destroy! This is why Jesus was made of a woman and born under the Law, that He might give us to enjoy the fullness of the privilege of adopted sons.

Follow me, a minute, a little further. The next thing that Christ has brought us by being made of a woman is, “Because you are sons, God *has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts*.” Here are two seedings! God sent His Son and now He sends His Spirit! Because Christ has been sent, therefore the Spirit is sent, and now you shall know the Holy Spirit’s indwelling because of Christ’s Incarnation. The Spirit of Light, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Liberty—the same Spirit that was in Christ Jesus is in you! That same Spirit which descended upon Jesus in the waters of Baptism also descended upon you! You, O child of God, have the Spirit of God as your present Guide and Comforter—and He shall be with you forever. The life of Christ is your life and the Spirit of Christ is your Spirit! Therefore, this day be exceedingly glad, for you have not received the spirit of bondage, again, to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption!

There we finish, for Jesus has come *to give us the cry* as well as the spirit of adoption, “whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” According to ancient traditions, no slave might say, “Abba, Father.” And according to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, none but a man who is really a child of God and has received the adoption, can truly say, “Abba, Father.” This day my heart desires for every one of you, my Brothers and Sisters, that because Christ has been born into the world, you may at once come of age and may, at this hour, confidently say, “Abba, Father.” The great God, the Maker of Heaven and earth, is *my* Father and I dare say it, without fear, that He will never disown the kindred! The Thunderer, the Ruler of the stormy sea is my Father and, notwithstanding the terror of His power, I draw near to Him in love! He who is the Destroyer—who says, “Return, you children of men,” is *my* Father and I am not alarmed at the thought that He will call me to Himself in due time!

My God, You who shall call the multitudes of the slain from their graves to fire, I look forward with joy to the hour when You shall call and I shall answer You! Do what You will with me, You are my Father. Smile on me and I will smile back and say, “My Father.” Chasten me and as I weep I will cry, “My Father.” This shall make everything work good to me, be it never so good to bear! If You are my Father, all is well to all eternity! Bitterness is sweet and death, itself, is life, since You are my Father. Oh, go merrily home, you children of the living God, saying, each one within himself, “I have it! I have it! I have that which cherubim before the Throne of God have never gained—I have a relationship with God of the nearest and the dearest kind—and my spirit, for her music, has this word, ‘Abba, Father! Abba, Father!’”

Now, dear children of God, if any of you are in bondage under the Law, why do you remain so? Let the redeemed go free! Are you fond of wearing chains? Are you like Chinese women that delight to wear little shoes which crush their feet? Do you delight in slavery? Do you wish to be captives? You are not under the Law but under Grace! Will you allow your unbelief to put you under the Law? You are not a slave. Why tremble like a slave? You are a child. You are a son! You are a daughter! You are an heir—live up to your privileges!

Oh, you banished seed, be glad! You are adopted into the household of God! Then be not as a stranger. I hear Ishmael laughing at you—let him laugh! Tell your Father of him and He will soon say, “Cast out this bondwoman and her son.” Free Grace is not to be mocked by human merit! Neither are we to be made sad by the forebodings of the legal spirit. Our soul rejoices and, like Isaac, is filled with holy laughter, for the Lord Jesus has done great things for us of which we are glad! To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Galatians 3:24-29; 4; 5:1-4.*  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK—249, 647, 260.**

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**END OF VOLUME 30**Sermon #1435 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ADOPTION—THE SPIRIT AND THE CRY  
NO. 1435

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1878, BY C.H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”  
Galatians 4:6.~~***

WE do not find the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity set forth in Scripture in formal terms, such as those which are employed in the Athanasian creed, but this Truth of God is continually taken for granted, as if it were a fact well known in the Church of God. If not laid down very often, in so many words, it is everywhere held in solution and it is mentioned incidentally in connection with other Truths of God in a way which renders it quite as distinct as if it were expressed in a set formula. In many passages it is brought before us so prominently that we must be willfully blind if we do not note it. In the present chapter, for instance, we have distinct mention of each of the three Divine Persons. “God,” that is the Father, “sent forth the Spirit,” that is the Holy Spirit and He is here called, “the Spirit of His Son.”

Nor have we the *names* alone, for each sacred Person is mentioned as acting in the work of our salvation. Look at the fourth verse, “God sent forth His Son.” Then note the fifth verse, which speaks of the Son as redeeming them that were under the Law. And then the text itself reveals the Spirit as coming into the hearts of Believers and crying Abba, Father. Now, inasmuch, as you have not only the mention of the separate names, but also certain special operations ascribed to each, it is plain that you have, here, the distinct personality of each.

Neither the Father, the Son, nor the Spirit can be an *influence*, or a mere form of *existence*, for each one acts in a Divine manner and with a special sphere and a distinct mode of operation. The error of regarding a certain Divine Person as a mere influence, or emanation, mainly assails the Holy Spirit, but its falseness is seen in the words—“crying, Abba, Father”—an *influence* could not cry! The act requires a person to perform it. Though we may not understand the wonderful Truth of the undivided Unity and the distinct personality of the Triune Godhead, yet, nevertheless, we see the Truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures and, therefore, we accept it as a matter of faith.

The Divinity of each of these sacred Persons is also to be gathered from the text and its connection. We do not doubt the Divinity of the Father, for He is here distinctly mentioned as “God.” Twice is the Father evidently intended when the word, “God,” is used. That the Son is God is implied, for though made of a woman, as to His human Nature, He is described as “sent forth” and, therefore, He was *preexistent* before He was sent forth and made of a woman. This, together with His being called the Son of God and His being spoken of as able to redeem, are, to our minds, sufficient

proofs of Deity.

The Spirit is said to do what only God can do, namely, to dwell in the hearts of all Believers. It were not possible for any being to cry in the hearts of a multitude of men if He were not Omnipresent and, therefore, Divine! So here we have the name of each Divine Person, the working of each, the personality of each and, in some degree, the Deity of each within the compass of a few lines. As for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they know how necessary is the co-operation of the entire Trinity to our salvation and they are charmed to see the loving union of all in the work of deliverance. We reverence the Father, without whom we had not been chosen or adopted—the Father who has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We love and reverence the Son by whose most precious blood we have been redeemed and with whom we are one in a mystic and everlasting union. And we adore and love the Divine Spirit, for it is by Him that we have been regenerated, illuminated, quickened, preserved and sanctified—and it is through Him that we receive the seal and witness, within our hearts, by which we are assured that we are, indeed, the sons of God. As God said of old, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” even so do the Divine Persons take counsel together and all unite in the new creation of the Believer. We must not fail to bless, adore and love each one of the exalted Persons, but we must diligently bow in most humble reverence before the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

Having noted this most important fact, let us come to the text itself, hoping to enjoy the doctrine of the Trinity while we are discoursing upon our adoption, in which wonder of Grace they each have a share. Under the teaching of the Divine Spirit may we be drawn into sweet communion with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, to His Glory and to our benefit. Three things are very clearly set forth in my text—the first is the dignity of Believers—“you are sons.” The second is the consequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit—“because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” And the third is the filial cry—crying, “Abba, Father.”

**I.**First, then, THE DIGNITY OF BELIEVERS. Adoption gives us the *rights* of children; regeneration gives us the *nature* of children. We are partakers of both of these, for we are sons. And let us here observe that this sonship is a gift of Grace received by faith. We are not the sons of God by nature in the sense here meant. We are in a sense “the offspring of God” by *nature*, but this is very different from the sonship here described, which is the peculiar privilege of those who are born again. The Jews claimed to be of the family of God, but as their privileges came to them by the way of their fleshly birth, they are likened to Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, but who was cast out as the son of the bondwoman and compelled to give way to the son of the promise.

We have a sonship which does not come to us by nature, for we are “born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Our sonship comes by *promise*, by the operation of God as a special gift to a peculiar seed, set apart unto the Lord by His own Sovereign Grace, as Isaac was. This honor and privilege come to us, according to the connection of our text, by faith. Note well the 26th verse of the preceding chapter (Gal. 3:26): “For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” As unbelievers we know nothing of adoption. While we are under the Law as self-righteous we know something of *servitude*, but we know nothing of sonship. It is only after faith has come that we cease to be under the schoolmaster and rise out of our minority to take the privileges of the sons of God.

Faith works in us the spirit of adoption and our consciousness of sonship, in this wise—first, it brings us justification. Verse 24 of the previous chapter says, “The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” An unjustified man stands in the condition of a criminal, not of a child—his sin is laid to his charge. He is reckoned as unjust and unrighteous as, indeed, he really is and he is, therefore, a rebel against his king and not a child enjoying his father’s love. But when faith realizes the cleansing power of the blood of Atonement and lays hold upon the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, then the justified man becomes a son and a child!

Justification and adoption always go together. “Whom He called, them He also justified” and the calling is a call to the Father’s house and to a recognition of *sonship*. Believing brings forgiveness and justification through our Lord Jesus! It also brings adoption, for it is written, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Faith brings us into the realization of our adoption, in the next place, by setting us free from the bondage of the Law. “After that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” When we groaned under a sense of sin and were shut up by it as in a prison, we feared that the Law would punish us for our iniquity and our life was made bitter with fear.

Moreover, we strove in our own blind self-sufficient manner to keep that Law and this brought us into yet another bondage which became harder and harder and as failure succeeded to failure we sinned and stumbled more and more to our soul’s confusion. But now that faith has come, we see the Law fulfilled in Christ and ourselves justified and accepted in Him—this changes the slave into a child and duty into choice! Now we delight in the Law and, by the power of the Spirit, we walk in holiness to the glory of God. Thus it is that by believing in Christ Jesus we escape from Moses, the taskmaster, and come to Jesus, the Savior. We cease to regard God as an angry Judge and view Him as our loving Father! The system of merit and command, punishment and fear has given way to the rule of Grace, gratitude and love—and this new principle of government is one of the grand privileges of the children of God.

Now, faith is the mark of sonship in all who have it, whoever they may be, for, “you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). If you are believing in Jesus, whether you are Jew or Gentile, bond or free, you are a son of God. If you have only believed in Christ of late and have but for the past few weeks been able to rest in His great salvation, yet, Beloved, now are you a child of God! It is not a later privilege,

granted to assurance or growth in Grace! It is an early blessing and belongs to him who has the smallest degree of faith and is no more than a baby in Grace. If a man is a Believer in Jesus Christ, his name is in the register of the great family above, “for you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”

But if you have no faith, no matter what zeal; no matter what works; no matter what knowledge; no matter what pretensions to holiness you may possess, you are nothing and your religion is vain. Without faith in Christ you are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith then, wherever it is found, is the infallible token of a child of God and its absence is fatal to the claim. This according to the Apostle is further illustrated by our Baptism, for in Baptism, if there is faith in the soul, there is an open putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the 27th verse: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” In Baptism you professed to be dead to the world and you were, therefore, buried into the name of Jesus. And the meaning of that burial, if it had any right meaning to you, was that you professed yourself to be dead to everything but Christ and henceforth your life was to be in Him and you were to be as one raised from the dead to newness of life.

Of course the outward form means nothing to the unbeliever, but to the man who is in Christ it is a most instructive ordinance. The spirit and essence of the ordinance lie in the soul’s entering into the symbol, in the man’s knowing not only the baptism into water, but the baptism into the Holy Spirit and into fire—and as many of you as know that inward mystic Baptism into Christ, know also that henceforth you have put on Christ and are covered by Him as a man is by his garment! Henceforth you are one in Christ! You wear His name, you live in Him, you are saved by Him, you are altogether His! Now, if you are one with Christ, since *He* is a son, you are also sons. If you have put on Christ, God sees you not in yourself but in Christ—and that which belongs to Christ belongs also to you, for if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.

As the Roman youth, when he came of age, put on the toga and was admitted to the rights of citizenship, so the putting on of Christ is the token of our admission into the position of sons of God. Thus are we actually admitted to the enjoyment of our glorious heritage. Every blessing of the Covenant of Grace belongs to those who are Christ’s and every Believer is on that list. Thus, according to the teaching of the passage, we receive adoption by *faith* as the *gift* of Grace.

Again, adoption comes to us by redemption. Read the passage which precedes the text—“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Beloved, prize redemption and never listen to teaching which would destroy its meaning or lower its importance! Remember that you were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish! You were under the Law and subject to its curse, for you had broken it most grievously! And you were subject to its penalty, for it is written, “the soul that sins, it shall die.” And yet again, “cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.”

You were also under the *terror* of the Law, for you feared its wrath and you were under its irritating power, for often when the commandment came, sin within you revived and you died. But now you are redeemed from all! As the Holy Spirit says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” Now you are not under the Law, but under Grace, and this because Christ came under the Law and kept it both by His active and His passive obedience, fulfilling all its commands and bearing all its penalty on your behalf! Henceforth you are the redeemed of the Lord and enjoy a liberty which comes by no other way but that of the eternal ransom!

Remember this and whenever you feel most assured that you are a child of God, praise the redeeming blood—whenever your heart beats highest with love to your great Father, bless the “Firstborn among many brethren,” who, for your sakes came under the Law, was circumcised, kept the Law in His life and bowed His head to it in His death, honoring and magnifying the Law and making the justice and righteousness of God to be more conspicuous by His life than it would have been by the holiness of all mankind! And He made God’s justice to be more fully vindicated by His death than it would have been if all the world of sinners had been cast into Hell! Glory be to our redeeming Lord, by whom we have received the adoption!

Again, we further learn from the passage that we now enjoy the privilege of *sonship*. According to the run of the passage the Apostle means not only that we are children, but that we are full-grown sons. “Because you are sons” means because the time appointed of the Father is come and you are of age and no longer under tutors and governors. In our minority we are under the schoolmaster, under the regimen of ceremonies, under types, figures, shadows—learning our A B Cs by being convicted of sin. But when faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster but come to a more free condition. Till faith comes we are under tutors and governors, like mere boys. But after faith, we take our rights as sons of God!

The Jewish church of old was under the yoke of the Law. Its sacrifices were continual and its ceremonies endless. New moons and feasts had to be kept. Jubilees had to be observed and pilgrimages made. In fact, the yoke was too heavy for feeble flesh to bear! The Law followed the Israelite into every corner and dealt with him upon every point—it had to do with his garments, his meat, his drink, his bed, his board and everything about him! It treated him like a boy at school who has a rule for everything. Now that faith has come, we are full grown sons and, therefore, we are free from the rules which govern the school of the child. We are under law to Christ, even as the full-grown son is still under the discipline of his father’s house, but this is a law of love and not of fear, of Grace and not of bondage.  
“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us

free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” Return not to the beggarly elements of a merely outward religion, but keep close to the worship of God in spirit and in truth, for this is the liberty of the children of God! Now, by faith we are no more like bondservants. The Apostle says that, “the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he is lord of all; but is under tutors and governors till the time appointed of the father.” But, Beloved, you are now the sons of God and you have come to your majority— you are now free to enjoy the honors and blessings of the Father’s house! Rejoice that the free Spirit dwells within you and prompts you to holiness! This is a far superior power to the merely external command and the whip of threats.

Now no more are you in bondage to outward forms, rites and ceremonies, but the Spirit of God teaches you all things and leads you into the inner meaning and substance of the Truth of God. Now, also, says the Apostle, we are heirs—“Why you are no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” No man living has ever realized, to the fullest, what this means! Believers are at this moment heirs, but what is the estate? It is God Himself! We are heirs of God! Not only of the promises, of the Covenant engagements and of all the blessings which belong to the chosen seed, but heirs of God Himself! “The Lord is my portion, says my soul.” “This God is our God forever and ever.” We are not only heirs to God, to all that He gives to His firstborn, but heirs of God, Himself! David said, “The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup.”

As God said to Abraham, “Fear not Abraham, I am your shield and your exceeding great reward,” so says He to every man that is born of the Spirit! These are His own words—“I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people.” Why, then, O Believer, are you poor? All riches are yours! Why, then, are you sorrowful? The ever-blessed God is yours! Why do you tremble? Omnipotence waits to help you! Why do you distrust? His immutability will abide with you even to the end and make His promises steadfast! All things are yours, for Christ is yours and Christ is God’s! And though there are some things which at present you cannot actually grasp in your hand, nor even see with your eyes, remember the things which are laid up for you in Heaven, you can enjoy by faith, for, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ,” “in whom, also, we have obtained an inheritance,” so that, “our citizenship is in Heaven.”

We enjoy even now the pledge and earnest of Heaven in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Oh what privileges belong to those who are the sons of God! Once more upon this point of the Believer’s dignity, we are already tasting some of the inevitable consequences of being the sons of God. What are they? One of them is the opposition of the children of the bondwoman. No sooner had the Apostle Paul preached the liberty of the saints, than straightway there arose certain teachers who said, “This will never do! You must be circumcised, you must come under the Law.” Their opposition was to Paul a token that he was of the free woman, for behold, the children of the bondwoman singled him out for their virulent opposition!

You shall find, dear Brothers and Sisters, that if you enjoy fellowship with God; if you live in the spirit of adoption; if you are brought near to the Most High so as to be a member of the Divine family, straightway all those who are under bondage to the Law will quarrel with you. Thus says the Apostle, “As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” The child of Hagar was found by Sarah to be mocking Isaac, the child of promise. Ishmael would have been glad to have shown his enmity to the bated heir by blows and personal assault, but there was a superior power to check him so that he could get no further than “mocking.” So it is now! There *have* been periods in which the enemies of the Gospel have gone a great deal further than mocking, for they have been able to imprison and burn alive the lovers of the Gospel—but now, thank God—we are under His special protection as to life and limb and liberty and are as safe as Isaac was in Abraham’s house.

They can mock us, but they cannot go any further, or else some of us would be publicly hung! But trials of cruel mocking are still to be endured—our words are twisted, our sentiments are misrepresented and all sorts of horrible things are imputed to us—things which we know not! And to all we would reply with Paul, “Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” This is the old way of the Hagarenes—the child after the flesh is still doing his best to mock him that is born after the Spirit. Do not be astonished, nor grieved in the least degree when this happens to any of you! Rather let this turn to the establishment of your confidence and to the confirmation of your faith in Christ Jesus, for He told you of old, “If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

**II.**Our second head is THE CONSEQUENT INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BELIEVERS—“God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” Here is a Divine act of the Father—the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son—and God has sent Him forth into your hearts! If He had only come knocking at your hearts and asked your leave to enter, He had never entered. But when Jehovah sent Him, He made His way without violating your will, but with irresistible power! Where Jehovah sent Him, there He will abide and go no more out forever.

Beloved, I have no time to dwell upon the words, but I want you to turn them over in your thoughts, for they contain a great depth. As surely as God sent His Son into the world to dwell among men, so that His saints beheld His Glory, the “Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth,” so surely has God sent forth the Spirit to enter into men’s hearts, there to take up His residence that in Him, also, the Glory of God may be revealed. Bless and adore the Lord who has sent you such a Visitor as this!

Now, note the style and title under which the Holy Spirit comes to us. He comes as the Spirit of Jesus. The words are “the Spirit of His Son,” by which is not meant the Character and disposition of Christ, though that were quite true, for God sends this unto His people, but it means the Holy Spirit! Why, then, is He called the Spirit of His Son, or the Spirit of Jesus? May we not give these reasons? It was by the Holy Spirit that the Human

Nature of Christ was born of the Virgin. By the Spirit our Lord was attested at His Baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and abode upon Him. In Him the Holy Spirit dwelt without measure, anointing Him for His great work. And by the Spirit He was anointed with the oil of gladness more than His fellows.

The Spirit was also with Him, attesting His ministry by signs and wonders. The Holy Spirit is our Lord’s great gift to the Church. It was after His ascension that He bestowed the gifts of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church to abide with the people of God forever. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, because He is Christ’s Witness here below, for, “there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.” For these and many other reasons He is called “the Spirit of His Son” and it is He who comes to dwell in Believers. I would urge you very solemnly and gratefully to consider the wondrous condescension which is here displayed. God Himself, the Holy Spirit, takes up His residence in Believers!

I never know which is the more wonderful—the Incarnation of Christ or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! Jesus dwelt here for a while in human flesh untainted by sin—holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But the Holy Spirit dwells *continually* in the hearts of all Believers, though as yet they are imperfect and prone to evil! Year after year, century after century, He still abides in the saints and will do so till the elect are all in Glory! While we adore the Incarnate Son, let us adore, also, the indwelling Spirit whom the Father has sent!

Now notice the place wherein He takes up His residence—“God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your *hearts*.” Note that it does not say into your heads or your brains! The Spirit of God, doubtless, illuminates the intellect and guides the judgment—but this is not the commencement nor the main part of His work. He comes chiefly to the affections! He dwells with the heart, for with the heart man believes unto righteousness and “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” Now, the heart is the center of our being and, therefore, does the Holy Spirit occupy this place of vantage. He comes into the central fortress and universal citadel of our nature and thus takes possession of the whole!

The heart is the vital part. We speak of it as the chief residence of life and, therefore, the Holy Spirit enters it and, as the living God dwells in the living heart, taking possession of the very core and marrow of our being! It is *from* the heart and *through* the heart that life is diffused. The blood is sent to the extremities of the body by the pulsing of the heart— and when the Spirit of God takes possession of the affections, He operates upon every power, faculty and member of our entire manhood. Out of the heart are the issues of life and from the affections sanctified by the Holy Spirit all other faculties and powers receive renewal, illumination, sanctification, strengthening and ultimate perfection! This wonderful blessing is ours “because we are sons” and it is filled with marvelous results.

Sonship sealed by the indwelling Spirit brings us peace and joy. It leads to nearness to God and fellowship with Him. It excites trust, love, vehement desire and creates in us reverence, obedience and actual likeness to God. All this and much more, because the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us! Oh, matchless mystery! Had it not been revealed, it had never been imagined! And now that it *is* revealed, it would never have been believed if it had not become matter of actual experience to those who are in Christ Jesus! There are many professors who know nothing of this! They listen to us with bewilderment as if we told them an idle tale, for the carnal mind knows not the things that are of God! They are spiritual and can only be *spiritually* understood!

Those who are not sons, or who only come in as sons under the Law of Nature, like Ishmael, know nothing of this indwelling Spirit and are up in arms at us for daring to claim so great a blessing! Yet it is ours and none can deprive us of it!

**III.**Now I come to the third portion of our text—THE FILIAL CRY. This is deeply interesting. I think it will be profitable if your minds enter into it. Where the Holy Spirit enters there is a cry. “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, crying, ‘Abba, Father.’” Now notice it is the *Spirit of God* that cries—a most remarkable fact! Some are inclined to view the expression as a Hebraism and read it, He “makes us to cry,” but, Beloved, the text does not say that and we are not at liberty to alter it upon such a pretense! We are always correct in keeping to what God says and here we plainly read of the Spirit in our hearts that He is crying, “Abba, Father.”

The Apostle, in Romans 8:15, says, “You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby *we* cry, Abba, Father,” but *here* he describes the Spirit, Himself, as crying, “Abba, Father.” We are certain that when he ascribed the cry of, “Abba, Father,” to us, he did not wish to exclude the Spirit’s cry, because in the 26th verse of the famous eighth Chapter of Romans, he says, “Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Thus he represents the Spirit Himself as groaning with unutterable groans within the child of God, so that when he wrote to the Romans he had on his mind the same thought which he here expressed to the Galatians—that it is the Spirit, Himself, which cries and groans in us, “Abba, Father.”

How is this? Is it not ourselves that cry? Yes, assuredly! And yet the Spirit cries also! The expressions are both correct. The Holy Spirit prompts and inspires the cry. He puts the cry into the heart and mouth of the Believer. It is *His* cry because *He* suggests it, approves of it and educates us to it. We would never have cried thus if He had not first taught us the way. As a mother teaches her child to speak, so He puts this cry of, “Abba, Father,” into our mouths! Yes, it is He who forms in our hearts the desire after our Father, God, and keeps it there! He is the Spirit of adoption and the Author of adoption’s special and significant cry! Not only does He prompt us to cry, but He works in us a sense of need which *compels* us to cry and also that spirit of confidence which emboldens us to claim such relationship to the great God!

Nor is this all, for He assists us in some mysterious manner so that we are able to pray aright—He puts His Divine energy into us so that we cry, “Abba, Father,” in an acceptable manner. There are times when we cannot cry at all and then He cries in us! There are seasons when doubts and fears abound and so suffocate us with their fumes that we cannot even

raise a cry—and then the indwelling Spirit represents us, speaks for us and makes intercession for us—crying in our name and making intercession for us according to the will of God! Thus does the cry, “Abba, Father,” rise up in our hearts even when we feel as if we could not pray and dare not think ourselves children! *Then* we may each say, “I live, yet not I, but the Spirit that dwells in me.”

On the other hand, at times our soul gives such a sweet assent to the Spirit’s cry that it becomes ours, also. But then we more than ever acknowledge the work of the Spirit and still ascribe to Him the blessed cry, “Abba, Father.” I want you, now, to notice a very sweet fact about this cry, namely, that it is literally the cry of the Son. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and that Spirit cries in us exactly according to the cry of the Son! If you turn to the Gospel of Mark, at the 14th chapter, 36th verse, you will find there what you will not discover in any other Evangelist (for Mark is always the man for the striking points and the memorable words). He records that our Lord prayed in the garden, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto You; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what You will.” So that this cry in us copies the cry of our Lord to the letter—“Abba, Father.”

Now, I dare say you have heard these words, “Abba, Father” explained at considerable length at other times. And if so, you know that the first word is Syrian or Aramaic, or, roughly speaking, Abba is the Hebrew word for, “father.” The second word is in Greek and is the Gentile word, “Pater,” which also signifies father. It is said that these two words are used to remind us that Jews and Gentiles are one before God. They do remind us of this, but this cannot have been the principal reason for their use. Do you think that when our Lord was in His agony in the garden that He said, “Abba, Father,” because Jews and Gentiles are one? Why should He have thought of that doctrine and why need He mention it in prayer to His Father?

Some other reason must have suggested it to Him. It seems to me that our Lord said, “Abba,” because it was His native tongue. When a Frenchman prays, if he has learned English, he may ordinarily pray in English, but if ever he falls into an agony he will pray in French, as surely as he prays at all! Our Welsh Brothers and Sisters tell us that there is no language like Welsh—I suppose it is so to *them.* They will talk English when about their ordinary business and they can pray in English when everything goes comfortably with them, but I am sure that if a Welshman is in a great fervency of prayer, he flies to his Welsh tongue to find full expression. Our Lord, in His agony, used *His* native language and as born of the seed of Abraham He cries in His own tongue, “Abba.”

Even thus, my Brethren, we are prompted by the spirit of adoption to use our own language, the language of the *heart*—and to speak to the Lord freely in our own tongue. Besides, to my mind, the word, “Abba,” is of all words in all languages the most natural word for father. I must try and pronounce it so that you see the natural childishness of it, “Ab-ba,” “Ab-ba.” Is it not just what your children say, ab, ab, ba, ba, as soon as they try to talk? It is the sort of word which any child would say, whether Hebrew, or Greek, or French, or English! Therefore, Abba is a word worthy of introduction into all languages! It is truly a *child’s* word and our Master felt, I have no doubt, in His agony, a love for child’s words.

Dr. Guthrie, when he was dying, said, “Sing a hymn,” but he added, “Sing me one of the children’s hymns.” When a man comes to die, he wants to be a child, again, and longs for children’s hymns. And Our blessed Master in His agony used the children’s word, “Abba,” and it is equally becoming in the mouth of each one of us. I think this sweet word, “Abba,” was chosen to show us that we are to be very natural with God and not stilted and formal. We are to be very affectionate and come close to Him and not merely say, “Pater,” which is a cold Greek word, but say, “Abba,” which is a warm, natural, loving word—fit for one who is a little child with God and makes bold to lie in His bosom—and look up into His face and talk with holy boldness!

“Abba” is not a word, somehow, but a baby’s lisping. Oh, how near we are to God when we can use such a speech! How dear He is to us and dear we are to Him when we may thus address Him, saying, like the great Son, Himself, “Abba, Father.” This leads me to observe that this cry in our hearts is exceedingly near and familiar. In the sound of it I have shown you that it is childlike, but the tone and manner of the utterance are equally so. Note that it is a *cry*. If we obtain audience with a king we do not cry, we speak in measured tones and set phrases. But the Spirit of God breaks down our measured tones and takes away the formality which some hold in great admiration—and He leads us to*cry*—which is the very reverse of formality and stiffness.

When we cry, we cry, “Abba.” Even our very cries are full of the spirit of adoption! A cry is a sound which we are not anxious that every passer-by should hear, yet what child minds his father hearing him cry? So, when our heart is broken and subdued, we do not feel as if we could talk fine language at all, but the Spirit in us sends forth cries and groans! And of these we are not ashamed, nor are we afraid to cry before God. I know some of you think that God will not hear your prayers because you cannot pray grandly like such-and-such a minister. Oh, but the Spirit of His Son cries and you cannot do better than cry, too! Be satisfied to offer to God broken language—words salted with your grief—wet with your tears. Go to Him with holy familiarity and be not afraid to cry in His Presence, “Abba, Father.”

But then how earnest it is—for a cry is an intense thing. The word implies fervency. A cry is not a flippant utterance, nor a mere thing of the lips—it comes up from the soul! Has not the Lord taught us to cry to Him in prayer with fervent importunity that will not take a denial? Has He not brought us so near to Him that sometimes we say, “I will not let You go unless You bless me”? Has He not taught us so to pray that His disciples might almost say of us as they did of one of old, “Send her away, for she cries after us.” We do cry after Him! Our heart and our flesh cry out for God, for the living God, and this is the cry—“Abba, Father! I must know You! I must taste Your love! I must dwell under Your wings! I must behold Your face! I must feel Your great fatherly heart overflowing and filling my heart with peace!” We cry, “Abba, Father.”

I shall close when I notice this, that the most of this crying is kept within the heart and does not come out at the lips. Like Moses we cry when we say not a word. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” You know what I mean—it is not alone in your little room, by the old armchair that you cry to God, but you call Him, “Abba, Father,” as you go about the streets or work in the shop! The Spirit of His Son is crying, “Abba, Father,” when you are in the crowd or at your table among the family! I see it is alleged as a very grave charge against me that I speak as if I were familiar with God. If it is so, I make bold to say that I speak only as I feel! Blessed be my heavenly Father’s name, I know I am His child and with whom should a child be familiar but with His father?

O you strangers to the living God, be it known that if this is vile, I purpose to be viler, still, as He shall help me to walk more closely with Him! We feel a deep reverence for our Father in Heaven which bows us to the very dust, but for all that we can say, “truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” No stranger can understand the nearness of the Believer’s soul to God in Christ Jesus—and because the world cannot understand it, it finds it convenient to sneer—but what of that? Abraham’s tenderness to Isaac made Ishmael jealous and caused him to laugh, but Isaac had no cause to be ashamed of being ridiculed since the mocker could not rob him of the Covenant blessing!

Yes, Beloved, the Spirit of God makes you cry, “Abba, Father,” but the cry is mainly within your heart and there it is so commonly uttered that it becomes the habit of your soul to be crying to your heavenly Father! The text does not say that He had cried, but the expression is, “crying”—it is a present participle, indicating that He cries every day, “Abba, Father.” Go home, my Brothers and Sisters, and live in the spirit of sonship! Wake up in the morning and let your first thought be, “My Father, my Father, be with me this day.” Go out into business and when things perplex you, let that be your resort—“My Father, help me in this hour of need.” When you go to your home and meet with domestic anxieties, let your cry be, “Help me, my Father.”

When alone, you are not alone because the Father is with you! And in the midst of the crowd you are not in danger, because the Father, Himself, loves you! What a blessed word is that—“The Father Himself loves you”! Go and live as His children! Take heed that you reverence Him, for if He is a father, where is His fear? Go and obey Him, for this is right. Be imitators of God as dear children! Honor Him wherever you are by adorning His doctrine in all things. Go and live upon Him, for you shall soon live with Him! Go and rejoice in Him! Go and cast all your cares upon Him. Go henceforth and whatever men may see in you may they be compelled to acknowledge that you are the children of the Highest!

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” May you be such henceforth and evermore. Amen and amen! Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #69 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR  
NO. 69

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

***~~“These are the two Covenants.”  
Galatians 4:24.~~***

THERE cannot be a greater difference in the world between two things than there is between Law and Grace. And yet, strange to say, while the things are diametrically opposed and essentially different from each other, the human mind is so depraved and the intellect, even when blessed by the Spirit, has become so turned aside from right judgment, that one of the most difficult things in the world is to discriminate properly between Law and Grace. He who knows the difference—and always remembers the essential difference between Law and Grace—has grasped the marrow of divinity. He is not far from understanding the Gospel theme in all its ramifications, its outlets and its branches, who can properly tell the difference between Law and Grace! There is always in a science, some part which is very simple and easy when we have learned it, but which, in the commencement, stands like a high threshold before the porch. Now, the first difficulty in striving to learn the Gospel is this— between Law and Grace there is a plain enough difference to every Christian and especially to every enlightened and instructed one. But still, when most enlightened and instructed, there is always a tendency in us to confuse the two things. They are as opposite as light and darkness and can no more agree than fire and water. Yet man will be perpetually striving to make a compound of them—often ignorantly and sometimes willfully. They seek to blend the two, when God has positively put them asunder!

We shall attempt, this morning, to teach you something of the allegories of Sarah and Hagar, so that you may, thereby, better understand the essential difference between the Covenants of Law and of Grace. We shall not go fully into the subject, but shall only give such illustrations of it as the text may furnish us. First, I shall want you to notice *the two women* whom Paul uses as types—Hagar and Sarah. Then I shall notice *the two sons*—Ishmael and Isaac. In the third place, I shall notice *Ishmael’s conduct to Isaac*. And I shall conclude by noticing *the different fates of the two*.

**I.**First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN—Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two Covenants. And before we start, we must not forget to tell you what the Covenants are. The first Covenant for which Hagar stands is the Covenant of Works which is this—“There is My Law, O man. If you on your side will engage to keep it, I, on My side will engage that you shall live by keeping it. If you will promise to obey My commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry you to Heaven. But mark Me, if you violate one command, if you do rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy you forever.” That is the Hagar Covenant—the Covenant propounded on Sinai, amidst tempests, fire and smoke—or rather, propounded, first of all, in the Garden of Eden where God said to Adam, “In the day that you eat, thereof, you shall surely die. As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the Covenant of the Law—the Hagar Covenant.

The Sarah Covenant is the Covenant of Grace or the Everlasting Covenant, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which Covenant is this—“Christ Jesus, on His part, engages to bear the penalty of all His people’s sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon His shoulders. And the Father promises on His part that all for whom the Son does die shall most assuredly be saved! That seeing they have evil hearts, He will put His Law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it and that seeing they have sins, He will pass thereby and not remember them any more forever.” The Covenants of Works was, “Do this and live, O man!” But the Covenant of Grace is, “Do this, O Christ and you shall live, O man!” The difference of the Covenants rests here—the one was made with man, the other with Christ. The one was a conditional Covenant, conditional on Adam’s standing—the other is a conditional Covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us! There are no conditions, whatever, in the Covenant of Grace, or if there are conditions, the Covenant *gives* them. The Covenant of Grace *gives* faith, *gives* repentance, *gives* good works, *gives* salvation as a purely gratuitous unconditional act! Nor does our continuance in that Covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The Covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well!

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice that *Sarah, who is the type of the new Covenant of Grace, was the original wife of Abraham*. Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The Covenant of Grace was the original Covenant after all. There are some bad theologians who teach that God made man upright and made a Covenant with him. That man sinned and that as a kind of afterthought God made a new Covenant with Christ for the salvation of His people. Now, that is a complete mistake! The Covenant of Grace was made before the Covenant of Works. For Christ Jesus, before the *foundation of the world*, did stand as its Head and Representative. And we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. We, long before we fell, were loved of God! He did not love us out of pity to us, but He loved His people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners—but when He started with them He considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin to show forth the riches of His Grace, which existed *before* their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but He loved them beyond their sin and before their sin! He made the Covenant of Grace before we fell by the Covenant of Works. If you could go back to eternity and ask which is the older born, you would hear that Grace was born before Law—that it came into the world long before the Law was promulgated. Older, even, than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental Rock of Grace, in Covenant made of old, long before seers preached the Law and long before Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the Garden, God had ordained His people to eternal life, that they might be saved through Jesus Christ!

Notice next— *though Sarah was the elder wife, yet Hagar bore the first son*. So the first man, Adam, was the son of Hagar. Though he was born perfectly pure and spotless, he was not the son of Sarah when he was in the Garden. Hagar had the first son. She bore Adam, who lived for a time under the Covenant of Works. Adam lived in the Garden on this principle. Sins of commission were to be his fall. And if he omitted to do the sin, then he was to stand forever. Adam had it entirely in his own power whether he would obey God or not—his salvation, then, rested simply on this basis, “If you touch that fruit, you die. If you obey My command and do not touch it, you shall live.” And Adam, perfect as he was, was but an Ishmael and not an Isaac, till after his fall. *Apparentl*y, at any rate, he was a Hagarene, though *secretly*, in the Covenant of Grace, he may have been a child of promise. Blessed be God, we are not now under Hagar! We are not under the Law since Adam fell. Now Sarah has brought forth children. The new Covenant is, “The mother of us all.”

But notice again, *Hagar was not intended to be a wife. She never ought to have been anything but a handmaid to Sarah*. The Law was never intended to save men—it was only designed to be a handmaid to the Covenant of Grace. When God delivered the Law on Sinai, it was apart from His ideas that any man would ever be saved by it. He never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the Law is a wondrous handmaid to Grace. Who brought us to the Savior? Was it not the Law thundering in our ears? We would never have come to Christ if the Law had not driven us there! We would never have known sin if the Law had not revealed it. The Law is Sarah’s handmaid to sweep our hearts and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled, that the dust may be laid. The Law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ’s dog, to go after His sheep and bring them to the Shepherd. The Law is the thunderbolt which frightens ungodly men and makes them turn from the error of their ways and seek God! Ah, if we know rightly how to use the Law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well. But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah. And Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly and drive her out. We must do the same! And let none murmur at us if we treat the Hagarene harshly in these days—if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the Law. We will quote Sarah as an example. *She*treated Hagar harshly and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness—we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable that as coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah—and they are prone to be continually crying, “Hagar, you shall be my mistress,” instead of saying, “No, Sarah, I will be your son and Hagar shall be bondmaid.” What is God’s Law now? It is not *above*a Christian—it is *under*a Christian. Some men hold God’s Law like a rod *in terror* over Christians and say, “If you sin, you will be punished with it.” It is not so! The Law is *under* a Christian. It is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern. “We are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us! The Law is good and excellent if it keeps its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid, because she is not the wife—and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the Law out of Chapels, as long as it is kept in its right position. But when it is set up as mistress—away with her—we will have nothing to do with legality!

Again— *Hagar never was a free woman and Sarah never was a slave*. So, Beloved, the Covenant of Works never was free and none of her children ever were. All those who trust in works never are free and never can be, even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still, they are bond slaves, for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor, we are still debtors to Him and still remain as bond slaves. If I could keep all God’s Law, I should have no right to favor, for I should have done no more than was my *duty* and still be a bond slave! The Law is the most rigorous master in the world, no wise man would love its service. For after all you have done, the Law never gives you a, “Thank you,” for it, but says, “Go on, Sir, go on!” The poor sinner trying to be saved by Law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill and never getting a step further, but only being continually whipped. The faster he goes, the more work he does and the more he is tired—so much the worse for him! The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned. The more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave—Ishmael, moral and good as he was—was nothing but a slave and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son! Sarah never was a slave. She might, sometimes, be taken prisoner by Pharaoh, but she was not a slave even then! Her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was still his wife—she was soon acknowledged by her husband and Pharaoh was soon obliged to send her back. So the Covenant of Grace might seem in jeopardy and the representative of it might cry, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” But it never was in real danger. And sometimes the people under the Covenant of Grace may seem to be captives and bond slaves. But they are still free. Oh, that we knew how to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.”

One thought more. *Hagar was cast out, as well as her son. But Sarah never was*. So the Covenant of Works has ceased to be a Covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it—not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael’s mother, too! So the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the Law as a Covenant has ceased to be, for mother and son are both driven out by the Gospel and those who trust in the Law are sent away by God. You ask today who is Abraham’s wife? Why Sarah—does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah’s cave at this instant? There she lies and if she lies there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham’s wife, while Hagar never can be! Oh, how sweet to think that the Covenant made of old was in all things ordered well and never, never shall be removed! “Although my house is not so with God yet He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” Ah, you legalists, I do not wonder that you teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology! Of course Hagar has to be driven out and Ishmael, too. But we who preach the Covenant of free and full salvation know that Isaac never shall be driven out and that Sarah never shall cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. You Hagarene! You ceremonialists! You hypocrites! You formalists! Of what use will it be, when at last you shall say, “Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the Law?” Oh, she is driven out and you may go with her into eternal oblivion! But where is my mother? The Christian can say, at last, and it will be said, “there is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all. And we shall enter in and dwell with our Father and our God.”

**II.**Now we are going to review the TWO SONS. While the two women were types of the two Covenants, the two sons were types of those who live under each Covenant. Isaac is a type of the man who walks by faith and not by sight, and who hopes to be saved by Grace. Ishmael of the man who lives by works and hopes to be saved by his own good deeds. Let us look at these two.

First. *Ishmael is the elder*. So, Beloved, the legalist is a great deal older than the Christian. If I were a legalist, today, I would be some 15 or 16 years older than I am as a Christian, for we are all born legalists. Speaking of Arminians, Whitefield said, “We are all born Arminians.” It is Grace that turns us into Calvinists! It is Grace that makes Christians of us, Grace that makes us free and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus.” The legalist must be expected, then, to have more might of argument than Isaac. And when the two boys are wrestling, of course Isaac generally gets a fall, for Ishmael is the bigger fellow. And you must expect to hear Ishmael making the most noise, for he is to be a wild man, his hand against every man and every man’s hand against him. Whereas Isaac is a peaceful lad. He always stands up for his mother and when he is mocked, he can go and tell his mother that Ishmael mocked him but that is all that he can do—he has not much strength. So you notice nowa-days—the Ishmaelite are generally the stronger and they can give us desperate falls when we get into arguments with them. In fact, it is their boast and glory that the Isaacs have not much power of reasoning—not much logic. No, Isaac does not need it, for he is an heir according to promise—and promise and logic do not much consist together. His logic is his faith—his rhetoric is his earnestness. Never expect the Gospel to be victorious when you are disputing after the manner of men—more usually look to be beaten. If you are discoursing with a legalist and he conquers you, say, “Ah, I expected that, it shows I am an Isaac, for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a thrashing and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life and were strong. And it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people.”

But where was the *difference*between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was *no difference between them as to ordinances*, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly Beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac—between the legalist and the Christian—in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized. He would be afraid to die if he did not. And *I do not believe there was much difference as to character.*Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac. There is nothing said against him in Scripture. Indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad, from the fact that when God gave a blessing, He said, “With Isaac shall the blessing be.” Abraham said, “O that Ishmael might live before You.” He cried to God for Ishmael because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition! God said, I will give Ishmael such-and-such a blessing. He shall be the father of princes, he shall have temporal blessings. But God would not turn aside, even for Abraham’s prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out of the house, it is said, “It grieved Abraham because of his son.” And I do not suspect that Abraham’s attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael’s character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away. Yet Ishmael came to his father’s funeral, for it is said that his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, buried him in Machpelah. There seems, then, to have been but little difference in the characters of the two. So, dearly Beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life. For God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of *man* that made any distinction, but that He “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will, He hardens.”

Then *what was the distinction*? Paul has told us that the first was born after the *flesh* and the second after the *Spirit*. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist, “You do good works. You have repented, you say—you are keeping the Law and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?” Perhaps he says, “Grace.” But if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it. He had Grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, *you*used your Grace and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own*doing*. You may call it Grace, or you may call it *mustard*. It was not Grace, after all, for it was *your using*, you say, that made the difference! But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the Law and what does he say? “Very badly, indeed.” Are you a sinner, Isaac? “Oh, yes, an exceedingly great one. I have rebelled against my Father times without number. I have often gone astray from Him.” Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? “No.” But yet there is a difference between you and him after all. What has made the difference? “Why, Grace has made me to differ.” Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could Ishmael have been an Isaac? “No,” says Isaac, “it was God who made me to differ, from the first to the last. He made me a child of promise before I was born and He must keep me so”—

***“Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days.  
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”***

Isaac has more really good works. He does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labors, if it is possible, to serve his Father far more than the legalist does his master. But still, doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman! The difference is not in works, however, but in *motives*. Not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life—not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians. You may be often better in your lives and yet you may be lost! Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least! God says men must be saved by*faith* and if you say, “No, I will be saved by works,” you may try it, but you will be lost forever! It is as if you had a servant and you should say, “John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable,” but he goes away and does the reverse and then says, “Sir, I have done it very nicely.” “Yes,” you say, “but that is not what I told you to do.” So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works. But He has said, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” So when you come before God with your good works, He will say, “I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved.” “Ah,” you say, “I thought the other was a great deal better way.” Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts! “Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness,” when Israel, who followed after righteousness, has not attained it? It is this—“Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the Law.”

**III.**Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL’S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this Doctrine? You have said, “It is dreadful! It is horrible! It is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the Promise, I cannot be saved! It is really awful! It is an immoral Doctrine—it does a deal of damage and ought to be stopped.” Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course Ishmael will mock at Isaac and we need no further explanation. Where the pure Sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the Promise and not the child of the flesh, is the heir, the child of the flesh always makes a hubbub about it! What said Ishmael to Isaac? “What business have you here? Am I not my father’s eldest son? I would have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?” That is how the legalist talks. “Is not God the father of everybody? Are we not all His children? He ought not to make any difference.” Said Ishmael—“Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother’s favorite, but my mother is as good as yours.” And so he teased and mocked Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with Free Salvation. The legalist says, “I don’t see it, I cannot have it and I won’t. If we are both equal in character, it cannot be fair that one should be lost and the other saved.” And thus he mocks Free Grace. You may get on very easily if you do not preach Free Grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things that are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them “baits for popularity.” (See the *so-called* FREEMAN Newspaper.) Few fishes however, bite at those baits! Most men say, “I hate him, I cannot stand him! He is so uncharitable.” You say we preach this to gain popularity!? Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a bare-faced lie! For the Doctrine of God’s Sovereignty will always be unpopular—men will always hate it and grind their teeth—just as they did when Jesus taught it! Many widows, He said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the Prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Savior got from that sermon! The people ground their teeth at Him and all the popularity He had would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong. But He made His way out of them and escaped. What? *Popular*to humble a man’s pride, to abolish man’s standing and make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No, it will never be popular till men are born angels and all men love the Lord—and that will not be just yet, I suppose.

**IV.**But we have to enquire WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS? First, *Isaac had all the inheritance and Ishmael none*. Not that Ishmael came off poorly, for he had many presents and became very rich and great in this world. But he had no *spiritual* inheritance. So the legalist will get many blessings, as a reward for his legality. He will be respected and honored. “Verily,” said Christ, “the Pharisees have their reward.” God does not rob any man of his reward. Whatever a man angles for, he catches. God pays men all He owes and a great deal more. And those who keep His Law, even in this world, will receive great favors. By obeying God’s command they will not injure their bodies as much as the vicious and they will better preserve their reputation—obedience does good in this world. But then Ishmael had none of the inheritance. So, you poor legalist, if you are depending on your works, or on anything, except the Free Sovereign Grace of God for your deliverance from death, you will not have so much as a foot of the inheritance of Canaan! In that great day when God shall allot the portions of all the sons of Jacob, there will not be a scrap for you! But if you are a poor Isaac, a poor guilty trembling sinner—and if you say, “Ishmael has his hands full—  
***“But nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to the Cross I cling!”***  
If you are saying, this morning—  
***“I am nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All.”***  
If you renounce all the works of the flesh and do confess, “I am the chief of sinners, but I am the child of the Promise and Jesus died for me,” you shall have an inheritance and you shall not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world! Nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. You may sometimes be sold and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring His Josephs and His Isaacs back and you shall yet be exalted to Glory and sit at Christ’s right hand! Ah, I have often thought what consternation there will be in Hell when outwardly good men go there. “Lord,” says one as he goes in, “Am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized! I took the Lord’s Supper. I was everything that ever a man could be that was good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ. But I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable! And am I to be locked up there?” Yes, Sir! And among the damned you shall have this preeminence—that you did scorn Christ most of all! They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin and so did you, in your measure, but you did add to your sin this most damnable of sins—that you did set up yourself as an anti-Christ and bowed down and worshipped your own fancied goodness!  
Then God will proceed to tell the legalist, “On such a day I heard you rail at My Sovereignty. I heard you say it was unfair of Me to save My people and distribute My favors after the counsel of My own will. You did impugn your Creator’s Justice, and justice you shall have in all its power.” The man had thought he had a great balance on his side but he finds it is only some little grain of duty. But then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom—“Without God, without hope, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel!” The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God’s great bill is ten thousand million talents! And so with an awful howl and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he had hoped would have saved him, crying, “I am lost! I am lost with all my good works! I find my good works were sands but my sins were mountains. And because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy.”  
Now, once more, *Ishmael was sent away and Isaac was kept in the house*. So there are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God’s Church, though you have been living in the Church as well as others, though you have got the mask of profession on you—you will find that it will not avail! You have been like the elder son—whenever a poor prodigal has come into the Church, you have said, “As soon as your son is come which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.” Ah, envious legalist, you will be banished, at last, from the house! I tell you legalist and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have and though you have been baptized with Christian Baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter—any more than a Roman Catholic or a Muslim—unless you are trusting simply in the Grace of God and are an heir according to the Promise! Whoever trusts to his works, though it be ever so little, will find that that little trust will ruin his soul! All that nature spins must be unraveled! That ship which works have built must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the Covenant of God, or else that soul is lost! Legalist, you hope to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat you respectfully. I will not charge you with having been a drunk, or a swearer. But I want to ask you, Are you aware that in order to be saved by your works, it is requisite that you should be *entirely perfect*? God demands the keeping of the *whole Law*. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one! Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought? Never had an evil imagination? Come, Sir, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with anything like lust, or carnality, or that your fine mouth which uses such chaste language ever condescended to an oath, or anything like lasciviousness! I will not imagine that you have ever sang a lascivious song. I will leave that out of the question—but have you ever sinned? “Yes,” you say. Then, mark this—“*the soul that sins, it shall die*.” And that is all I have to say to you. But if you will deny that you have ever sinned, do you know that if, in the future you commit but*one* sin—though you should live a perfect life for 70 years and at the end of that 70 years, you have committed but *one* sin, all your obedience would go for nothing. For “*he that offends in one point is guilty of all*.”  
“Sir,” you say, “you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere and I think *sincere* obedience will be accepted instead of *perfect* obedience.” You do, indeed! And pray tell, what is *sincere* obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week. He was very sincere and he did not think he was doing wrong as long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a *sincere* obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, “I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow.” My dear Sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this is what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are! But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” It strikes me your sincere obedience is a sincere delusion and such you will find it! “Oh,” you say, “I believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus Christ and we must say, ‘Lord, there is a great deficiency here, will You make it up?’” I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible and if they were found heavier, they were declared to be innocent. But to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea! Why, Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as you are! You wish Christ to be a make-weight? He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but He will accept no such menial service! “Oh,” you say, “He shall *assist* me in the matter of salvation.” Yes, I know that would please you. But Christ is a very different kind of Savior. He has a propensity, when He does a thing, to do it all. You may think it strange, but He never likes any assistance. When He made the world, He did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wings— but He did it entirely Himself! So it is in salvation—He says, “My Glory I will not give to another.”  
And I beg to remind you, as you profess to go to Christ and have a little share in the business of salvation, yourself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is *appropriate to you* and which you may masticate at your leisure—“And if by Grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise work is no more work.” For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both! Go home, Sir and make yourself a mixture with fire and water! Endeavor to keep in your house a lion and a lamb—and when you have succeeded in doing these—tell me that you have made works and Grace agree, and I will tell you, even then, you have told me a lie! For the two things are so essentially opposite, it cannot be done! Whoever among you will cast all his good works away and will come to Jesus, with this— “Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING—  
***‘Nothing in my hands I bring  
Simply to the Cross I cling.’ ”***  
Christ will give you good works enough! His Spirit will work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure and will make you holy and perfect. But if you have endeavored to get holiness before Christ, you have begun at the wrong end! You have sought the flower before you have the root, and are foolish for your pains!  
Ishmaels, tremble before Him now! If others of you are Isaacs, may you always remember that you are children of the Promise. Stand fast. Be not entangled by the yoke of bondage, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Amen.

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SALVATION BY FAITH AND THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT  
NO. 1228

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 11 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” Galatians 5:5.~~***

IT may seem remarkable that Paul, who was once the strictest of Pharisees, should become the most ardent champion of the doctrines of Salvation by Grace and Justification by Faith. How large a portion of the New Testament is given up to his writings—and the most prominent subject in all that falls from his pen is righteousness by faith. Did not the Lord show great wisdom in selecting as the chief advocate of this Truth of God a man who knew the other side—who had worked diligently under the Law, who had practiced every ceremony, who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews—and had profited above many under the Jews’ religion, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers?

Paul would know, right well, the bondage of the old system, and having felt its iron enter into his soul, he would more highly prize the liberty with which Christ makes men free! He was also a man of great learning—he was at home in every part of the Old Testament and, consequently, the quotations which he makes from it are innumerable. He also understood the Rabbinical method of spiritualizing and used it against his old associates, turning the Old Testament allegories into a battery in defense of New Testament principles.

He knew how to take the story, as we have seen, of Hagar and Sarah, and to find in it an argument for the doctrine which he desired to defend. It was well that a man who had been, in spirit, a Pharisee and in education equal to the most learned of the Jewish doctors, should be engaged by the Spirit of God to defend the glorious principles of Salvation by Grace. Moreover, Paul was a man of very powerful mind. Has the Christian Church ever had in her midst a man whose arguments are so keen, so subtle, so profound and yet so clear? He dives to the very bottom of things, but he never darkens counsel by mysticism.

Like the eagle, he soared aloft and his piercing eyes did not fail him as he gazed on the sun. He was amazed by the Revelations he beheld, but he was not dazzled. He spoke some things hard to be understood, which the foolish have wrested to their destruction, but they had to do his teaching great violence before they could *pervert* it. His intimate acquaintance with Divine things and the logical conformation of his mind, combined with an immovable decision of character and a flaming ardor of soul, made him, in the hands of God, the fittest conceivable instrument for the Divine purpose. He was wisely chosen and set for the defense of the Gospel.

But why, my Brothers and Sisters, such care in selecting an advocate whose previous education and formation of mind so well enabled him to do battle for the cause? Why was the choice so carefully made? Why such a display of Divine Wisdom? I reply, because this is the point which, above all others has been, is, and always will be, most assailed by the enemies of our holy religion. Justification by Faith is the Thermopylae of Christianity! It is there that the battle must be decided by hand-to-hand fight! If that narrow pass is once carried by the enemy, then the whole of our bulwarks may be stormed! But as long as that fort is held fast, the rest of the Truths of the Gospel will be maintained.

The Lord, therefore, sent this mighty man of valor, this Saul the Benjamite—head and shoulders taller than his fellows, of sound heart and decided purpose and devout spirit—to wage war with the adversaries of Free Grace. I have said that the Truth of God has always been assailed and is it not the case? It was the clouding of this light, the almost quenching of it, which occasioned the darkness of the medieval period! It was Luther’s clear sight of this Truth and the astonishing thunders with which he uttered it, which brought about the Reformation!

And though there are other Truths of God of great importance—and we would not depreciate their value for a single moment—yet this one, whenever it has flashed forth with brilliance before the eyes of men, has always been the means of restoring evangelical doctrines and at the same time exercising a powerful influence over men’s hearts and bringing much glory to the Savior. Despite this fact, or perhaps because of it, it is still resisted. And at the present day it is opposed as much as ever, for you hear, continually, the remark that the preaching up of salvation by immediate faith in Christ is very dangerous and opposed to the interests of morality. It is asserted that it cannot be supposed to make men any better and will only create in them a false confidence. They say it will add to other faults the pride and presumption which grow out of an assured security.

We continually hear such observations. The present revival has set all the owls hooting and you know their note—good works are in peril and virtue in jeopardy! However well meant, I believe that at the bottom of these wonderful objections you will discover the old Popery of reliance upon good works. Human nature always did kick against Salvation by Grace, alone, and it always will! Even professing Christians raise the same objection, but they word it cautiously. They say that the preaching up of Jesus Christ as saving men *immediately* upon their believing in Him ignores, too much, the work of the Holy Spirit. And they affirm that a great deal more ought to be said about the preparation of the heart, the humbling and abasing of the soul, the law work, the inward sense of need and so on.

There may be some truth in this as seen from a certain point, and I should be disposed to hear such criticisms patiently, but I fear that in not a few instances the remarks are suggested by a measure of departure from the simplicity of the Gospel—the very essence of which lies in the words, “believe and live.” There is a danger of meaning, “salvation by works,” while we use the phrase, “the work of the Spirit.” Zeal for the inner life may only be a convenient method for covering up pure legalism. I will, therefore, assert it boldly that salvation by *feelings* is as unscriptural as salvation by works—and that Paul did not cry out against those who trusted in works with greater vehemence than he would, now, have called out against any who relied upon their terrors and convictions, or who imagined that their feelings, or their doings may be joined on to the finished work of Christ as a ground of trust. Jesus Christ, alone, is a complete and all-sufficient foundation for faith! It is by believing in Him that men are justified—and in no degree by anything else!

We shall use our text, this morning, with the view of dealing with that class of objections which are founded upon the work of the Holy Spirit. It would be a grievous fault in any preaching if it did not ascribe honor to the Holy Spirit, nor could we too severely rebuke any ministry which ignored His Divine working. But, on the other hand, it is no less a fault to misrepresent the Spirit’s work and set it up in a kind of competition with the work of the Lord Jesus! Faith is not opposed to the Spirit, but is the *child* of it—“We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

Two things I shall try to do—may the Holy Spirit enable me—for on His mysterious teachings my mind relies for guidance into the Truth of God. First I shall labor to *declare the Christian’s hope.* Then, secondly, I shall endeavor to *show the relation of that hope to the Holy Spirit.*

**I.**Let me DECLARE THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE. “We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Concerning the Christian’s hope, let us notice, first, *its singularity*. The Jews had a hope founded upon their *descent*. “We have Abraham for our father,” they said. “We were free born, we were never in bondage to any man. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we.” They looked down upon Gentiles as uncircumcised and despised them.

Brethren, we have no such hope! We do not expect to be saved by virtue of our parentage. We cannot boast of fleshly descent from Abraham. Neither do we rest upon the fact that we are, some of us, the children of godly parents and that from generation to generation saintly names occur in our pedigree. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and no more, however pure the flesh may be. The children of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. Carnal descent leaves us heirs of wrath even as others. We have no belief in a pretended Abrahamic Covenant made with the seed of Believers according to the flesh. We have no reliance upon anything that comes to us by the way of the natural birth, for that would make us like that son of the bondwoman who was born after the flesh.

Those who glory in their birth may do so at their leisure—we have no sympathy with their glorying. Our hope is altogether distinct from the hope of the Jew. Neither have we any confidence in outward rites and ceremonies. Paul has said, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails

anything, nor uncircumcision,” and we hold that if you put any other rite in the place of circumcision the same statement is true. No infant baptism, no immersion, no mass, no sacrament, no confirmation, no *ceremony* of any kind can, in any measure or degree, be rested upon as the soul’s righteousness. What if the rites which we believe that God, Himself, had given were authenticated to us by a voice out of the excellent Glory? On those rites we dare not build, no, not for an instant!

No blood of bullocks or of goats after the old Law and no unbloody sacrifice of the mass after the modern legality of Popery can we rest upon! The beggarly elements of a visible external religion we have left behind as childish garments, unfit for men in Christ Jesus. No, Brothers and Sisters, we are wide as the poles asunder from all who rest upon outward forms and ceremonial religiousness! We hope to be saved, not because we attend a place of worship, nor because we have made a profession of religion, but because we have obtained righteousness by faith! We differ, also, from those who place reliance upon moral virtues and spiritual excellencies—and even from those who would have us found our hope upon certain Graces supposed to be the works of the Holy Spirit.

Had we been the most courageously honest. Had we been the most chastely pure. Had we never offended against the law of man in any respect whatever. If we could say with the Apostle, “as touching the law, blameless,” and if, like the young man in the Gospel narrative, we could say of the Commandments, “All these things have I kept from my youth up,” yet would we count our virtues and obedience to be but dross that we might win Christ and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

We dare not hope to be acceptable with God because of anything good that is in us by nature, or may be infused into us by Grace. We are accepted in the Beloved and apart from Him we look not to be found acceptable. Even what the Holy Spirit works with us does not furnish us with any merit which we can plead, for it is a *gift* of Grace, and no part of our justifying righteousness. We rest upon Jesus Christ crucified and not upon our faith, our repentance, our prayers, our conquests of sin, our likeness to Christ! Right away from anything that comes *from* us or *to* us we look to Jesus, who is all our salvation, the Alpha and Omega, the Author and the Finisher of faith.

Our faith is singular, then, because it differs from that of the Jew who boasts in his carnal descent. It differs from that of the religionist, who rests upon outward forms, and that of the self-righteous man who depends upon his own works in whole or in part. These three forms of dependence we renounce from the very depth of our hearts! And any other form of dependence upon anything that can be done by man is equally detestable to us. We know that if we are saved it must be upon quite another ground than that of the merit of works of any sort or kind. “We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”  
Secondly, consider *the specialty* of our hope. Taking our text in connection with the 4th verse, we remark that our hope is in Divine Grace alone. According to Paul, any man who tries to be justified by the Law has altogether given up Salvation by Grace—therefore we trust for righteousness in Christ, alone, and look entirely to the free mercy of God. If I ever get to Heaven it will be in no measure because I deserve to be there, but because God willed that I should enter Glory by His abounding Grace! No man has any claim upon God whatever! If God gives man what he may claim in justice, He will award him eternal destruction from the glory of His power—that is all man has a right to—he is an undeserving, illdeserving, Hell-deserving sinner!

If any good thing, therefore, comes to us, it must be entirely on the ground of goodness freely given to the undeserving. It is pardon extended to the guilty. It is infinite compassion looking upon our misery and determining to reveal itself in a free gift. It is not to be won by effort—not to be deserved nor purchased—but bestowed solely because He “will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.” Our hope stands on pure Grace, Sovereign Grace, Grace unqualified! God blesses us because *He* is good, not because we are! God saves us because He is gracious, not because He sees any Grace inherent in us! He blesses as according to His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. And therefore Grace must ever be the subject of our praise! We can never endure the preaching of any other confidence, for we know it to be a delusion and a snare.

Thirdly, consider *the ground*of our hope. A groundless hope is a retched thing. But *our* hope has a firm foundation. It is founded upon right and is called, “the hope of righteousness by faith.” Righteousness is a solid basis for hope. If we had a hope which disturbed or destroyed or diminished the luster of the Righteousness of God, the sooner we were rid of it the better. But we need not detract in any degree from the severity of Divine Justice in order to sustain our hope. We expect to be saved by an act of Justice as well as by a deed of Mercy. A strong expression to use— and we use it advisedly. We reckon that by faith we are saved by a method which as much vindicates the Justice of God as if He had cast us into Hell—a plan by which the Divine Righteousness is manifested, rather than obscured.

Observe that our hope is the hope, “of righteousness.” That is to say, a hope arising out of the fact that we are righteous and therefore God will treat us as such. “Strange hope,” says one, “for we are guilty.” That we admit with deepest shame and we disown all reliance upon our *own* righteousness which we know to be but filthy rags. But still, we have a glorious hope based upon the fact that we are, at this moment, actually righteous before God! By *faith* we are as righteous as if we had never sinned! Those eyes which can discern the slightest flaw, gaze upon us and discern our inmost thoughts—but they discover no flaw in our righteousness! Like burning suns they search us through and through, but our righteousness endures the search and comes forth unscathed from the heat of that consuming fire.

This day, having believed in Jesus Christ, “there is therefore now no condemnation to us.” “Being justified by faith we have peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We have a righteousness which we dare present before God, for it is *perfect*! In it there is no omission and no excess. We are righteous before God and without fault before His Throne. Bold words, but not bolder than the Apostle used when he said, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we have a hope founded upon righteousness it is well sustained, for where Justice lends its aid to bless, we are sure that all the other Divine attributes will co-operate! But is it, indeed, the fact that we are righteous? According to Holy Scripture it is undoubtedly so! We are not righteous in *ourselves*. Have we not, with detestation, flung away that thought? But we know that it is written, “To him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Even David, also, describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” When we put our trust in Christ Jesus, His blood cleanses us from all sin! Does Divine Perfection need us to be more clean than that? Cleansed from all sin! When we trust in Jesus Christ, He is made of God unto us righteousness—do we require a more perfect and glorious righteousness? Our Redeemer finished transgression and made an end of sin! What remains of that of which an end is made? What more do we need than*everlasting* righteousness? What more does God, Himself, require? Don’t you know, Beloved, how the Lord, Himself, has said concerning His Church—“This is the name with which she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness”?

I said that clothed in the Righteousness of Christ we are as accepted as if we had never sinned. I correct myself—had we never sinned we could only have stood in the righteousness of man. But this day, by faith, we stand in the Righteousness of God, Himself! The works and the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ make up, for us, a wedding dress more glorious than human merit could have spun, even if unfallen Adam had been the spinner!—

***“With my Surety’s vesture on,***

***Holy as the Holy One.”***  
Here is the footing of our hope, then, that we are righteous in the Righteousness of Christ, accepted in the Beloved, complete in Him and perfect in Christ Jesus. This righteousness we have not obtained by any process which has occupied a great deal of time and exhibited our ability and tried our strength—it is the righteousness of *faith*. We have *believed* and we are righteous! “Strange doctrine,” says one. Not at all! It is the way by which Abraham became righteous, for it is written, “Abraham *believed* God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Along this path all the ancient saints traveled and sang, “Surely in the Lord Jehovah have we righteousness and strength.” This is the only possible way to righteousness and blessed is the man who follows it and knows that by faith in the great substitutionary Sacrifice he is righteous before God!

We will now dwell a minute upon *the substance of this hope*. Suppose you were all perfectly righteous—what would you expect from God? You cannot expect more, at any rate, than we do who have the righteousness of faith. We expect to die triumphantly, glorying in our exalted Head! We expect, as soon as our breath has left our body, to be with Him where He is, that we may behold His Glory! We expect to sit at the right hand of God, even the Father—because Christ is there. We expect to rise again at the blast of the archangel’s trumpet, when the Lord, who is our Righteousness, shall descend upon the earth! We expect, then, to be manifested because He will be manifested, for, “it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.”

We expect to share in all the glories of His millennial reign and when comes the end and He delivers up the kingdom to the Father, we expect to be there and forever in the perfection of bliss and Glory to dwell with Him, always singing, “Worthy is the Lamb” We will never sing, “Worthy am I,” but always say, “We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” We will never claim that our robes were not defiled, or that we cleansed them ourselves. We expect this and we expect it because we are righteous! Do you see this? No man has a right to expect a reward if he has not a righteousness to which it is due—but lo, He who is All in All to us, our Covenant Head, deserves the reward—and He has transferred that reward to us who are members of His body. And so are one with Him! We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith!

Once more upon this point, notice *the posture which our hope takes up*. We are *waiting* for this hope—waiting. Would it not have been better to have said, “We are *working*”? No, it would have spoiled the sense altogether. To complete the foundation of our hope of righteousness by faith we have nothing more to *do* except to wait for the reward of what is done! To the garment which covers us we dare not think of adding a single thread. Why should we? To the acceptance in which we stand before God we cannot hope to add a single jewel. Why attempt it? Has not Jesus said, “It is finished”?

As far as justifying righteousness is concerned, we are as righteous as we shall be when robed in light! We shall cast our crowns before the Throne of God. We are at rest, waiting in peace. It is true we are working for other reasons and other purposes, but as far as the righteousness of faith is concerned we are waiting, not working. Waiting—that is the posture of confidence! We are not hurrying, bustling and running about in anxiety, but we are at rest, knowing that the reward will come. As the workman, when his six days’ work is over, goes up to his master’s pay table and waits for his wages, we believe that the meritorious work by which

Heaven is procured for us is all done. And therefore we are waiting in the name of Jesus to take the reward which as a matter of justice is due to Him and has been, by His dying testament, transferred to us.

Waiting implies continuance. The Galatians wanted to be more sure than faith could make them and so they ran off to get circumcised and observed days, weeks, months and all sorts of carnal ordinances. But the Apostle says, “We, through the Spirit, *wait*.” We ask no touch of priests, or charm of magic rites! We are thoroughly furnished in our blessed Lord and are content to abide in Him. Our faith is not for today and tomorrow only, but for time and eternity! We are rooted and grounded in faith in Christ—

***“All that remains for me  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come  
To bear me to their King.”***

“I thought it was a race,” says one, “a combat.” Oh, yes, we will tell you about that another time, but that has nothing to do with our *righteousness*, nothing to do with the ground of our acceptance before God—and that is what we are speaking about just now. As far as that is concerned, “It is finished,” sounded from the tree of Calvary and that, “It is finished,” brings the righteous to perfect peace—and there they sit and wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

I have said enough upon the first point and must hasten to the second. **II.**THE RELATION OF THIS MATTER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. We may be quite sure that the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Jesus Christ cannot be opposed to the work of the Spirit of God, for never, without blasphemy,

can we imagine anything like a division in the purposes and works of the sacred Persons of the adorable Trinity. The will of the Father, the will of the Son and the will of the Spirit must be one! It is a perverse forgetfulness of the Unity of the Godhead to suppose otherwise. That which glorifies Jesus cannot dishonor the Holy Spirit—we may be quite sure of that.

But observe, Brothers and Sisters, it is the Spirit’s work to destroy the pride of man. All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of grass. The grass withers because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it. All the vaunted comeliness of the natural man is to be destroyed by the Holy Spirit—and does not the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith wither up the glory of man? What can do it more effectually? I have seen the proud Pharisee leer with a scornful hatred when he has heard this doctrine. “What?” he cries, “After all I have done for years, am I to come to Christ just as if I had been a thief or a harlot and be saved by *charity*?”

He cannot bear it! He will not have it! Now the Spirit of God designs to stain the pride of all glorying and to bring into contempt all the excellency of the earth—and this doctrine is the appropriate instrument for His work and is, therefore, consistent with the mind of the Spirit. Another office of the Holy Spirit is to exalt Christ. “He shall glorify Me,” said Jesus. And does not this doctrine glorify Jesus, since it makes Him the head and front, the All in All of a sinner’s hope by informing him that nothing but faith in Jesus will save him? Is not this according to the mind of the Spirit?

O Beloved, the Holy Spirit is no rival to the Redeemer, but a glorious co-worker, delighting to honor the Son! We know, Beloved, that the Spirit of God works under the economy of Grace, only. The Apostle says, “Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law?” Nobody ever received the Spirit by his own works, or as a matter of merit. Since, then, the Spirit only comes to men in connection with the great principle of Grace, and Justification by Faith is the essential doctrine of Grace, it must be perfectly consistent with His mind! And you may be sure of this, poor Sinner, that there is no deep, mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit which can, if rightly understood, stand in conflict with the Gospel announcements that, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” And, “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.” And, “Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” Salvation by Grace through faith and the operations of the Holy Spirit must be consistent!

Carefully note that this righteousness by faith must be consistent with the work of the Spirit because the faith which brings this righteousness is *never exercised by any but those who are born of the Spirit*. The flesh relies upon works. It is a somewhat remarkable circumstance, perhaps, but so it is, that sinful flesh, which is barren of all real excellence, always clings to *merit*. The natural man persists in the belief that he has something to do and yet he can do nothing! He grasps with all his might the sword which cuts him. You cannot get him to see that—

***“Till to Jesus Christ you cling  
By a simple faith,  
‘Doing’ is a deadly thing  
‘Doing’ ends in death.”***

He finds fault with it. He cannot bear it. Of course he cannot—Ishmael is the bondwoman’s son and has the nature of his mother in him. That which is born of the Spirit instinctively clutches the promise, even as Isaac did, for Isaac knew that he had no right to the inheritance except according to the promise, for, according to the flesh, Ishmael was the first born.

The new-born life in every man runs instinctively to Grace and lives by faith! You shall never find simple faith in Jesus exercised by any life except the life that is born of Divine Seed in the new birth. Here, then, simple faith and the Holy Spirit are related, for the new heart which the Spirit creates is the only soil in which faith will grow.

Again, faith for righteousness is *based on the testimony of the Holy Spirit*. My Brothers and Sisters, why do we believe that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ? On the ground that the Spirit, in the Holy Scripture, has borne witness that it is so! The witness which God gave concerning His Son is the basis for our belief! We accept the witness of the Holy Spirit as contained in these pages. The Bible cannot be contrary to the mind of the Spirit because it is inspired by the Spirit! So you may rest certain that faith in Jesus Christ as the ground of salvation cannot be opposed to the Spirit’s work, because that faith is based upon the Spirit’s own testimony concerning Christ!

Moreover, *simple faith is always the work of the Spirit*. No man did ever believe in Jesus Christ for righteousness unless the Spirit of God led him to it. He can never be brought to it unless the Holy Spirit shall lead him there. Faith is as much the gift of God as Jesus Christ, Himself! Nature never did produce a grain of *saving* faith and it never will. When a man has believed, *he obtains a great increase to his faith in Jesus by the work of the Spirit*. The Spirit never takes a man off from Jesus Christ as he grows in Grace, but He establishes him in his confidence in the Righteousness of Christ. The witness of the Spirit in us is a testimony to the faith that Jesus is the Propitiation for sin. He never leads us to rest upon the work within, but points us always to Jesus.

When He works in us mightily, our faith becomes even more simple and childlike. We sink in our own esteem and rise higher in confidence in Jesus. The Holy Spirit could not be supposed to do this if salvation by faith were an imperfect matter, or dangerous, or dishonoring to Himself! It is *by the Spirit that we continue to exercise faith*. Notice my text. I will quote it emphatically—“We, *through the Spirit,* wait for the righteousness by faith.” It is not because of any other influence but the influence of the *Spirit* that we come to rest—and continue to rest and wait while we rest—for the hope of the righteousness by faith! The Spirit of God works it all and, therefore, He is not in conflict with it. It is that which He plants, waters, fosters and brings to perfection—and He cannot but love it. Ridiculous, then, absurdly ridiculous, is the attempt to make out that the preaching of Justification by Faith is derogatory to the ministry and deity of the Holy Spirit!

Let us draw an inference or two before we close. From this subject the inference is that whoever has this hope of righteousness by faith has the Spirit of God. If your hope, Beloved, is based upon your being righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, you have been born again and renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit! Many are puzzled and say, “I wish I knew I had the Spirit.” They fancy that the Spirit of God would cause some singular excitement in them—very different from quiet penitence and humble trust. I have even known them suppose that it would cause some very astounding swooning, palpitations, and I know not what besides! The best evidence of your having the Spirit of God is your depending upon Christ as a little child depends upon its mother!

Others may bring other evidence to prove that they are born from above—let them bring the evidence and be thankful that they can bring it. But if you have no other evidence but this, “Jesus Christ is my sole reliance and on Him do I depend,” that is enough! All the rest will follow in due course. He that believes has the Holy Spirit in himself. He that believes in Him is not condemned.

Draw a second inference. Wherever there is any *other* hope, or a hope based upon anything else but this, the Spirit of God is*not* present. There may be much talk about Him, but the Spirit Himself is not there, for “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ the Righteous.” The Spirit will not bear witness to man’s homeborn presumptuous hopes! He bears witness only to the finished work of Jesus Christ! If you are trusting that you have the Spirit, but are building upon sacraments, works, orthodoxies, feelings, or anything *but* Jesus Christ, you have not the Spirit of God, for the Spirit of God never taught a man to place his house upon such sandy foundations.

Beloved Friend, you may, therefore, answer inquiries about what is within so far as they cause you distress, by turning your eyes to Jesus, the Lord, our Righteousness. “Look to Me,” says Jesus, “and be you saved.” Look away from self to God’s appointed Propitiation! On yonder shameful tree hangs all your trust! Look up to Jesus upon His Father’s Throne, for there dwells your hope!

One further thought I want to leave upon every mind. Nothing should make us speak with bated breath when we are lifting up Christ crucified before the eyes of sinful men. There is no doctrine, there is no experience, there is no decree of the Father, there is no influence of the Spirit which needs, for a moment, make us hesitate when we are extolling the Lord Jesus as an All-Sufficient Savior for the very chief of sinners. I stand here, this morning, to solemnly assert before God that I have not a shadow of a hope of seeing His face with acceptance except that which lies in the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners!

In Him I do unfeignedly trust, and in Him alone. What if I have preached the Gospel these 25 years? What if I have brought souls to Jesus, not by the hundreds but by the thousands through the Divine blessing? What if I have been the means of founding and fostering works of usefulness on the right hand and on the left? Truly, if these things were to be gloried in we might glory before men! But far from it! We ascribe them all to the Lord’s Grace and before His Presence we lie in the dust. We have no hope because of our works! No, nor a *shadow* of hope! We have no reliance upon our Graces! No, nor a ghost of a reliance upon them!

Jesus Christ stood in my place! I, a guilty sinner, have taken shelter by *faith* which He has *given* me! Beneath His wings I hide myself in Him. *There* is my hope and that is the hope of every true Believer here—

***“Not what these hands have done  
Can save this guilty soul.  
Not what this toiling flesh has borne  
Can make my spirit whole.  
Not what I feel or do  
Can give me peace with God.  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears,  
Can bear my awful load.  
Your work alone, O Christ,  
Can ease this weight of sin.  
Your blood alone, O Lamb of God,  
Can give me peace within.”***

Now we preach the same hope to the ungodly! Hear what God’s Word says to you! You have broken His Laws and deserve His wrath! He might justly sweep you down to Hell but behold, He addresses you in tones of

Divine Grace! You have no claim upon Him. You have no right to expect mercy at His hands because of anything in you that could move Him to pity. But in the plenitude of His Grace He has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for your sins. And the Apostle adds, “And not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” We preach Jesus Christ unto you this morning and say in His own Words, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.”

Come to Christ and trust in Him, and you shall be reconciled to God— ***“Your sins shall vanish quite away,  
Though black as Hell before.  
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea  
And shall be found no more.”***

Whoever you may be and in whatever condition of heart you may be—it doesn’t matter if you have seven devils in you, or if you are as vile as Lucifer, himself, in rebellion against God—if you believe in the great atoning Sacrifice you shall have instantaneous pardon and acceptance in the Beloved! O, hold not out against such free and boundless love! “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Oh, yield, Man! What are your works but sin and death? What are your boasted performances, your virtues and your excellencies? All rottenness in the sight of the heart-searching God! Quit your refuges of lies, I pray you! Quit them now, lest the avalanche of Divine Wrath overwhelms both you and your refuges—

***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away,  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds!  
This is the accepted Gospel day,  
Wherein free Grace abounds.”***

Trust His Son Jesus! It is His *command* to you! In other words, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” for, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” God save us, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 4, 5:1-6.* HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—202, 531, 533.**  
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AN OBJECTION AND AN ANSWER  
NO. 1280

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

***~~“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.” Galatians 5:6.~~***

THE most prominent doctrine in Paul’s teaching was that of Justification by Faith. He taught it so very plainly, so very boldly—I had almost said so very baldly—that it seemed necessary to the Holy Spirit that James should bear testimony to the necessity of holiness as the result of faith. Hence the Epistle of James is put into the sacred canon lest any should wrest and twist the language of Paul from its proper meaning. His great teaching—anybody can see this with half an eye—the great teaching of Paul is that we are saved by the Grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. This doctrine has always been taught in the Church of God and it is, as Luther well put it, the standing or falling article—the test of a standing or a falling Church.

A Church which holds this doctrine in its integrity, notwithstanding many errors, is still a Church of Christ, but the church which denies this, whatever else it may hold, is against Christ, and is not a Church of Christ at all. The great Reformation, for which we so often bless God, was brought about by this light. The Truth of God, which had been hidden in darkness, was held forth in the preaching and teaching of Protestant Reformers. For a long time after those eminent men had departed, the testimony of all the Protestant Churches to Justification by Faith was clear and unwavering. You can scarcely read a sermon of any of the immediate successors of the Reformers, but you will find it filled with the doctrine that man is justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by faith in Him and *not* by the works of the Law.

It was the same testimony which produced the revival in the last century, when Whitfield and Wesley awoke the slumbering masses of our population as they went forth through every town and hamlet preaching the Gospel. Whatever difference there might have been between those eminent Evangelists and their followers, they did not differ at all upon this point, that men are saved by believing in Jesus Christ—by resting upon the Atonement once offered for human sin upon the bloody tree of Calvary. And I rejoice, dear Friends, that this doctrine was never more clearly preached than now. As the time of the singing of birds has come and the Churches are waking up and expecting a blessed springtide, I thank God that there is this sign of its being a truthful work! Among other gracious signs it is conspicuous that Jesus Christ is preached and that faith in Him is declared to be of paramount importance.

That it is so is evident from the opposition which has been aroused! I can hear the voice of the old growler—he is a gentleman that never has been absent when the banner of Christ has been unfurled. He is beginning, again, to whine and snarl, as he always did, and to bark at this doctrine, in particular, as not according to holiness, subversive of morality and mischievous in all its tendencies! I shall not attempt to stop his growling. His temper tells its own tale. He and his cronies do but display their natural disposition. If dogs delight to bark and bite, Dr. Watts has taught us to let them do so, “for ‘tis their nature, too.”

I am not thinking of the cynical skeptic just now—my aim is to meet the sincere seeker. This objection takes the form of a difficulty in the minds of some who are anxious to find salvation. They say to themselves, “Can it be so? Is it possible that by simply *believing* on Christ, Himself, my soul can be saved? I can comprehend that this might be made a condition upon which God should pardon me, but that is not all I need. I need a new heart. I need a right spirit. It would be of little use for me merely to have my past sins forgiven. I need to become a better man. The salvation that I need is salvation from my sins, from temptations in the world and from the uprisings of my own naturally depraved heart. If I cannot get that, the mere pardon of sin is a very small business. I can understand, however, that God would pardon me upon my believing in Jesus. What I need to know is what effect my believing in Jesus will have upon *me*, personally—what change would accrue to my nature as the result of my believing.”

It is about that I want to talk—faith which works—faith which works! And I want to show something about how it works. It works “by love.” To begin, then, I shall first attempt to answer the enquiry, “What is the faith which saves the soul?” And I venture to answer the question, first, by saying that it does not differ as a mental act from any other kind of believing. I fully admit that there is much about faith that is mysterious and of that I may speak presently. But if any man asked me what the act of believing is, I should not hesitate to reply, “I believe God just the same as I believe anybody else—believe Him as I believe my father, as I believe my mother, as I believe my wife. It is the same mind which believes and it is the same act of the mind that comes into operation. It is a rational assent. Faith is to believe what God says, to take it to be true, real, a matter of fact.”

Now, when I believe what a man tells me, I do not say to myself, “Well, that is now a piece of my creed,” and so put it on the shelf and have done with it. A man tells me, for instance, in the middle of the night, that my house is on fire. You know what I should do. You know what *you* would do. You know what any sane man would do! But when you are told in God’s Word that you are in danger of the wrath to come, do you believe what you read? No, you do not, or you would not be so cool as you now are. Your imminent peril would prompt instant action. I would to God that what men call faith in a religious point of view were as prompt in its proceedings as the common acts of faith which they exercise towards their fellow men!

The fact is, the creed we profess comes often far—very far—short of the credit we give to our fellow creatures about the common affairs of life. Do you want to be saved? Believe God as you would believe the one that told you that your house was on fire! Believe God as you would believe your friend—believe Him actively, really, truly—for that is faith. God tells you that you have transgressed against Him, but that He wills not your death—that He has, therefore, sent His Son into the world to suffer in the place of sinners and that if you rely upon His Son you shall have immediate forgiveness and shall be saved. Believe that message! Believe it to be true! You ought to believe it, for God cannot lie.

It is an indisputable fact that whatever God says, stands good. It is not contingent upon anything but His own will and He is without variableness or shadow of turning. What He says He means. Believe Him, then, whom you have not seen, as you would believe anyone whom you see daily. Give credit to the Word He has written as you would credit any word that is spoken to you. And if you do so believe, mark you, your faith will then resolve itself into an act of reliance. If I believe a man, when I am in trouble, and he says, “Now, Sir, leave that with me I will get you through”—I rely upon him to do it. I leave the matter in his hands and go my way.

This is the very core of saving faith. It is to say, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner. I will trust Him to save me. He, on the Cross, made expiation for me and I am at peace. My heart rests on the Atonement which He has offered.” It is dependence, reliance—or as the old Puritans used to say, “recumbency”—leaning upon a Friend because I have ceased to rely on myself. If He takes the burden, I stand aloof. His the weight, mine the relief, free from pressure, free from anxiety. That is faith, easy, artless faith—self-renouncing, God-honoring faith! It is unequivocal faith—faith taken in the simple common acceptance of the word, of the act, of the feeling. The very core, marrow, essence, soul of faith is reliance upon Jesus Christ, once offered for human sin, and now gone, covered with Glory, up to the right hand of God to represent sinners within the veil!

And this reliance, wherever it is true, may also be described as an acceptance of what God has set forth as a propitiation for sin. God has given His Son. Let me put it in other words. God Himself, because He could not tarnish His justice, has descended to earth and taken up our Nature—He has worn the clay garb of our humanity. God Himself has suffered, has died upon the Cross as if He had been guilty. The Judge has taken the culprit’s place and borne the vengeance due to the offender. He says, “Will you accept My Substitution? Shall it be so? Are you willing that I should be in your place, that you may be in Mine?”

Sinner, I ask you, now—and let your *heart* reply—are you willing that the scourging of Christ should be in the place of your being scourged? Are you agreeable that by His stripes you may be healed? Are you willing that His blood should be shed instead of your blood—His death instead of your eternal death? You say—

***“My faith does lay her hand  
On that dear head of Yours,***

***While like a penitent I stand  
And here confess my sin.***  
You Say, “I am all too glad to take this Substitute, this blessed Substitute and to accept God’s way of salvation.” Very well! You are saved then and there! Believing God’s testimony, relying on God’s Son, accepting God’s way of salvation—that is the faith that saves the soul!

That is not faith which says, “I am saved because I believe I am.” That may be a lie. It is not a faith that says, “I feel so happy and, therefore, I am saved.” There are a great many that feel very happy, indeed, that will be lost. But it is a faith that goes upon principles, upon the Truths of God written in Scripture—not upon *excitement* nor upon *feelings*. God gives Christ to save men and Christ saves all who trust Him. I trust Him, therefore He saves me. I believe *God gave me* that trust, therefore I give all the glory to God! Having no works to boast of, I confess that I am saved through what Jesus did on my behalf. That is my first direction for your first dilemma.

I want to answer a few objections against this being the way of salvation. Let me ask you, however, what on earth is the good of your objecting? If God has made this to be the way of salvation, your best plan is to accept it. What good will your objections do? “Can I not do as I will with My own?” would be God’s response to your impertinence! As surely as this Book is God’s Word, so surely are we taught there that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: he that believes not shall be damned.” Now it is no use your kicking against it. There it stands and it will not be altered for anyone.

Were this city starving and a man of wealth were to bring in bread and distribute it, any regulations he chose to make for the distribution, he surely would have a right to enforce! Nobody ought to quibble at it. God has made and fixed this fast and firm— there is no other salvation. “There is no other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved.” Man, do not object! We sometimes say to boys who go out to business and do not like the work, “It is no use quarrelling with your bread and butter.” Surely the available supply of actual necessities ought to silence every murmur. What profit, I pray, Sir, can you expect to come of quibbling at God’s Covenant, or challenging the propriety of His salvation which He has prepared before the face of all people?

God has fixed it! He will not alter the thing that has gone out of His mouth. Leave your objections for something else! Write to the newspapers, if you please, about some public grievance, but to impugn with indignation, or bemoan with bitter complaints, God’s way of salvation must be the most unprofitable, not to say the most impertinent and wicked way of wasting time! It is alleged that when we tell men to believe in Jesus and they will be saved, they will go on in sin—they will despise good works— they will, perhaps, grow immoral! The answer is this. *Do*they? *Do*they? I quoted a very homely proverb just now. I will quote another quite as homely. “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” And truly the proof of the doctrine is in the practical results.

Do the people that believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, renouncing all trust in their good works, plunge deeper into sin and make this a reason for licentiousness? Answer honestly. Turn to the pages of history and see, on a large scale, the aspect of society. What do you think of the cavaliers of King Charles’s day? They certainly were not Believers in justification by faith! I do not know, exactly, what they *did* believe in. But I suppose had there been a preacher of good works and the whole duty of man who adorned moral essays with graceful language, sparkling wit and aphorisms from heathen authors, these gallant gentlemen would have listened to the court preacher with a listless satisfaction and gone home to their ladies to tell what a profitable sermon they had heard.

But where do you look for social virtue among men, holy living before God and noble sacrifices for the public good? Why, among your Puritans! Among the rough men that would do anything *but* sin, who feared no man’s face in the day of battle and who feared God in the sanctities of their private chambers and the secret recesses of their own hearts! Around Cromwell’s campfires at night there may be many disputes about doctrines but never a dispute about this question—that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ! All the world knows that the men who cry up good works have not got any stock in hand, or even a *sample* to show—while those who preach up faith in Jesus Christ are, themselves, the very people whose biographies will bear to be written and who exhibit the very works which this doctrine is supposed to destroy!

Judge, therefore, by facts! But if the doctrine of faith is such a wonderfully easy way of salvation and when it is accepted men just go on as they did before, why do not all the licentious people receive it? Why do you not hear in the theater and the saloon the song sung—

***“I do believe—I will believe—  
That Jesus died for me”?***

If Free Grace is such a potent factor in the merchandise of free living, why not introduce it more freely among your harlots? Why does it not find favor among the gay and giddy, the fast and frivolous? Do men do that? No! Because the world knows that our faith will not blend with their filth! If any man among you would like to come up here and say, “I, for one, believe in Jesus Christ and yet I lead a licentious life,” he would become known as a hypocrite among the sensuous and the Sybarites! It is all very well to bribe false witnesses who say that it leads to that. You know it does not. The licentious are the last persons to talk about the Atonement of Jesus Christ!

Yet if it were so, if the expiation of Christ pleased in ever so small a degree, the Epicurean of the world, it would surely be one of the doctrines which the self-indulgent would seize upon with the greatest eagerness. No, Sir, the man that lives in vice and violates every precept of the Decalogue is just the man to make conscience of going on Good Friday to his church—there he takes the sacrament and believes that he, somehow or other, gets absolution! At our Agricultural Hall services and noonday Prayer Meetings they will sneer because, they say, it is encouraging hypocrisy instead of putting down immorality, and so on. Yes, we know where the talk comes from—from men who lack a morality of their own! If

they were to look at their true lives it would suffice.

Again, suppose we were to change the system of preaching and preach that men were to be saved by good works—entirely by what they did. You say, “That would set them working!” Perhaps it would, or perhaps it would not—most likely the latter, for as a general rule it never has produced much result. Dr. Chalmers’ experience was that he preached morality till he had not any moral people left—and he did not see anybody converted to Jesus Christ. I believe you may preach against sin, but if you do not, at the same time, proclaim the way of salvation, you prevent shame and leave men accusing one another and excusing themselves. Your model sermons would become monstrous travesties of honesty! In plain English, you would be preaching up *selfishness*.

You say to these people, “Do this, that you may be saved.” What is, then, to be the objective of their life? *Self*-salvation. That is the one thing they are to live for—that they may somehow *merit* Heaven. But it is a doctrine that will pay extremely well! If you happen to be a priest and want something that will really pay you for your services, I do not know anything better than to tell them that they will get to Heaven by their benevolent actions, their deeds of charity and *especially* their alms to the church! And, of course, you need to remind them that in their departing moments it will be *extremely useful* to leave a large sum of money for the benefit of the church and much to the advantage of their souls! Oh, it is an excellent plan of picking their pockets!

If men give in that way, they are giving to God, they say. It is a baldfaced lie! They are giving to *themselves*—seeking their own salvation. It is a pure system of selfishness from beginning to end and he that lives to save himself is living with a mean purpose! I wonder how he can look himself in the face, and say, “God made me, and yet I am not living to His glory, but I am living to save myself.” I say, Sir, that if your system could be worked out and produce the best possible effect that could come of it, it would only be to reduce mankind into a race of self-seeking men, seeking, indeed, self in a very fine garb, but still seeking self.

“How about faith?” you say. Why, faith in Jesus Christ saves us from self! We believe in Him and we are saved from that day, for we live not for *self*-salvation. We are saved and now, out of love to Him who saved us, we live unto His praise and glory, this being our grand motive—that we might glorify Him, not seeking a reward, but, “As you have loved me, O ever loving Lord, so would I love You!” This is something better than selfishness. This is, in fact, salvation from self, which is no mean part of salvation from our sins. Push the matter still closer home. I would like to ask another question. You say that to tell a big evil sinner that God forgives him on the spot when he believes in Jesus is to encourage him in sin.

Come, then, and defend your hypothesis! Suppose that the man is led to believe that God has forgiven him, what will be the effect upon him? Think a little. Have you never heard of the effect of kindness upon men? Do you not believe in it? Some men are all for whips and chains. Flog them! Give them a term of penal servitude! Exile them! That is the law and it is supposed to be capable of working a wonderful reformation in their characters. But have you never heard of the effect of *kindness*? I will tell you a story of a Quaker. Isaac Hopper was in the streets of Philadelphia and he heard a waiter swearing awfully. This waiter waited upon him in a hotel and he swore there.

“Well,” said Hopper, “I must stop this man’s swearing.” So he brought him up, (it was many years ago), before the Philadelphian court, which then had a law that anybody who cursed God should be fined. So Cain got fined. Some years afterwards Hopper was in Philadelphia and he saw Cain, not in the white cravat of the waiter, but in rags. He had evidently been living a life of drunkenness. Now Hopper had desired this man’s good, so he said to the man, “Cain, you have not much improved since I saw you last.”

No, he had not and he had some bad ways. Hopper asked him if he did not remember when he had him brought before the Philadelphian court and fined for using bad language. Remember it?! He certainly did remember it! He should never forget the nasty trick that the Quaker had played on him. “Now,” Hopper said, “Friend Cain, I meant your good. I really did desire your good.” Cain said, “And I cursed at you dreadfully, afterwards.” So Hopper put his hand into his pocket with all the calculation of business and he said, “Friend Cain, you were fined so much and the interest upon it since then is so much. I can assure you I only meant your good and now I give you this back.”

Then he proceeded to speak to him very kindly till big tears stood in Cain’s eyes. And Cain said, “After all, Mr. Hopper, there is something better in the world than I thought there was.” And it was the means of reclaiming the man. The fining did not do him good, as we generally believe it does on those of whom we speak as “worthless characters.” Kindness— that’s what set him right! A more remarkable case was that of Penel, the master of the lunatic asylum in Paris, in the days of the Convention. There were hundreds of people chained to the floor and Penel sued the Convention that they would allow him to set them loose.

He proposed to let loose fifty furious savages first. Caithon, the president, said, “I will come down tomorrow and see these creatures. And if you are concealing any of the enemies of the republic, death to you at the guillotine.” And when Caithon went down they howled at him, like so many wild beasts, and he said, “I think you are maddest of all of them, but you may do as you like, though I am sure you will be the victim of it.” There was one English captain in the house who had been chained there 40 years—chained down to the ground because he had got one of his hands loose and had killed a keeper—a savage, morose beast of the worst kind that could be.

Penel went to him and he said, “Captain, if I set you free will you act like a rational being?” “Ah, that I would,” said the man, “but you are all afraid of me—all of you.” “No, I am not,” said Penel, “I have got these men here who could manage you very well, but I will trust you, if you behave yourself rationally.” Oh, he would behave very well, that he would—the very man who killed his keeper! And when his chains were taken from him he strove to rise, poor man, but for many minutes he could not

stand, because he had been chained down so long. At last he got up and looked up at the sky and could only say, “Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!” And he became not only calm, quiet and tractable, but made himself a sort of superintendent over the rest. I believe Penel was the means of bringing all the poor creatures who had been let loose back to sober rea

son and something like reasoning obedience of the laws under which they lived—simply by*kindness*. And has that been done by madmen? Why, it has been done by some of us, who were worse than mad—mad with sin! We have trusted them, forgiven them, been kind to them and conquered them! And do you believe, if the everlasting God says to a sinner, “Now, you will destroy yourself if you go on. I am angry with your sin and though I hate your sin, I do not hate you. I have laid your sin on Christ. Believe it.” And will you believe, if the man believes it—he will rise up to be worse than he was before?

Human nature is bad enough, but, after all, this is not the way of man! The cords of love hold us and the bands of a man restrain us. I will ask you, Sir, that makes the objection, if you could be met on the Tabernacle steps tonight or at your own door by an angel, who should say to you, “I have brought you this scroll fresh from the hands of the Eternal God: on it is written, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn you, I have bought you with My precious blood: your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.’”—Sir, would the effect of that upon you be to make you live a worse life than you did before?

You would be a devil—worse than a devil—if such were to be the consequence! But it could not be so. “I feel I must begin a new life”—that is what I want you to feel. And, therefore, I preach to you tonight, not as an angel with a scroll, but as a man, like yourself, with the Christ-inspired volume before me! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall have pardon for the past and you shall, with the reception of that pardon, find a change come over your nature which shall inspire you with nobler purposes and make you another man than you are at present! I might thus continue to speak, but I refrain. If the objection is not driven away by my feeble sentences, may God drive it away by His mighty Spirit!

Now my closing effort shall be to show the comparative power of faith. Paul says that faith works. It works by love—not by dread or fear, but by *love*. Oh, blessed machinery is this! Love shall be the great communicator—the great band which connects the mighty engine of faith with our lives—faith which works by love. Do you ask how faith works by love? Why, when a man believes God’s Testimony and sees that, notwithstanding all his offenses, God loves him and has provided His own dear Son to be a ransom for him, the man says, “My views of God are changed. I never understood that God was like this. I thought, surely, that He was very angry with me, that I should be utterly destroyed and that without remedy.

“Has God given *me* His only-begotten Son and did that only-begotten Son bear for me what I ought to have borne? Then I cannot be His enemy. It was ignorance of what He is that made me indifferent to Him. My indifference begat insolence and that made me oppose Him. Love has come into my soul, now, and I see who God is. God is Love. God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all.” The man’s mind is, by that very fact, changed in regard to God. And having effected this revolution of feeling, you have gone a long way towards changing the man’s actual life. The next step after that is repentance. The man says, “Well, I struggled against a mighty God who had made Laws which I have broken and only knew that He would punish me. I feared the worst. I felt case-hardened. I said, ‘I will go on, for there is no hope.’

“But now I perceive that God has never done anything towards me for which I should hate Him. He has never viewed me in a malicious spirit, but He has always regarded me with an eye to my good. I hate myself to think that I should have offended Him. Wretch that I am, that I should have lived 40 years denying the existence of One who has never forgotten me a single day! Wretch that I am, that I should have taken that name in vain which is a name above every name—the name that is to be my everlasting joy. O, my Father, my Father, how could it be that I, Your child, should be Your foe? My Savior, my bleeding Savior, how was it that I could revile Your people, despise Your Cross and trample on Your blood? I grieve, for I have grieved You! I hate the sins that made You mourn, now that I see that You forgive—and I thank You.”

There is a change, you see, of the view the man takes of God and then a change in the views which he takes of his own actions—and he repents in dust and ashes when he discovers the love of God. Yes, and Faith works by love yet farther, for Faith leads to the foot of the Cross and says, “Look there.” And the soul stands and looks up! And as it looks, it lives! And as it lives, it loves! And as it loves, it weeps! And as it weeps, it gazes upon Christ, again, and says, “Yes, He is the Son of God and yet the greatest sufferer that ever lived! He was offended, yet He died! He it is whose Laws were broken, yet the punishment of our sin was upon Him!

And as we look into those wounds and read those griefs, and as our eyes begin to penetrate within His flesh to see the heartbreak which He endured. And as the ear catches the sound of, “Eloi! Eloi! Lame Sabacthani.” And as our heart gazes into the side and sees His heart that was broken, we begin to love and weep—and love and weep again. And then we say to ourselves, “What should I do for Him who died to save my wretched soul?” Sin becomes hateful and we ask, “How can I please Him? How can I serve Him?” Then we wish we could die for Him and as He does not ask us to do that, we pray that we may *live* for Him. Love to Him becomes the strongest incentive, the mightiest impulse, the motive power that sways our entire being!

Oh, I wish you felt it to be so in your own souls! It has been so in some of us and now, forever more, to us, to live is Christ! Now for the love we bear to His name, Christ has become the great object of our being! And so faith, leading us by the way of gratitude up to the standpoint of love, begets in us a desire to please Him and also a desire to imitate Him—for love, somehow, always grows like its object. You cannot love a thing without becoming something like it, in proportion to the force of love. And just in proportion as you love Jesus, you must become like He. Oh, Objector, would it hurt the world if men were to grow like Christ? Whatever you

may think about the religion we have taken from His lips, I know you cannot speak against the life which He lived!

And if faith in Him will make men like He—and it *has* made them like He and *is making* them like He every day—it cannot be an evil and a licentious thing! It must, in fact, be the greatest power for morality, the greatest strengthener of social law and order and the very best principle a patriot might desire to spread throughout the nation in which he lives! Talk no more about morality, I pray you. O bleeding Lamb, the best morality is love to You! And where is it but in those who trust You with their soul, their All in All?

You will always find that those who thus, out of gratitude, desire to imitate Christ, inevitably become lovers of their fellow men. When we imitate Christ, we cannot be men-haters. To hate is not Christ, but the very opposite of Christ. Our blessed Lord and Master is no man-hater. When I listen to a cynic I know that Christ is not of his school. When I read the sharp and cutting satire. When I have heard men spoken of in terms which make them to be brutes—at least a few dozen generations back—I know that that doctrine was not learned of Christ. My Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the poor man’s Friend!

Never a syllable fell from His lips which would make a tyrant feel at ease in His despotism. Never did He utter a syllable that would make the oppressive master feel that he had any right to tread down his workmen. Never did He utter a line that would make the workman feel that he had the right to be envious of those who possess more talents or enjoy higher privileges than he had. His teaching was justice and His life was love. If you ask me for a man that all might respect—such a man as one would wish all men to be with whom we dwell—I can only commend you to the Person and Character of my Lord! And if you are to become imitators of Him, the husband will be the kindest husband and the most loving of fathers! The mother will be the most tender and amiable of mothers and of wives!

If you have been forgiven by Christ and so love Him mightily and imitate Him diligently—well, you will be such men and women that no pastor need be ashamed to say, “They belong to my flock!” And no fellow Christians will need be ashamed to acknowledge you as one of their fraternity! Oh, Beloved, there is growing up in this country, I fear, more and more a feeling of alienation, the one from the other. I cannot speak, as some do, of “the good old times,” for I believe the times were never so old as they are now and never so good. But I do grieve to see that different classes are positioned against each other. It will be ill for our country if this jealousy goes on, for rivalries provoke resentments.

God has given us preeminence among the sons of men in many respects and if the house would not be divided against itself it would prosper. If we will, every one of us, resolve to love his neighbor as himself and to seek his brother’s good, each one seeking and satisfied with that which is just and equal, whether occupying the higher or the lower or the middle place, from how many districts, manifold distractions would be averted! Yes, but if we will, each one do more, and be generous and kind and loving, we shall be benefactors, indeed, and bless our country! I do not know by what process we can be brought to do this so surely and so reasonably, as by our believing in Jesus Christ! Feeling gratitude and love to Him, then imitating Him, and then becoming like He, we shall verify, in our triumph over the world, the virtue of that faith whereby, alone, the victory can be won!

One other remark. If you would have faith in Christ as the ground of justification, do not mix up this gift in your thoughts with anything else that has nothing at all to do with it. “Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision.” These outward distinctions are of no consequence. They might have made a great difference at another time and under other circumstances, but, “from now on know we no man after the flesh.” “If any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” Now, there may be, and most likely there are, not a few of my hearers who are enquiring the way of salvation but cannot understand it because they distract themselves with thoughts about themselves that are totally irrelevant.

I think I can read the thought which is just now passing through the minds of many of you. “Oh,” you say, “I should like a few minutes conversation with the pastor!” And why? Have you any questions to ask? Is there any matter I have failed to make plain? Do you not understand, one and all of you, that, entirely irrespective of anything about your birth, your bringing up, or your business, the simple direction of the Gospel is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Suppose I listened to you. It would not be very difficult for me to conjecture what everyone would have to say. “Well,” says one, “I wanted to tell you, Sir, that I was trained in the Established Church and christened before I was three months old.” That means nothing.

“Alas, Sir!” says another, “You could not imagine the disadvantages of my childhood. My parents were no church-goers. They never had me sprinkled or dedicated, or anything else. I was reared like a heathen.” Well, that is no detriment—it means nothing. “Why, Sir,” says one, “I could repeat the Catechism and I knew by heart all the collects before I was four years old.” “Alas!” says another, “I *never*was taught *anything*.” Know assuredly, my Friends, that there is but one salvation for white men, or black men, for Pharisees or publicans! When you believe in Jesus, you are born-again! Every trace of your former self is wiped out. I would that you counted yourselves dead and buried, that you might live the new life and say with the Apostle, “The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.”

Some of you have been converted during the last few weeks. I hope a good many of you have. Some of you have been converted to God in this place. There are here present, I doubt not, those who have been brought to believe in Christ under various agencies piously and prayerfully conducted at this time in our metropolis. We greet you cordially. Our adversaries watch you narrowly. They say, “Well, but will they stand? Will they last?” “Is their conversion worth anything?” Now, I do pray that you who profess to have found Christ, do not make a sham of it. Do let it be salvation from sin that you have got. Salvation from Hell—is that what you want? That is *not* the salvation you ought to try after. It is salvation from *sin*. That will bring salvation from Hell!

You know, every thief would like to get salvation from going to prison, but that would not be of any particular use to him. The salvation that is worth having is the salvation from *thieving* any more. Mr. Thief, if you get *that*, you will get salvation from prison, too! Salvation from Hell is not the issue, but salvation from *sinning*. Now let us see how you live, you converts. You go home, Sir, and growl at your wife. You go home, Madam, to be snappish with your servant. You go home, housemaid, to be slovenly in your duties. You go home, working man, resolved to give half a day’s work for a whole day’s wage. You go home, master, to act the tyrant over your men. Well, you have been converted, have you?

I pray God to *undo* such a conversion and begin again with you! There are lots of people who need to be *un*converted before they are converted— to have the rubbish they have built up themselves pulled down before Christ can begin. Suppose you have some freehold ground and it has an old remarkable building on it. With a new edifice in view, you must clear away every vestige of the former house. There are plenty of people who have a good-for-nothing conversion that needs sweeping away before God can do anything with them.

Pray to the Lord in this way—“Lord, I beseech You save me from my sin. Let me have a perfect faith which works, not a faith that sends me to sleep, not a faith that gives me a dose of opium and says, ‘There, your conscience was like an aching tooth and would not stop aching, but I have stopped it.’” Now, ask the Lord to extract that which causes pain—to take away that which causes the mischief—not to give you quietness for a time. Ask for a right spirit and a new heart. Remember, you must be bornagain. Though it is quite true as we say and sing, “Only believe and you shall be saved,” yet if that, “only believing” is of a sort which merely asserts without intelligence of the mind, without emotion of the heart, there is nothing in it.

It leaves you what you were before—it is not the faith, pure and simple, that will save your soul. Evidently it will not save you, for it has left you still slaves to your sin. True, real, childlike faith in Jesus Christ saves us because it works by love. The Lord grant you to possess this precious prize which we persistently preach—the faith which works by love.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 3:20.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—351, 544, 406.**[The original title of this sermon was *A Remonstrance and a Rejoinder.*] Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1553 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH WORKING BY LOVE  
NO. 1553

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“Faith which works by love.” Galatians 5:6.~~***

ALL ways of justification by human works and outward forms are set aside by the Apostle. In one sentence he closes up every road which is cast up by man and opens up the way of the Lord, even the way of salvation by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Some hope to be saved by ritualism—their hopes are struck hip and thigh by these words, “Neither circumcision avails anything.” On the other hand, many are relying upon their freedom from all ceremonies and place their reliance upon a sort of anti-ritualism—they are struck by the words, “nor uncircumcision.” As Jews relied upon circumcision, so do many depend upon Baptism and sacraments—to these the Apostle gives no quarter. Others glory in uncircumcision—they have practiced no rites nor ceremonies—their mode of worship is plain even to unsightliness, free almost to disorder and of this they are apt to make a righteousness.

It is quite as easy to make a self-righteousness out of the plainness of the Quaker as out of the gaudiness of the Romanist and the one confidence will be as fatal as the other. You and I, as Baptists, may glory in the simplicity of our worship and the Scripturalness of our Baptism, but if we think that outward things will save us because they are Scripturally simple, we shall err as much as they do who multiply gorgeous services and pompous processions. Let the whole sentence be quoted! Paul says, “Neither circumcision avails anything,” but he does not stop there, for he adds, “nor uncircumcision.” The outward, whether decorated or unadorned; whether fixed or free, touches not the saving point—the only thing which can save us is *faith in Jesus Christ*, whom God has set forth as a Propitiation for sin.

Faith brings us into contact with the healing fountain and so our natural disease is removed. It appropriates, on our behalf, the result of the Redeemer’s service and sacrifice and so we become accepted in Him. But anything short of this must fail—it is the tearing of the garment while the heart is unbroken—the washing of the outside of the cup and platter while the inner part is very filthiness. The Apostle, however, does more than merely condemn other foundations than those of faith—he distinguishes here between faith, itself, and its many imitations. It is not every sort of faith that will save the soul.

True faith, undoubtedly, will save a man though it is but as a grain of mustard seed. But it must be *true* faith—the genuine silver and not a mere plated article. “Money answers all things,” says the wise man, but then it must be current coin of the realm, for *counterfeit* money will answer for nothing except to condemn the man who has it in his possession! Real faith will save us, but forgeries of it will increase our peril. Assurance is of God, but presumption is of the devil. The test of true faith is that it works—“Faith which works,” says the text. To that end it must, first of all, live, for it is clear that a dead faith cannot work. There must be heart in our faith and the Spirit of God breathing in it, or it will not be the living faith of a living child of God.

Being alive, true faith must not sleep, but must awaken itself as a child of the day, for a slumbering faith is matter for heart-searching, since sleep is a cousin to Death. A wakeful faith becomes *active* and in its activity lies much of its proof. “By their fruits you shall know them” is one of Christ’s own rules for testing men and things—and we are to know faith by that which comes of it—by what it does for us and in us and through us. Faith is not worth having if it is fruitless. It has a name to live and is dead. If it works not at all, it lives not at all and cannot justify its possession. A dead god may be served by a dead faith, but only a living, waking, working faith can please the ever-living, ever-working Jehovah. God save us from a dreaming faith and a talking faith and give us “faith which works.”—

***“Not words alone it cost the Lord  
To purchase pardon for His own.  
Nor will a soul by Grace restored  
Return the Savior words alone.”***

A further distinction is also set forth, namely, that true faith “works by love.” There are some who do many works as the result of a kind of faith who, nevertheless, are not justified. As for instance, Herod, who believed in John and did many things and yet murdered his minister. His faith worked, but it worked by dread and not by love—he feared the stern language of the second Elijah and the judgments which would come upon him if he rejected the Baptist’s warnings and so his faith worked through *fear*. The great test of the working of saving faith is this—it “works by love.” If you are led by your faith in Jesus Christ to love Him and so to serve Him, then you have the faith of God’s elect. You are, then, undoubtedly, a saved man and you may go your way and rejoice in the liberty with which Christ has made you free.

It shall be joy to you to serve the Lord, since love is the mainspring of your service. That is the point we are going to speak upon this morning— the connection which exists between faith and love—“Faith which works by love.” We may be helped to test both our faith and love while we are speaking of the intermingling and intertwisting of the roots and branches of these two Divine Graces and it will do us good to perform a thorough self-examination. It never does any man harm to overhaul himself and to see in what a state he is—whether he is really right or not—whether he is prospering in soul or not.

I am afraid of our taking our good estate for granted, but I am not afraid of the most searching self-enquiry. May God the Holy Spirit bless our ministry to this end this morning!

**I.**Our first observation will be this—FAITH ALWAYS PRODUCES LOVE—“Faith which works by love.” When faith has anything to do, she walks to the field with Love at her side. The two Divine Graces are inseparable. Like Mary and Martha, they are sisters and abide in one house. Faith, like Mary, sits at Jesus’ feet and hears His Words and then Love diligently goes about the house and rejoices to honor the Divine Lord. Faith is light, while Love is heat and in every beam of Grace from the Sun of Righteousness you will find a measure of each. True faith in God cannot exist without love to Him, nor sincere love without faith. They are united, like Siamese twins, and where you meet the one the other is sure to be present.

This happens by a necessity of faith’s own nature. The moment a man believes in Jesus Christ, he loves Him as a matter of course. It is possible to trust in another person and not love him, but from the peculiar circumstances of the case, our Lord, having loved us and given Himself for us out of the infinite charity of His heart, we are compelled to love Him the moment we repose upon Him. To trust the bleeding Lamb and not love Him is a thing not to be imagined! Faith is a gold ring which, in every case, the heavenly Jeweler sets with the beryl of love. Water faith with a drop of God’s own dew and it blossoms into love!

The first steps of the prodigal, when he comes to himself, are all towards his father’s house and heart. When he gets home he may make many steps here and there about his father’s estate, but at the first, at any rate, his face is distinctly towards his father. Did he not say, “I will arise and go unto my father”? The first steps of the soul, when it begins to believe in God, are desires after Him in which there is a measure of love. The affections are awakened and drawn towards God as soon as there is the slightest degree of faith in the soul. Every Believer here knows that. Look back to the day when you first saw the Lord, if you can remember it—the hour you looked to Him and were lightened—did you not love Him immediately?

Love Him? Yes! We sometimes fear we loved Him better then, than now, though I hope that it is not the case. If anyone had asked me, in the first flush of my joy when first I beheld my bleeding Lord, “Do you love Him?” I should not have hesitated, but replied, “I love Him as my very soul, for He has redeemed me from going down into the Pit.” Faith creates love as summer breeds flowers! Our first love came with our first faith by a necessity of nature which can never change. Love grows out of faith yet farther by the discoveries of beauty in Christ which faith is sure to make. Faith is the soul’s eye and its telescope by which it sees that which is so far off as to otherwise be invisible. Holy faith gazes upon the *Character* of the Lord Jesus Christ, realizes His Person and discerns His matchless work and so creates knowledge out of which comes love.

Faith stands like the cherubim upon the golden Mercy Seat, looking downward always upon the blood-sprinkled Propitiatory, admiring and wondering, spying out something fresh every hour and thus filling itself with ever-increased delight with those things which the angels desire to look into. Out of this gracious discernment comes admiring love. Faith delights to unveil the superlative beauties of the Well-Beloved before the gaze of Love and then Faith and Love unite in crying out, “Yes, He is altogether lovely!” Those who believe can say, “We see Jesus,” and those whose hearts are won by Him can add, “We loved Him because He first loved us.” O that we knew our Lord better! O that we believed in Him more! Then should we be knit to Him as the heart of Jonathan was knit to David.

Faith creates love, next, by its appropriation of that which it discerns, for while faith is the soul’s eye, it is also the mind’s hands by which it grasps the blessing. Faith sees the love of Christ and then says, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” Faith sees the wounds of Jesus and perceives His Deity through those windows of ruby and immediately appropriates Him and cries, “My Lord and my God.” Love is sure to arise out of a sense of possession. Does not a mother love her child very much because it is her own?

When we have an interest in a person so as to call him, “my brother,” “my husband,” “my son,” then a sense of property increases our sense of affection. This made the Psalmist sing, “O God, You are my God, early will I seek You.” Why, even in dead things, such as gold and silver and goods and lands, when they are a man’s own they are apt to be loved, for the affections cling to that which is possessed—“Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” And therefore, the danger which attends worldly things, lest our heart be bird-limed with them and so be held captive, instead of mounting upward towards God. This tendency is clearly seen in reference to higher possessions and especially with regard to Christ. If Christ is yours and Faith can say, “Jesus is mine,” Love alters the sentence and cries, “This is my Beloved and this is my Friend.”

When the faith of Thomas saw Jesus as Lord and God, his love gave a musical ring to his exclamation by joying in personal possession and calling Him, “my Lord and my God.” Love rejoices in Jesus as her own possession, triumphs in Him and right sweetly sings of love to Him because He is her own Husband and Lord. Thus you see faith creates love from a necessity of its nature, from the discoveries which it makes and from its appropriation of the good things that are in Christ. Dear Hearer, do you know anything about these matters? Faith further excites love by another step, namely, by its enjoying the mercy and then leading the heart to a grateful acknowledgment of the source of the mercy. There are two links in the chain in this case—faith wins the mercy by *prayer—*the mercy is enjoyed and then out of the enjoyment of the gift springs love to Him who gave it.

Brothers and Sisters, what innumerable favors faith has already brought to us! Some of you, I trust, do not look upon the Covenant as a locked-up storeroom from which nothing is to be taken until you come to die. But the key of David has been put into your hands by faith and you have enjoyment, even now, of the fat things full of marrow and the wines on the lees well-refined which the Lord has prepared for them that love Him. At this moment you know that you are justified; you know that you are adopted into the family of God—do you not, therefore, love the Lord? I know you do! You feel, at this moment, that you are enjoying the privileges of heirship with Christ—does not this bind you fast to your elder Brother?

Every day you are receiving Providential mercies. I hope you keep your eyes open to see them—every day you are receiving preserving mercies, restoring mercies, instructive mercies, sealing mercies—do you not love God for all these priceless gifts? Spiritual blessings are coming to you from the God of All Grace and you are filled with joys, like your Savior’s grief—immense, unknown—surely this cements your soul to your Redeemer! Unless your heart is altogether out of order, you love God better and better because He is manifesting His love to you more and more. Is it not so? Faith told you that the Lord was good and then she cried, “I will prove it to you,” and she handed out of the Covenant store-house mercies rich and rare and laid them at your feet! And since you have possessed them and lived upon them as your own, you have blessed the Giver and loved Him more than you ever did before.

Thus Faith receives promises and feeds Love on the fruit of them. It does this even more sweetly by the familiarity with God which it breeds in the heart, for Faith is in the habit of going to God with all her burdens and coming away with her load removed. Faith has the daily practice of pleading promises with God, speaking to Him face to face as a man speaks with his friend and receiving favors from the right hand of the Most High which make even her expectant soul to wonder! Faith commences with God in the morning, as Abraham did, and walks with Him in the field at evening, as Isaac did. Faith houses herself with God as the swallow built her nest under the eaves of the temple. Faith’s life is in God, even as the life of a fish is in the sea.

The bosom of Jesus Christ is the pillow of faith and the heart of God is the pavilion of faith. Because faith thus keeps us near to God, it causes us to love Him. Oh, poor blind Soul, if you could see Jesus, you would love Him! You who are most opposed to Him would become His friends if you knew Him! It is not possible for a Believer to be in Christ’s company an hour without feeling his heart warmed. The pilgrims to Emmaus said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He spoke with us by the way?” Those who have known and believed His love towards them must feel His spell upon their affections holding them captive. There is none like He among the sons of men—His beauties ravish the heart! If Jesus does but lift the veil and let us have a glimpse of one of His eyes for a moment, our hearts are melted within us—

***“Where can such sweetness be  
As I have tasted in Your love,***

***As I have found in Thee?”***  
Because faith thus makes us familiar with our Divine Lord, it must inevitably produce love in the soul. And here again, are two links instead of one—our familiarity with Christ soon begets congeniality of disposition and spirit, for that we are much *with* Christ—we become much *like* Christ. He who lies on a bed of spices will naturally find his garments smell of the same. A mirror upon which the sun is shining is, itself, bright and flashes its reflected rays afar. He that walks with wise men will be wise, but he that dwells with the Infinite Wisdom shall be taught of God! Doubtless, happy couples who live together in mutual affection and confidence become very much like each other—the one becomes the other’s self—they have the same aims and objectives, they are often surprised to find that they have thought the same thoughts and are about to say the same words at the same moment.

So do the saint and the Savior grow like each other after years of acquaintance, only the growth is all on one side—we grow up unto Him in all things who is the Head. Oh that our likeness to Christ were as clear and complete as our likeness to our dear companions below! You see how love is thus nurtured in the soul by a growing likeness of disposition. Wherever there is congeniality of taste, mind, view, disposition and spirit, love becomes strong and well established. And thus faith, by begetting in us likeness to Christ, causes love to Christ to become a mighty power in the soul! Surely all these points sufficiently show that faith creates love in the soul wherever it really dwells.

Do not, I pray you, begin to say, “I am afraid I do not love the Lord as I ought,” and so on. Take it for granted that you do not love Him to the fullest of His infinite deserts. Instead of raising questions about the degree of your love, ask yourself whether you *believe* in Him. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus? Are you confiding in Him? Because if the root is there, the flower will appear before long. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God and all who are born of the God of Love must, themselves, love God. Do not talk of *trying* to love God. You cannot force yourself to love anybody—who in his senses would ever dream of such a thing? Such attempts would be utter folly.

Love must be free-born, it cannot be bought or forced. We cannot tell what love is though we feel it. It is a mysterious something not to be described by the cold maker of definitions, but it is always a product of something else which goes before it. If you believe, you will love. If you do not believe you will never love till you believe. Go to the root of the matter. Do not try to grow the hyacinth of love without the bulb of faith. Do you trust Jesus with all your heart and are you confiding your soul’s eternal interests with Him? Then I know that you love Him, though you may, for a while, be occupied with other pursuits.

Love slumbers in you like fire in a flint, or rather, it smolders like fire in smoldering turf. But before long it will burn vehemently like coals of juniper! Look well to your faith and your love will not fail. Remember the lines of a sweet poet and pray that you may sing them out of your own soul—

***“Hallelujah! I believe!  
Now, O Love! I know your power,  
You have no false or fragile fetters,  
Nor the rose-wreaths of an hour.  
Christian bonds of holy union  
Death itself does not destroy;  
Yes, to live and love forever,  
Is our heritage of joy.”***

**II.**Let me now enlarge upon a second remark—LOVE IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT UPON FAITH. “Faith which works by love.” Love, then, does not work of itself, except in the strength of faith. Love is so entirely dependent upon faith that, as I have already said, it cannot exist without it! No man loves a Savior in whom he reposes no confidence. There may be an admiration of the Character of Christ, but the emotion which the Scripture treats as, “love,” only comes into the heart when we *trust* in Jesus. “We love Him because He first loved us.” When we have a belief in His love and a sense of it, then we begin to love Jesus—but love to Jesus cannot exist without *faith* in Him.

Certainly love cannot flourish except as faith flourishes. If you doubt your Lord, you will think harsh thoughts of Him and cease to love Him as you should. If you fall into trouble and you doubt His wisdom, or His goodness in sending it, the next thing will be that your heart will be cold towards Him—you will begin to think your Lord to be tyrannical and harsh to you and you will quarrel with Him. The two Graces must diminish or increase together! If you attain to a simple, childlike confidence which rests in Christ as a babe on its mother’s bosom reposes entirely in her care, then shall your love be made perfect! But if you need to trust *yourself* a little and you begin judging your God and do not repose entirely in Him, then it is that you have to ask yourself whether you love Him or not. May God the Holy Spirit work in us a mighty strength of faith that we may have a vehement love, strong as death, immortal as Divinity!

Love, again, as it cannot *flourish* without faith, so it cannot *work* without it. Love is a great designer and planner, but how to perform, it finds not unless faith shows the way. Love sits down and says, “I wish the world were converted to Christ!” But Faith goes out and preaches the Gospel. Love cries, “I would to God that the children knew of Jesus and that their hearts were renewed even while they are yet little!” But Faith opens the Sunday school and teaches the young and trusts in God that He will bless the Word to their salvation. Love must have faith to give it muscle, sinew and strength—therefore take right good care of your faith.

Longfellow says, “Therefore love and believe, and works will follow spontaneously, even as the day the sun.” Love is as Solomon’s lily, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. How fair to look upon! Stand and admire its charms. Know, O gazer, that yon lovely flower could not be thus arrayed were it not joined by its stalk to a living root which is hidden underground! Faith is the necessary bulb out of which comes love as the perfection of beauty. You look over the fair city of Mansoul and you see a gilded dome glittering in the sun—that dome is love and it rests upon foundations of faith which are laid deep upon the rock—otherwise the dome would fall in ruins. Love to God, if it is worthy of the name, must be soundly based on confidence in Jesus. It cannot abide without it, but is carried away by wind and flood, like the house on the sand.

Therefore we are disposed to judge with prudence the outbursts of emotion which we see in certain excitable persons. We hear them sing, “Oh, yes, I love Jesus,” but we are not so sure of it when we watch their lives. We are pleased with such emotions if they arise out of the knowledge of Christ and genuine faith in Him, but we have too often seen the semblance of ardent affection without knowledge and without humility— without penitence and without childlike faith—and therefore we rejoice with trembling. We fear lest the building which rises up in a night should vanish like “the baseless fabric of a vision” and disappear like the soap bubble of a child, which, though it is adorned with all the colors of the rainbow, dissolves in an instant.

See, then, to your faith, since love is entirely dependent upon it. See that you are rooted and grounded and settled, lest the high tower of professed love should soon lie in ruins and only indifference remain.

**III.**Thirdly, I advance to another observation which comes more closely home to the text though our previous thoughts have been necessary to bring us up to it—FAITH DISPLAYS ITS POWER BY LOVE. “Faith which works by love.” For a moment you must permit me to compare faith to a craftsman in metals who is about to prepare some magnificent work which cunning smiths were known to produce in the days of worked iron, when skill and hand labor were thought much of and articles were produced which are almost worth their weight in silver.

Faith, as a smith, strong and vigorous, has love to be her arms. Faith lifts not a finger without love—it is her arm every morning. Faith believes and resolves and then it proceeds to action, but the power with which it can work lies in love. Faith without love would be a cripple without arms. More than this—it is not only Faith’s arms but her tools. “Faith works by love.” This is Faith’s hammer and file and anvil—her every implement. You have seen a screw hammer which can be made to fit every nut and bolt, however large or small—love is just such a tool—for love will teach a little child or evangelize a nation!

Love can stand and burn at the stake, or it can drop two mites that make a farthing into the offering box. Love hopes all things, endures all things—nothing comes amiss to it. A wonderfully handy tool is this sacred Grace which Faith has adopted to work with! It can strike and it can cut, it is good for uniting and good for breaking, it will avail for anything which Faith wishes to perform. Only let Faith wield love as its instrument and it can fashion whatever Divine Wisdom tells it to form. More than that, love is Faith’s furnace. All the tools in the world will not suffice the smith unless he can blow the coals and create a fervent heat.

What is there, Brethren, that can kindle the heat of enthusiasm like earnest love to God? Faith believes God and rejoices in God and then comes in love and the heart grows hot as Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace! The melting fire burns right gloriously and sparks of joy leap upward from it. What is there that cannot be performed if we have enough love? This is the great fire which burns in human hearts when God the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of Jesus—by its heat all things are fused. This fire will yet consume all sin and melt all hardness. None can quench it, *everything* must yield before it! That consecrated craftsman called Faith, blows the coals of Love and, plunged into its glowing flame, tasks difficult as iron is hard become easily workable! Thus, “Faith works by love.”

Love is more than this, for, when all is melted and ready to flow, love is faith’s mold—it pours out all it does into the mold of God’s Love— fashioning its works according to the Divine pattern of Love in Christ Jesus. As Jesus loved us, even so should we love one another. And as He loved the Father and for love of the Father, that He might glorify Him, fulfilled the Law and made Himself a Sacrifice, even so are we willing to lay down our lives for the Brethren and for the Father’s honor. Thus Love becomes Faith’s mold into which she carefully seeks to pour out her whole being. What is more, she is Faith’s metal, for into the mold of love, Faith pours love itself. Love thus “answers all things.”

Love is the substance of every good work. Melt it down in the refining pot and holiness is love. If there is any virtue, zeal, consecration or holy daring, its *substance* is love. All the grand deeds which the heroes of the Cross have performed are composed of the solid metal of love to Jesus Christ. Be it great or be it little, he who has served God aright has always brought into the sanctuary an offering of pure love comparable to the gold of Ophir. Love, also, is Faith’s burnisher and file and with it she finishes all her work right carefully. Have you never lovingly gone over all your work to give it the finishing touches? Have you not wished to perfect all that you have attempted? I know well what it means.

My rough castings—how very coarse they are—and when I fix them I look at them and say, “That will not do, for I see *self* there. That will not do, *unbelief* is there. This will not do, too much of*self-will* is there.” And then I have with tearful love, filed down and polished my poor efforts and found love to be an excellent burnisher, ready to my hand. When Augustine went over all his works to write his *Retractations*, it was Love removing roughness from her work. If we loved more, we might have more of retractation work to do. Thus Faith works by love—love is Faith’s arm, Faith’s tools, Faith’s furnace, Faith’s metal, Faith’s mold and Faith’s burnisher.

My Hearer, if you are working for God in any other way than this, you will make a mess of it! The Law can never help you to such work as God will accept. It is fitted to produce bars for a prison but not pillars for a temple. You must work for God because you love Him—no other labor except the labor of love can be acceptable with Him. Some people serve God because they are in religious society and they must not be thought lacking—therefore that blessed guinea, squeezed out by all the ten-pound subscriptions on the list at the top of it—respectable people must put down something, you know.

That occasional going out to week-night services is often done because it is expected of you and not because it is a delight. Even Sabbath assemblies grow to be a weariness and worship is regarded as a task. This is not gold, but gilded dross—take it away! This is *forced* service, devoid of the life-blood of obedience! This is fruit without flavor or scent. That which is done because a man loves God, because he loves to yield his heart to his God, however humble the service may be, is accepted of God. True affection to Him who redeemed you from going down to the Pit never fails to present an acceptable tribute before the living God! May you abound in this to your own comfort and to the Glory of Christ.

**IV.**I close with the fourth remark, which is this—LOVE REACTS UPON FAITH AND PERFECTS IT. While Love owes everything to Faith, Faith, byand- by, becomes a debtor to Love. Love leads the soul into admiration and so increases Faith. Having loved Christ, having become enamored of Him, Love, which has dove’s eyes which can see everything that is fair, spies out, daily, more and more of Christ’s perfections and thus she aids the eye of Faith. Love sees among the rest of the Lord’s perfections His power, His faithfulness, His immutability—and Faith at once concludes, “Then I can trust Him more than ever.”

Knowing more of His power, more of His faithfulness, more of His unchangeableness, I can depend upon Him without wavering. So if Faith’s eyes first look to Jesus, Love’s eyes see yet more and discover further excellences. Faith is that other disciple which outran Peter, but Love is the disciple which enters in and spies out details. Love, moreover, forbids unbelief and so helps Faith, for Love says, “How can we grieve Him by doubts?” Does not true love in every heart, when exercised towards a man or a woman, forbid distrust? Fear in the form of distrust has torment and, therefore, love casts it out.

The lack of mutual confidence in married life is the death of love, but love is instinctively tender of showing anything like suspicion towards a dear and faithful lover. Even when it supposes that there is an error, love puts it down as by no means a willful fault, but concludes that there may be a sense in which it is right, for love believes all things, endures all things and will not tolerate mistrust which it knows to be a worm at the very core of the heart. So you see, where there is great love of Christ, it forbids doubt and thus kills the foxes of distrust which spoil the tender vines of Faith. Love to Jesus feels that it were better to distrust all men and angels than doubt the dear Redeemer who poured out His blood to prove His love! Distrust the heavens, for they shall pass away. Distrust the earth, for it shall be utterly burned up. Distrust man, for he is as a broken reed! But never distrust the faithful God! Lean on Him with your whole weight! Repose in Him with your undivided confidence. So Love teaches and Faith learns her lesson.

Moreover, perfect Love casts out fear because fear has torment and when perfect Love has cast out fear, then Faith has room to display its strength. Love has not learned to be afraid, nor will she permit the work of Faith to become the labor of a shrinking, crouching slave. Dread? Where can that find a lodging in the heart that loves? You hear very proper people sometimes cry out against certain of us because they say we speak as if we were on the best of terms with God and were familiar with the Lord Jesus. Sarcastically they speak what is soberly true—in their blindness they have hit the truth—it is even so. To them God is a stranger and I doubt not that the language which we use may well seem to them strange and almost profane.

It would be profane if they were to use it, being what they are. I do not accuse them of open sin, but I do say and will say that he who is not a child of God cannot fitly use expressions which are most becoming from the lips of those who *are* the sons of God. A child may say to his father what no one else may dare say and yet he has more reverence for him than anyone else. Your child shall rightly behave towards you in a manner which you could not tolerate in a stranger. Look at the judge on the bench—with that big wig and those solemn robes—the prisoner at the bar and the court and the jury must all be very respectful and distant. But I guarantee you when his lordship reaches home, his grandchild has no dread of grandpapa or his robes!

Love gives boldness and is yet most reverent—reverently familiar. Chilliness and coldness are not for the children of God—*they* are called to close communion with their heavenly Father and the Meeting Place is not at Sinai, but at Calvary! Faith and Love are home-living children and not out-of-door pensioners. They dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Oh Beloved, this is the joy of love, that it brings us into such close personal communion with God in Jesus Christ! That trembling, slavish fear is gone and, loving God, we are familiar with Him and trust Him implicitly. Oh, dear Friends, trust your God with everything! Trust Him in little things! Trust Him in great things! Trust Him in your joys to keep you sober! Trust Him in your sorrows to keep you from despair! Oh, that you may possess much of this love, for it is an eminent Grace. “Faith is child-like,” says Dr. Eadie. “Hope is saint-like, but love is God-like.” May we reach this Godlike virtue through faith in God Himself!

My final word is this—let us, dear Friends, as a Church and people, be *working* people. Faith works. Let us work because we have faith. I wish that every member of this Church were at work for Jesus. I have very few complaints, however, because I believe that the majority of the dear Brothers and Sisters associated here are hard at it—but if there are any of you who are not serving the Lord—I pray you, bestir yourselves! You must work or your faith will be questioned and your love will be suspect! We are a hive of bees, but what will happen if, instead of making honey, the workers all turn to drones? Why, they will next turn to wasps!

If such a change cannot take place in Nature, it certainly occurs in morals and spirituals, for we have seen companies of good, hard-working Christians suddenly break out into factions and quarrel furiously! When bees turn to wasps there is nothing but fighting. May our good Lord save us from such a calamity! I do not mind being like the queen bee in the hive, king of the bees. But a leader of wasps I cannot be! Dear Friends, get to work for the Master—you, I mean, who stand idle all the day. Go work, today, in the Savior’s vineyard. Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, do not relax your energies! Continue to be a lively, energetic Church.

Now that so many Sunday schools need teachers, I charge our friends not to let that blessed part of the service lag behind. There are dozens of schools crying out for teachers! The children come and there are none to instruct them. Should it be so? If you are to be a working Church, you must be a loving Church because faith works by *love*. You must love one another much and love Christ more and love the souls of perishing sinners! Yes, love them so that you will not let them perish if you can do anything towards their salvation. Personal doing of good to men is needed if love is to be real. The love of Jesus made Him seek and save the lost and if ours is worth the name, we shall be engaged in the same holy endeavor.

But if you are to be a working Church and a loving Church you must be a *believing* Church, for that is the bottom of it all. Faith works by love. Get home, then, to prayer and renew your faith in Jesus. May the Holy Spirit lead you anew to the dying love of Jesus. I often go straight away back to the Cross from which I started when I set out for Heaven. The devil says to me, “*You* are no Christian.” I do not think he knows much about it, but I have, before now, tried to show him some evidences that I am a Christian and he has only puffed at them. I find the better way is to go right away to the Cross and say, “I rest on Jesus only.”

Satan cannot deny but what you are a Christian when you stand *there*! Go and do your first works and believe in Jesus just as you did at the first and abide in Him forevermore. As sinners, cling to Jesus and let Him be everything to you. Constant faith will create fervent love and fervent love will do persevering work—so shall we be a people zealous for good works! The Lord bless every one of you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1750 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LUTHER SERMON AT EXETER HALL  
NO. 1750

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 11, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT EXETER HALL.~~***

***~~“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.” Galatians 5:6.~~***

PAUL makes a clean sweep of that trust in the externals of religion which is the common temptation of all time. Circumcision was a great thing with the Jew and, oftentimes he trusted in it. But Paul declares that it avails nothing. There might be others who were glad that they were not Jews, but Paul declares that their *uncircumcision* avails no more than its opposite! Certain matters connected with godliness are external and yet they are useful in their places—especially is that the case with Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the assembling of ourselves together, the reading of the Word of God and public prayer and praise. These things are proper and profitable, but none of them must be made, in any measure or degree, the ground of our hope of salvation, for this text sweeps them all away and plainly describes them as availing nothing if they are made to be the foundations of our trust.

In Luther’s day superstitious confidence in external observances had overlaid faith in the Gospel. Ceremonies had multiplied excessively under the authority of the Pope. Masses were said for souls in “purgatory” and men were actually selling indulgences for sin in the light of day! When God raised up Martin Luther, who was born four centuries ago, he bore emphatic testimony against salvation by outward forms and by the power of priestcraft, affirming that salvation is by faith, alone, and that the whole Church of God is a company of priests, every Believer being a priest unto God.

If Luther had not affirmed it, the doctrine would have been just as true, for the distinction between clergy and laity has no excuse in Scripture, which calls the saints, “God’s kleros”—God’s clergy, or heritage. Again we read, “You are a royal priesthood.” Every man that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is anointed to exercise the Christian priesthood and, therefore, he need not put his trust in another, seeing the supposed priest is no more than any other man. Each man must be accountable for himself before God. Each one must read and search the Scriptures for himself and must believe for himself—and when saved, he must offer up himself as a living sacrifice unto God by Jesus Christ, who is the only High Priest of our profession.

So much for the negative side of the text, which is full of warning to this Ritualistic age. The chief testimony of our great Reformer was to the justification of a sinner in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ and by that alone. He could fitly have taken this as his motto, “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision but faith which works by love.” He was in the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg, troubled and perturbed in mind, and he had there, in an old Latin Bible, this text, “The just shall live by faith.” It was a new idea to him and by its means spiritual light entered his soul in some degree. But such were the prejudices of his up-bringing and such the darkness of his surroundings, that he still hoped to find salvation by outward performances.

He therefore fasted long, till he was found swooning from hunger. He was exceedingly zealous for salvation by works. At last he made a pilgrimage to Rome, hoping to find, there, everything that was holy and helpful. He was disappointed in his search, but yet found more there of what he looked for. On the pretended staircase of Pilate, while in the act of climbing it upon his knees, the Wittenberg text again sounded in his ears like a thunderclap—“The just shall live by faith.” Up he started and descended those stairs, never to grovel upon them again! The chain was broken, the soul was free! Luther had found the L of God and, therefore, from that day on it became his life’s business to flash that Light upon the nations, crying evermore, “The just shall live by faith.”

The best commemoration which I can make of this man is to preach the doctrine which he held so dear. And you who are thus saved can best assist me by believing the doctrine and proving its truth in your own cases. May the Holy Spirit cause it to be so in hundreds of instances!

**I.**First, let us inquire WHAT IS THIS FAITH? We are always talking about it, but what is it? Whenever I try to explain it, I am afraid lest I should confuse rather than expound. There is a story told concerning John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress.” Good Thomas Scott, the Commentator, wrote notes to it. He thought the “Pilgrim’s Progress” a difficult book and he would make it clear. A pious cottager in his parish had the book and she was reading it when her minister called. He said to her, “Oh, I see, you are reading Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. Do you understand it?” She answered innocently enough, “Oh, yes Sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations.”

I am afraid lest you should say when I have done, “I understand what faith is, as I find it in the Bible, and one day, perhaps, I may be able to understand the preacher’s explanation of it.” Warned by this, I will speak as plainly as I can! And first, it is to be remembered that faith is not a mere creed-holding. It is very proper to say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth,” and so forth. But you may repeat all that and be no “Believer” in the Scriptural sense of that term. Though the creed is true, it may not be true to *you*—it would have been the same to you if the opposite had been true, for you put the truth away like a paper in a pigeon-hole and it has no effect upon you. “A very proper doctrine,” you say, “a very proper doctrine,” and so you put it to sleep. It does not influence your *heart*, nor affect your life.

Do not imagine that professing an orthodox creed is the same thing as faith in Christ! A truthful creed is desirable for many reasons, but if it is a dead, inoperative thing, it cannot bring salvation. Faith is belief of the Truths of God, but it is more. Again, faith is not the mere belief that there *is* a God, though that we *must* have, for we cannot come to God except we “believe that He is and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” We are to believe in God—that He is good, blessed, true, right and, therefore, to be trusted, confided in and praised. Whatever He may do, whatever He may say, God is not to be suspected, but believed in. You know what it is to believe in a man, do you not? To believe in a man so that you follow him and confide in him and accept his advice?

In that same way faith believes in God—not only believes that He is, but finds rest in His Character, His Son, His promise, His Covenant, His Word and everything about Him. Faith livingly and lovingly trusts in her God about everything! Especially must we believe in what God has revealed in Scripture—that it is verily and, indeed, a sure and Infallible testimony to be received without question. We accept the Father’s witness concerning Jesus and take heed, thereto, “as unto a light that shines in a dark place.” Faith has specially to believe in Him who is the sum and substance of all this Revelation, even Jesus Christ, who became God in human flesh that He might redeem our fallen nature from all the evils of sin and raise it to eternal felicity.

We believe *in* Christ, *on* Christ, and *upon* Christ—accepting Him because of the record which God has given to us concerning His Son—that He is the Propitiation for our sins. We accept God’s unspeakable Gift and receive Jesus as our All in All. If I wanted to describe saving faith in one word, I should say that it is *trust*. It is so believing God and so believing in Christ that we trust ourselves and our eternal destinies in the hands of a reconciled God. As creatures we look up to the great Father of Spirits. As sinners we trust for the pardon of our sins to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As being weak and feeble we trust to the power of the Holy Spirit to make us holy and to keep us so. We venture our eternal interests in the vessel of Free Grace, content to sink or swim with it. We rely upon God in Christ.

The Word employed to set forth faith in the Scriptures sometimes signifies to *lean*. We lean with all our weight upon our God, in Jesus Christ. We hang upon Christ as a vessel hangs upon a nail. “Recumbency” was a term by which the old Puritans used to describe faith—a lying, or leaning upon something out of ourselves. Guilty as I am, I believe God’s Word that, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” Trusting to that blood I know that I am cleansed from all sin. God sets forth Christ to be a Propitiation—we believe that He is a Propitiation and we take Him to be our Propitiation. By that appropriation our sin is covered and we are free! Faith is the grasping, the appropriating, the receiving into one’s self of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I sometimes illustrate it by that passage of Paul where he says, “The word is near you, even in your mouth.” When a morsel is in your mouth, if you desire to possess it so as never to lose it, what is the best thing to do? Swallow it! Let it go down into the inward parts. Now the word that we preach is, according to the Apostle, “in your mouth”—suffer it, then, by God’s Grace, to go down into your heart, and you shall find it true that, “with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” This is the faiths which saves the soul.

**II.**In the second place we will consider WHY FAITH IS SELECTED AS THE WAY OF SALVATION. I would remind you that if we could not answer this question it would not matter—since the Lord has appointed believing as the way of Grace, it is not ours to challenge His choice. Beggars must not be choosers! Let us trust, if so the Lord ordains. But we can answer this question in a measure. First, it is clear that no other way is possible. It is not possible for us to be saved by our own merits, for we have already broken the Law of God and, future obedience, being already due, cannot make up for past defects—

***“Could my tears forever flow,  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
All for sin could not atone  
You must save, and You alone.”***

The road of good works is blocked up by our past sins and it is sure to be further blocked up by future sins—we ought, therefore, to rejoice that God has commended to us the open road of faith! God has chosen the way of faith that salvation might be by Divine Grace. If we had to do anything in order to save ourselves, we would be sure to impute a measure of virtue to our own doing, or feelings, or prayers, or almsgivings and we would thus detract from the pure Grace of God. But salvation comes from God as a pure favor—an act of undeserved generosity and benevolence—and the Lord will, therefore, only put it into the hand of faith, since faith arrogates nothing to herself. Faith, in fact, disowns all idea of merit, and the Lord of Grace therefore elects to place the treasure of His love in the hands of faith.

Again, it is of faith that there may be no boasting, for if our salvation is of our doing or feelings, we are sure to boast. But, if it is of faith, we cannot glory in self. “Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.” Faith is humble and ascribes all praise to God. Faith is truthful and confesses her obligation to the Sovereign Grace of God. I bless the Lord that He has chosen this way of faith because it is so suitable for poor sinners. Some among us, tonight, would never have been saved if salvation had only been prepared for the good and righteous. I stood before my God guilty and self-condemned. No youth ever had a keener sense of guilt than I had.

When I was convicted of sin, I saw my thoughts and desires to be vile in the sight of God—and I also became vile in my own eyes. I was driven to despair and I know that I could never have been cheered by any plan of salvation except that which is of faith. The Covenant of Works by reason of our weakness affords us no suitable way of hope at any time and, under certain circumstances, we see this very vividly. Suppose that you were in the last article of death? What good works could you do? Yonder dying thief found it a happy thing that by faith he could trust the Crucified One—and before the sun set could be with Him in Paradise! Faith is a suitable way for sinners and especially for sinners who are soon to die!

In some sense we are all in that condition and some of us, perhaps, are especially so. What man among us knows that he will see tomorrow’s dawn? I bless God, again, that the way of salvation is by faith because it is a way open to the most unlearned. What fine theology we get nowadays— deep thinking they call it. The men go down so deep into their subjects and so stir the mud at the bottom, that you cannot see them and they cannot see themselves! I apprehend that teachers of a certain school do not, themselves, know what they are talking about. Now, if salvation were only to be learned by reading through huge folios, what would become of multitudes of poor souls in Bow, and Bethuel Green, and Seven Dials? If the Gospel had consisted of a mass of learning, how could the unlearned be saved?

But now we can go to each one of them and say, “Jesus died”— ***“There is life in a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for you!”***

However little you may know, you know that you have sinned. Know, then, that Jesus has come to put away sin and that whoever believes in Him is immediately forgiven and enters into eternal life. This brief and blessed Gospel is suitable to all cases, from princes to peasants, and we wonder not that faith was selected as the way of salvation.

**III.**But now, thirdly, I want to say a good deal, tonight, upon another question—HOW DOES FAITH OPERATE? For according to our text, it is, “Faith which works by love.” It is a living, laboring, loving faith which, alone, saves the soul. I cannot tell you what hard things I have heard about this doctrine of Salvation by Faith. They say that it is immoral. I have heard immoral men say so and surely they ought to know! They say that it will lead to sin and those who say so would, I should think, be rather pleased with it for that reason if they believed their own statement. I have never heard a *holy* man charge faith with leading him into sin. I know no man that follows after God and lives near to Him who is under fear that faith in God will tempt him to sin!

The fact is, faith does nothing of the kind! Its action is most distinctly the reverse. Like the prudent wife in Proverbs, faith will do a man good and not harm all the days of his life. First, it touches the mainspring of our nature by creating love within the soul. What is needed, now, for the degraded classes in London? Sanitary regulations? Certainly, if they are not allowed to be a dead letter for the need of someone to carry them out. New houses? By all manner of means—the more the better. Lower rents? Assuredly, for no one has a right to get an excessive rent for unhealthy accommodations. Higher wages? Certainly, we could all of us do with a little more.

Many other things are needed. While yonder gin-palaces remain at the corners of the streets, you will not make much headway in lifting up the masses and I suppose the drink-shops will always flourish while the taste for drink remains. Suppose the licensed poison-shops were shut up— would that suffice? I think not. There are men and women in London, and thousands of them, who, if they were put into the cleanest houses and were a mile away from a gin-shop, would still drink and still turn their houses into pigsties! What is needed? Oh, if you could make Christians of them! Suppose they could be born-again? Suppose they could be made to love the things which they now hate, and hate the things which they now love? New hearts and right spirits are the need of London’s outcasts!

How can these be produced? In the hand of God, the Holy Spirit—this is exactly what faith works in the heart! Here is a watch. “It needs cleaning.” Yes, clean it. “It does not work. It needs a new crystal.” Well, put in a new crystal. “It still does not work. It needs new hands.” Get new hands by all means! Still it does not run. What is the matter with it? The maker says that it needs a mainspring. There’s the seat of the evil—nothing can be right till that is rectified. Set all other matters going, but do not forget that the mainspring is the chief part of the business! Faith supplies the soul with a powerful spring of action. It says to the man, “You are forgiven through the blood of Christ who died for you—how do you feel towards Him?”

The man replies, “I love the Lord for redeeming me.” Loving Jesus, the man has now within his soul the seed of every good. He will become a holier and a better being, for he has begun to love, and love is the mother of holiness. Is any service in the world like the service of love? You have a servant in your house, fawning and obsequious, but if you were to reduce his wages, he would show you the rough side of his tongue and seek another employer! You do not expect any more of him than that, but if you did, you would not get it. How different was an old servant I have heard of, who, when his master went down in the world, was content with half-pay! And when he was sorrowfully told that he must go, for his master could not afford him clothes, he made his old ones last him, for he would not leave his master in his old age.

He would rather have earned bread *for* his old master than have left him! He was an attached servant worth his weight in gold! There are few such servants nowadays, for there are not many such *masters*. This kind of service cannot be purchased, but its price is above rubies. When the Lord leads us to believe in Jesus, we become, from then on, His loving servants and serve Him not for reward, but out of gratitude! It is no longer with us so much work and so much pay—we do not fear the threat of Hell for disobedience, nor do we look to Heaven as won by works. No, no, our salvation is a free gift! It is furnished for us through infinite love and supreme compassion and, therefore, we return our heart’s warmest affection. Our heart clings to that dear side which was opened for us. We feel a tender love to those dear pierced feet. We could kiss them every day.

Those blessed hands of the Crucified! If they do but touch us, we are strengthened, honored, comforted. Jesus is altogether lovely to us, our bosom Friend and Lord! Faith, instead of being a poor, paltry thing, as some imagine, is the grandest cause of love and so of obedience and holiness. Know, again, that faith puts us into a new relation. We are bound by nature to be the servants of God, but faith whispers in our ear, “Say, ‘Our Father,’” and when the heart has received the Spirit of adoption, the aspect of service is entirely changed—mercenary service is succeeded by loving obedience and our spirit is altered! To become an heir of God, a jointheir with Jesus, is to elevate work into delight, labor into fellowship with God! The Law is no fetter to a child of God—it is his delight! Faith removes from the heart that form of selfishness which before seemed necessary.

So you hope to be saved by what you do, do you? May I ask you, Friend, whom you are serving in all this? I will tell you. You are serving yourself! All that you do is to win happiness for yourself. How, then, are you serving God? You are living a selfish life, though it is tinged with the color of spirituality. What is done by you in the matter of religion has no objective but that you may be saved and go to Heaven. Your most zealous work is all for *self*. Suppose I say to you, “I know that I am saved. I know that Jesus has put away my sin. I know that He will not permit me to perish”? Why, then, there is room in my case for the serving of the Lord because of what He has done for me! Now I have not myself to *save*—I have Christ to *serve*!

Gratitude is the motive of the Gospel and under its power, unselfish virtue is possible, but not upon the ground of legal service. Pure virtue, it seems to me, is a sheer impossibility till a man is saved because it always must partake, till then, of the low and groveling view of benefiting himself by what he is doing. When once the great transaction is done, and you are saved, then you are lifted up into a nobler sphere and you say—

***“Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,  
Should I not love You well?  
Not for the hope of winning Heaven,  
Nor of escaping Hell!  
Not with the hope of gaining anything,  
Not seeking a reward,  
But as You have loved me,  
O ever-loving Lord,  
So would I love You, dearest Lord,  
And in Your praise will sing  
Solely because You are my God,  
And my Eternal King.”***

Therefore faith inspires us with a higher motive than the Law can suggest. Faith soon creates love for man, for, if the Lord Jesus has saved you, my Brothers and Sisters, you will speedily desire that others may be saved, also. You have tasted of this honey and the sweetness upon your own tongue prevails you to invite others to the feast. He who has been brought into the liberty of Free Grace would set free every captive sinner if he could.

When well worked out, faith means harmony with God. It creates an agreement with the Divine will, so that whatever pleases God pleases us. If the Lord should set the Believer on a dunghill with Job, he would still bless His name. Faith agrees with the Divine Precept which it desires to obey; with the Divine Doctrine which it desires to know and publish. Yes, whatever is of God, Faith says, “It is the Lord, let Him command, teach, or do what seems Him good.” I have shown you that faith is not the trifling principle which its deprecators describe as, “Only believe.” Oh, that they knew what it is to only believe! It is the setting free of the mind from fetters. It is the dawn of Heaven’s own day. It is a lifelong struggle, this “Only believe.” It is “the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.”

Brothers and Sisters, I believe that a humble, persevering faith in God is one of the highest forms of adoration that ever reaches the Throne of God. Though cherubim and seraphim salute the Lord with their, “Holy, holy, holy;” though the whole host of shining ones surround the Throne of God with perpetual hallelujahs, there is no more hearty reverence given to God than when a poor sinner, black as night, cries believingly, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” To believe in the pardon of sin is a wonderful adoration of the mercy and power of God! To believe in a constant Providence is a sweet way of worshipping God in His power and goodness!

When a poor laborer in his cottage, needing bread for his children, kneels down and cries, “Lord, it is written, ‘Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure!’ I believe Your Word and, therefore, I look to You in my necessity.” He renders a homage to the truth and faithfulness of God such as Gabriel could not give, for Gabriel never knew the pinch of hunger. To believe that God will keep us to the end and raise us to His Glory is more honoring to God than all the hymns of the glorified! From us dying sons of earth, when we confide in His promise, there arises up to Heaven incense of a sweet smell, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

To my mind there is also this about faith—that it has a marvelous power over God. Do you ask me to retract that expression? Let it stand! I will explain it. Faith overcomes the Highest upon His Throne. Faith in an inferior can hold a superior fast. Some years ago I was walking in the garden, one evening, and I saw a stray dog about whom I had received information that he was in the habit of visiting my grounds and that he did not, in the least, assist the gardener and, therefore, his attentions were not desired. As I walked along one Saturday evening, meditating upon my sermon, I saw this dog busily doing mischief. I threw my stick at him and told him to go home. But what do you think he did? Instead of baring his teeth at me, or hurrying off with a howl, he looked at me very pleasantly, took up my stick in his mouth and brought it to me! And then, wagging his tail, he laid the stick at my feet!

The tears were in my eyes—the dog had beaten me. I said, “Good dog! Good dog, you may come here when you like after that.” Why had the dog conquered me? Because he had confidence in me and would not believe that I could mean him any hurt. To turn to grander things—the Lord Himself cannot resist humble confidence. Do you not see how a sinner brings, as it were, the rod of Justice to the Lord, and cries, “If You smite me, I deserve it; but I submit to You.” The great God cannot spurn a trustful heart. It is impossible! He were not God if He could cast the soul away that implicitly relies on Him! This is the power of faith, then, and I marvel not that the Lord should have chosen it, for believing is a thing most pleasing to God!

O that you would all trust Him! God lifts His sword against you—run into His arms! He threatens you—grasp His promise! He pursues you—fly to His dear Son! Trust at the foot of the Cross in His full Atonement and you must be saved!

**IV.**Now, I am going to finish in a way suitable to this Luther memorial. You have heard a great deal about Luther’s preaching salvation by faith alone. Now, LET US TURN TO LUTHER’S LIFE and see what Luther himself meant by it. What kind of faith did Luther himself exhibit by which *he* was justified? First, in Luther’s case, faith led him to an open avowal of what he believed. Luther did not mean to go up to Heaven by the back stairs, as many young men hope to do. You wish to be Christians on the sly, so as to escape the offense of the Cross. Luther did not refuse to confess Christ and take up his cross and follow Him. He knew that he, who with his heart believes, must also with his mouth make confession—and he did so right nobly.

He began teaching and preaching the Truth of God which had enlightened his own soul. One of his sermons displeased Duke George of Saxony, but as it saved a lady of high rank, Luther did not fret. He was not the man to conceal the Truth of God because it was dangerous to avow it. Tetzel came with his precious indulgences and his releases for souls in “purgatory.” Thousands of good Catholics were indignant, but no one would bell the cat. Luther called Tetzel, “servant of Pope and of the devil,” and declared, “As he came among us practicing on the credulity of the people, I could not refrain from protesting against it and opposing his odious career.” Without mimicking words, or attempting to speak politely, Luther went at him, fearless of the consequences. He believed in the blessings of Grace, “without money and without price,” and he did not conceal his convictions! He nailed his Theses to the Church door where all might read them.

When astronomers require a new constellation in the heavens let it be “the hammer and nails.” O you who make no profession, let this man’s outspoken faith rebuke you! His dauntless valor for the Truth of God caused him to be greatly hated in his own day with a ferocity which has not yet died out. Luther is still the best hated man in certain quarters. Witness the vile tracts which have been produced, during the last fortnight, to the disgrace of the press which they defile! I can say no worse nor better of them than that they are worthy of the cause in whose interest they are issued. Mention the name of Luther and the bond-slaves of Rome gnash their teeth! This intense ill-feeling proves Luther’s power. Young men, I do not know what your ambition may be, but I hope you do not wish to be in this world mere chips in the porridge, giving forth no flavor whatever.

My ambition does not run in that line. I know that if I have no intense haters, I can have no intense lovers—and, by His Grace, I am prepared to have both. When right-hearted men see honest love of the Truth of God in a man, they cry, “He is our Brother. Let him be our champion!” When the wrong-hearted reply, “Down with him!” we thank them for the unconscious homage which they thus pay to decision of character. No child of God should court the world’s approbation. Certainly Luther did not. He pleased God and that was enough for him. His faith was of this kind, also—that it moved him to a hearty reverence for what he believed to be Holy Scripture. I am sorry that he was not always wise in his judgment of what the Bible contains, but to him Scripture was the last court of appeal. If any had convinced Luther of error out of that Book, he would gladly have retracted.

But that was not their plan—they simply said, “He is a heretic. Condemn him or make him retract.” To this he never yielded for an instant! Alas, in this age numbers of men are setting up to be their own inspired writers. I have been told that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client, and I am inclined to think that when any man sets up to be his own savior and his own revelation, much the same thing occurs. That conceited idea is in the air at this present time—every man is excogitating his own bible. Not so Luther! He loved the Sacred Book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-ax and his weapon of war. A text of Scripture fired his soul, but the words of tradition he rejected. He would not yield to Melancthon, or Zwingli, or Calvin or whoever it might be—however learned or pious. He took his own personal faith to the Scripture and, according to his light, he followed the Word of the Lord. May many a Luther be in this place!

The next thing I note was the intense activity of his faith. Luther did not believe in God doing his work, so as to lie by in idleness. Not a bit of it! A disciple once said to Mohammed, “I am going to turn my camel loose and trust in Providence.” “No,” said Mohammed, “trust in Providence, but tie up your camel carefully.” This resembled Oliver Cromwell’s Puritan precept, “Trust in God, but keep your powder dry.” Luther believed above most men in keeping his powder dry. How he worked! By pen, by mouth, by hand! He was energetic almost beyond belief. He seemed a manyhanded man. He did works which would have taxed the strength of hundreds of smaller men. He worked as if everything depended upon his own activity and then he fell back in holy trust upon God as though he had done nothing! This is the kind of faith which saves a man both in this life and in that which is to come.

Again, Luther’s faith abounded in prayer. What supplications they were! Those who heard them tell us of his tears, his wrestling, his holy arguments. He would go into his closet, heavy at heart, and remain there an hour or two, and then come forth singing, “I have conquered, I have conquered!” “Ah,” he said one day, “I have so much to do today that I cannot get through it with less than three hours’ prayer.” I thought he was going to say, “I cannot afford to give even a quarter of an hour to prayer”—but he *increased* his prayer as he increased his labor. This is the faith that saves—a faith that lays hold on God and prevails with Him in private supplication.

His was a faith that delivered him entirely from the fear of man. Duke George is going to stop him. “Is he?” said Luther. “If it were to rain Duke Georges, I would go.” He is exhorted not to go to Worms, for he will be in danger. If there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the housetops, he would be there! And he was there, as you all know, playing the man for the Gospel and for his God. He committed himself to no man, but kept his faith in God pure and unmingled! Popes, emperors, doctors, electors were all as nothing to Luther when they stood against the Lord. Be it so with us, also! His was a faith that made him risk all for the Truth of God. There seemed no hope of his ever coming back from Worms alive. He was pretty sure to be burned like John Russ—and the wonder is that he escaped. His very daring brought him safety from peril! He expressed his regret that the crown of martyrdom would, in all probability, be missed by him, but the faith which is prepared to die for Jesus was within him. He, who in such a case saves his life, shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ’s sake shall find it unto life eternal! This was the faith that made Luther a man among men and saved him from priestly affectations.

I do not know whether you admire what is thought to be very superior religion. It is a thing of beauty, but not of use. It ought always to be kept in a glass case—it is made up for drawing-rooms and religious meetings, but would be out of place in a shop or on a farm. Now, Luther’s religion was with him at home—at the table us well as in the pulpit. His religion was part and parcel of his common life and that life was free, open, bold and unrestrained. It is easy to find fault with him from the superfine standpoint, for he lived in an honest fearlessness. My admiration kindles as I think of the hearty openness of the man! I do not wonder that even ungodly Germans revere him, for he is all German, and all man! When he speaks, he does not take his words out of his mouth to look at them, and to ask Melancthon whether they will do. No, he hits hard and he has spoken a dozen sentences before he has thought whether they are polished or not!

Indeed, he is utterly indifferent to criticism and speaks what he thinks and feels. He is at his ease, for he feels at home. Is he not everywhere in his great Father’s house? Has he not a pure and simple intent to speak the Truth of God and do the right? I like Luther with a wife and children. I like to see him with his family and a Christmas tree, making music with little Johnny Luther on his knee. I love to hear him sing a little hymn with the children and tell his pretty boy about the horses in Heaven with golden bridles and silver saddles. Faith had not taken away his manhood, but sanctified it to noblest uses. Luther did not live and move as if he were a mere cleric, but as a brother to our common humanity!

After all, Brothers and Sisters, you must know that the greatest divines have to eat bread and butter like other people. They shut their eyes before they sleep and they open them in the morning, just like other folks! This is matter of fact, though some stilted gentleman might like us to doubt it. They feel and think like other men. Why should they seem as if they did not? Is it not a good thing to eat and drink to the glory of God and show people that common things can be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer? What if we do not wear canonicals and so on? The best canonicals in the world are thorough devotion to the Lord’s work! And if a man lives aright, he makes every garment a vestment, every meal a sacrament and every house a temple! All our hours are canonical! All our days holy days! Every breath is incense, every pulse music for the Most High!

They tell us that Luther ignored good works. It is true he would not allow good works to be spoken of as the means of salvation, but of those who professed faith in Jesus he demanded holy lives! Luther abounded in prayer and charity. What an almsgiver Luther was! I fear he did not, at all times, dimly regard the principles of the Charity Organization Society! As he goes along, if there are beggars, he empties his pockets for them. Two hundred crowns have just come in, and, though he has a family about him, he cries, “Two hundred crowns! God is giving me my portion in this life.” “Here,” he says to a poor Brother minister, “take half! And where are the poor? Fetch them in. I must be rid of this!” I am afraid that his Catherine was forced, at times, to shake her head at him, for, in truth, he was not always the most economical husband that might be. In almsgiving he was second to none and in all the duties of life he rose far beyond the level of his age. Like all other men, he had his faults, but as his enemies harp on that string and go far beyond the truth, I need not dwell upon his failings. I wish that the detractors of Luther were half as good as he. All the glory of his grand career was unto the Lord, alone!

Lastly, Luther’s faith was a faith that helped him under struggles that are seldom spoken of. I suppose that never man had greater soul-conflict than Luther. He was a man of heights and depths. Sometimes he went up to Heaven and he sang his hallelujahs. And then he went down, again, into the abyss with his “Miserere.” I am afraid that great, vigorous man that he was, he had a bad liver. He was grievously afflicted in body in ways which I need not mention. And he was sometimes laid aside for months together, being so racked and tortured that he longed to die. His pains were extreme and we wonder how he endured them so well. But always, between the attacks of illness, Luther was up again preaching the Word of God. Those desperate struggles with the devil would have crushed him but for his faith. The devil seems to have been constantly assailing him and he was constantly assailing the devil.

In that tremendous duel he fell back upon his Lord and, trusting in Omnipotence, he put Satan to rout. Young men, I pray that a Luther may spring up from your ranks. How gladly would the faithful welcome him! I, who am more a follower of Calvin than of Luther, and much more a follower of Jesus than of either of them, would be charmed to see another Luther upon this earth! God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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CIRCUMCISION AND UNCIRCUMCISION  
NO. 3454

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1915.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1866.~~***

***~~“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love.” Galatians 5:6.~~***

MAN appears to the most superficial observer to have, at any rate, two parts—his outward bodily form and constitution—and his inward, invisible, but essential self. There are some persons who care nothing for the inner man, who think that to educate the body and to have it in the finest state for athletic exercises is sufficient, but these persons are very few and very foolish, for the commonsense of mankind now holds that the mind must be trained, that the mental faculties must be put into healthy order and that the inner man must be cared for as well as the outer man. Who shall venture to say that the flesh is more important than the soul? He would be foolish who would attach no importance to the body. “Verily, bodily exercise profits a little,” says the Apostle, though it may be but a little. We are not to despise the body, nor to neglect it. We are not to consider it as a thing utterly unworthy of our regard in any respect. “Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit” and, therefore, are neither to be despised, nor to be defiled? But, still, wisdom tells us that the inner man is more important than the outer and that we must care for that at all hazards, and see to its interests, come what may of the interests of the body.

Now true religion I may compare, in this respect, to man. *It*, too, has its two parts—the outward and the inward. I suppose every religion must have some outward way of displaying itself. Even our Quaker friends, who give up both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, yet show their religiousness, even more conspicuously than most of us do, by a certain form of dress. And if there were nothing else, the mere sitting still in the meeting house for an hour would be an outward form—and I believe it is one which has a tendency to become as formal as any other method of worship. All religion, whether true or false, must have an outward part to it, that is, its body, and this outward part of religion, the body, is not to be despised, but is to be cared for and thoughtfully observed. But the tendency with most men is to put the outward form of religion into the highest place and to think the most of it, just as I have said some think more of the body than they do of the mind.

Now this is all idle and foolish, for the outward form of religion, after all, is nothing without the inward spirit. No, it is worse than nothing—it is hypocrisy! It is an insult to Heaven and is more likely to bring a curse upon those who practice it, than it is to obtain for them a blessing! Inward worship, when it does not show itself outwardly, is acceptable to God, for, “God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth”—and spiritual worship, when it does show itself outwardly, is equally acceptable to Him, for He receives it for the sake of the Spirit which gives it life. But outward religion without the inward spirit is always to be classed under the list of offenses rather than of excellencies, for we believe an outward worship which does not carry the heart with it, to be abhorrent to God—

***“For God abhors the sacrifice***

***Where not the heart is found.”***  
Yet, understand, the outward is to be observed, but without the inward it is nothing!

And now for our text. The Apostle first speaks about the outward part of religion, and then he tells us what the inward part of it is. In the first place we will have a few words on—

**I.**THE OUTWARD PART OF RELIGION.  
Paul here speaks of it after that fashion. He says, “In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision.” Before our Savior came into the world, circumcision was a thing of meaning. It was the seal of the Covenant. God had ordained it to be the outward token of the inward possession of certain remarkable privileges with which He had endowed the seed of Abraham. But after Christ came, circumcision lost its force and availed nothing—for this reason only—namely, that it had lost all *spiritual* meaning and was no longer the type of spiritual blessings and benefits. The Savior had been pleased to institute other ordinances which better set forth the spiritual Truth which He came to reveal, and circumcision, therefore, having no more any spiritual teaching in it, became a dead thing and the Apostle says that it avails nothing. Of course, it was, in Paul’s day, the outward mark of a firm believer in Judaism. The man who still held to the old faith was not to be led away by the innovations, as he supposed them to be, of Jesus of Nazareth, but still held that it was essential, first and foremost, that the seed of Israel should bear in the flesh the ordained mark. But the Apostle said that “circumcision avails nothing.” He put it on to the side. But what is remarkable, as showing the force of the Apostle’s meaning, is that he should have added, “Nor uncircumcision,” for while there were some who said, “I have received the seal of the Covenant—I am circumcised”—the Apostle said to them, “It avails nothing.” “Oh,” says another, but I, being a Jew, refuse to be circumcised. I, as a Jew, have come out and said that my children shall no longer be initiated into the Jewish faith according to the Jewish custom. I have repudiated it—shall not I be saved? I have no faith in the customs of my fathers—surely it is well with me, for by this I have declared myself to be a follower of the Savior.” “No,” says the Apostle, “it makes no difference! You who are circumcised get no good by it and you who are uncircumcised get no good—neither the one nor the other is of any good to you!” He sweeps away the whole of the Jewish ceremony, both in its observance and in its non-observance! And so he gives it a twofold blow and lays it dead!  
Now I do not think that the Apostle meant here to speak merely of circumcision, but of all other rites and ceremonies! I believe he would have us understand that while there is any spiritual meaning connected with them, they are valuable just as circumcision might have been valuable while there was any spiritual meaning connected with it—but that when we are not Believers, when we merely receive them outwardly, without knowing their spiritual meaning, or comprehending and receiving the spiritual Grace which they typify, they avail nothing—they are of no service, and that, indeed, in and of themselves, they are of no use whatever apart from that “faith which works by love.” Whether you were sprinkled in your infancy, or have been immersed as Believers, supposing you not to have been Believers, that immersion is as much a mistake as your previous sprinkling! You have not received any benefit from either, for there is nothing in either. The true essence of the thing lies in the *faith* which works by love, and if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing at all! You have received only the mere outward ceremony and there has no good come to your soul. You may have come to the Lord’s Supper. You may have received it kneeling, or received it standing, or received it sitting—if you have received it by faith, you have been enabled by faith to feed upon Christ to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. But if you have received it without faith, you have received nothing! No, you have done worse than that, for you have eaten and you have drank condemnation unto yourselves—you have taken the bread of the children, not being a child, and so you have stolen from the Father’s Table! You have entered into the court of the priests without being a priest and so you have committed the sin of Uzza—you have ventured to perform a sacrifice for which you were not fit— and it is a marvel of God’s long-suffering mercy that you have not received a curse for having intruded where you were never called! If you have come to Baptism and to the Lord’s Supper with the faith which works by love, you have doubtless received benefits by the ordinances—but if you have come without that faith—Baptism or no Baptism avails nothing whatever! There is nothing in any of those outward forms and ceremonies in themselves! They are only a dead and killing letter, a mystifying ceremony which drags men down to the things which are apparent. But when faith comes, it quickens them and makes them live—it transforms them into blessed means of Grace and then God, in them, communes with the soul. I think it would be difficult to say too broadly or too strongly that outward ceremonies profit nothing in themselves. I know we are likely to be misunderstood, and that there would be some who would say that they would neglect these things altogether. If you wish to misunderstand us, you will. We wish to speak very plainly, but if we were misunderstood in that point, we would not regret it so much as we would if we were misunderstood upon the other, namely, that the outward form of religion is nothing but death, the mere letter, and not the spirit, and that only true vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can really bless the soul!  
Now let us try to bring out this thought still more fully, that “neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision”—that is to say, that outward forms do not avail to change the life.  
The change of the outward life is a very great part of salvation. A man cannot be saved from a sin in which he still indulges. It is clear that if a man is saved in the Scriptural sense, he is saved from his sins. The drunk becomes sober, the harlot becomes chaste, the unrighteous become religious. Now it is a matter of commonsense which I will put to anybody—whether there is any tendency in an outward ceremony to make a thief honest, or to make a drunk sober? Whether, in fact, sprinkling, or immersion, or receiving bread, or drinking of wine *have any tendency, in themselves, to produce any sort of moral effect upon the man*? When St. Francis Zavier went to India, he converted thousands of people, and made them Christians—and how do you think he did it? Why, by having on his belt a little pot of water and a large brush—as he went along, he sprinkled the people with the water and they were christened! They were Christianized, baptized and he put them all down as converts. Very well, legitimately so they were, I have no doubt, as much benefited by that as people are by infant baptism, and as much as people are by immersion, if they are immersed without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! We laugh at the thing when it is done on a large scale, and wonder that people can receive it—but we may equally laugh at it with scorn in any one individual instance! My dear Hearer, if you could really prove that an outward ceremony changed men, oh, how diligently would we practice it! If the consecrated wafer really does make men holy, oh, turn your houses into ovens and let there be bakers in every street! Happy bakers who can convert the minds of men! Happy wheat that can be ground so as to change sinners into saints! But where is the connection? Where is the connection between bread and the conscience? Where is the connection between water, either in drops or in floods, and the heart, the affections and the reason of man? Oh, Beloved, we know better than this! How is it, then, that men’s minds can cling to such superstitions? “You must be born-again” in order that an effect may be produced upon your minds and hearts! You must know another influence than that which is outward! There must come upon you an unseen and invisible power which shall enlighten your understandings, control your souls, change your affections and so make your lives to be different from what they were! But oh, these outward things are but clumsy appliances! You might as well turn gas upon a fire to put it out, as try to save a soul by these outward forms! Circumcision and uncircumcision—neither of them avail anything in the moral life of man—and everybody knows that!  
But, then, it is equally true that *they do not do anything to comfort a real awakened and quickened conscience.* I have no doubt that a great many people do derive a degree of comfort from going to church and chapel. You come here and sit in your pews and are very comfortable. Perhaps some of you go to sleep, but that does not lessen your comfort, but rather increases it. If the sermon were never so dull, perhaps it would be all the better for you, but it prevents your being quite as comfortable because it happens to be personal, and to be plainly and boldly spoken. I know there are hundreds and thousands of people in this country who would be greatly troubled in their minds if they did not go to church or chapel twice on Sundays—and they get comfort in this because their conscience is dead! If their conscience were really awakened, they would understand that there is no connection between conscience and outward forms. A conscious sinner, an awakened sinner, never can be lulled to sleep, again, except by that same voice which first awakened it! Conscience finds peace concerning sin when it finds sin laid upon the Savior. It gets peace concerning guilt when it sees Him smarting and bleeding unto death. When faith comes, conscience has peace with God through Jesus Christ, but I am certain that no conscience which God ever awakened from the dead found peace through Baptism, or through the Lord’s Supper, or through any outward form! The conscience which is once awakened cries, “These things are good enough for saints. They may minister comfort to them, but I need salvation itself! I need Christ Himself— not things *about* Christ, but Christ—not merely to worship with His people, but to be one of them! “Putting aside the crucifix as it was held up to his eyes in his dying moments, and refusing the last unction, a dying monk cried out, “Tua vulnera Jesu! Tua vulnera Jesu!”—“Your wounds, O Jesus! Your wounds, O Jesus!” And this is what every awakened conscience will have to cry! It must be the blood of Jesus, not the sacramental wine! The washing of the bath that was filled with His Atonement—not any outward washing for the cleansing of the flesh! The reception of God the Holy Spirit into our souls, as a priest coming into a temple! The receiving of the love of Jesus into our hearts as an altar fire into a censor! The receiving of the love of God, Himself, our Father, so that we can say—  
***“Abba Father! Cry With an unfaltering tongue.”***  
It is all this which the conscience needs and it will not be satisfied with anything short of this. “Faith which works by love” will quiet the conscience, but all else that you can do is but as singing a song to one that is of a sad heart—it yields no comfort to the soul.  
If a man were very hungry, very hungry, indeed, I can imagine that if a person should say to him, “Sit down. I am going to play you a tune,” he would answer, “Oh, but give me something solid! Give me something substantial!” What would the other say? “Not pleased with music? Come, then, I will give you some painting. Look at that window, there, is not that finely done?” “Give me something solid! Oh, give me something solid!” “Well, but here comes a procession—are not these gentlemen very prettily arrayed? Is it not a gaudy show, worthy of any baby?” “Yes,” replies the man, “but I need something solid! I can eat neither processions, nor painted windows, nor music! I need something solid.” “Oh,” says the man, “but I must give you a rule to live by—here is one which was settled long ago by bishops—will not that satisfy you?” “No. Your rules and regulations may be all very good, but I need something solid, something to receive now.” Now the guilty conscience has an awful hunger within itself that cannot be satisfied with ritualism of the best and finest sort, but the conscience cries, “I need something to satisfy me! Tell me, how can God be Just, and yet be the justifier of the ungodly? That is the question. Tell me, how can God punish sin and yet forgive it? Tell me, what is to become of me while I am covered with all these iniquities? Tell me how I can get free from them.” Well, the Gospel comes and says, “The Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place of all who believe on Him, and the moment you believe in Him you are completely saved! Your sin is gone, you are a child of God, your feet are on the Rock of Ages and you can never perish.” “Oh,” says the conscience, “that is what I need! That is the very thing I have been longing for! Here is the gracious God turning to me and saying, ‘I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities.’” Ah, may God give us such a spiritual hunger as that, and there will be no fear that we shall ever be mystified about circumcision or uncircumcision, for we shall feel that neither of them avail anything! If we once get the faith that works by love, we shall be satisfied with favor and filled with the goodness of the Lord!  
But now it remains for us to say that, as outward religion neither changes the morals of men, nor gives peace to an awakened conscience, *so neither can these outward things avail to take us to Heaven.* You will be deceived at the last, rest assured of that, if you rest on anything which only concerns these eyes of ours, these hands and these feet. If you are depending upon the things which are seen, they are, every one of them, temporal—they cannot be of any use to you when you come into the land of the things that are not seen—which are eternal! Oh, Soul, if you rest upon a mortal hope, or a mortal thing, or an outward ceremony, or an outward form, you are resting on that which cannot have any efficacy in the unseen world! And when your soul comes to the grave and you look across the narrow stream of death into the dim eternity, you will then have no hope! It is very strange how God makes liars tell the truth. The priests do not pretend to offer you any hope, for what do they tell you? Do they ever say that these ceremonies will take you to Heaven? Not they! It seems as if God would not let Satan fabricate the lie, perfectly, for he has left a weak part in it. Where does the best believer in outward ceremonies go? Ask the priest, and he will tell you that he goes to “purgatory!” Did not Cardinal Wiseman go there? Did they not put upon the lid of his coffin, “Pray for the repose of his soul,” and was not that a proof that they believed he went where he needed to be prayed for and where he had no repose for his soul? Do not all the mightiest and greatest men of that church go there? Do not even the Popes go there? It is a poor consequence—that is all you can get, if you get anything! They cannot offer you anything better than this! But oh, if you get the “faith which works by love,” I will tell you what you will have—you shall have a good hope through Divine Grace

not of “purgatory,” not of the “limbos patrum,” but of being with Christ in Heaven as soon as your eyes are closed in death and, confident of this, you shall come to your dying bed, you shall lie there as long as God is pleased to spare you in your sickness, without doubt or fear! And when the last hour comes you shall have Grace to die, if not triumphantly, at least hopefully! You shall have preludes of the everlasting song, foretastes of the coming Glory and you shall die with some such song as this on your lips—  
***“Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me!  
Now shall my labors have an end  
In joy, and peace, and thee!”***  
It is singular, and strangely indicative of a trembling conscience, that those who preach up circumcision and uncircumcision dare not offer Heaven—but those who declare that salvation is by faith in Jesus can boldly say to every trembling sinner, “Fear not! If you believe in Jesus when you die, yet shall you be with Him in Paradise, ‘for there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus’ for they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” We shall not be in “purgatory,” but we shall be with Him, for His prayer to His Father for us was, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.”  
Thus have we said enough to show you that the outward form of religion avails nothing. Now we come to speak, in the next place, concerning—  
**II.**THE INWARD PART OF RELIGION.  
The text tells us that the inward part of religion is “faith which works by love.” Now what is faith? In one word, it is trust—the trusting of the soul in God’s promise made in Christ Jesus. My faith is that which enables me to believe that God is true, to believe that He sent His Son in the flesh to suffer for my sins, to believe that through the merit of His blood and the virtue of His holy life, I am saved. To trust in Him to save me—this is faith. It is not the faith of God’s elect to merely believe dogmas and truths, to believe them to be true, but to rest upon them, to trust in them, to repose one’s soul thereon! The very essence of Christianity is trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But mark, we are told that this is *faith of a certain kind—*it is “faith which works by love.” It is not a faith that merely talks, much less a faith that goes to sleep, or a faith that bolsters men up in presumption and makes them live in sin, but a faith which works by love, a practical faith. It is a faith which has arms and hands—not a crippled faith—but a living thing which cannot help working! It is not a frozen river that is like stone in its bed, but rolling on, increasing and swelling until it comes to the sea. It is a living thing, a working thing! My faith is no faith at all if it does not operate upon my daily life. If I believe that Jesus Christ has saved me and I trust in Him, there are a great many things I cannot do which other people can do— and many things that I love to do which other people would not do and do not wish to do! If my religion never comes across me when I am in the shop, and stops me, and never comes to me when I am in the market place, then it is a religion which is not worth a button—and the sooner I am rid of it the better! It must be a working religion, practically operating upon the entire man. And this is the way in which it operates—it operates by love. It works by making us love Christ for what He has done for us. It works by making us love God, so that we say, “Lord, what is Your will, for we wish to submit to it”? And this makes us cheerful, happy and resigned. It works, in fact, by making us love the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do not love Jesus, then your faith is no faith, for the very sound of His name is precious to those who have true faith! It works by love to Him who Himself loved us and gave Himself for us! It works by love to God, who gave His Son—  
***“Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn.  
Chosen of Him before time began,  
I choose Him in return.”***  
Then faith also works by love to *the Brothers and Sisters*. A man has no faith if he does not love faithful men. It is a mark of the child of God that he loves the rest of the family. “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren”—not only the brethren who happen to be called by our denominational name—that is very easy! A hypocrite can do that—but *all* the saints! Whenever, as St. Basil used to say, we can see anything of Christ, there we ought to give something of Christian love, so that genuine faith loves all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and desire the good and prosperity of all the branches of the vine. And, mark you, this faith will work by love, even to your enemies! If you are a genuine Christian, you will love those who do not love you. It is very little to love our own relatives, though there are some who do not do even that. But to love our enemies is the mark of a true Christian—to be prepared to bear and to forbear, to endure, but never to inflict, to be reviled, but not to answer, not to rebuke, but to heap coals of fire upon the head of our foes by endeavoring to do all that we can for the good of those who do us ill. It was said of Thomas Cranmer, “Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn and he will be your friend and give you help.” And it was said of another, that if you wanted to get a favor from him, the best thing you could do was to do him an injury, because then, when you asked him for anything, he was quite certain to say, “I will do it for you because you have been my enemy.” Let us seek for something of the same spirit! Let us love even those who are unlovable and who love us not.  
Then I may say that one mark of this faith is that *it loves sinners*. God deliver you, as a Church and congregation, from that unloving spirit which never cares for the souls of men! I believe that to be an accursed theology which makes a preacher say, “I have preached to the living people of God. As for the dead, I have nothing to say to them.” A theology which dries up the milk of human kindness makes a man a cynic towards his own kind. And to have no care for his own flesh and blood is a theology that never came from Heaven, but from a very different quarter! I have seen the dupes of this theology callous about the conversion of even their own children! And I have heard them boast that they never speak to their children about religion—boasting of it as though it were not the most disgraceful thing that could be said! The Christian that cares not for his own household is worse than a heathen and a publican! We have heard some of these say that God will do His own work and, therefore, they never speak about Christ, and though this were not degrading themselves below the very basest idolaters, for even an idolater will speak well of his god and endeavor to bring others to bow before his blocks of wood and stone! But these persons, stupefied by a fatalism which is far more Muslim than Christian, leaves undone the work which God would have them do and which, if they had genuine faith in their souls, they would do! May God give us not a frozen faith like that, but a faith which works by love to the souls of sinners! You do not love Christ if you do not love sinners! He came into the world to seek and to save them, and if you do not try to bring them to Him, you do not know Christ! How dwells the love of God in you if you have never cared for poor dying men?  
So, then, it seems that the very soul and essence of true religion is this—the possession of a trust in Christ which, through the passion called, “love,” affects my whole being, moves me to the greatest activity, and restrains me from sin. Now, dear Friends, have you got this faith that works by love? “Oh, I am not baptized,” says one. Now I never asked you that question! I did not indeed. I only asked you, Have you got the faith which works by love? “Oh, Sir, I have been baptized.” I did not ask you that! I asked if you have got the faith which works by love? “Well, Sir, I am a member of the church.” What does that matter? That is not the point—the point is, have you the faith which works by love? If you have got that, you are going to Heaven! If you have not, you are on the highroad to Hell! If you have the faith which works by love, you may have a great many errors, you may make a great many mistakes, but your face is towards Jerusalem and you will get there! But if you have not the faith which works by love, you may be as orthodox as the Bible, itself, and you may be sound in theology as the Holy Spirit—and yet, even if all this were possible—you could never enter Heaven if you have not the faith which works by love. That is the essential thing, the one thing necessary.  
I was struck, when thinking over this text, to find that in the next Chapter (Galatians 6:15) you get this truth in another shape. By comparing one text with another, you often get fresh light, and here you have it—“For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but”—but what? The faith which works by love? No, “but a new creature.” Well, then, these two things must be the same! My having the faith which works by love implies that I am a new creature! Now some of you have been puzzling yourselves about whether you have been born-again, whether you are new creatures. Have you got the faith that works by love? If so, you are a new creature, for you never saw a man in a natural state who had faith that works by love! He may have faith, a faith which makes him tremble like the devil, but the faith that works by love to Jesus Christ, no hypocrite ever did have or ever could have! What are you to apprehend, my dear Friends, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ and are trusting in Him? Do not let the devil perplex you by saying that perhaps you have not experienced regeneration, perhaps you have not felt this and have not felt that! You are right, and must be right, if you have the faith which works by love, for, according to the Scriptures, that is so evident a proof of being a new creature that it is tantamount to it! Hear how our Savior puts it. There were some who wanted to do the work of God and who said, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” What do you think Christ said to them? Did He say, “You must feel this, or feel that,” and so on? No! He said, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.” This is the greatest work that God ever does—to make a man believe in His Son! Wherever a man is made to believe in Jesus Christ and to trust Him, you may see the finger of God. You may imitate 20 things in religion, but you cannot give a man true faith—it must be an act of Grace. No dead sinner ever did trust Christ! No unregenerate soul ever possessed the faith which works by love! And it may stand to you as a certain evidence of the new birth, if you have got the faith which works by love.  
As I studied the subject farther, I was struck to find that in another text (Colossians 3:11) you get the same sentiment—“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Now there are some who say, “I hope I am a new creature, but I am sometimes afraid whether Christ is mine.” Well, but it is the same thing! Christ is all and in all to you, and you are the very same people who are new creatures, and who have the faith that works by love! Then, dear Heart, if you are trusting in Christ, Christ is your All-in-All, and you need not say—  
***“‘Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious doubt.  
Do I love the Lord or no,  
Am I His or am I not?”***  
You are His, if you are trusting in Him with the faith that works by love! Oh, I think there are some of you who can say, “Well, I do trust Him. I have nowhere else to trust. I cannot trust in myself. I dare not rely on my prayers. I cannot depend upon any mortal thing, but the Lord knows that I do rest upon the blood of Jesus Christ. I am not deceived about that and, what is more, I do love Him, not as I want to love Him, not as I ought to love Him, but I do love Him. The sound of His name is sweet to me. I could not live without it and when I am at a distance from Him I cannot be happy. There was a time when I could be very happy and very contented without the Savior—when I could enjoy the theater, the ballroom and all the pleasures of the world, but I cannot now. It is all emptiness and vanity—vanity of vanity! I must have Christ! If others can do without Him, I cannot. I must have Him.”  
Well, then, dear Soul, He is yours! He is your All-in-All. I spoke last Sunday of the limpets at the seaside, sitting on the rocks. It does not prove that the rocks belong to the limpets because the limpets sit there, but in your case you are just like a poor little thing flying to Christ—and that proves that Christ belongs to you, that He is yours in this world, and will be yours in the world to come! Then if I take hold of Christ, I know that He is mine! There was never a sinner who took Christ and then found that he had made a mistake. The woman who came to the Savior and touched the hem of His garment, and asked to receive a cure of the Savior, did not take the cure away, but He said, “Your *faith* has *saved* you; go in peace.” If you can get Christ, Christ is yours. Trust Him with your soul, now, Sinner! You have no qualification. You have no goodness. You have no merits. Perhaps you have no good feelings, nor anything that is commendable. Well now, trust Him! Do you believe that He can save such a sinner as you are? Can you do Him the credit, Sinner, that such a lost and almost condemned sinner as you are can be saved by Him? If you have the power thus to believe in Him, it proves that you are saved, for you could not thus have believed unless He had visited you and given you Grace to do it! Can you do it now? The greater you feel your sin to be, the blacker you persuade yourself that you are tonight, the more can you honor Christ by casting yourself wholly on Him!  
He who has no disease cannot honor the physician by saying he believes he can cure him, but he who has a disease through and through him, so that he is given up—when he says to the physician, “Sir, I believe that you can exterminate this disease and make me a healthy man”— does honor to his physician by his faith. You great sinners, you black sinners, you lost, ruined and undone sinners, the Lord help you now to trust Christ, and then you will honor Him, and give Him glory, and that is the best proof that He is in you and that you shall be with Him in the day of His appearing! It is faith that works by love that is the grand thing, and that is the same thing as being a new creature, and the same thing as having Christ to be our All-in-All.  
May God give this to those of you who are seeking it, so that, having begun in the spirit, you do not end in the flesh, but walk in the liberty wherewith Christ shall make you free. Amen.

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #2594 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS”  
NO. 2594

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 30, 1898.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING IN THE YEAR 1856.~~***

***~~“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the Cross ceased.” Galatians 5:11.~~***

THE religion of Jesus is the most peaceful, mild and benevolent religion which was ever promulgated. When we compare it with any set of dogmas invented by men, there is not one of them that can stand the least comparison with it for gentleness, mildness and love. As for the religion of Mohamed, it is the religion of the vulture—but the religion of Jesus is that of the dove—all is mercy, all is mild. It is, like its Founder, an embodiment of pure benevolence, Grace and truth.

And yet, strange to say, gentle as the Gospel is, and inoffensive as its professors have always proved themselves to be, when they have acted rightly—not resisting evil, but submitting to it, whatever it might be—yet there has never been anything which has caused more disturbance in the world than the Christian religion! It is not a sword and yet it has brought war into the world. It is not a fire and yet it has consumed many old institutions—and has burned much that men thought would last forever. It is the Gospel of peace and yet it has parted the dearest friends and caused terrible feuds and confusions everywhere! Though in itself it is all gentleness, yet it seems as if the standard of the dove were the standard of battle and as if raising up the peaceful Cross had been the signal for war, like the blood-red fiery Cross which of old they passed through Scotland to summon the clans to battle! Strange, yet strangely true it is, that the Cross of Christ has always been an offense and that it has provoked the fiercest battles and the sternest strifes which men have ever had with their fellow men.

In considering our text I shall, first, speak to you a little concerning *what “the offense of the Cross” is.* Secondly, as to *how men show their offense against the Cross.* Thirdly, I shall have a little to say to *those who are offended at the Cross,*to show them their folly. And, lastly, I shall conclude *by an inference or two, for the special benefit of Christian ministers and the Church at large.*

**I.**Let us enquire, first, WHEREIN DOES “THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS” CONSIST?  
Our limits forbid any attempt to be elaborate and we commence by saying that “the offense of the Cross” lies, *first, in the way in which it deals with all human wisdom.* The philosopher puts his glasses to his eyes, looks at the Cross and then says, “I cannot see anything so very wonderful in it—even with these splendid glasses of mine, which can see more than that poor, humble peasant! I do not care about such a system of religion as that—any simpleton can understand the Cross.” So he passes by and merely sneers at it.  
The man who loves controversy comes to the Gospel and finds that there is in it pure dogmatism. Such things are said to be true and sinners must believe them—or else be damned. “I shall not do so” he says. “I shall not yield implicit faith to the Gospel. I like disputing upon points of doctrine. I like to argue against them. I shall not listen to your preacher who says, ‘This is the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing else but the Truth.’ I will not hear the man who speaks thus authoritatively! I like men who will give me margin enough to doubt, who let me believe what I like and no more. I prefer to use my reason and common sense.” When you come to talk with him about the religion which says, “Believe that or else be lost. Believe that or else be shut out of the pale of salvation,” he turns on his heels and says, “I will not believe any such thing!” And when he asks what it is he is to believe, he professes himself to be wiser than the Word of God! “What?” he says, “believe in the Atonement? I can’t—it is contrary to my common sense. Believe the Doctrine of Election? Why, it shocks my humanity! Believe in the total depravity of human nature and the impossibility of being saved without being born again? Why, I cannot receive such teaching for a single moment! It is contrary to all that the scholars have ever taught and different from what any philosopher ever would have invented! So I shall not receive it.”  
And he turns away with an anathema against the Cross. He cannot bear it because of its great simplicity! If he could describe it as being so amazing that he could by no means make the common people comprehend it—and that it was only because of his gigantic intellect that he was able to understand it, himself—he would not mind accepting it! But as it is so plain and simple, he turns away from it in disgust. He cannot bear the Gospel of the Cross—it has not worldly wisdom enough in it for him—and he either does not know or he forgets that the knowledge of Christ Crucified is the most excellent of all the sciences, and that never is reason so glorified as when it humbly sits down under the shadow of the Cross!  
But there is something in the Cross of Christ which hurts men’s pride even more than this! And that is, *it is opposed to all their notions of human ability.*The man who is relying for salvation on his own strength does not like the Doctrine of the Cross. If anyone preaches a gospel which tells the sinner that he has power to save himself—if he preaches a gospel which says that Christ, having died to put all men in a salvable condition, they have only to exercise the power they have and they will be able to deliver themselves—if a man thus preaches something which exalts the skill and strength of the *creature—*he will never offend his unregenerate hearers! But if he once begins to cast the sinner down in the dust and to teach what Christ Himself taught—“No man can come to Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him”—and that, in the Scriptures, all men are declared to be “dead in trespasses and sins,” then the proud sinner will turn away and say, “I am not going to be so insulted, to have all my powers leveled to the ground! Am I to be made into a mere machine, or into a piece of clay and to lie passive in the Potter’s hands? I will not submit to such an indignity!” If the minister will give him a little to do, himself, and let him sacrifice a little to his own idol, he will drink down the false doctrine as the ox drinks down water! But since we tell him he is powerless, like the poor bleeding man when the Samaritan met him, he says, “I will have nothing to do with you!”  
And the Cross offends men, yet again, because *it goes clean contrary to their ideas of human merit.* There is not a soul in all the world that, by nature, loves to be stripped of all merit. No, the last thing a man likes to part with is his righteousness. I have known poor sinners stand on Sinai’s top until their knees knocked together, yet they have clung to their self-righteousness even there! I have known men stand where God’s earthquakes were shaking the ground under their feet and the thunder and lightning were playing above their heads, yet they *still* held fast to their self-righteousness! It is a hard thing to get that away from men. You know how Bunyan says that when Great-Heart slew Giant Despair, the giant “had, as they say, as many lives as a cat.” And I am sure that self-righteousness has many more lives than that—it is the hardest thing in the world to kill! You may cut the evil weed, self-righteousness, up, but when you think you have got to the last root of it, it will be shooting up again before you can sharpen your knife to cut it up once more! This evil thing is bred in man’s nature. When you preach against it, see how men will roar at you—they cannot bear that teaching!  
I sometimes receive letters from persons who say, “We would not be surprised if all your congregation were to live in sin because you are always preaching against man’s righteousness and inviting poor sinners to come to Christ by simple faith—and to be saved by Grace, alone.” I daresay they would not be surprised if such a thing were to happen, but I would be surprised if my people, as a whole, lived in sin! I bless God that I have no cause to wonder about that matter, for a holier people you will not find this side of Heaven than those who receive into their hearts the Doctrine of Christ’s Imputed Righteousness. This I will say of them, that Grace has worked good fruits in them, that they walk in the fear of the Lord, in love to one another and in the practice of uprightness and godliness. But men of the world cannot stand this teaching because it makes nothing of the merits of which they think so much! Tell men that they are a very good sort of folk—they love to hear that! Give people a good compliment of themselves and they will like to listen to you—but that selfconceit is the ruin of tens of thousands! I am sure it is only when we begin to say—  
***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All”***  
—that we are saved. But as long as we are content with ourselves in our natural sinful condition, there is not the slightest hope for us. So, you see, this is “the offense of the Cross,” that we do not let men trust in their own merits!  
But there is another offense which is a very grievous one and the world has never forgiven the Cross that “offense” yet—*it will not recognize any distinctions between mankind.* The Cross makes moral and immoral persons go to Heaven by the same road! The Cross makes rich and poor enter Heaven by the same door! The Cross makes the philosopher and peasant walk on the same highway of holiness! The Cross procures the same crown for the poor creature with one talent that the man with 10 talents shall receive. Therefore, the wise man says, “What? Am I to be saved by the same Cross which saves a man who does not know his letters?” Your fine lady asks, “Am I to be saved in the same fashion as my servant girl?” The gentleman says, “Am I to be saved the same way as that chimney-sweep?” And he who boasts of his self-righteousness cries, “What? Am I to jostle against a harlot, to elbow a drunk on the road to Heaven? Then, I will not go to Heaven at all.” Then, Sir, you will be lost! There are no two roads to Heaven—it is the same road for everyone who goes there—and therefore, the Cross has always been offensive to men of mark and might. Few kings and queens have ever bent humbly before it. Men have covered up the Cross with some fine decorations and they have said that they loved it—but it was not the Cross they cared for—it was the gaudy ornaments! If it had been the simple Cross, they would have dragged it through the streets, as Mohamed’s people did with the cross at Jerusalem.  
**II.**This brings me now to tell you, in the second place, HOW PERSONS SHOW THEIR OFFENSE AGAINST THE CROSS OF CHRIST.  
In olden times they did it by burning, torturing and tormenting Christians, making them suffer all kinds of indescribable agonies. But that method did not work, so the devil now adopts other measures. He found that the more he oppressed them, like Israel in Egypt, the more they multiplied—so now he acts in another fashion. How does he do it? Not exactly by open persecution, but “the offense of the Cross” shows itself, sometimes, by*private persecution.*You do not, all of you, hear of the persecution that is going on with regard to the Lord’s people. Every now and then things of this sort come to my notice, though you may not know of them. How many drunk husbands there are who persecute their wives almost incessantly because they cleave fast to God? How many a young man, how many a young woman is there who is called to suffer persecution from father and mother and sister and brother, for Christ’s sake? Persecution is not over—it works slyly and comes not out openly before the world. It comes not out into Smithfield, as it did of old, though there may be many a house in the neighborhood of Smithfield that reeks with it. It comes not out in an honest garb, but watches for its prey in a covert way. It is not the lion, but the prowling jackal, though it is as wild and as ravenous as ever.  
And when persecution does not display itself in positive acts, it operates by means of jeers and scoffs—by the shrug of the shoulder and, let me say, more men have been ruined by this practice than by the worse slanders! Men who shrug their shoulders generally do a deal of mischief, though they may not know it. When, sitting at table, I have mentioned a person’s name and someone has shrugged his shoulders and said, “Oh”—the man’s character was half gone! If the person had anything to say against the other, why could he not say it right out and not leave us in the dark to surmise all manner of iniquities? Another man will say, “I don’t wish to persecute you. You can go to Chapel as often as you like.” Yet there is, on his face, the cold sneer and on his lips, the cruel jest or slander! Every idle rumor is circulated and everything that can be invented against the minister of the Gospel and against Christian people— all still showing that there is now—as there was in the days of the Apostles, an “offense of the Cross.”  
But I will tell you what is the favorite plan, nowadays. It is not to oppose the Cross, but *to wind round the Cross and try to get the Cross to alter its shape a little.*Men who hate the Doctrines of the Cross, say, “We, too, preach the Gospel.” They alter it. They misshape it. They make it “another gospel, which is not another.” Let others say, if they will, that yes and no can meet together, that fire and water can kiss each other, that Christ and Belial can be twins—the true minister of Jesus Christ cannot do that! Truth is Truth and whatever is the opposite of it cannot be truth. The Truth of God is one and that which opposes it must certainly be error and falsehood. But it is the fashion to try to blend the two things together. Look at very many of the churches—they say that they hold to the Truth of God. Look at their articles—they have all the five points of Calvinism. And if you ask the ministers whether they believe the Doctrine of Election—“Certainly,” they reply. If you ask them whether they believe all the great cardinal Truths of the Gospel, they say, “Oh, yes, certainly we believe them! But we do not think they ought to be preached to the common people.”  
Ah, Sirs! You have a fine notion of yourselves if you do not think that “the common people” are as good as you are and that they can receive the Doctrines of Grace as well as you can! “Oh, but those doctrines are dangerous! They drive the people to Antinomianism” They say this, but when we write to them, they reply, “Oh, we are as sound as you are!” Yes, but it is one thing to be sound, and another thing to preach sound Truth! I will never believe a man to be better than what he preaches. If a man does not proclaim “the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God, and nothing but the Truth,” we like him none the better, but 10 times worse because he says that he believes it! We would rather he did not believe it at all than that he should conceal his real sentiments. Such men, who hide the Truth of God, prove that they are as much offended with the Cross as if they openly tried to refute its doctrines! God send us the day when the pure, unadulterated Doctrines of the Grace of God, which is in Christ Jesus, shall be proclaimed in every church and heard in every street and received by every professed Christian!  
**III.**Now I come, in the third place, TO SAY SOMETHING TO THOSE WHO ARE OFFENDED AT THE CROSS.

First, let me say that *it is very foolish of a man who does not believe the Gospel to oppose those who do.* If a man does not, himself, love the Gospel, he should leave alone other people who do. You have often heard the old fable of the dog in the manger, but here is something worse—here is the dog *out* of the manger—he does not even lie on the hay, and yet he barks at those that come to feed upon it! He does not love the Gospel and because others do, he hates them! Why, surely, what you do not want yourselves, you might let other people have in quietness! You need not oppose them for carrying away what you count worthless rubbish! Why should you be so offended and endeavor to make a stand against the Truth of God, since you cannot, in your present condition, get anything out of it and may burn your fingers for your pains?

Then, next, *how foolish it is to be offended at the Cross, seeing that you cannot stop its progress!* He who should place himself before Juggernaut’s car to be crushed would be as wise as you who are opposing the Gospel. If it is true, remember, “The Truth of God is mighty and must prevail.” Who are you to attempt to stand against it? You will be crushed, but let me tell you that when the car goes over you, the wheel will not be raised even an inch by your size! For what are you? A tiny gnat, a creeping worm which that wheel will crush to less than nothing and not leave you even a name as having been an opponent of the Gospel! There have been men who have stood up and said, “We will stop the chariot of Christ.” Thousands have looked at them and have been afraid. Their trumpets have blown loud and long and some poor Christians have said, “Stand aside! Here comes a man who will stop the chariot of the Lord Jesus.”

At one time, it was Tom Paine. Then it was Robert Owen. But what became of them? Did the chariot stop for them? No, it went on just as if there had never been a Tom Paine or a Robert Owen on the earth! Let all the infidels in the world assuredly know that the Gospel will win its way, whatever they may do. Poor creatures! Their efforts to oppose it are not worthy of our notice and we need not fear that they can stop the Truth of God! As well might a gnat think to quench the sun! Go, tiny insect, and do it, if you can! You will only burn your wings and die. As well might a fly think it could drink the ocean dry. Drink the ocean, if you can—more likely you will sink in it and so it will drink you! You who despise and oppose the Gospel, what can you do? It comes on “conquering and to conquer.” I always think that the more enemies the Gospel has, the more it will advance. As the old warrior said, “The more enemies there are, the more there are to be killed, the more there are to be taken prisoners and the more there are to run away.” Double your hosts, you opposers! Come on against us with a still mightier power! Rage yet more loudly! Slander us yet more foully! Do what you can, victory is ours, for it is predestinated! The massive column of Divine Predestination stands firm and on its top there are the eagle wings betokening victory for every Believer and for the whole Church of Christ! God’s Truth must and shall conquer, therefore, do *you*, foolish creature, hope to oppose the Gospel because it offends you? The Stone cut out without hands cannot be broken by you—but if it fall upon you, it will grind you to powder!

But another thought, and I have done with this part of my subject. O man, if you hate the Gospel, let me solemnly say to you how *doubly foolish you are to be offended with Christ, who is the only One who can save you!*As well might the drowning man be offended with the rope which is cast to him and which is the only means of his escape! As well might the dying patient be offended with the cup of medicine which is put to his lips and which, alone, can save his body from death! As well might the man whose house is burning be offended with the fireman who roughly puts the fire escape ladder against his window—as that you should be offended with Christ! Offended with Him who would snatch you as “a brand from the burning”? Offended with Him who, alone, can quench for you the fire of Hell? Offended with Him whose blood, alone, can wash you white and give you a place with Him in Glory everlasting? Offended with Him? Then you are mad, indeed! Not Bedlam, itself, can produce a maniac more foolish than you are!

Ah, you despisers, you shall wonder and *perish!*You are offended with the Gospel because it says that you have not any merit, but you have not any—then why are you offended? You are offended at the Gospel because it does not ask anything of you in order that you may be saved, yet if it did demand anything of you as a condition of your salvation, you would be lost! It is just the Gospel for you—it is made on purpose—it fits your condition! It is adapted to your case and yet you are offended with it? Oh, how can you be so foolish? Did you ever hear of a man who was offended with a coach that was carrying him because it had wheels? Why should you be offended with the Gospel chariot because it could not advance except on the wheels of Free Grace? What? You are offended with the Gospel because it lays you low? Don’t you know that it is the very best place for you? The devil would have you very high if he could, but that would be only that he might ruin you!

My dear Friends, I beseech you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, think about why you are offended with the Gospel! I know it goes against your prejudices. When you first hear it, you do not love it, but, remember, it is your only hope of salvation. Are you offended with that which alone can save you? Offended with that which can put a crown on your head, a palm branch in your hand and give you bliss forever? Then, I think when you sink to Hell, you will look up to Heaven and say, “Ah, Christ! I was offended with You, but now I see that You are the only Savior. I hated Your name, of which it is written, ‘At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.’ I hated that Savior who was the only Savior to redeem sinners from sin.”

**IV.**Lastly, I am TO DRAW ONE OR TWO INFERENCES.  
The first is this, *If the Cross of Christ is an offense and always was an offense, what is the reason why so many professed Christians go on so easily from January to December and never have any trouble about it?*Old John Berridge said, “If you do not preach the Gospel, you may sleep soundly enough. But if you preach it faithfully, you will hardly have a sound place in your skin, for you will soon have enemies enough assailing you.” How is it that we never hear of any slander against a great many ministers? Everything goes easily and comfortably with them. Nobody is ever offended with their preaching. People go out of their chapel doors and say, “What a nice sermon! It was just the thing for everybody, and nobody could be offended.” They do not fully preach the Gospel, or they would be sure to offend some people! Suppose that somebody says to me, “Do you know that Mrs. So-and-So was fearfully offended with your last sermon?” That is no trouble to me if I know that I have preached the Truth of God! A celebrated preacher was once told that he had pleased all his hearers. “Ah,” he said, “there is another sermon lost.”  
The most effective sermons are those which make opposers of the Gospel bite their lips and gnash their teeth. “That preaching is worth little,” Rowland Hill used to say, “that cannot make the devil roar. He preaches but very little of the Truth of God who does not set the old lion roaring against him.” Depend upon it, Satan does not like the Gospel any better than he did—and the world does not like the Gospel any better than it did—and if there is not, nowadays, so much persecution and hatred as there used to be, it is because men do not proclaim the plain, simple Truth of God as their forefathers did! People go to hear nice velvet-tongued preachers. They like the minister to prophesy smooth things to them! “I won’t go to hear Mr. So-and-So,” says one, “for he will be sure to offend me.”  
Now what is the reason for this? It is because he preaches the whole Gospel, the pure Truth of God! But do men imagine that we *want* to offend them? No, God knows the hard things we often say cause us more pain than they cause to our hearers. But it is a good thing when we care little for the opinion of men and when we have learned to live above the world. Once let ministers faithfully proclaim the plain, simple Gospel, and we shall soon hear the laughter, scorn and jeers. It was an ill day when the sons of God made affinity with the daughters of men. And it will be an ill day for the Church of Christ when the world speaks well of it and everybody commends it. The denomination that is most spoken against is usually the one where Christ most dwells! But the denomination that is flowing in plenty and dandled on the knees of honor is usually the most corrupt! Preach the Gospel boldly, steadfastly, steadily, strongly, out-and-out—and you will not be long without hearing something about “the offense of the Cross.”  
My last remark is this. O my Brothers and Sisters, *how many reasons we have to bless and extol our gracious God if the Cross of Christ is not an offense to us!*I hope many here can unite with me in saying that there is nothing in the Bible that offends us and there is nothing in the Gospel that now offends us. If there is anything you do not understand, you do not hate it—if it seems dark and mysterious, you do not reject it, but you are willing to learn all you can about it. Ah, my God, if all I have ever preached is false, I stand prepared to disown it when You shall teach me better! If all I have ever learned is a mistake and I have not learned it from You, I will not be ashamed to recant it in that hour when You shall, Yourself, teach me and show me my error. We are not ashamed to bring ourselves wholly into the mold of Scripture, to take it just as it stands, to believe it and to receive it. And if you are in that state, mark you, you are saved, for no man can say that he accepts the Gospel wholly, loves it all, and receives it in his heart—and can yet be a stranger to it!  
I have heard preachers ignorantly talk about “natural” love to the Gospel—there cannot be such a thing! I heard someone say that there was a “natural” love to Christ—it is all rubbish! Nature cannot beget a love to Christ, nor love to *any* good thing—that must come of God, for all love is from Him! There is nothing good in us by nature. Every conviction must, in some way or other, come from the Holy Spirit. Even if it is a temporary one, it must be traced to Him if it is good. Oh, let us adore, exalt and magnify the mighty Grace that has made us love the Gospel! For I am sure, with some of us, there was a time when we hated it as much as any people in all the world ever did. Old John Newton used to say, “You who are called Calvinists—though you are not merely Calvinists, but the old, legitimate successors of Christ—you ought, above all men, to be very gentle with your opponents, for, remember, according to your own principles, they cannot learn the Truth of God unless they are taught of God. And if you have been taught of God, you ought to bless His name—and if they have not, you should not be angry with them, but pray to God to give them a better education.” Do not let us make any extra “offense of the Cross” by our own ill humor, but let us show our love to the Cross by loving and trying to bless those who have been offended with it.  
Ah, poor Sinner, what do you say? Are you offended with the Cross? No, you are not, for it is there that you wish to lose your sins. Do you desire this moment to come to Christ? You say, “I have no offense against Christ. Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! I would come, even, to His seat.” Well, if you want Christ, Christ wants you; if you desire Christ, Christ desires you! Yes, more! If you have one spark of desire after Christ, Christ has a whole burning mountain of desire after you. He loves you more than you can ever love Him! Rest assured that you are not first with God. If you are seeking Jesus, He has first sought you. Come, then, you destitute, weary, lost, helpless, ruined, chief of sinners! Come, put your trust in His blood and His perfect righteousness, and you will go on your way rejoicing in Christ, set free from sin, delivered from iniquity, rendered as safe, though not as happy, as the very angels that now sing high hosannas before the Throne of the Most High!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *GALATIANS 1.***

**Verse 1.***Paul, an Apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead).*Paul begins this Epistle by stating his commission as an Apostle. In Galatia he had been subjected to the great sorrow of having his Apostleship called in question. Does he, therefore, give up his claim to the office and retire from the work? No, not for a moment! He begins his letter to the Galatians by declaring himself to be “an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.” His enemies had said, “Paul was never one of the Savior’s 12 Apostles. He is not like those who were trained and educated by Christ, Himself. No doubt he has borrowed his doctrine from them and he is only a retailer of other men’s goods.” “No, no,” says Paul, “I am an Apostle as truly as any other of the twelve! ‘Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.’”

**2** ***.****And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.* Paul always loved to associate others with him in his Christian service. He was not one who wanted to ride the high horse and to keep himself aloof from his Brethren in Christ. He frequently mentions the truehearted men who were with him, even though they were far inferior to him in talent and also in Grace. He often joins with himself such men as Timothy and Silvanus, and here he puts in, “all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia.”

**3** ***.****Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* It is the genius of the Gospel to wish well to others. Hence Paul begins the actual Epistle with a benediction—“Grace be to you and peace.” Dear Friends, may you all have a fullness of these two good things! Grace rightly comes first and peace afterwards. Peace before Grace would be perilous—no, more, it would be ruinous! But may you always have enough of Grace to lead you on to a deep and joyful peace! The two things go together very delightfully—Grace and peace—and it is the best of Grace, and the best of peace, since they come “from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**4** ***.****Who gave Himself for our sins.*There is the Doctrine of the Atonement which Paul always brings into his preaching and writing as soon as he can—“Who gave Himself for our sins.” Well does Luther say, “Christ never gave Himself for our righteousness, but he gave Himself for our sins because there was no other way of saving us except by a Sacrifice for sin.” The substitutionary Character of Christ’s death is always to be noticed. “Who gave himself for our sins.”

**4 *,*5*.****That He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself puts away our sin in order that we may rise out of it and may become a pure and holy people, delivered from this present evil world and brought into obedience to the will of God. Now we come to quite another topic.

**6** ***.****I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel.*The Galatians were a very fickle people. Some have said that they were a colony from Gaul—Galatians— and that they partook somewhat of the fickleness which is attributed to the character of the Gaul. I know not how true that may be, but, certainly, they seem very soon to have left the Gospel—to have adulterated it and to have fallen into Ritualism—into Sacramentarianism, into salvation by works, and all the errors into which people usually fall when they go away from the Gospel.

**7** ***.****Which is not another. But there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.*“Another Gospel, which is not another,” for there are not two gospels, any more than there are two gods. There is one only message from God, of good news to men, and if you turn away from that, you turn away to a lie, to that which will bring you trouble, to that which will pervert you and lead you astray!

**8.***But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Paul is no fanatic, no raving enthusiast, yet he cannot endure the notion of a false Gospel! In his solemn anathema, he includes himself and all the Brothers with him, yes, and the very angels of God if they “preach any other Gospel.” Let him be accursed, he says, and so he is.

**9** ***.****As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.*The modern style of speaking is, “Let us fraternize with him. He is a man of original thought. Surely, you would not bind all men down to one mode of speech. Perhaps if he has made mistakes, you will bring him round to your way of thinking by receiving him kindly into your fellowship.” “No, no,” says Paul, “As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.”

**10.***For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* He would not be the servant of Christ if he pleased men. Those whom we try to please are our masters! If a man tries to please the populace, or to please the refined few, those are his masters and he will be their slave. But if he tries to please his God, then is he a free man, indeed!

**11, 12.***But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*Paul foresaw what would be said about him later and truly, to this day, the fiercest attack upon Christianity is always made upon the teaching of the Apostle Paul. The men who creep in unawares among us talk glibly about having great reverence for Christ, but none for Paul. Yet Paul is Christ’s Apostle! Paul speaks only what was personally revealed to Him by the Lord, Himself, and he is, in everything, to be accepted as speaking by Divine Revelation.

**13, 14.***For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure, I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* He was an out-and-out Jew. He never took up anything without going through with it thoroughly. So, while he believed in Judaism, he really did believe it. He was no hypocrite, no pretender—he fought for it tooth and nail! This was the man who afterwards preached the Christianity he had received from Christ! Evidently he did not borrow it from his parents, for they had taught him quite differently. His religion was not the product of his training, but it came to him from God—to him who seemed to be the most unlikely person in the whole land to ever receive it!

**15, 16.***But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*He felt Divinely called to preach the Gospel. Christ revealed Himself to him on the way to Damascus. As soon as he was converted, he did not wait for anybody to ordain him, or to teach him further, but he says, “I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

**17.***Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but went into Arabia.*What he did there, we do not know, but probably he had a time of quiet meditation and prayer, all alone. “I went into Arabia.” The best thing we can do, sometimes, is to get away from the voices of men and listen only to the voice of God. “I went into Arabia.”

**17.***And returned again unto Damascus.* To bear witness for Christ in the very city where he had gone to persecute the saints!  
**18.***Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*That is, “after three years,” which showed that he did not go there to receive any commission from Peter. He had been, for three years, working for his Lord and Master before he ever saw the face of an Apostle!  
**19.***But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.*He had an interview with the Apostle James. James was probably the chief minister of the Church at Jerusalem, so Paul went and had a conversation with him.  
**20.***Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* “I did not derive my knowledge of Christ from any one of these holy men, therefore I am not an imitator of any other Apostle. I was sent out by Christ, Himself, and instructed by Him by Revelation, so I am an Apostle of Christ as much as any of them.”  
**21, 22.***Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judea which were in Christ.* They did not know him. It is evident that he had not been there to be taught by them, or else they would have recognized their illustrious pupil.  
**23, 24.***But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.*Brothers and Sisters, may you and I so live that Christian people may glorify God in us! May they often wonder at the mighty Grace which has worked such a change in us! And as they see us zealous and fervent, may they marvel at the amazing Grace of God which has brought us to be so consecrated to Christ!

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1582 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT—JOY  
NO. 1582

***~~DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But the fruit of the Spirit is joy.”  
Galatians 5:22.~~***

OBSERVE, “the fruit of the Spirit,” for the product of the Spirit of God is one. As some fruits are easily divisible into several parts, so you perceive that the fruit of the Spirit, though it is but one, is threefold, no, it makes three times three—“love, joy, peace; longsuffering, gentleness, goodness; faith, meekness, temperance”—all one! Perhaps “love” is put first not only because it is a right royal virtue, nearest akin to the Divine perfection, but because it is a comprehensive Grace and contains all the others. All the commandments are fulfilled in one word and that word is “love.” And all the fruits of the Spirit are contained in that one most sweet, most blessed, most heavenly, most God-like Grace of love. See that you abound in love to the great Father and all His family, for if you fail in the first point, how can you succeed in the second? Above all things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

As for joy, if it is not the first product of the Spirit of God, it is next to the first, and we may be sure that the order in which it is placed by the Inspired Apostle is meant to be instructive. The fruit of the Spirit is love, first, as comprehensive of the rest—then joy rising out of it. It is remarkable that joy should take so eminent a place! It attains unto the first three and is but one place lower than the first. Look at it in its high position and if you have missed it, or if you have depreciated it, revise your judgment and endeavor with all your heart to attain to it, for depend upon it— this fruit of the Spirit is of the utmost value!

This morning, as I can only speak upon one theme, I leave love for another occasion and treat only of joy. May its Divine Author, the Holy Spirit, teach us how to speak of it to our profit and His Glory! It is quite true that the Spirit of God produces sorrow, for one of His first effects upon the soul is holy *grief*. He enlightens us as to our lost condition, convicting us of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. And the first result upon our heart is astonishment and lamentation. Even when we look to Christ, by the work of the Spirit one of the first fruits is sorrow—“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him, and be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

But this sorrow is not the ultimate objective of the Spirit’s work—it is a means to an end. Even as the travail of the mother leads up to the joy of birth, so do the pangs of repentance lead up to the joy of pardon and acceptance. The sorrow is, to use a Scriptural figure, the blade, but the full corn in the ear is joy. Sorrow helps the fruit on, but the fruit, itself, is joy. The tears of godly grief for sin are all meant to sparkle into the diamonds of joy in pardoning love. This teaches us, then, that we are not to look upon bondage as being the objective of the work of the Spirit of God, or the design of the Lord in a work of Grace. Many are under bondage to the Law—they attempt to keep the commands of God—not out of love, but from slavish fear. They dread the lash of punishment and tremble like slaves. But to Believers it is said, “You are not under the Law, but under Grace” and, “You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

To be in bondage under the Law, to be afraid of being cast away by God and visited with destruction on account of sin after we have trusted in Jesus—this is *not* the work of the Spirit of God in Believers, but the black offspring of unbelief or ignorance of the Grace of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Neither is a painful dread or a servile terror a fruit of the Spirit. Many worship the Lord Jesus, Himself, at a distance—they know not that Believers are “a people *near* unto Him.” They are afraid of God and they never delight in Him. They attend to worship, not because they rejoice in it, but because they think it must be done. Their secret feeling is—“What a weariness it is,” but necessity compels. They know nothing of a child’s joy in sure and full forgiveness, spoken by the Father’s own lips as He pressed them to His bosom.

His kiss was never warm upon their cheek. The ring was never on their finger, nor the best robe upon their shoulders. The music and the dancing of the joyous family who are in harmony with the father’s joy over the lost son have never charmed their ears. They are still under dread, which is the fruit of *superstition* rather than “the fruit of the Spirit.” Many things they do and suffer and all in vain—if the Son did but make them free, they would be free, indeed! I know some whom I am very far from despising, but whom, on the contrary, I greatly value, whose religion, sincere as I know it is, is sadly tinged with gloomy colors. They are afraid of Assurance, for they dread presumption! They dare not speak of their own salvation with the certainty with which the Bible saints were known to speak of it—they always say, “I hope,” and, “I trust.”

They would seem to be total abstainers from joy! They are suspicious of it lest it should be carnal excitement or visionary hope. They hang their heads like bulrushes and go mourning all their days as if the religion of Christ knew no higher festival than a funeral and all its robes were the garments of despair! Brothers and Sisters, despondency is *not* the fruit of the Spirit! Make no mistake, depression is frequently the fruit of indigestion, or of satanic temptation, or of unbelief, or of some harbored sin, but, “the fruit of the Spirit is joy.” Constantly looking within your own self instead of looking alone to Christ is enough to breed misery in any heart.

I have also known gloomy expressions to be the fruit of affectation, the fruit of the unwise imitation of some undoubtedly good person who was of a downcast spirit. Some of the best of men have had a melancholy turn, but they would have been better men if this had been overcome. Imitate their many *virtues*—but take the pot of ointment and pick out the dead flies. O my Brethren, look well to it that you bring forth the genuine, holy, sacred, delicious fruit of the Spirit which, in one of its forms, is “joy.” Do not covet the counterfeit of earthly joy, but seek to the good Spirit to bear the true fruit in you.

**I.**In speaking upon this joy I shall notice, first, the fact that IT IS BROUGHT FORTH. Brothers and Sisters, the Spirit of God is not barren! If He is in you, He must and will inevitably produce His own legitimate fruit—and “the fruit of the Spirit is joy.” We know this to be a fact because we, ourselves, are witnesses of it. Joy is our portion and we are cheered and comforted in the Savior. “What?” you ask, “are we not depressed and sorrowful at times?” Yea, verily, and yet what Christian man or woman among us would make an exchange with the happiest of all worldlings? Your lot is somewhat hard, my Brother, and sometimes your spirit sinks within you. But do you not count yourself to be, even at your worst, happier than the worldling at his best? Come, would you not take your poverty, even with your mourning, rather than accept his wealth with all his hilarity and give up your hope in God?

I am persuaded you would—you would not change your blest estate for a monarch’s crown! Well, then, that which you would not change is a good thing and full of joy to your heart. Brothers and Sisters, we experience extraordinary joys at times. Some are of an equable temperament and they are almost to be envied, for a stream of gentle joy always glides through their spirit. Others of us are of a more excitable character and, consequently, we fall very flat at times. Yes, but then we have our high days and holidays and mounting times—and then we outsoar the wings of eagles! Heaven itself can hardly know more ecstatic joy than we have occasionally felt! We shall be vessels of greater capacity in Heaven, but even here we are, at times, full to the brim with joy—I mean the same joy which makes Heaven so glad.

At times God is pleased to inundate the spirit with a flood of joy and we are witnesses that, “happy is the people whose God is the Lord.” We do not dance before the Ark every day, but when we do, our joy is such as no worldling can understand—it is far above and out of his sight. Besides our own witness, the whole history of the Church goes to show that God’s people are a joyful people. I am sure that if in reading the history of the first Christian centuries you are asked to point out the men to be envied for their joy, you would point to the Believers in Jesus. There is a room in Rome which is filled with the busts of the emperors. I have looked at their heads—they look like a collection of prizefighters and murderers—and I could scarcely discover on any countenance a trace of joy.

Brutal passions and cruel thoughts deprived the lords of Rome of all chance of joy. There were honorable exceptions to their rule, but taking them all round you would look in vain for moral excellence among the Caesars. And lacking this thing of beauty, they missed that which is a joy. Turn, now, to the poor, hunted Christians and read the inscriptions left by them in the catacombs! They are so calm and peaceful that you say instinctively—a joyous people were known to gather here! Those who have been most eminent in service and in suffering for Christ’s sake have been of a triumphant spirit, dauntless because supported by an inner joy! Their calm courage made them the wonder of the age. The true Christian is a different type of manhood from the self-indulgent tyrant. There is almost as much advance from the coarseness of vice to holiness as there is from the chimpanzee to the man!

I do not know how much Tiberius and Caligula and Nero used to sing. Happy men they certainly were not. I can hardly imagine them singing except at their drunken orgies and then in the same tone as tigers growl! But I do know that Paul and Silas sang praises unto God with their feet in the stocks and the prisoners heard them! And I know, also, that this was the mark of the Christians of the first age, that, when they assembled on the Lord’s Day, it was not to groan but to sing praises to the name of one Christos, whom they worshipped as God. High joys were common, then, when the Bridegroom comforted His bride in the dens and caves of the earth. Those pioneers of our holy faith were destitute, afflicted, tormented—yet were they men of whom the world was not worthy—and men who counted it all joy to suffer persecution for Christ’s sake.

Now, if in the very worst times God’s people have been a happy people, I am sure they are so now. I would appeal to the biographies of men of our own day and challenge any question as to the statement that their lives have been among the most desirable of human existences for they possessed a joy which cheered their sorrows, blessed their labors, sweetened their trials and sustained them in the hour of death. With some Christians, this fruit of the Spirit is perpetual, or almost so. I do not doubt that many walk with God as Enoch did throughout the whole day of their life, always peaceful and joyful in the Lord. I have met with some dear Brothers and Sisters of that kind, whose breath has been praise, whose life has been song! How I envy them and chide my own heart that I cannot always abide in their choice condition! It is to be accomplished and we will press forward till we are “always rejoicing.”

But with others, joy is *not* constant and yet it is frequent. David had his mourning times when tears were his meat, day and night, and yet God was his exceeding joy. How thankful we ought to be for the portrait of David’s inner self which is presented to us in the Book of Psalms. With all his grief, what joys he had! David was, on the whole, a joyous man. His Book of Psalms has in it lyrics of delight—the most glad hymns that ever leaped from human tongues! David is, I believe, the type of a great majority of the people of God who, if not, “always rejoicing,” are yet often so. Please remember that the utmost fullness of joy can hardly be enjoyed always in this mortal life. I believe that the human frame is not, in this world, capable of perpetual ecstasy.

Look at the sun, but look not too long lest you are blinded by excessive light. Taste of honey, but eat not much of it or it will no longer please the palate. Let your ears be charmed with the Hallelujah chorus, but do not *dream* that you could endure its harmonies all the hours of the day— before long you would cry out for eloquent pauses and sweet reliefs of silence! Too much, even, of delight will weary our feeble hearts and we shall need to come down from the mountain. Our bodies require a portion of sleep and that which is inevitable to the flesh has its likeness in the spirit—it must be quiet and still. I believe it is inevitable, also, more or less, that the loftiest joy should be balanced by a sinking of heart. I do not say that depression is certain to follow delight, but usually some kind of faintness comes over the finite spirit after it has been lifted up into communion with the Infinite.

Do not, therefore, set too much store by your own *feelings* as evidences of Divine Grace. “The fruit of the Spirit is joy,” but you may not, at this moment, be *conscious* of joy. Trees are not always bearing fruit and yet “their substance is in them when they lose their leaves.” Some young people say, “Oh, we know we are saved because we are so happy.” It is by no means a sure evidence, for joy may be carnal, unfounded, unspiritual. Certain Christians are afraid that they cannot be in a saved state because they are *not* joyous, but we are saved by *faith* and not by joy! I was struck with the remark of Ebenezer Erskine when he was dying and someone said to him, “I hope you have, now and then, a blink to bear up your spirit under affliction.” He promptly replied, “I know more of words than of blinks,” that is to say he had rather trust a promise of God than his own glimpses of Heaven! And so would I.

The Word of God is a more sure testimony to the soul than all the raptures a man can feel! I would sooner walk in the dark and hold hard to a promise of my God than trust in the light of the brightest day that ever dawned!. Precious as the fruit is, do not put the fruit where the root should be. Please remember that joy is not the root of Grace in the soul— it is the *fruit* and must not be put out of its proper position. “The fruit of the Spirit is joy” and it is brought forth in Believers, but not alike in all. But to all Believers there is a measure of joy.

**II.**Secondly, THIS JOY IS OF A SINGULAR CHARACTER. It is singular for this reason, that it often ripens under the most remarkable circumstances. As I have already said, the highest joy of Christians has often been experienced in their times of greatest distress. Tried Believers have been happy when smarting under pain, or wasting away with disease. Sick beds have been thrones to many saints—they have almost feared to come out of the furnace because the Presence of the Lord in the midst of the fire has made it none other than the gate of Heaven to their souls! Saints in poverty have been made exceedingly rich and when they have eaten a dry crust they have found a flavor in it which they never discovered in the dainties of their abundance.

Many children of God, even when driven away from the outward means of Grace, have, nevertheless, enjoyed such visits of God, such inlets of Divine Love, that they have wondered from where such joy could come! In the wilderness, waters leap forth as do streams in the desert. Believers are not dependent upon *circumstances*. Their joy comes not from what they *have*, but from what they *are—*not from *where* they are, but from *Whose* they are—not from what they enjoy, but from that which was suffered for them by their Lord. It is a singular joy, then, because it often buds, blossoms and ripens in winter time and when the fig tree does not blossom and there is no herd in the stall. God’s Habakkuks rejoice in the God of their salvation!

It is a singular joy, too, because it is quite consistent with spiritual conflict. He that is an heir of Heaven may cry, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And yet, before the sigh is over, he may sing, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing! Straggling, yet always victorious! Cast down, but not destroyed! Persecuted, but not forsaken! Troubled and yet, all the while triumphant! Such is the mingled experience of the saints. Oh, this is the wondrous Grace, this joy which can live side by side with conflict of the sorest sort. This joy is special because at times it is altogether beyond description. One who was of a sober disposition called it “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “Full of glory!”

That is a wonderful expression! A drop of glory is sweet, but, oh, to taste a joy that is*full* of glory—is that possible here? Yes and some of us bear witness that it is so—we have felt joy that we dare not tell and could not tell if we dared—men would turn and tear us apart, condemning us as utterly fanatical or out of our minds if we were to cast these pearls before them! But, oh, if they could guess what delicious drafts are held within the jeweled chalice of Divine Communion with our Master, they would be ready to wade through Hell, itself, to drink from them! Our joy is altogether unspeakable joy at times.

One more singularity there is in it, for it is all the while solid, thoughtful, rational joy. The joy of the ungodly is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—noisy and flashy—but soon over. The ungodly man feels merry, but really, if you come to look into his mirth, there is nothing in it but flame without fuel, sparkle without solidity. But the Christian’s joy is such that he has as much reason for it as if it were a deduction from mathematics. He has as just a right to be joyful as he has to eat his own bread! He is certain of his pardon, for God has told him that a Believer in Christ is not condemned! And he is sure of his acceptance, for he is justified by faith. He knows that he is secure, for Christ has given him *eternal* life and said that His sheep shall never perish! He is happy, not for causes at which he guesses, but by *Infallible* reasons plainly revealed in God’s Word! This makes Him joyful in the Lord when others wonder that he is so, for he perceives arguments for happiness which are unknown to the thoughtless crowd.

That word, “joyful,” is a very sweet and clear one. “Happiness” is a very dainty word, but yet it is somewhat insecure because it begins with a “hap,” and seems to depend on a chance which may happen to the soul. We say “happy-go-lucky,” and that is very much the world’s happiness—it is a kind of thing that may hap and may not hap—but there is no hap in the fruit of the Spirit which is joy! When we are joyful, or full of joy, and that of the best kind, we are favored, indeed! No man takes this joy from us and a stranger meddles not with it—it is a *celestial* fruit and earth cannot produce its like.

**III.**Thirdly, I would now refresh your memories and by the help of the Spirit of God bring back former joys to you—THIS JOY IS EXPERIENCED BY THE CHRISTIAN UNDER VARIOUS FORMS. Sometimes he experiences it in hearing the Word of God—it is written concerning Samaria there was great joy in that city because Philip went down and preached the Gospel to them. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! However, joy of hearing lies in *believing* what you hear. We get joy and peace in*believing*. When you get a grip of the Word of God—when the glad tidings becomes a message to your own soul and the Spirit speaks it to your own heart, then you say, “Go on, man of God! Your sermon will not be too long today, for the Lord is laying it home to my soul.”

The reason why people grumble at long sermons is often because they do not feed on them. Very seldom the hungry man murmurs at having too big a meal. It is a delightful thing to hear the Word faithfully preached. Have you not sometimes exclaimed, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings glad tidings”? That is one occasion of joy. But what joy there is, dear Friends, in the salvation of God when we heartily receive it! Oh, how we bless the God of our salvation and how we praise Him that He has saved us from our sins and from the wrath to come by giving us everlasting consolation and good hope through Grace, by the sacrifice of His dear Son!

Frequently we revel in the privileges of the Covenant. The joy of my heart, when I think of the doctrine of Election, is quite inexpressible. That hymn which begins***—***

***“In songs of sublime adoration and praise, You pilgrims to Zion who press,  
Break forth and extol the great Ancient of Days His rich and distinguishing Grace,”***

is often with me and makes my heart merry. Then the doctrine of Redemption, of which I tried to speak last Lord’s Day [*Silver Sockets— Redemption the Foundation*, Volume 27, Sermon #1581] how joyous it is! What bliss to know that the Redeemer lives! “Unto you that believe He is precious” and a fullness of joy flows forth at every remembrance of Him. Then that doctrine of Justification is the marrow of joy! Oh, to think that we are *just* in the sight of God through Jesus Christ!

All the Doctrines of Grace, especially that of Final Perseverance, are joyful Truths of God! I declare that if you take Final Perseverance from me, you have robbed the Bible of one of its crowning attractions! Jesus has not given us a transient salvation, but His salvation shall be forever! I will quote again those matchless words of His—“I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Honey flows here as in the woods of Jonathan! Put it to your mouth and your eyes shall be enlightened! The joy of God’s people, when they can get half-an-hour alone and sit down and crack a dish of those nuts called the Doctrines of Grace, is such as philosophical worldlings might well desire! But the *modern gospel* has no such wines on the lees well-refined.

But, Brothers and Sisters, our most grand joy is in God Himself! Paul says, “and not only so, but we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, to think of the great Father! What a melting of spirit comes over the child of God if at midnight he looks up at the stars and considers the Heavens and cries, “What is man, that You are mindful of him?” To think that He is not only mindful of us, but that He has taken us to be His sons and daughters! To feel the Spirit within our heart crying, “Abba, Father! Abba, Father!” Oh, this is joy in the most profound sense! How sweet to think of Jesus Christ the Son, the glorious Incarnate God, the Surety, the Satisfaction, the Representative, the All in All of His people! We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor do we miss the joy of the Spirit when we know that He dwells in us. He sanctifies us, comforts us and guides us in the road to Heaven. Oh Brothers and Sisters, this is a sea of bliss, the infinite deeps of the eternal godhead! Leap from all your miseries into this sea of Glory! Plunge into the joy of your Lord! This being so, we have a joy in all God’s ordinances— “with joy do we draw water out of the wells of salvation.” What a joy prayer is—I hope you find it so. The Lord has said, “I will make them joyful in My house of prayer.” And what a joy it is to get answers to our petitions, even as our Lord says, “Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Has not your joy been full till your eyes have been dim with tears and you have not hardly dared to tell how wondrously God has answered you? The Mercy Seat is lit up with joy.

What a joyous ordinance is that of praise! We come up to the sanctuary and bring our offering to God and present Him our oblation, just as the Jew of old brought his bullock or his lamb—and we joyfully present our gift unto the Most High. Then we begin to sing His praises and our joy is the chief musician upon our stringed instruments. How our spirits rise as we adore the Lord! The amount of happiness felt in this Tabernacle when we have been singing unto the Lord, can never be measured! For my own part, I have seemed to stand just outside the wall of the New Jerusalem joining in the hymns which are sung within the gates of the Eternal City! One joy note has helped another and the volume of sound has affected every part of our being and stirred us up to vehemence of joy!

And oh, what joy there is in coming to the Lord’s Table! May we experience it tonight, as we have often done before. The Lord is known to us in the breaking of bread and that knowledge is blissful. But I have scarcely begun the list, for we have a great joy in the salvation of other people! Perhaps one of the choicest delights we know is when we partake in the joy of the good Shepherd over His lost sheep when He calls us together, for we, also, are His friends and His neighbors. And He bids us rejoice that He has found the sheep which was lost! Especially do we joy and rejoice if the poor wanderer has been brought back by our means. The jewels of an emperor are *nothing* compared with the riches we possess in winning a soul for Christ! “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” The joy of harvest is great, the joy of the man who comes again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Do you know this joy, Brothers and Sisters? If you do not, awaken yourselves and may this sweet fruit of the Spirit yet be yours. Oh, the joy of seeing Christ exalted! John the Baptist said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” He called himself the Bridegroom’s friend, and rejoiced greatly in the Bridegroom’s joy. We can sympathize with him when we can bring about a marriage between Christ and any poor soul—and help to put the ring on the finger. The joy we feel is of the purest and loveliest order, for it is unselfish and refined. Let Jesus be exalted and we ask no more! If He reigns, we reign! If He is lifted up, our hearts are more than satisfied! Brethren, if we ever become perfect in heart, we shall joy in all the Divine will, whatever it may bring us.

I am trying, if I can, to find a joy in rheumatism, but I cannot get up to it yet. I have found a joy when it is over—I can reach *that* length—and I can and do bless God for any good result that may come of it. But when the pain is on me, it is difficult to be joyous about it and so I conclude that my sanctification is incomplete and my conformity to the Divine will is sadly imperfect. Oh, the splendor of God’s will! If a man were as he ought to be, God’s will would charm him and he would not wish for the smallest change in it! Poverty, sickness, bereavement, death—all are to be rejoiced in when our will is merged in the will of God!

What? Would you alter God’s infinitely wise appointment? Would you wish to change the purpose of unerring Love? Then you are not wholly reconciled to God, for when the head gets quite right the heart climbs where Paul was when he said, “We glory in tribulations, also, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience experience.” It needs a Samson to kill the lion of affliction and you cannot get honey out of it until it is conquered. But we might all be Samsons if we would but lay hold on the strength of God by faith! Dear Brothers and Sisters, the list of joys which I am even now only *commencing*, contains the joy of an easy conscience, the joy of feeling you have done right before God, the joy of knowing that your objective, though misunderstood and misrepresented, was God’s Glory! This is a jewel to wear on one’s breast—a quiet conscience.

Then there is the joy of communion with Christ, the joy of fellowship with His saints, the joy of drinking deep into Christ’s spirit of selfsacrifice. There, too, is the joy of expecting His glorious Advent when He and His saints shall reign upon the earth and the joy of being with Him forever! The joy of Heaven, the joy of which we have been singing just now. These joys are countless, but I will pause here and leave you to make a fuller catalog when you are at home. May the Holy Spirit not only refresh your memories concerning old joys, but bring forth out of His treasury new delights that your joy may be full!

**IV.**I must notice, in the fourth place, that THIS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT MAY BE CHECKED IN ITS GROWTH. Some of you may have muttered while I have been speaking of this joy, “I do not know much about it.” Perhaps not, friend—shall I tell you why? Some people are too full of the joy of the *world*, the joy of getting on in business, the joy of a large family, the joy of health, the joy of wealth, the joy of human love, or the joy which comes of the pride of life. These joys may be your *idols* and you *know* the joy of the Lord will not stand side by side with an idolatrous delight in the things of this world! See to that. Dagon must fall if the Ark of the Lord is present—the world must lose its charms if you are to joy in Christ Jesus.

Our joy is sadly diminished by our unbelief. If you will not believe, neither shall you be established. Ignorance will do the same to a very large extent. Many a Christian has a thousand reasons for joy which he knows nothing of. Study the Word and ask for the teaching of the Spirit of God that you may understand it and so shall you discover wells of delight! Joy is diminished, also, by walking at a distance from God. If you get away from the fire, you will grow cold—the warmest place is right in front of it and the warmest place for a believing heart is close to Christ in daily fellowship with Him. It may be that indulged in sin is spoiling our joy. “This little hand of mine,” as Mr. Whitfield once said, “can cover up the sun as far as my eyes are concerned.”

You have only to lift a naughty, rebellions hand and you can shut out the light of God, Himself—any known sin will do it. Trifling with sin will prove a killjoy to the heart. I believe that many lose the joy of the Lord because they do not put it in the right place. See where it lives. Look at my text—“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.” There joy stands in the center—“love” is on one side and “peace” on the other! Find a man who never loved anybody and you have found a joyless man. This man’s religion begins and ends with looking to his own safety. The only point he longs to know is—is *he* saved? He never knows joy, poor creature, how can he? As to peace, where is it? He has none because wherever he goes he growls, grumbles, snarls and barks at everybody. There is no peace where he is! He is always quarrelling and then he says, “I have little joy.”

He does not live in the right house for joy! Joy dwells at No. 2. “Love” is No. 1—“joy” is No. 2—“peace” is No. 3 and if you pull down either of the houses on the side, No. 2, in the middle, will tumble down! Joy is the center of a triplet and you must have it so or not at all—“Love, joy, peace.” Thus I have shown how the growth of joy can be checked. I pray you do not allow such an evil thing to be worked in *your* heart.

**V.**But, lastly, IT OUGHT TO BE CAREFULLY CULTIVATED. There is an obligation upon a Christian to be happy. Let me say it again—there is a responsibility laid upon a Christian to be cheerful! It is not merely an invitation, but it is a *command*—“Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous.” “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.” Gloomy Christians who do not resist despondency and strive against it, but who go about as if midnight had taken up its abode in their eyes and an everlasting frost had settled on their souls are not obeying the commands of God! The command to rejoice is as undoubted a precept of God as to love the Lord with all your heart. The vows of God are upon you, O Believer, and they bind you to be joyful!

In this joyfulness you shall find many great advantages. First, it is a great advantage, in itself, to be happy. Who would not rejoice if he could? Who would not rejoice when God commands him? Rejoicing will nerve you for life’s duties. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” A man who goes about Christ’s work in an unwilling, miserable spirit will do it badly and feebly. He may do it earnestly, but there will be no life or energy about him. Hear how the sailors, when they pull the rope, will shout and sing and work all the better for their cheery notes! I do not believe our soldiers would march to battle with half their present courage if they tramped along in silence. Beat the drums! Let the trumpet sound forth its martial note! Every man is eager for the fray while soul-stirring music excites him. Let your heart make music unto God and you will fight valiantly for the Kingdom of your Lord.

Holy joy will also be a great preventive. The man who feels the joy of the Lord will not covet worldly joy. He will not be tempted to make a God of his possessions or of his talents, or of anything else. He will say, “I have joy in God. These things I am very thankful for, but they are not my joy.” He will not crave the aesthetic in worship, for his joy will be in God and His Truth—not in external forms. Some people’s idea of joy in religion lies in fine singing, charming music, pretty dresses, splendid architecture, or showy eloquence. They need this because they do not know the secret joy of the Lord, for when *that* holy passion reigns within, you may sit inside four whitewashed walls and not hear a soul speak for a whole hour and a half and yet you may have as intense a joy as if you listened to the most earnest oratory or the sweetest song!—

***“Joy in God is suitable to our condition!  
Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?”***

What are we doing now, some of us? We have been hanging our harps on the willows—let us take them down—the willow limbs will bend! Thank God we did not break the harps, though we did hang them there. Let us get into our right position—children of the happy God should, themselves, be happy. Joy is certainly the best preparation for the future. We are going where, if we learn to groan ever so deeply, our education will be lost, for melancholy utterances are unknown up there! We are going where, if we learn to sing with sacred joy, our education will be useful, for the first thing we shall hear when we get into Heaven will undoubtedly be, “Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!” And if we have been joyful on earth we shall say, “Ah, I am at home here!”

To enter Heaven with a joyful soul is only to rise from downstairs to the upper chamber where the music knows no discord. It is the same song in both places, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” Joy in the Lord will be very helpful to you as to usefulness. I am sure a Christian man’s usefulness is abridged by dreariness of spirit. What nice Sunday school teachers some Christians I know of would make! “Come you children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the miseries of religion!” And the dear Brother begins by telling the children about the Slough of Despond, Giant Despair and the Valley of the Shadow of Death! He wonders, when he gets home, that the dear children are not attracted to the ways of godliness! Are they likely to be? A member of a Church who has no joy of the Lord is little likely to encourage or influence others—they edge away from him.

Even those who try to comfort him find it is to no purpose and so they give him a wide berth. You hear him stand up to address an assembly of Believers, to tell his experience, and after a very little of it you feel you have had enough. Those who drink wine will tell you that half a dozen drops of vinegar are more than they need in a glass of wine and those who carry the cruet about wherever they go are not choice company! I do not find fault with gloomy souls, but they might be more useful if they could live more in the sunlight! The joy of the Lord is the most injurious to Satan’s empire of anything. I am of the same mind as Luther, who, when he heard any very bad news, used to say, “Come, let us sing a Psalm and spite the devil.”

There is nothing like it! Whenever anything happens that is rough and ugly and seems to injure the Kingdom of Christ, say to yourself, “Bless the Lord, glory be to His name.” If the Lord has been dishonored by the falling away of a false professor, or the failure of the ministry in any place, let us give Him all the more honor, ourselves, and in some measure make up for all that has happened amiss. And, lastly, holy joy is very pleasing to God. God delights in the joy of His creatures. He made them to be happy! His first and original design in the creation of all beings is His own Glory in their happiness. When His people rejoice He rejoices.  
Some of you spent Christmas day in the bosom of your families. Possibly you have a large family—10 or 12 were at home on that day, with a grandchild or two. I will tell you what was your greatest joy on that day—it was to see the happiness of your children and to mark how they enjoyed what you had provided for them. They are only little children, some of them, creeping about on the floor, but they pleased you because they were so pleased themselves! The joy of a little child delights your heart to hear it, for it gives us joy to behold joy in those we love. Suppose your sons and daughters had all come marching in on Christmas day in a very gloomy state of mind—cold, loveless, joyless—suppose that they did not enjoy anything, but grumbled at you and at one another? You would be quite sad and wish the day to be soon over and never come again for the next seven years!

Thus in a figure we see that our heavenly Father delights in the delight of His children and is glad to see them grateful and happy and acting as children should do towards such a Parent! Now, Brothers and Sisters, rise as one man and sing—

***“Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry!  
We’re marching thro’  
Immanuel’s ground  
To fairer worlds on high.”***

Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1782 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT  
NO. 1782

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But the fruit of the Spirit is love.”  
Galatians 5:22.~~***

THE worst enemy we have is the flesh. Augustine used to frequently pray, “Lord, deliver me from that evil man, myself.” All the fire which the devil can bring from Hell could do us little harm if we had not so much fuel in our nature. It is the powder in the magazine of the old man which is our perpetual danger. When we are guarding against foes outside, we must not forget to be continually on our watchtower against the foe of foes within. “The flesh lusts against the Spirit.” On the other hand, our best Friend, who loves us better than we love ourselves, is the Holy Spirit. We are shockingly forgetful of the Holy Spirit and, therein, it is to be feared that we greatly grieve Him. Yet we are immeasurably indebted to Him—in fact, we owe our *spiritual existence* to His Divine Power.

It would not be proper to compare the love of the Spirit with the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as even, by implication, to set up a scale of degrees in love—for the love of the regenerating Spirit is infinite, even as is the love of the redeeming Son. But yet, for a moment, we will set these two displays of love side by side. Is not the indwelling of the Spirit of God equal in loving kindness to the Incarnation of the Son of God? Jesus dwelt in a pure Manhood of His own—the Holy Spirit dwells in *our* manhood, which is fallen and, as yet, imperfectly sanctified. Jesus dwelt in His human body, having it perfectly under His own control, but, alas, the Holy Spirit must contend for the mastery within *us*, and though He is Lord over our hearts, yet there is an evil power within our members, strongly entrenched and obstinately bent on mischief.

“The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.” Our Lord Jesus dwelt in His body only for some 30 years or so, but the blessed Spirit of All Grace dwells in us through all the days of our pilgrimage— from the moment when He enters into us by regeneration He continues in us, making us qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. You sing—

***“Oh, ‘tis love, ‘tis wondrous Love,”***  
in reference to our Lord Jesus and His Cross—sing it, also, in reference to the Holy Spirit and His long-suffering! He looks at us from within and, therefore, He sees the chambers of imagery where hidden idols still abide. He sees our actions—not from the outside, for there, perhaps, they might be judged favorably. But He discerns them from *within—*in their springs and in the *pollution* of those springs—in their main currents and in all their side eddies and back waters.

Brothers and Sisters, it is amazing that this blessed Spirit should not leave us in indignation! We lodge Him so evilly. We honor Him so little. He receives so little of our affectionate worship that He might well say, “I will no longer abide with you.” When the Lord had given up His people to the Roman sword, there was heard in the Temple at Jerusalem a sound as of rushing wings and a voice crying, “Let us go from here.” Justly might the Divine Presence have left us, also, because of our sins! It is matchless love which has caused the Holy Spirit to bear with our ill manners and bear our vexatious behavior! He stays though sin intrudes into His temple! He makes His royal abode where evil assails His palace! Alas, that a heart where the Spirit deigns to dwell should always be made a thoroughfare for selfish or unbelieving traffic!

God help us to adore the Holy Spirit at the commencement of our discourse and to do so even more reverently at its close! The Holy Spirit, when He comes into us, is the Author of all our desires after true holiness. He strives against the flesh in us. That holy conflict which we wage against our corruption comes entirely of Him. We would sit down in *willing* bondage to the flesh if He did not bid us strike for liberty. The good Spirit also leads us in the way of life. If we are led of the Spirit, says the Apostle, we are not under the Law. He leads us by gentle means, drawing us with cords of love and bands of a man. “He leads me.” If we take a single step in the right road, it is because He leads us. And if we have persevered, these many years, in the way of peace, it is all due to His guidance—even to Him who will surely bring us in and make us to enjoy the promised rest!—

***“And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone.”***

The Holy Spirit not only creates the inward contest against sin and the agonizing desire for holiness, but He leads us onward in the way of life. And He remains within us, taking up His residence and more—for the text suggests a still more immovable steadfastness of residence in our hearts since, according to the figure, the Spirit strikes root within us. The text speaks of, “fruit,” and fruit comes only of a *rooted* abidance—it could not be conceived of in connection with a transient sojourning, like that of a wayfaring man. The stakes and tent pins that are driven into the ground for an Arab’s tent bear no fruit, for they do not remain in one place. And, inasmuch as I read of the, “fruit of the Spirit,” I take comfort from the hint and conclude that He intends to abide in our souls as a tree abides in the soil when fruit is borne by it!

Let us love and bless the Holy Spirit! Let the golden altar of incense perfume this earth with the sweet savor of perpetual adoration to the Holy Spirit! Let our hearts heartily sing to Him this solemn doxology—

***“We give You, sacred Spirit, praise,  
Who in our hearts of sin and woe  
Makes living springs of Grace arise,  
And into boundless glory flow.”***

**I.**Now, coming to our text, I shall notice the matters contained in it. The first thing which my mind perceives is A WINNOWING FAN. I would like to be able to use it, but it is far better that it should remain where it is, for, “the fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor.” The handle of this winnowing fan is made of the first word of the text, that disjunctive conjunction, that dividing monosyllable, “*But*.” “*But* the fruit of the Spirit is love”! That, “but,” is placed there because the Apostle had been mentioning certain works of the flesh, all of which he winnows away like chaff. And then he sets forth in opposition to them, “the fruit of the Spirit.”

If you will read the chapter, you will notice that the Apostle has used no less than 17 words—I might almost say 18—to describe the works of the *flesh*. Human language is always rich in bad words because the human heart is full of the manifold evils which these words denote. Nine words are used to express the fruit of the Spirit. But to express the works of the *flesh*—see how many are gathered together! The first set of these works of the flesh which have to be winnowed away are the *counterfeits of love to man*. Counterfeited love is one of the vilest things under Heaven. That heavenly word, love, has been trailed in the mire of unclean passion and filthy desire. The licentiousness which comes of the worship of Venus has dared to take to itself a name which belongs only to the pure worship of Jehovah.

Now, the works which counterfeit love are these—“ *adultery*, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.” To talk of “love” when a man covets his neighbor’s wife, or when a woman violates the command, “You shall not commit adultery,” is little less than sheer blasphemy against the holiness of love! It is not love, but *lust*—love is an angel and lust a devil! The purities of domestic life are defiled and its honors are disgraced when once the marriage bond is disregarded. When men or women talk of religion and are unfaithful to their marriage covenant, they are base hypocrites! Even the heathen condemned this infamy—let not Christians tolerate it!

The next fleshly work is “ *fornication*,” which was scarcely censured among the heathen, but is most sternly condemned by Christianity. It is a wretched sign of the times, that in these corrupt days some have arisen who treat this crime as a slight offense and even attempt to provide for its safer indulgence by legislative enactments! Has it come to this? Has the civil ruler become a panderer to the lusts of corrupt minds? Let it not be once named among you, as it becomes saints. “*Uncleanness”* is a third work of the flesh and it includes those many forms of foul offense which defile the body and deprive it of its true honor. We bring up the rear with, “lasciviousness,” which is the cord which draws on uncleanness and includes all *conversation* which excites the passions, all *songs* which suggest lewdness, all *gestures* and *thoughts* which lead up to unlawful gratification.

We have sadly much of these evils in these days, not only openly in our streets, but in more secret ways. I loathe the subject! All works of art which are contrary to modesty are here condemned and the most pleasing poetry, if it creates impure imaginations. These unclean things are the works of the flesh in the stage of putridity—the very maggots which swarm within a corrupt soul. Bury these rotten things out of our sight! I do but uncover them for an instant that a holy disgust may be caused in every Christian soul and that we may flee from them as from the breath of pestilence! Yet remember, O you that think yourselves pure and imagine you would never transgress so badly, that even into these loathsome and abominable criminalities high professors have fallen!

Yes, and sincere Believers, trusting in themselves, have slipped into this ditch from where they have escaped with infinite sorrow—to go with broken bones the rest of their pilgrimage. Alas, how many who seemed to be escaped from pollution have so fallen that they have had to be saved so as by fire! Oh, may we keep our garments unspotted by the flesh! And this we *cannot* do unless it is in the power and energy of the Spirit of Holiness. He must purge these evils from us and cause His fruit to so abound in us that the deeds of the flesh shall be excluded forever.

The winnowing fan is used next against the *counterfeits of love to God.* I refer to the falsities of superstition—“Idolatry and witchcraft”—“but the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Alas, there are some that fall into *idolatry,* for they trust in an arm of flesh and exalt the creature into the place of the Creator—“their God is their belly and they glory in their shame.” The golden calf of *wealth*, the silver shrines of*craft*, the goddess of *philosophy*, the Diana of *fashion*, the Moloch of power—these are all worshipped instead of the living God! Those who profess to reverence the true God, yet too generally worship Him in ways which He has not ordained. Thus says the Lord, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them.”

Yet we have Christians (so called) who say they derive help in the exercise of devotion from images and pictures! Look how their places of assembly are rendered gaudy with pictures, images and things which savor of old Rome! What idolatry is openly carried on in certain buildings belonging to the National Church! What sensuous worship is now approved! Men cannot worship God, nowadays, unless their eyes, ears and noses are gratified! When these senses of the flesh are pleased, they are satisfied with themselves! “But the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Love is the most perfect architecture, for “love builds up.” Love is the sweetest music, for without it we become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Love is the choicest incense, for it is a sacrifice of sweet smell. Love is the most fit vestment—“Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”  
Oh, that men would remember that the fruit of the Spirit is not the finery of the florist, the sculptor, or the milliner, but the love of the heart! It ill becomes us to make that gaudy which should be simple and spiritual. The fruit of the Spirit is not idolatry—the worship of another god—or of the true God after the manner of will worship! No, that fruit is obedient love to the only living God. “*Witchcraft*,” too, is a work of the flesh. Under this head we may rightly group all that prying into the unseen; that rending of the veil which God has hung up; that interfering with departed spirits; that necromancy which calls itself spiritualism and pays court to familiar spirits and demons—this is no fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit of a bitter root! Brother and Sister Christians, modern witchcrafts and wizardry are to be abhorred and condemned—and you will be wise to keep clear of them, trembling to be found acting in concert with those who love darkness rather than light—because their deeds are evil!

Idolatry and witchcraft are caused by a lack of love to God and they are evidences that the Spirit’s life is not in the soul! When you come to love God with all your heart, you will not worship God in ways of your own devising, but you will ask, “How shall I draw near unto the most high God?” And you will take your direction from the Lord’s Inspired Word. The service which He prescribes is the only service which He will accept! The winnowing fan is at work right now—I wonder whether it is operating upon any here present?

But next, this great winnowing fan drives away, with its, “ *but,”* all *the forms of hate*. The Apostle mentions, “*hatred*,” or an habitual enmity to men, usually combined with a selfish esteem of one’s own person. Certain men cherish a dislike to everybody who is not of their clique, while they detest those who oppose them. They are contemptuous to the weak, ready to take offense and care little whether they give it or not. They delight to be in minorities of one and the more wrong-headed and pugnacious they can be, the more are they in their element. “*Variance*,” too, with its perpetual dislikes, bickering and quarrelling, is a work of the flesh. Those who indulge in it are contrary to all men, pushing their angles into everybody’s eyes, and looking out for occasions of fault-finding, and strife.

“ *Emulations*”—that is, jealousy—jealousy in all its forms, is one of the works of the flesh. Is it not cruel as the grave? There is a jealousy which sickens if another is praised and pines away if another prospers. It is a venomous thing and stings like an adder! It is a serpent by the way, biting the horse’s heels, so that his rider falls backward. “*Wrath”* is another deed of the flesh—I mean the fury of angry passion and all the madness which comes of it. “But I am a man of very quick temper,” says one! Are you a Christian? If so, you are bound to master this evil force or it will ruin you! If you were a saint of God to the very highest degree in all but in this one point, it would pull you down! Yes, at any moment an angry spirit might make you say and do that which would cause you life-long sorrow.

“ *Strife”* is a somewhat milder, but equally mischievous form of the same evil. It burns not quite so fast and furiously, yet it is a slow fire kindled by the same flame of Hell as the more ardent passion. The continual love of contention; the morbid sensitiveness; the overbearing regard to one’s own dignity which join together to produce strife are all evil things. What is the proper respect which is due to poor creatures like ourselves? I suppose that if any one of us got our “proper respect,” we would not like it long— we would think that bare justice was rather scant in its appreciation! We desire to be flattered when we cry out for, “proper respect!” Respect, indeed! Why, if we had our just due, we would be in the lowest Hell!

Then our Apostle mentions, “ *seditions*,” which occur in the State, the Church and the family. As far as our Church life is concerned, this evil shows itself in an opposition to all sorts of authority or law. Any kind of official action in the Church is to be railed at because it is official! Rule of any sort is objected to because each man desires to have the preeminence and will not be second! God save us from this evil leaven! *Heresy*is that kind of hate which makes every man set up to create his own religion, write his own bible and think out his own gospel. We have heard of, “every man his own lawyer,” and now we are coming to have, “Every man his own god, every man his own bible, every man his own instructor.”

After this work of the flesh, come “ *Envyings*”—not so much the desire to enrich one’s self at another’s expense, as a wolfish craving to impoverish him and pull him down for the mere sake of it. This is a very acrid form of undiluted *hate* and leaves but one stronger form of hate. To desire another’s dishonor merely from envy of his superiority is simply devilish and is a sort of murder of the man’s best life. The list is fitly closed by, “*murders*”—a suitable cornerstone to crown this diabolical edifice—for what is hate but murder? And what is murder but hate bearing its full fruit? He who does not love has, within him, all the elements that make a murderer! If you have not a general feeling of benevolence towards all men and a desire to do them good, the old spirit of Cain is within you and it only needs to be unrestrained and it will strike the fatal blow and lay your brother dead at your feet! God save you, Brothers and Sisters, every one of you, from the domination of these dark principles of hate which are the works of the flesh in its corruption. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love.”

Next time you begin to boil over with wrath, imagine you feel a hand touching you and causing you to hear a gentle voice whispering, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Next time you say, “I will never speak to that man again, I cannot stand him,” imagine you feel a fresh wind fanning your fevered brow and hear the Angel of Mercy say, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Next time you are inclined to find fault with everybody, set your brethren by the ears and create a general scuffle, I pray you let the chimes ring out, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love!” If you wish to find fault, it is easy to do so—you may begin with me and go down to the last young member that was admitted into the Church—and you will not have to look long before you can spy out something which needs improvement!

But to what end will you pick holes in our coats? Whenever you are bent on the growling business, pause awhile and hear the Scripture admonish you—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” When you become indignant because you have been badly treated and you think of returning evil for evil, remember this text—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” “Ah,” you say, “it was shameful!” Of course it was! And therefore do not imitate it—do not render railing for railing—but contrariwise, blessing, for, “the fruit of the Spirit is love.” The winnowing fan is at work—may God blow your chaff away, Brothers and Sisters, and mine, too!

The next thing which the winnowing fan blows away is *the excess of self-indulgence—“*drunkenness, reveling and such like.” Alas, that Christian people should ever need to be warned against these animal offenses! And yet they do. The wine cup still has its morgues for professors! Nor is this all—it is not merely that you *drink* to excess, but you may *eat* to excess, or clothe your body too sumptuously—or there may be some other spending of money upon your own gratification which is not according to sober living. Drunkenness is one of those trespasses of which Paul says, “they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” The reveling which makes night hideous with its so-called songs —call them howling and you are nearer the mark—the reveling which spends hour after hour in entertainment which heats the blood, hardens the heart and chases away all solid thought, is not for us who have renounced the works of darkness—for us there is a better joy, namely, to be filled with the Spirit—“the fruit of the Spirit is love.”

**II.**The second thing which I see in the text is A JEWEL—that jewel is *love*. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” What a priceless diamond this is! It is altogether incalculable in value. What a heavenly Grace love is! It has its center in the heart, but its circumference sweeps, like Omnipresence, around everything! Love is a Grace of boundless scope. We love God—it is the only way in which we can fully embrace Him. We can *love* the whole of God, but we cannot *know* the whole of God! Yes, we love God, and even love that part of God which we cannot comprehend or even know. We love the Father as He is. We love His dear Son as He is. We love the everblessed Spirit as He is. Following upon this, for God’s sake, we love the creatures He has made! It is true, in a measure, that—

***“He prays best that loves best  
Both man and bird and beast.”***

Every tiny fly that God has made is sacred to our souls as God’s creature. Our love climbs to Heaven, sits among the angels and soon bows among them in lowliest attitude, but, in due time, our love stoops down to earth, visits the haunts of depravity, cheers the attics of poverty and sanctifies the dens of blasphemy, for it loves the lost! Love knows no outcast London—it has cast out none! It talks not of the “lapsed masses,” for none have lapsed from its regard. Love *hopes* good for all and *plans* good for all—while it can soar to Glory, it can descend to sorrow. Love is a Grace which has to do with eternity, for we shall never cease to love Him who *first loved us*!

But love has also to do with this present world, for it is at home in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, nursing the sick and liberating the slave. Love delights in visiting the fatherless and the widows and thus it earns the encomium—“I was hungry and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger and you took Me in: naked, and you clothed Me: I was sick and you visited Me: I was in prison and you came unto Me.” Love is a very practical, home-spun virtue, and yet it is so rich and rare that God, alone, is its Author. None but a heavenly Power can produce this fine linen—the love of the *world* is sorry stuff! Love has to do with friends. How fondly it nestles in the parental bosom! How sweetly it smiles from a mother’s eyes! How closely it binds two souls together in marriage bonds! How pleasantly it walks along the ways of life, leaning on the arm of friendship! And love is not content with this—she embraces her *enemy*, she heaps coals of fire upon her adversary’s head— she prays for them that despitefully use her and persecute her. Is not this a precious jewel, indeed?

What earthly thing can be compared to it? You must have noticed that in *the list of the fruits of the Spirit, it’s the first—*“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” It is first because, in some respects, it is best. First, because it leads the way. First, because it becomes the motive principle and stimulant of every other Grace and virtue! You cannot conceive of anything more forceful and more beneficial and, therefore, it is the first. But *see what follows at its heels*. Two shining ones attend it like maids of honor, waiting upon a queen! “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace”—he that has love, has joy and peace! What choice companions! To love much is to possess a deep delight, a secret cellar of the wine of joy which no man may otherwise taste.

He that loves is like to God, who is the God of Peace. Truly the meek and loving shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace! He is calm and quiet whose soul is full of love. In his boat the Lord stands at the helm, saying to the winds and waves, “Peace! Be still!” He that is all love, though he may have to suffer, yet shall count it all joy when he falls into different trials. See, then, what a precious jewel it is that has so many shining brilliants set at its side. Love has this for its excellence, that it fulfils the whole Law of God—you cannot say that of any other virtue! Yet, while it fulfils the whole Law, it is not legal. Nobody ever loved because it was *demanded* of him—a good man loves because it is his nature to do so. Love is free—it blows where it will—like the Spirit from which it comes. Love, indeed, is the very essence of heart liberty! Well may it be honored, for while it is a true Grace of the Gospel, it nevertheless fulfils the whole Law. If you would have Law and Gospel sweetly combined, you have it in the fruit of the Spirit, which is love.

Love, moreover, is Godlike, for God is Love. Love it is which prepares us for Heaven where *everything* is love. Come, sweet Spirit, and rest upon us till our nature is transformed into the Divine Nature by our becoming burning flames of love! Oh, that it were so with us this very day! Mark, Beloved, that the love we are speaking of is*not* a love which comes out of men on account of their *natural constitution*. I have known persons who are tenderly affectionate by nature—and this is good, but it is not *spiritual* love—that is the fruit of *nature* and not of Grace! An affectionate disposition is admirable, but it may become a danger by leading to inordinate affection, a timid fear of offending, or an idolatry of the creature. I do not condemn natural amiability—on the contrary, I wish that all men were naturally amiable—but I would not have any person think that this will *save* him, or that it is a proof that he is renewed.

Only the love which is the fruit of the Spirit may be regarded as a mark of Grace. Some people, I am sorry to say, are naturally sour—they seem to have been born at the season of crabapples and to have been fed on vinegar. They always take a fault-finding view of things. They never see the sun’s splendor and yet they are so clear-sighted as to have discovered his spots. They have a great specialty of power for discerning things which it were better not to see. They do not remember that the earth has proved steady and firm for centuries, but they have a lively recollection of the earthquake, and they quake, even now, as they talk about it.

Such as these have need to cry for the indwelling of the Spirit of God, for if He will enter into them His power will soon overcome the tendency to sourness, for, “the fruit of the Spirit is love.” Spiritual love is nowhere found without the Spirit and the Spirit is nowhere dwelling in the heart unless love is produced. So much for this jewel!

**III.**I see in the text a third thing, and that is A PICTURE—a rich and rare picture painted by a Master, the great Designer of all things beautiful—the Divine Spirit of God. What does He say? He says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” We have seen many fine pictures of fruit and here is one. The great Artist has sketched fruit which never grow in the gardens of earth till they are planted by the Lord from Heaven! Oh, that every one of us might have a vineyard in his bosom and yield abundance of that love which is “the fruit of the Spirit!” What does this mean? “Fruit”—how is love a *fruit*? The metaphor shows that love is a thing which comes out of life. You cannot fetch fruit out of a dead post. The pillars which support these galleries have never yielded any fruit and they never will—they are of hard iron and no life-sap circulates within them.

A dead tree brings forth no fruit. God implants a spiritual life in men and then, out of that life, comes love, as the fruit of the Spirit. Love appears as a *growth*. Fruit does not*begin* perfectly ripe from the tree all at once. First comes a flower; then a tiny formation which shows that the flower has set. Then a berry appears, but it is very sour. You may not gather it. Leave it alone, a little while, and allow the sun to ripen it. Byand-by it fills out and there you have the apple in the full proportions of beauty—and with a mellow flavor which delights the taste. Love springs up in the heart and increases by a sure growth. Love is not produced by casting the mind in the mold of imitation, or by fastening the Grace to a man’s manner as a thing outside of himself. Little children go to a shop where their little tastes are considered and they buy sticks upon which cherries have been tied—but everybody knows that they are not the fruit of the *sticks*—they are merely bound upon them! And so have we known people who have borrowed an affectionate mannerism and a sweet style— but they are not natural to them—they are not true love.

What sweet words! What dainty phrases! You go among them and, at first, you are surprised with their affection! You are a, “*dear* Sister,” or a, “*dear* Brother,” and you hear a, “*dear* minister.” And you come to the “*dear* Tabernacle” and sing *dear* hymns to those *dear* old tunes. Their talk is so sweet that it is just a little sticky—and you feel like a fly which is being caught in molasses! This is disgusting! It sickens me! Love is a fruit of the *Spirit—*it is not something assumed by a man—but something growing out of his heart. Some men sugar their conversation very largely with pretentious words because they are aware that the fruit it is made of is unripe and young. In such a case their sweetness is not affection but affectation! But *true* love, *real* love for God and man comes out of a man because it is *in* him, worked within by the operation of the Holy Spirit whose fruit it is. The outcome of regenerated manhood is that a man lives no longer unto himself but for the good of others.

Fruit, again, calls for care. If you have a garden, you will soon know this. We had a profusion of flowers upon our pear trees this year and, for a few weeks, the weather was warm beyond the usual heat of April. But nights of frost followed and cut off nearly all the fruit. Other kinds of fruit which survived the frost are now in danger from the dry weather which has developed an endless variety of insect blight so that we wonder whether any of it will survive! If we get over this trial and the fruit grows well, we shall yet expect to see many apples fall before autumn because a worm has eaten into their hearts and effectually destroyed them. So is it with Christian life! I have seen a work for the Lord prospering splendidly, like a fruitful vine, when suddenly there has come a frosty night and fond hopes have been nipped. Or else new notions and wild ideas have descended like insect blights and the fruit has been spoiled! Or if the work has escaped these causes of damage, some immorality in a leading member, or a quarrelsome spirit has appeared unawares like a worm in the center of the apple—and down it has fallen, never to flourish again.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” You must take care of your fruit if you wish to have any laid up in store at the end of the year. And so must every Christian be very watchful over the fruit of the Spirit, lest in any way it should be destroyed by the enemy. Fruit is the reward of the husbandman and the crown and glory of the tree. The Lord crowns the year with His goodness by giving fruit in due season—and truly the holy fruit of love is the regard of Jesus and the honor of His servants. How sweet is the fruit of the Spirit! I say, “fruit,” and not *fruits*, for the text says so. The work of the Spirit is *one*, whether it is known by the name of love, or joy, or peace, or meekness, or gentleness, or temperance. Moreover, it is constant—the fruit of the Spirit is borne continually in its season. It is reproductive, for the tree multiplies itself by its fruit, and Christianity must be spread by the love and joy and peace of Christians.

Let the Spirit of God work in you, dear Brothers and Sisters, and you will be fruitful in every good work, doing the will of the Lord—and you will rear others like you, who shall, when your time is over, occupy your place and bring forth fruit to the great Husbandman!

**IV.**Lastly, you see in my text, A CROWN. “The fruit of the Spirit is love.” Let us make a diadem out of the text and lovingly set it upon the head of the Holy Spirit, because He has produced, in the people of God, this precious thing which is called, “Love.” How comes heavenly love into such hearts as yours and mine? It comes, first, because the Holy Spirit has given us a new *nature*. There is a new life in us that was not there when we first came into the world. And that new life lives and loves. It must love God, who has created it, and man, who is made in His image. It cries, “My Father,” and the essence of that word, “My Father,” is love!

The Spirit of God has brought us into new relationships. He has given us the spirit of adoption towards the Father. He has made us to feel our brotherhood with the saints and to know our union with Christ. We are not in our relationships what we used to be, for we were “heirs of wrath even as others.” But now we are “heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ” and, consequently, we cannot help loving, for love, alone, could make the new relation to be fully enjoyed. The blessed Spirit has also brought us tender new *obligations*. We were bound to love God and serve Him as creatures, but we did not do it—now the Holy Spirit has made us to feel that we are debtors to infinite love and mercy through redemption. Every drop of Jesus’ blood cries to us to love! Every groan from yonder dark Gethsemane cries love! The Spirit of God works in us so that every shiver of yonder Cross moves us to love!

The love of Christ constrains us—we *must* love, for the Spirit has taken of the things of the loving Christ and has revealed them to us. The Spirit of God has so entered into us that He has caused love to be our delight! What a pleasure it is when you can preach a sermon full of love to those to whom you preach! Or when you can visit the poor, full of love to those you relieve! To stand on the street corner and proclaim of Jesus’ dying love—why, it is no irksome task to the man who does it lovingly—it is his joy and his recreation! Holy service in which the emotion of love is indulged is as pleasant to us as it is to a bird to fly, or to a fish to swim! Duty is no longer bondage, but choice! Holiness is no longer restraint, but perfect liberty! And self-sacrifice becomes the very *crown* of our ambition—the loftiest height to which our spirit can aspire! It is the Holy Spirit that does all this.

Now, my dear Hearer, have you this love in your heart? Judge by your relation to God. Do you live without prayer? Do you very seldom read God’s Word? Are you getting indifferent as to whether you go and worship with His people? Ah, then, be afraid that the love of God is not in you! But do you feel that you love everything that has to do with God—His work, His service, His people, His Day, His Book—and that you do all you possibly can to spread His Kingdom, both by prayer, by word of mouth, by your liberality and by your example? If you love, you can easily see it, I think, and there are many ways by which you can test yourself.

Well, suppose that to be satisfactorily answered, then I have this further question—Do you and I—who can say, “Lord, you know that I love You”—do we sufficiently bless the Holy Spirit for giving us this jewel of love? If you love Christ, then say, “This love is*given* to me. It is a rare plant, an exotic. It never sprang out of my natural heart. Weeds will grow there, but not this fair flower.” Bless the Holy Spirit for it! “Oh, but I do not love God as I ought!” No, Brother, I know you do not, but bless Him that you love Him at all! Love God for the very fact that He has led you to love Him—and that is the way to love Him more! Love God for letting you love Him! Love Him for taking away the stone out of your heart and giving you a heart of flesh! For the little Grace that you see in your soul, thank God!

You know when a man has been ill, the doctor says to him, “You are not well by a long way, but I hope you are on the turn.” “Yes,” says the man, “I feel very ill, but still, I think I am a little better—the fever is less and the swelling is going down.” He mentions some little symptom and the doctor is pleased because he knows that it indicates much—the disease is past the crisis. Bless God for a little Grace! Blame yourself that you have not more Grace, but praise Him to think you have any! Time was when I would have given my eyes and ears to be able to say, “I love God.” And now that I do love Him, I would give my eyes and ears to love Him more! I would give all I have to get more love into my soul! But I am grateful to think I have a measure of true love and I feel its power.

Do be grateful to the Holy Spirit. Worship and adore Him specially and peculiarly. You say, “Why specially and peculiarly?” I answer—Because He is so much forgotten. Some people hardly know whether there is a Holy Spirit! Let the Father and the Son be equally adored, but be careful in reference to the Holy Spirit, for the failure of the Church towards the Holy Trinity lies mainly in a forgetfulness of the Gracious work of the Holy Spirit! Therefore I press this upon you and I beg you to laud and magnify the Holy Spirit and sedulously walk in all affectionate gratitude towards Him all your days. As your love increases, let your worship of the Holy Spirit become daily more and more conspicuous because love is*His* fruit although it is your vital principle. To the God of Love I commend you all. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—23, 651, 649.**Adapted from*The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY DEFENDED; OR, A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH  
NO. 1239

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Galatians 5:24.*

FROM several quarters we have heard intensely earnest objections, lately, to *the matter and tenor*of the preaching of the evangelists from America who have been working among us. Of course their teaching, as well as our own, is open to honest judgment and they, we feel sure, would rather court than shun investigation of the most searching sort. Criticisms upon their style of speaking and singing, and so on, are so unimportant that nobody has any need to answer them. “Wisdom is justified of her children.” It is a waste of time to discuss mere matters of taste, for no men, however excellent, can please all, or even become equally adapted to all constitutions and conditions. Therefore we may let such remarks pass without further observation.

But upon the matter of doctrine very much has been said and said, also, with a good deal of temper not always of the best kind. What has been affirmed by a certain class of public writers comes to this, if you boil it down—that it cannot really do any good to tell men that simply by believing in Jesus Christ they will be saved. And that it may do people very serious injury if we lead them to imagine that they have undergone a process called *conversion* and are now safe for life. We are told by these gentlemen, who ought to know, for they speak very positively, that the doctrine of immediate salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is a very dangerous one. They say that it will certainly lead to the deterioration of the public morality since men will not be likely to set store by the practical virtues when faith is lifted up to so very lofty a position. They say if it *were* so it were a grievous fault and woe to those who lead men into it!

That it is not the fact, we are sure, but meanwhile let us survey the field of battle. Will you please notice that this is no quarrel between these gentlemen and our friends Messrs. Moody and Sankey, alone! It is a quarrel between these objectors and the whole of us who preach the Gospel. For, although differing, as we do, in the *style* of preaching it, we are all ready to set our seal to the clearest possible statement that men *are* saved by faith in Jesus Christ and saved the moment they believe! We all hold and teach that there *is* such a thing as conversion—and that when men are converted they become other men than they were before—and a new life begins which will culminate in eternal glory.

We are not so dastardly as to allow our friends to stand alone in the front of the battle, to be looked upon as peculiar persons holding strange notions from which the rest of us dissent. So far as salvation through faith in the atoning blood is concerned, they preach nothing but what we have preached all our lives! They preach nothing but what has the general consent of Protestant Christendom. Let that be known to all and let the archers shoot at us all alike! Then, further, if this is the point of objection, we should like those who raise it to know that they do not raise it against us, merely, and these friends who are more prominent, but against the Protestant faith which these very same gentlemen most probably profess to glory in!

The Protestant faith, in a nutshell, lies in this very same justification by faith which they hoot at. It was the discovery that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which first stirred up Luther. That was the ray of light which fell upon his dark heart and by the power of which he came into the liberty of the Gospel! This is the hammer by which popery was broken in old times and this is the sword with which it still is to be smitten—the very “Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior and, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Luther used, in fact, to say—and we endorse it—that this matter of Justification by Faith is the article by which a Church must stand or fall.

That so-called Church which does not hold this doctrine is not a Church of Christ! And it is a Church of Christ that does hold it, notwithstanding many mistakes into which it may have fallen. The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of *merit* and the Protestant doctrine of Grace! And no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends. We shall go somewhat further than this. The objection is not against Messrs. Moody and Sankey, but against all evangelical ministers! It is not against them, only, but against our common Protestantism! And yet more—it is against the Inspired Word of God—for if this Book teaches *anything* under Heaven, it certainly teaches that men are saved by faith in our Lord Jesus!

Read the Epistle to the Galatians and your judgment may be very perverse, but you cannot, by any common wresting of words, expel the doctrine of Justification by Faith from the Epistle. It was written on purpose to state that Truth of God plainly and defend it fully. Neither can you get rid of that doctrine from the whole New Testament. You shall find it not merely seasoning all the Epistles, but positively saturating them! And, as you take chapter by chapter, you may wring out of them, as out of Gideon’s fleece, this one Truth—that justification before God is by *faith—*not by the works of the Law. So the objection is against the Bible—and let those who shoot their errors, understand that they fight against the Eternal Spirit of God and the witness which He has borne by His Prophets and Apostles! Deny Inspiration and you have no ground to stand on. But while you believe the Bible you must believe in Justification by Faith.

But now let us look this matter in the face. Is it true, or not, that persons who believe in Jesus Christ become worse than they were before? We are not backward to answer the inquiry and we stand in a point of observation which supplies us with abundant data to go upon. We solemnly affirm that men who believe in Jesus become purer, holier and better. At the same time, I confess that there has been a good deal of injudicious and misleading talk, at times, by uninstructed advocates of Free Grace. I fear, moreover, that many people think that they believe in Jesus Christ, but do nothing of the sort. We do not defend rash statements, or deny the existence of weakminded followers. But we ask to be heard and considered.

Some persons say, “You tell these people that they will be saved upon their believing in Christ.” Exactly so. “But will you kindly tell me what you mean by being saved, Sir?” I will, with great pleasure. We do *not* mean that these people will go to Heaven when they die, irrespective of character. But, when we say that if they believe in Jesus they will be saved, we mean that they will be saved from living as they used to live—saved from being what they now are—saved from licentiousness, dishonesty, drunkenness, selfishness and any other sin they may have lived in. The thing can readily be put to the test! If it can be shown that those who have believed in the Lord Jesus have been saved from living in sin, no rational man ought to entertain any objection to the preaching of such a salvation!

Salvation from wrongdoing is the very thing which every moralist should commend and not censure—and that is the salvation which we preach. I am afraid that some imagine that they have only to believe something or other, and they will go to Heaven when they die. And that they have only to feel a certain singular emotion and it is all right with them. Now, if any of you have fallen into that error, may God, in His mercy, lead you out of it, for it is not every faith that saves, but only the faith of God’s elect. It is not any sort of *emotion* that changes the heart, but the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is a small matter to go into an inquiry-room and say, “I believe.” Such an avowal as that proves nothing at all! It may even be false. It will be proved by this—if you have rightly believed in Jesus Christ you will become, from that time forward, a different man from what you were. There will be a change in your heart and soul, in your conduct and your conversation. And, seeing you thus changed, those who have been honest objectors will right speedily leave off their objections, for they will be in the condition of those who saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John and, therefore, they could say nothing against them.

The world demands *facts* and these we must supply! It is of no use to cry up our medicine by *words*—we must point to *cures*. Your change of life will be the grandest argument for the Gospel, if that life shall show the meaning of my text—“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Let us discuss this text in an apologetic manner, hoping to overcome prejudice, if God permits.

**I.** Notice, first of all, that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY FAITH IS, IN ITSELF, AN AVOWAL THAT WE HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. If faith is such an avowal, why say that it is not connected with holy living? Let me show that this is the case. Faith is the accepting of Jesus Christ. In what respects? Well, principally as a Substitute. He is the Son of God and I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to die—the Son of God stands in my place and suffers for me. And when I believe in Him I accept Him as standing for me.

To believe in Jesus was very beautifully set forth in the old ceremony of the Law, when the person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands upon the head of the bullock or the lamb and thereby accepted the victim as standing in his place, so that the victim’s sufferings should be instead of his sufferings. Now, our faith accepts Jesus Christ as standing in our place. The very pith and marrow of faith’s confidence lies in this—

***“He bore, that I might never bear,  
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

Christ for me, Christ in my place. Now, try to catch the following thought. When you believe, you accept Christ as standing instead of you and profess that what He did, He did for you—and what did Christ do upon the tree? He was crucified and died. Follow the thought and note well that by faith *you regard yourself as dead with Him—*crucified with Him.

You have not really grasped what faith means unless you have grasped this. With Him you suffered the wrath of God, for He suffered in your place. You are now *in* Him—crucified *with* Him, dead *with* Him, buried *with* Him, risen *with* Him and gone into Glory *with* Him—because He represents you and your faith has accepted the representation. Do you see, then, that you did, in the moment when you believed in Christ, register a declaration that you were, from that moment on, dead unto sin? Who shall say that our Gospel teaches men to *live* in sin, when the faith which is essential to salvation involves an avowal of *death* to it? The convert begins with agreeing to be regarded as dead with Christ to sin—have we not, here, the foundation stone of holiness?

Observe, also, that if he follows the commands of Christ, the very first step which a Christian takes after he has accepted the position taken up by the Lord Jesus on his behalf is another avowal more public than the first, namely, *his Baptism*. By faith he has accepted Christ as dead, instead of him, and he regards himself as having died in Christ. Now, every dead man ought to be buried, sooner or later. And so, when we come forward and confess Christ, we are “buried with Him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life.”

Though Baptism does not mean *anything* as a ceremony, having no power or efficacy in and of itself, yet as a *sign* and *symbol* it teaches us that true Believers are dead and buried with Christ. So, you see, the two ways in which, according to the Gospel, we actually and avowedly give ourselves to Christ, are by faith and Baptism. “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Now, the essence of faith is to accept Christ as representing me in His death. And the essence of Baptism is to be buried with Christ because I am dead with Him. Thus at the very doorstep of the Christian religion, in its first *inward act* and its first *outward symbol*, you get the thought that Believers are, from now on, to be separated from sin and purified in life.

He who truly believes and knows what it is to be really buried with Christ, has begun—no, he *has*, in a certain sense, effected completely—what the text describes as the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts. For, dear Friends, let it never be forgotten that the grand object for which we lay hold on Christ is the death of sin! If there are any among us who have believed in Christ that he might escape the pangs of Hell—O, Brothers and Sisters, you have but a very poor idea of what Jesus Christ has come into the world to do! He is proclaimed to be a Savior who “shall save His people *from their sins*.” This is the object of His mission! True, He comes to give pardon, but He never gives pardon without giving *repentance* with it!

He comes to justify, but He does not justify without also sanctifying. He has come to deliver us, not from you, O Death, alone! Nor from you, O Hell, alone! But from you, O Sin, the mother of Death, the progenitor of Hell! The Redeemer lays His axe at the root of all the mischief by killing Sin and thus, as far as we are concerned, He puts an end to Death and Hell! Glory be to God for this! Now, it does seem to me that if the very commencement of the Christian faith is so manifestly connected with death to sin, they do us grievous injustice who suppose that in preaching faith in Jesus Christ we ignore the moralities or the virtues, or that we think little of sin and vice! We do not so, but we proclaim the only method by which moral evil can be put to death and swept away! The reception of Christ is an avowal of the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts—what more can the purest moralist propose? What more could he avow, himself?

**II.**But secondly, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IS ATTENDED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION OF SIN. I shall now state my own experience when I believed in Jesus. And while I am doing so I rejoice to remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands in this place who have experienced the same. And there are millions in this world and millions more in Heaven who know the Truth of what I declare. When I believed that Jesus was the Christ and rested my soul in Him, I felt in my heart, from that moment, an intense hatred to sin of every kind. I had loved sin before, some sins particularly, but those sins became, from that moment, the most obnoxious to me and, though the propensity to them was still there, yet the love of them was clean gone.

And when I at any time transgressed I felt an inward grief and horror at myself for doing the things which before I had allowed and even enjoyed. My relish for sin was gone. The things I once loved I abhorred and blushed to think of. Then I began to search out my sins. I see, now, a parallel between my experience in reference to sin and the details of the crucifixion of Christ. They sent Judas into the garden to search for our great Substitute, and just in that way I began to search for sin, even for that which lay concealed amid the thick darkness of my soul. I was ignorant and did not know what sin was, for it was night in any soul, but, being stirred up to destroy the evil, my repenting spirit borrowed lanterns and torches, and went out as against a thief.

I searched the garden of my heart through and through, with an intense ardor to find out every sin. And I sought God to help me, saying, “Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways.” Nor did I cease till I had spied out my secret transgressions. This inward search is one of my most constant occupations. I patrol my nature through and through to try and arrest these felons, these abhorred sins, that they may be crucified with Christ! O you in whom iniquity lurks under cover of your spiritual ignorance, arouse yourself to a strict scrutiny of your nature and no longer endure that your hearts should be the lurking-places of evil!

I remember when I found my sin. When I found it, I seized it and I dragged it off to the Judgment Seat. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you know when that occurred to you—and how stern was the judgment which Conscience gave forth. I sat in judgment on myself. I took my sin to one court and to another. I looked at it as before men and trembled to think that the badness of my example might have ruined other men’s souls! I looked at my sin as before God and I abhorred myself in dust and ashes. My sin was as red as crimson in His sight and in mine, also. I judged my sin and I condemned it—condemned it as a felon to a felon’s death. I heard a voice within me which, Pilate-like, pleaded for it—“I will chastise him and let him go! Let it be put to shame just a little. Let not the wrong deed be done quite so often. Let the lust be curbed and kept under.”

But, ah, my soul said, “Let it be crucified! Let it be crucified!” And nothing could shake my heart from this intent, that I would slay all the murderers of Christ, if possible, and let not one of them escape, for my soul hated them with a deadly hatred and would gladly nail them all to the tree. I remember, too, how I began to see the shame of sin. As my Lord was spit upon, mocked and despitefully used, so did my soul begin to pour contempt upon all the pride of sin, to scorn its promises of pleasure and to accuse it of a thousand crimes! It had deceived me. It had led me into ruin. It had well-near destroyed me! I despised it and poured contempt upon its bribes and all it offered of sweetness and of pleasure.

O Sin, how shameful a thing did you appear to be! I saw all that is base, mean and contemptible concentrated in you! My heart scourged sin by repentance, smote it with rebukes and buffeted it with self-denials. Then was it made a reproach and a scorn. But this sufficed not—sin must *die*. My heart mourned for what sin had done and I was resolved to avenge my Lord’s death upon myself. Thus my soul sang out her resolve—

***“Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine  
That crucified my God!  
Those sins that pierced and nailed His flesh  
Fast to the fatal wood!  
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die!  
My heart has so decreed:  
Nor will I spare the guilty things  
That made my Savior bleed.”***

Then I led forth my sins to the place of crucifixion. They would gladly have escaped, but the power of God prevented them and like a guard of soldiery, conducted them to the gallows of mortification. The hand of the Lord was present and His all-revealing Spirit stripped my sin as Christ was stripped!

He set it before my eyes, even my secret sin in the light of His Countenance! O, what a spectacle it was as I gazed upon it! I had looked, before, upon its dainty apparel and the colors with which it had painted itself to make it look as fair as Jezebel when she painted her face. But now I saw its nakedness and horror—and I was well-near ready to despair! But my spirit bore me up, for I knew that I was forgiven, and I said, “Christ Jesus has pardoned me, for I have believed in Him. And I will put the flesh to death by crucifying it on His Cross.” The driving of the nails, I remember, and how the flesh struggled to maintain its liberty. One, two, three, four—the nails went in and fastened the accursed thing to the wood with Christ so that it could neither run nor rule—and now, glory be to God, though my sin is not dead, it is crucified and must eventually die!

It hangs up there. I can see it bleeding out its life. Sometimes it struggles to get down and tries to wrench away the nails, for it would go after vanity. But the sacred nails hold it too fast—it is in the grasp of Death and it cannot escape. Alas, it dies a lingering death, attended with much pain and struggling! But still it dies. And soon its heart shall be pierced through with the spear of the love of Christ and it shall utterly expire. Then shall our immortal nature no more be burdened with the body of this death, but, pure and spotless, it shall rise to and behold the face of God forever.

Now, I am not talking allegorically of things which *ought* to be realized, but, as a matter of fact, remain mere ideas. I am describing in figure what happens in reality—for every man who believes in Jesus immediately bestirs himself to get rid of sin. And you may know whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not by seeing whether there is a change in his motives, feelings, life and conduct. Do you say that you doubt this? You may doubt what you like, but facts speak for themselves. There will come before me, I dare say, before this week is over, as there have almost every week of my life, men who have been slaves to intoxication made sober, at once, by believing in Jesus Christ!

Women, once lost to virtue, who have become pure and chaste by believing in Jesus, will come, and so will men and women who were fond of all manner of evil pleasures, who have turned instantly from them, and have continued to resist all temptation because they are new creatures in Christ Jesus! The phenomenon of conversion is singular, but the effect of conversion is more singular, still! And it is not a thing done in a corner—it can be seen every day. If it were merely an excitement in which men felt a distress of mind and then, by-and-by, thought they were at peace and became happy because self-satisfied, I should not see any particular good in it. But if it is true that regeneration changes men’s tastes and affections, that it, in fine, changes them *radically*, making them altogether new creatures! If it is so, I say, then may God send us thousands of conversions! And that this *is* so, we are quite sure, for we see it perpetually.

**III.**Thirdly, we go a step farther and say that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE HEART BY SIMPLE FAITH IS CALCULATED TO CRUCIFY THE FLESH. When a man believes in Jesus, the first point that helps him to crucify the flesh is that *he has seen the evil of sin*, inasmuch as he has seen Jesus, his Lord, die because of it. Men think that sin is nothing, but what will sin do? What will it *not*do? The virus of sin, what will it poison? Yes, what will it *not*poison? Its influence has been baleful upon the largest conceivable scale.

Sin has flooded the world with blood and tears through red-handed war! Sin has covered the world with oppression and so has crushed the manhood of many, and broken the hearts of myriads! Sin begat slavery, tyranny, priestcraft, rebellion, slander and persecution! Sin has been at the bottom of all human sorrows. But the crowning culminating point of sin’s villainy was when God, Himself, came down to earth in human form—pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love— came to work miracles of mercy and redemption. Then sinful man could never rest till he had crucified his Incarnate God! They coined a word when the Parliamentary party executed the king in England. They called the king’s destroyers “regicides,” and now we must make a word to describe sin—sin is a *deicide*.

Every sinner, if he could, would kill God, for he says in his heart, “No God.” He means he *wishes* there were none. He would rejoice, indeed, if he could learn for certain that there was no God. In fact, that is the bugbear of his life, that there *is* a God—a just God who will bring him into judgment! His secret wish is that there were no religion and no God, for he might, then, live as he pleased. Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment! “No,” he says, “I cannot continue in such evil! If that is the true meaning of every offense against the Law of God—that it would put God, Himself, out of His own world if it could—I cannot bear it.”

His spirit recoils with horror, as he feels—

***~~“My sins have pulled the vengeance down  
Upon His guiltless head!  
Break, break, my heart, oh burst my eyes!  
And let my sorrows bleed.  
Strike, mighty Groom, my flinty soul,  
Till melting waters flow,  
And deep repentance drowns my eyes~~***

***~~In undissembled woe.”~~***

Then *the Believer has also seen, in the death of Christ, an amazing instance of the great Grace of God,* for if sin is an attempt to murder God—and it is that—then how wonderful it is that the creatures who committed this sin were not destroyed at once! How remarkable that God should consider it worth His while to devise a plan for their restoration! And He did, with matchless skill, contrive a way which involved the giving up of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Though this was an expense unequalled, yet He did not withdraw from it. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” And this for a race of men who were the enemies of their good and gracious God!

“From now on,” says the believer in Christ, “I can have nothing to do with sin, since it does despite to so gracious a God. O, you accursed Sin, to drive your dagger at the heart of Him who was all Grace and Mercy! This makes sin to be exceedingly sinful.” Further, *the Believer has had a view of the justice of God*. He sees that God hates sin intensely, for when His only-begotten Son took sin upon Himself, God would not spare, even Him! That sin was not His own—in Him was no sin! But when He voluntarily took it upon Himself and was made a curse for us, the Judge of all the earth did not spare Him! Down from His armory of vengeance He took His thunderbolts and hurled them at His Son, for His Son stood in the sinner’s place.

There was no mercy for the sinner’s Substitute. He had to cry as never one cried, before or since, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Torrents of woe rushed through His spirit. The condemnation of sin overwhelmed Him. All God’s waves and billows went over Him. Now, when a man sees this amazing fact, he can no longer think lightly of transgression. He trembles before the thrice holy Jehovah and cries in his secret heart, “How can I sin if this is God’s opinion of it? If in His justice, He smote it so unsparingly, even when it was only laid by imputation upon His Son, how will He smite it when its actual guilt lies on me? O God deliver me from it.” The Believer has also had one more sight which, perhaps, more effectually than any other changes his view of sin.

*He has seen the amazing love of Jesus* . Did you ever see it, my Hearer? If you have seen it, you will never love sin again! O, to think that He who was Master of all Heaven’s majesty came down to be the victim of all man’s misery! He came to Bethlehem and dwelt among us, offering 30 years and more of toilsome obedience to His Father’s will. And at the close He reached the crisis of His griefs, the crowning sorrow of His Incarnation—His bloody sweat and agonizing death on the Cross! That was a solemn Passover which He ate with His disciples, with Calvary in full view. Then He arose and went to Gethsemane—

***“Gethsemane,the olive press,  
(And why so called let Christians guess).  
Fit name, fit place, where vengeance strove,  
And gripped and grappled hard with love.  
‘Twas there the Lord of Life appeared  
And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared;  
Bore all Incarnate God could bear  
With strength enough, and none to spare.”***

Behold how He loved us! He was taken to Pilate’s Hall and there was scourged—scourged with those awful Roman whips weighted with little bullets of lead and made of the intertwisted sinews of oxen, into which they also inserted small slivers of bone, so that every blow, as it fell, tore off the flesh! Our beloved Lord had to suffer this again and again, being scourged often as that verse seems to intimate which says—

***“He was wounded for our t ransgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities:  
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.  
And with His stripes we arehealed.”***

Yet He loved us, still loved us! Many waters could not quench His love, neither could the floods drown it. When they nailed Him to the tree, He still loved us. When, every bone being dislocated, He cried in sad soliloquy, “I am poured out like water, all My bones are out of joint,” He loved us still! When the dogs compassed Him and the bulls of Bashan beset Him round, He still loved us.

When the dread faintness came upon Him till He was brought into the dust of death and His heart melted like wax, He still loved us! When God forsook Him and the sun was blotted out, and midnight darkness covered the midday and a denser midnight veiled His spirit—a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt—He loved us still! Till He had drunk the last dregs of the unutterably bitter brew, He still loved us! And when the light shone on His face and He could say, “It is finished,” that light shone on a face that still loved us! Now, every man to whom it has been given to believe in Jesus and to know His love, says, “How can I offend *Him*? How can I grieve *Him*? There are actions in this life which I might otherwise indulge in, but I dare not now, for I fear to vex my Lord.”

And if you say “ *Dare* not, are you afraid of Him?” The answer will be, “I am not slavishly afraid, for into Hell I can never go.” What am I afraid of, then? I am afraid of that dear face, on which I see the guttering of tears which He once shed for *me*. I am afraid of that dear brow which wore the crown of thorns for *me.* I cannot rebel against such kindness— His bleeding love enchains me. How can I do so great a wickedness as to put my dying Lord to shame?” Do you not feel this, my beloved Brothers and Sisters? If you have ever trusted the Lord Jesus, you crouch at His feet and kiss the prints of His nails for very love! And if He would use you as a footstool, if it would raise Him any higher, you would count it the highest honor of your life!

Yes, if He bade you go to prison and to death for Him, and would say it Himself, and put His pierced hands on you, you would go there as cheerfully as angels fly to Heaven! If he bade you *die* for Him, though the flesh is weak, your spirit would be willing! Yes, and the flesh would be made strong enough, too, if Jesus did but look upon you, for He can, with a glance, cast out selfishness and cowardice, and everything that keeps us back from being whole burnt-offerings to Him! Is it not so?—

***“Speak of morality!  
You bleeding Lamb  
The best morality  
Is love to You!”***

When we are once filled with love to You, O Jesus, sin becomes the dragon against which we wage a lifelong warfare! Holiness becomes our noblest aspiration and we seek after it with all our heart and soul and strength! If candid minds will but honestly consider the religion of Jesus Christ, they will see that Christians must hate sin if they are sincere in their faith. I might go farther into that, but I will not.

**IV.**The last thing of all is this. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH THE GOSPEL AND WHERE HE IS, HOLINESS MUST BE PROMOTED. Let it never be forgotten that while the reception of Jesus Christ by simple faith is an avowal of death to sin and brings with it an experience of hating sin—and is calculated to do so—there is one thing more. If, dear Friends, in any work of revival, or ordinary ministry, there was nothing more than you could see or hear, I think that many criticisms and quibbles might be, at least, rational, but they are not so! One grand fact makes them forever unreasonable.

Wherever Jesus Christ is preached, there is present One sublime in rank and high in degree. You will not suppose that I am speaking of any *earthly* potentate. No, I am speaking of the Holy Spirit—the ever blessed Spirit of God! There is never a Gospel sermon preached by an earnest heart but what the Holy Spirit is there, taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto men. When a man turns his eyes to Jesus and simply trusts Him—for we adhere to that as being the vital matter—there is accompanying that act—no, I must correct myself, there is as the *cause* of that act a miraculous, supernatural power which in an instant changes a man as completely as if it flung him back into nothingness and brought him forth into new life! If this is so, then believing in Christ is something very marvelous.

Now, if you will turn to the third chapter of John’s Gospel and also to his Epistles, you will see that faith is *always* linked with regeneration, or the new birth, which new birth is the work of the Spirit of God. That same third of John which tells us, “You must be born again,” goes on to say, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, a miracle of purification has been worked in the heart! Deny this and you deny the testimony of the Scriptures, which say plainly, that, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “And whoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.”

Why do you doubt, for we who are personal examples can assure you that it has been so in our case? I mean not that myself and one or two others affirm this, but the witnesses may be met with by hundreds and thousands—and they all agree in asserting that the power of the Holy Spirit has changed the current of their desires and made them love the things which are holy, just, and true. Therefore, Sirs, whether you believe it or not, you must be so kind as to understand one thing from us very decidedly, namely—that if to preach salvation through faith is vile, we purpose to be still viler! Surely you cannot blame us for acting as we do if our central point of our argument is correct!

If the preaching of the Cross, though it is to them that perish, foolishness, is, to them that believe in Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God, we shall not give up preaching Christ for you! If it is so that men are made new creatures—that, while others are talking about morals, our Gospel plants and produces them—we shall not give up work for talk, nor the efficient agency of the Gospel for the inventions of philosophy! To the front, my Brothers and Sisters, with the Cross, more and more! In your schools and in your pulpits set forth Christ Crucified as the sinner’s hope more and more plainly! Bid the sinner look to Jesus! Look and live!

The Gospel is the great promoter of social order, the great reclaimer of the waifs and strays of society, the elevator of the human race! This doctrine of free pardon and gracious renewal, freely given to the most worthless upon their *believing in Jesus Christ*, is the hope of mankind! There is no balm in Gilead and never was—but this is the balm of Calvary, for *there* is the true medicine—and Jesus Christ is the Infallible Physician. Do but try it, Sinners! Do but try it! Look to Jesus and the passions which you cannot overcome shall yield to His cleansing power! Believe in Jesus and the follies which cling to you, and crush you as the snakes engirdled Laocoon and his sons, you shall be able to untwist!

Yes, they shall die at Jesus’ glance and shall fall off from you. Believe in Jesus and you have the spring of excellency, the hat of purity, the source of virtue, the destruction of evil, the bud of perfection! God grant us, still, to prove the power of the Lord Jesus in ourselves and to proclaim His power to all around us!—

***“Happy if, wi th our last breath,  
We may but gasp His name;  
Preach Him to all,  
And cry in death,  
Behold, behold, the Lamb!”***

Amen and amen!

***PORTIO N OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.*HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—278, 317, 432 AND “SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS.”**

Adapted from*The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1239 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY DEFENDED—OR, A VINDICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH  
NO. 1239

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Galatians 5:24.*

FROM several quarters we have heard intensely earnest objections, lately, to *the matter and tenor* of the preaching of the evangelists from America who have been working among us. Of course their teaching, as well as our own, is open to honest judgment and they, we feel sure, would rather court than shun investigation of the most searching sort. Criticisms upon their style of speaking and singing, and so on, are so unimportant that nobody has any need to answer them. “Wisdom is justified of her children.” It is a waste of time to discuss mere matters of taste, for no men, however excellent, can please all, or even become equally adapted to all constitutions and conditions. Therefore we may let such remarks pass without further observation.

But upon the matter of doctrine very much has been said and said, also, with a good deal of temper not always of the best kind. What has been affirmed by a certain class of public writers comes to this, if you boil it down—that it cannot really do any good to tell men that simply by believing in Jesus Christ they will be saved. And that it may do people very serious injury if we lead them to imagine that they have undergone a process called *conversion* and are now safe for life. We are told by these gentlemen, who ought to know, for they speak very positively, that the doctrine of immediate salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is a very dangerous one. They say that it will certainly lead to the deterioration of the public morality since men will not be likely to set store by the practical virtues when faith is lifted up to so very lofty a position. They say if it *were* so it were a grievous fault and woe to those who lead men into it!

That it is not the fact, we are sure, but meanwhile let us survey the field of battle. Will you please notice that this is no quarrel between these gentlemen and our friends Messrs. Moody and Sankey, alone! It is a quarrel between these objectors and the whole of us who preach the Gospel. For, although differing, as we do, in the *style* of preaching it, we are all ready to set our seal to the clearest possible statement that men *are* saved by faith in Jesus Christ and saved the moment they believe! We all hold and teach that there *is* such a thing as conversion—and that when men are converted they become other men than they were before—and a new life begins which will culminate in eternal glory.

We are not so dastardly as to allow our friends to stand alone in the front of the battle, to be looked upon as peculiar persons holding strange notions from which the rest of us dissent. So far as salvation through faith in the atoning blood is concerned, they preach nothing but what we have preached all our lives! They preach nothing but what has the general consent of Protestant Christendom. Let that be known to all and let the archers shoot at us all alike! Then, further, if this is the point of objection, we should like those who raise it to know that they do not raise it against us, merely, and these friends who are more prominent, but against the Protestant faith which these very same gentlemen most probably profess to glory in!

The Protestant faith, in a nutshell, lies in this very same justification by faith which they hoot at. It was the discovery that men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ which first stirred up Luther. That was the ray of light which fell upon his dark heart and by the power of which he came into the liberty of the Gospel! This is the hammer by which popery was broken in old times and this is the sword with which it still is to be smitten—the very “Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Jesus is the all-sufficient Savior and, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” Luther used, in fact, to say—and we endorse it—that this matter of Justification by Faith is the article by which a Church must stand or fall.

That so-called Church which does not hold this doctrine is not a Church of Christ! And it is a Church of Christ that does hold it, notwithstanding many mistakes into which it may have fallen. The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of *merit* and the Protestant doctrine of Grace! And no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends. We shall go somewhat further than this. The objection is not against Messrs. Moody and Sankey, but against all evangelical ministers! It is not against them, only, but against our common Protestantism! And yet more—it is against the Inspired Word of God—for if this Book teaches *anything* under Heaven, it certainly teaches that men are saved by faith in our Lord Jesus!

Read the Epistle to the Galatians and your judgment may be very perverse, but you cannot, by any common wresting of words, expel the doctrine of Justification by Faith from the Epistle. It was written on purpose to state that Truth of God plainly and defend it fully. Neither can you get rid of that doctrine from the whole New Testament. You shall find it not merely seasoning all the Epistles, but positively saturating them! And, as you take chapter by chapter, you may wring out of them, as out of Gideon’s fleece, this one Truth—that justification before God is by *faith—* not by the works of the Law. So the objection is against the Bible—and let those who shoot their errors, understand that they fight against the Eternal Spirit of God and the witness which He has borne by His Prophets and Apostles! Deny Inspiration and you have no ground to stand on. But while you believe the Bible you must believe in Justification by Faith. But now let us look this matter in the face. Is it true, or not, that persons who believe in Jesus Christ become worse than they were before? We are not backward to answer the inquiry and we stand in a point of observation which supplies us with abundant data to go upon. We solemnly affirm that men who believe in Jesus become purer, holier and better. At the same time, I confess that there has been a good deal of injudicious and misleading talk, at times, by uninstructed advocates of Free Grace. I fear, moreover, that many people think that they believe in Jesus Christ, but do nothing of the sort. We do not defend rash statements, or deny the existence of weak-minded followers. But we ask to be heard and considered.

Some persons say, “You tell these people that they will be saved upon their believing in Christ.” Exactly so. “But will you kindly tell me what you mean by being saved, Sir?” I will, with great pleasure. We do *not* mean that these people will go to Heaven when they die, irrespective of character. But, when we say that if they believe in Jesus they will be saved, we mean that they will be saved from living as they used to live—saved from being what they now are—saved from licentiousness, dishonesty, drunkenness, selfishness and any other sin they may have lived in. The thing can readily be put to the test! If it can be shown that those who have believed in the Lord Jesus have been saved from living in sin, no rational man ought to entertain any objection to the preaching of such a salvation!

Salvation from wrongdoing is the very thing which every moralist should commend and not censure—and that is the salvation which we preach. I am afraid that some imagine that they have only to believe something or other, and they will go to Heaven when they die. And that they have only to feel a certain singular emotion and it is all right with them. Now, if any of you have fallen into that error, may God, in His mercy, lead you out of it, for it is not every faith that saves, but only the faith of God’s elect. It is not any sort of *emotion* that changes the heart, but the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is a small matter to go into an inquiry-room and say, “I believe.” Such an avowal as that proves nothing at all! It may even be false. It will be proved by this—if you have rightly believed in Jesus Christ you will become, from that time forward, a different man from what you were. There will be a change in your heart and soul, in your conduct and your conversation. And, seeing you thus changed, those who have been honest objectors will right speedily leave off their objections, for they will be in the condition of those who saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John and, therefore, they could say nothing against them.

The world demands *facts* and these we must supply! It is of no use to cry up our medicine by *words*—we must point to *cures*. Your change of life will be the grandest argument for the Gospel, if that life shall show the meaning of my text—“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Let us discuss this text in an apologetic manner, hoping to overcome prejudice, if God permits.  
**I.** Notice, first of all, that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST BY

FAITH IS, IN ITSELF, AN AVOWAL THAT WE HAVE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. If faith is such an avowal, why say that it is not connected with holy living? Let me show that this is the case. Faith is the accepting of Jesus Christ. In what respects? Well, principally as a Substitute. He is the Son of God and I am a guilty sinner. I deserve to die—the Son of God stands in my place and suffers for me. And when I believe in Him I accept Him as standing for me.

To believe in Jesus was very beautifully set forth in the old ceremony of the Law, when the person bringing a sacrifice laid his hands upon the head of the bullock or the lamb and thereby accepted the victim as standing in his place, so that the victim’s sufferings should be instead of his sufferings. Now, our faith accepts Jesus Christ as standing in our place. The very pith and marrow of faith’s confidence lies in this—

***“He bore, that I might never bear,***

***His Father’s righteous ire.”***  
Christ for me, Christ in my place. Now, try to catch the following thought. When you believe, you accept Christ as standing instead of you and profess that what He did, He did for you—and what did Christ do upon the tree? He was crucified and died. Follow the thought and note well that by faith *you regard yourself as dead with Him—*crucified with Him.

You have not really grasped what faith means unless you have grasped this. With Him you suffered the wrath of God, for He suffered in your place. You are now *in* Him—crucified *with* Him, dead *with* Him, buried *with* Him, risen *with* Him and gone into Glory *with* Him—because He represents you and your faith has accepted the representation. Do you see, then, that you did, in the moment when you believed in Christ, register a declaration that you were, from that moment on, dead unto sin? Who shall say that our Gospel teaches men to *live* in sin, when the faith which is essential to salvation involves an avowal of *death* to it? The convert begins with agreeing to be regarded as dead with Christ to sin—have we not, here, the foundation stone of holiness?

Observe, also, that if he follows the commands of Christ, the very first step which a Christian takes after he has accepted the position taken up by the Lord Jesus on his behalf is another avowal more public than the first, namely, *his Baptism*. By faith he has accepted Christ as dead, instead of him, and he regards himself as having died in Christ. Now, every dead man ought to be buried, sooner or later. And so, when we come forward and confess Christ, we are “buried with Him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life.”

Though Baptism does not mean *anything* as a ceremony, having no power or efficacy in and of itself, yet as a *sign* and*symbol* it teaches us that true Believers are dead and buried with Christ. So, you see, the two ways in which, according to the Gospel, we actually and avowedly give ourselves to Christ, are by faith and Baptism. “He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Now, the essence of faith is to accept Christ as representing me in His death. And the essence of Baptism is to be buried with Christ because I am dead with Him. Thus at the very doorstep of the Christian religion, in its first *inward act* and its first *outward symbol*, you get the thought that Believers are, from now on, to be separated from sin and purified in life.

He who truly believes and knows what it is to be really buried with Christ, has begun—no, he *has*, in a certain sense, effected completely— what the text describes as the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts. For, dear Friends, let it never be forgotten that the grand object for which we lay hold on Christ is the death of sin! If there are any among us who have believed in Christ that he might escape the pangs of Hell—O, Brothers and Sisters, you have but a very poor idea of what Jesus Christ has come into the world to do! He is proclaimed to be a Savior who “shall save His people *from their sins*.” This is the object of His mission! True, He comes to give pardon, but He never gives pardon without giving *repentance* with it!

He comes to justify, but He does not justify without also sanctifying. He has come to deliver us, not from you, O Death, alone! Nor from you, O Hell, alone! But from you, O Sin, the mother of Death, the progenitor of Hell! The Redeemer lays His axe at the root of all the mischief by killing Sin and thus, as far as we are concerned, He puts an end to Death and Hell! Glory be to God for this! Now, it does seem to me that if the very commencement of the Christian faith is so manifestly connected with death to sin, they do us grievous injustice who suppose that in preaching faith in Jesus Christ we ignore the moralities or the virtues, or that we think little of sin and vice! We do not so, but we proclaim the only method by which moral evil can be put to death and swept away! The reception of Christ is an avowal of the crucifixion of the flesh with the affections and lusts—what more can the purest moralist propose? What more could he avow, himself?

**II.**But secondly, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IS ATTENDED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION OF SIN. I shall now state my own experience when I believed in Jesus. And while I am doing so I rejoice to remember that there are hundreds, if not thousands in this place who have experienced the same. And there are millions in this world and millions more in Heaven who know the Truth of what I declare. When I believed that Jesus was the Christ and rested my soul in Him, I felt in my heart, from that moment, an intense hatred to sin of every kind. I had loved sin before, some sins particularly, but those sins became, from that moment, the most obnoxious to me and, though the propensity to them was still there, yet the love of them was clean gone.

And when I at any time transgressed I felt an inward grief and horror at myself for doing the things which before I had allowed and even enjoyed. My relish for sin was gone. The things I once loved I abhorred and blushed to think of. Then I began to search out my sins. I see, now, a parallel between my experience in reference to sin and the details of the crucifixion

of Christ. They sent Judas into the garden to search for our great Substitute, and just in that way I began to search for sin, even for that which lay concealed amid the thick darkness of my soul. I was ignorant and did not know what sin was, for it was night in any soul, but, being stirred up to destroy the evil, my repenting spirit borrowed lanterns and torches, and went out as against a thief.

I searched the garden of my heart through and through, with an intense ardor to find out every sin. And I sought God to help me, saying, “Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways.” Nor did I cease till I had spied out my secret transgressions. This inward search is one of my most constant occupations. I patrol my nature through and through to try and arrest these felons, these abhorred sins, that they may be crucified with Christ! O you in whom iniquity lurks under cover of your spiritual ignorance, arouse yourself to a strict scrutiny of your nature and no longer endure that your hearts should be the lurking-places of evil!

I remember when I found my sin. When I found it, I seized it and I dragged it off to the Judgment Seat. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you know when that occurred to you—and how stern was the judgment which Conscience gave forth. I sat in judgment on myself. I took my sin to one court and to another. I looked at it as before men and trembled to think that the badness of my example might have ruined other men’s souls! I looked at my sin as before God and I abhorred myself in dust and ashes. My sin was as red as crimson in His sight and in mine, also. I judged my sin and I condemned it—condemned it as a felon to a felon’s death. I heard a voice within me which, Pilate-like, pleaded for it—“I will chastise him and let him go! Let it be put to shame just a little. Let not the wrong deed be done quite so often. Let the lust be curbed and kept under.”

But, ah, my soul said, “Let it be crucified! Let it be crucified!” And nothing could shake my heart from this intent, that I would slay all the murderers of Christ, if possible, and let not one of them escape, for my soul hated them with a deadly hatred and would gladly nail them all to the tree. I remember, too, how I began to see the shame of sin. As my Lord was spit upon, mocked and despitefully used, so did my soul begin to pour contempt upon all the pride of sin, to scorn its promises of pleasure and to accuse it of a thousand crimes! It had deceived me. It had led me into ruin. It had well-near destroyed me! I despised it and poured contempt upon its bribes and all it offered of sweetness and of pleasure.

O Sin, how shameful a thing did you appear to be! I saw all that is base, mean and contemptible concentrated in you! My heart scourged sin by repentance, smote it with rebukes and buffeted it with self-denials. Then was it made a reproach and a scorn. But this sufficed not—sin must *die*. My heart mourned for what sin had done and I was resolved to avenge my Lord’s death upon myself. Thus my soul sang out her resolve—

***“Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine  
That crucified my God!  
Those sins that pierced and nailed His flesh Fast to the fatal wood!  
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die!  
My heart has so decreed:  
Nor will I spare the guilty things  
That made my Savior bleed.”***

Then I led forth my sins to the place of crucifixion. They would gladly have escaped, but the power of God prevented them and like a guard of soldiery, conducted them to the gallows of mortification. The hand of the Lord was present and His all-revealing Spirit stripped my sin as Christ was stripped!

He set it before my eyes, even my secret sin in the light of His Countenance! O, what a spectacle it was as I gazed upon it! I had looked, before, upon its dainty apparel and the colors with which it had painted itself to make it look as fair as Jezebel when she painted her face. But now I saw its nakedness and horror—and I was well-near ready to despair! But my spirit bore me up, for I knew that I was forgiven, and I said, “Christ Jesus has pardoned me, for I have believed in Him. And I will put the flesh to death by crucifying it on His Cross.” The driving of the nails, I remember, and how the flesh struggled to maintain its liberty. One, two, three, four— the nails went in and fastened the accursed thing to the wood with Christ so that it could neither run nor rule—and now, glory be to God, though my sin is not dead, it is crucified and must eventually die!

It hangs up there. I can see it bleeding out its life. Sometimes it struggles to get down and tries to wrench away the nails, for it would go after vanity. But the sacred nails hold it too fast—it is in the grasp of Death and it cannot escape. Alas, it dies a lingering death, attended with much pain and struggling! But still it dies. And soon its heart shall be pierced through with the spear of the love of Christ and it shall utterly expire. Then shall our immortal nature no more be burdened with the body of this death, but, pure and spotless, it shall rise to and behold the face of God forever.

Now, I am not talking allegorically of things which *ought* to be realized, but, as a matter of fact, remain mere ideas. I am describing in figure what happens in reality—for every man who believes in Jesus immediately bestirs himself to get rid of sin. And you may know whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not by seeing whether there is a change in his motives, feelings, life and conduct. Do you say that you doubt this? You may doubt what you like, but facts speak for themselves. There will come before me, I dare say, before this week is over, as there have almost every week of my life, men who have been slaves to intoxication made sober, at once, by believing in Jesus Christ!

Women, once lost to virtue, who have become pure and chaste by believing in Jesus, will come, and so will men and women who were fond of all manner of evil pleasures, who have turned instantly from them, and have continued to resist all temptation because they are new creatures in Christ Jesus! The phenomenon of conversion is singular, but the effect of conversion is more singular, still! And it is not a thing done in a corner—it can be seen every day. If it were merely an excitement in which men felt a

distress of mind and then, by-and-by, thought they were at peace and became happy because self-satisfied, I should not see any particular good in it. But if it is true that regeneration changes men’s tastes and affections, that it, in fine, changes them *radically*, making them altogether new creatures! If it is so, I say, then may God send us thousands of conversions! And that this *is* so, we are quite sure, for we see it perpetually.

**III.**Thirdly, we go a step farther and say that THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE HEART BY SIMPLE FAITH IS CALCULATED TO CRUCIFY THE FLESH. When a man believes in Jesus, the first point that helps him to crucify the flesh is that *he has seen the evil of sin*, inasmuch as he has seen Jesus, his Lord, die because of it. Men think that sin is nothing, but what will sin do? What will it *not* do? The virus of sin, what will it poison? Yes, what will it *not* poison? Its influence has been baleful upon the largest conceivable scale.

Sin has flooded the world with blood and tears through red-handed war! Sin has covered the world with oppression and so has crushed the manhood of many, and broken the hearts of myriads! Sin begat slavery, tyranny, priestcraft, rebellion, slander and persecution! Sin has been at the bottom of all human sorrows. But the crowning culminating point of sin’s villainy was when God, Himself, came down to earth in human form—pure, perfect, intent on an errand of love—came to work miracles of mercy and redemption. Then sinful man could never rest till he had crucified his Incarnate God! They coined a word when the Parliamentary party executed the king in England. They called the king’s destroyers “regicides,” and now we must make a word to describe sin—sin is a *deicide*.

Every sinner, if he could, would kill God, for he says in his heart, “No God.” He means he *wishes* there were none. He would rejoice, indeed, if he could learn for certain that there was no God. In fact, that is the bugbear of his life, that there *is* a God—a just God who will bring him into judgment! His secret wish is that there were no religion and no God, for he might, then, live as he pleased. Now, when a man is made to see that sin in its essence is the murderer of Emmanuel, God with us, his heart being renewed, he hates sin from that very moment! “No,” he says, “I cannot continue in such evil! If that is the true meaning of every offense against the Law of God—that it would put God, Himself, out of His own world if it could—I cannot bear it.”

His spirit recoils with horror, as he feels—  
***“My sins have pulled the vengeance down  
Upon His guiltless head!  
Break, break, my heart, oh burst my eyes! And let my sorrows bleed.  
Strike, mighty Groom, my flinty soul,  
Till melting waters flow,  
And deep repentance drowns my eyes***

***In unrelenting woe.”***

Then *the Believer has also seen, in the death of Christ, an amazing instance of the great Grace of God,* for if sin is an attempt to murder God— and it is that—then how wonderful it is that the creatures who committed this sin were not destroyed at once! How remarkable that God should consider it worth His while to devise a plan for their restoration! And He did, with matchless skill, contrive a way which involved the giving up of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Though this was an expense unequalled, yet He did not withdraw from it. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” And this for a race of men who were the enemies of their good and gracious God!

“From now on,” says the believer in Christ, “I can have nothing to do with sin, since it does despite to so gracious a God. O, you accursed Sin, to drive your dagger at the heart of Him who was all Grace and Mercy! This makes sin to be exceedingly sinful.” Further, *the Believer has had a view of the justice of God*. He sees that God hates sin intensely, for when His only-begotten Son took sin upon Himself, God would not spare, even Him! That sin was not His own—in Him was no sin! But when He voluntarily took it upon Himself and was made a curse for us, the Judge of all the earth did not spare Him! Down from His armory of vengeance He took His thunderbolts and hurled them at His Son, for His Son stood in the sinner’s place.

There was no mercy for the sinner’s Substitute. He had to cry as never one cried, before or since, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Torrents of woe rushed through His spirit. The condemnation of sin overwhelmed Him. All God’s waves and billows went over Him. Now, when a man sees this amazing fact, he can no longer think lightly of transgression. He trembles before the thrice holy Jehovah and cries in his secret heart, “How can I sin if this is God’s opinion of it? If in His justice, He smote it so unsparingly, even when it was only laid by imputation upon His Son, how will He smite it when its actual guilt lies on me? O God deliver me from it.” The Believer has also had one more sight which, perhaps, more effectually than any other changes his view of sin.

*He has seen the amazing love of Jesus* . Did you ever see it, my Hearer? If you have seen it, you will never love sin again! O, to think that He who was Master of all Heaven’s majesty came down to be the victim of all man’s misery! He came to Bethlehem and dwelt among us, offering 30 years and more of toilsome obedience to His Father’s will. And at the close He reached the crisis of His griefs, the crowning sorrow of His Incarnation—His bloody sweat and agonizing death on the Cross! That was a solemn Passover which He ate with His disciples, with Calvary in full view. Then He arose and went to Gethsemane—

***“Gethsemane, the olive press,  
(And why so called let Christians guess).  
Fit name, fit place, where vengeance strove,  
And gripped and grappled hard with love. ‘Twas there the Lord of Life appeared  
And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared;  
Bore all Incarnate God could bear  
With strength enough, and none to spare.”***Behold how He loved us! He was taken to Pilate’s Hall and there was scourged—scourged with those awful Roman whips weighted with little bullets of lead and made of the intertwisted sinews of oxen, into which they also inserted small slivers of bone, so that every blow, as it fell, tore off the flesh! Our beloved Lord had to suffer this again and again, being scourged often as that verse seems to intimate which says— ***“He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities:  
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed.”***  
Yet He loved us, still loved us! Many waters could not quench His love, neither could the floods drown it. When they nailed Him to the tree, He still loved us. When, every bone being dislocated, He cried in sad soliloquy, “I am poured out like water, all My bones are out of joint,” He loved us still! When the dogs compassed Him and the bulls of Bashan beset Him round, He still loved us.  
When the dread faintness came upon Him till He was brought into the dust of death and His heart melted like wax, He still loved us! When God forsook Him and the sun was blotted out, and midnight darkness covered the midday and a denser midnight veiled His spirit—a darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt—He loved us still! Till He had drunk the last dregs of the unutterably bitter brew, He still loved us! And when the light shone on His face and He could say, “It is finished,” that light shone on a face that still loved us! Now, every man to whom it has been given to believe in Jesus and to know His love, says, “How can I offend *Him*? How can I grieve *Him*? There are actions in this life which I might otherwise indulge in, but I dare not now, for I fear to vex my Lord.”  
And if you say “*Dare* not, are you afraid of Him?” The answer will be, “I am not slavishly afraid, for into Hell I can never go.” What am I afraid of, then? I am afraid of that dear face, on which I see the guttering of tears which He once shed for *me*. I am afraid of that dear brow which wore the crown of thorns for *me.* I cannot rebel against such kindness— His bleeding love enchains me. How can I do so great a wickedness as to put my dying Lord to shame?” Do you not feel this, my beloved Brothers and Sisters? If you have ever trusted the Lord Jesus, you crouch at His feet and kiss the prints of His nails for very love! And if He would use you as a footstool, if it would raise Him any higher, you would count it the highest honor of your life!  
Yes, if He bade you go to prison and to death for Him, and would say it Himself, and put His pierced hands on you, you would go there as cheerfully as angels fly to Heaven! If he bade you *die* for Him, though the flesh is weak, your spirit would be willing! Yes, and the flesh would be made strong enough, too, if Jesus did but look upon you, for He can, with a glance, cast out selfishness and cowardice, and everything that keeps us back from being whole burnt-offerings to Him! Is it not so?— ***“Speak of morality!  
You bleeding Lamb  
The best morality  
Is love to You!”***  
When we are once filled with love to You, O Jesus, sin becomes the dragon against which we wage a lifelong warfare! Holiness becomes our noblest aspiration and we seek after it with all our heart and soul and strength! If candid minds will but honestly consider the religion of Jesus Christ, they will see that Christians must hate sin if they are sincere in their faith. I might go farther into that, but I will not.  
**IV.**The last thing of all is this. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH THE GOSPEL AND WHERE HE IS, HOLINESS MUST BE PROMOTED. Let it never be forgotten that while the reception of Jesus Christ by simple faith is an avowal of death to sin and brings with it an experience of hating sin—and is calculated to do so—there is one thing more. If, dear Friends, in any work of revival, or ordinary ministry, there was nothing more than you could see or hear, I think that many criticisms and quibbles might be, at least, rational, but they are not so! One grand fact makes them forever unreasonable.  
Wherever Jesus Christ is preached, there is present One sublime in rank and high in degree. You will not suppose that I am speaking of any *earthly* potentate. No, I am speaking of the Holy Spirit—the ever blessed Spirit of God! There is never a Gospel sermon preached by an earnest heart but what the Holy Spirit is there, taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto men. When a man turns his eyes to Jesus and simply trusts Him—for we adhere to that as being the vital matter—there is accompanying that act—no, I must correct myself, there is as the *cause* of that act a miraculous, supernatural power which in an instant changes a man as completely as if it flung him back into nothingness and brought him forth into new life! If this is so, then believing in Christ is something very marvelous.  
Now, if you will turn to the third chapter of John’s Gospel and also to his Epistles, you will see that faith is *always* linked with regeneration, or the new birth, which new birth is the work of the Spirit of God. That same third of John which tells us, “You must be born again,” goes on to say, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ, a miracle of purification has been worked in the heart! Deny this and you deny the testimony of the Scriptures, which say plainly, that, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “And whoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.”  
Why do you doubt, for we who are personal examples can assure you that it has been so in our case? I mean not that myself and one or two others affirm this, but the witnesses may be met with by hundreds and thousands—and they all agree in asserting that the power of the Holy Spirit has changed the current of their desires and made them love the things which are holy, just, and true. Therefore, Sirs, whether you believe it or not, you must be so kind as to understand one thing from us very decidedly, namely—that if to preach salvation through faith is vile, we purpose to be still viler! Surely you cannot blame us for acting as we do if our central point of our argument is correct!  
If the preaching of the Cross, though it is to them that perish, foolishness, is, to them that believe in Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God, we shall not give up preaching Christ for you! If it is so that men are made new creatures—that, while others are talking about morals, our Gospel plants and produces them—we shall not give up work for talk, nor the efficient agency of the Gospel for the inventions of philosophy! To the front, my Brothers and Sisters, with the Cross, more and more! In your schools and in your pulpits set forth Christ Crucified as the sinner’s hope more and more plainly! Bid the sinner look to Jesus! Look and live! The Gospel is the great promoter of social order, the great reclaimer of the waifs and strays of society, the elevator of the human race! This doctrine of free pardon and gracious renewal, freely given to the most worthless upon their *believing in Jesus Christ*, is the hope of mankind! There is no balm in Gilead and never was—but this is the balm of Calvary, for *there* is the true medicine—and Jesus Christ is the Infallible Physician. Do but try it, Sinners! Do but try it! Look to Jesus and the passions which you cannot overcome shall yield to His cleansing power! Believe in Jesus and the follies which cling to you, and crush you as the snakes engirdled Laocoon and his sons, you shall be able to untwist!  
Yes, they shall die at Jesus’ glance and shall fall off from you. Believe in Jesus and you have the spring of excellency, the hat of purity, the source of virtue, the destruction of evil, the bud of perfection! God grant us, still, to prove the power of the Lord Jesus in ourselves and to proclaim His power to all around us!—  
***“Happy if, with our last breath,  
We may but gasp His name;  
Preach Him to all,  
And cry in death,  
Behold, behold, the Lamb!”***  
Amen and amen!

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Galatians 5.* HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—278, 317, 432 AND “SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS.”**

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BURDEN-BEARING  
NO. 2831

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 17, 1903.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 26, 1886.~~***

***~~“Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ...Every man shall bear his own burden.” Galatians 6:2, 5.~~***

OBSERVE, dear Friends, that the Apostle says in the second verse of this chapter, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” These Galatians had been trying to bear the heavy burden of the Law of Moses. They had, as far as they could, put themselves, again, under the old Ceremonial Law. They had forsaken the Gospel way of justification by faith and had sought to be made perfect by their personal obedience to the Law of God. Now, the Apostle, as though he would expel one affection by another, says, “You want a law? You wish to be under a law? Well, here is the law of Christ—yield yourselves to it! Instead of observing the outward ceremonies of the Levitical law, here is a living law which touches the heart and influences the life—obey that law. You are Christians. You have come under law to Christ by the very fact that you are not your own, but have been bought with a price by Him—now see to it that you yield implicit obedience to the law of Christ.”

It is somewhat remarkable, I think, that many of those who are selfrighteous and apparently pay much regard to the Law of Moses are usually quite forgetful of that which is the very essence and spirit of that Law. They are so righteous that they become stern, severe, censorious— which is being unrighteous—for the righteousness even of the Law of God is a righteousness of love, “for all the law is fulfilled in one word,” that is, “love.” A self-righteous man is not generally a man with a tender spirit. He looks at that which is hard and stern in the Law and he begins to be hard and stern himself—there is none of the softness, sweetness, gentleness and graciousness which even the Law, itself, required when it said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Paul did well, in the mood in which the Galatians were—as they wanted to be under law, to remind them of what is the essence of the Law of God and he did still better by reminding them that they *were* under law—to Christ, whose law emphasizes the love which even Moses, himself, had taught under the old dispensation!

These Galatians had most foolishly sought to burden themselves with a load which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. After being set free by the Gospel, they had gone back to the yoke of bondage, so the Apostle, in effect said to them, “As you have been so bewitched and fascinated that you want burdens to rest upon you, here are burdens for you—‘Bear you one another’s burdens.’ And, as you want law, here is law for you—so fulfill the law of Christ.” It was characteristic of that sacred craftiness, that holy ingenuity, which was so conspicuous in the Apostle Paul that he worded his argument thus, that he might draw the attention of these Galatians to it, fix it upon their memories and, if possible, reach and influence their consciences.

Should there be any of you here who desire to come under the yoke of bondage, or who wish to be burden-bearers, or who find great music in the word, “law,” I hope you will discover all these things in the text. I see in it, first of all, *community*—“Bear you one another’s burdens.” Then the latter part of the text teaches us *immunity*. You are not bound to consider other people’s burdens so much as your own, that you become responsible for them. No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Then the third point, which will be a further opening up of the fifth verse, will be *personality*: “Every man shall bear his own burden.”

**I.**First, I see, in the text, A MARVELOUS COMMUNITY. “Bear you one another’s burdens.” What does this mean?  
Well, dealing with it first, *negatively*, it does *not* mean that we are to burden one another. There are some whose religion consists in laying heavy burdens upon other men’s shoulders while they, themselves, will not carry them for a single yard. You recollect that sect of Pharisees with whom our Master was always in conflict—they have their representatives in these modern times. Why, even this text, itself, is twisted by some into a reason for burdening others. “‘Bear you one another’s burdens,’” they say —“do you not see, Friend, that you *have* to help me?” Yes, friend number one, but do you not see that you are not to go and burden that other friend? It is true that you have to bear his burdens. Let the first application of this passage be to*yourself*, and be not eager to apply it to your neighbor from whom you want to draw something. You have begun by violating the spirit of the text, not only by not bearing your brother’s burden, but also by thrusting upon him your own burden without taking his in exchange! I say this because I have often found that men naturally draw this inference—“We are to help one another, therefore, please help me.” The proper inference would be, “We are to help one another—where is the man whom I am to help?” Is not that the most logical conclusion from the text? Yet such is the selfishness of our nature that we begin straightway to say, “This text is a cow, I will milk it,” not, “this text gives me something to *do*, so I will do it,” but, “This text gives me a chance of getting something and I am going to get it.” If you talk like that, it proves that you are out of gear with the text and have not entered into the spirit of it at all.  
The text does *not* mean that we are to spy out our brother’s faults. Its context shows that the word, “burdens,” here means, “faults.” “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear you one another’s burdens.” To a good man, a fault is a burden. The worst burden that he has to carry is the fact that he is not perfect—that is what troubles him. Now, you and I are not to go about the world spying out everybody else’s faults. “He is an excellent man,” says one, “but.” Now stop there! You have said already quite enough, you will spoil it if you say another word. “Ah,” says another, concerning someone else, “she is an admirable woman, an earnest worker for the Savior.” Stop there! I know what you are going to say something that might make it seem that you are about as good as she is and perhaps a little better, and you are afraid that the light of your star would not be seen unless you first covered up that other star! But it must not be so! “Bear you one another’s burdens.” Bear with one another’s faults, but spy not out one another’s faults.  
I think I have heard a story of Mr. Wesley going several times to a certain town where he thought that there was a band of earnest Christian people, but he was met by a Brother who told him how dead they all were, what little life there was in their Prayer Meetings and how much of inconsistency there was among them. When he got there, he did not notice anything of this sort, so, the third time he went, he said to this Brother, “How is it that you always meet me and tell me of these things about the Brethren! Nobody else ever seems to say it.” “Well, you see,” he said, “Mr. Wesley, I have a rare gift of discerning spirits.” “Oh,” said the good man, “then wrap that talent up in a napkin and bury it, and you will have done the best thing possible with it. The Lord will never ask you what you have done with it if you will only keep it to yourself.” I believe that there was great wisdom in that advice. There are still some who have only that gift of spying out other men’s faults. That is shocking, dreadful, horrible! So, after all that, my Brother, shut your eyes and bend your back. If you know that the burden is there, bow down to help bear it, but do not stand and point at it, and seem as if you wished to do that Brother a discredit.  
Further, the text does *not* mean that we are to despise those who have heavy burdens to bear. For instance, those who have the grievous burden of poverty. “Oh,” some say, “there is a large number of persons attending at such-and-such a place, but they are all poor people.” So you think little of poor people, do you? Then what poor souls you must be! “Oh, but,” says one, “such-and-such a person is always afflicted and very sad.” And do you despise the afflicted, especially the mentally afflicted, the desponding, the sorrowful among God’s people? Do you turn away from them and say, “I cannot endure talking with persons of that sort— they are so sad in temperament and disposition”? But the Apostle says, “Bear you one another’s burdens,” which means—do not run away from other people because you see that they are burdened. If you say, “I like to be with the cheerful and the happy, I cannot go and spend my life in comforting the mourners in Zion”—is that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who was meek and lowly, and who did not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? O Brothers and Sisters, we need to be schooled in this matter of showing sympathy with the sorrowful! No doubt it will drag our own spirits down if we really have fellowship with those whom God has sorely afflicted in mind, but we must be willing to be dragged down—it will do us good! If the Lord sees that we are willing to stoop to the very least of His people, He will be sure to bless us. I sometimes like to sing that verse that Dr. Doddridge wrote, and I hope I can sing it truly—  
***“Have You a lamb in all Your flock  
I would disdain to feed?  
Have You a foe, before whose face  
I fear Your cause to plead?”***  
The second half of the verse is much easier than the first half. You might be able to stand up like young David before Goliath, himself, for there is something grand and noble in such an action as that. But to go looking after the poor little lambs of the flock that scarcely seem as if they are alive, is quite another matter. Yet that is what the text means— “Bear you one another’s burdens.” Carry the lambs in your bosom, be tender to such as are afflicted. Be, as your Master was, of a gentle, loving spirit, seeking to bear the infirmities of the weak, especially you who are strong, for, if you are like those fat cattle described by the Lord in the prophecy of Ezekiel that thrust the lean cattle with side and with shoulder, and pushed with their horns those of the herd that were sickly, then the Lord will order you to be taken to the slaughter-house, for that is the lot of the fed beasts that are so big and brutal! The tall tree is uprooted in the breeze which only bends the lowly willow. Blessed are they who never exalt themselves over the weak and afflicted among the children of God!  
Nor do I think, dear Friends, that our text could be made to mean that any of us may dare to live as if all things existed for our own use. Are there not some people who seem to feel that they are the center of all creation and that all things were created for their honor and glory? The working people round about them are so many “hands” to be employed by them at the lowest possible rate. The whole stream of trade must be so directed as to conduct the golden liquid into their capacious reservoirs. Politics and everything else must be so arranged that they shall prosper, whoever else may suffer loss. As they go through the world, their great concern is to mind the main chance. “Every man for himself,” is the motto of their lives and they try to get as much as they can—and to keep as much as they can. Perhaps even their benevolence is only selfindulgence thinly veiled, for they give alms that they may be seen of men.  
There are some Christian people—at least, I call them Christians by courtesy—whose main thought is about saving their own souls. Their favorite hymn is not in “Our Own Hymn Book”—  
***“A change to keep I have,  
A God to glorify—  
A never-dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky.”***  
That is nothing but a kind of spiritual selfishness—living unto yourself! There is something that you want to get and that something is what you strive after. Blessed is that man who is saved beyond all fear and who, for the love he bears his Lord, lives wholly and only to prove the power of the Grace of God that has been bestowed upon him—and earnestly seeks to be the means of saving the souls of others. The Doctrines of Grace do this for us, by delivering us from all fear with regard to the future and fixing us firmly upon the Rock of Ages. They turn our thoughts away from self to the service and the glory of our God. I delight to sing— ***“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done. I am my Lord’s, and He is mine”***  
and to feel that as He will never lose me, nor permit me to lose Him, I can turn all my thoughts to the rescue of my fellow-sinners who are going down into the Pit. If God shall grant us Grace to enter into the true spirit of the Gospel, having been delivered from every burden—both of this life and of that which is to come—we shall be prepared to bear one another’s burdens and so to fulfill the law of that Christ who has set us free from the law of sin and death which was in our members.  
I have thus shown you, negatively, what the text does *not* mean.  
But, dear Friends, to take our text *positively*, we can see that it must mean, first, that we are to have great compassion upon those who are bearing the burden of sin. You cannot bear the burden of their sins for them—only Christ can do that—but you can help them to bear their burden. I mean this. Here is a troubled soul who has begun to seek the Lord and the poor creature is in great sorrow of heart. Get alongside that burdened one and say, “Now, dear Friend, I am very sorry for you. I feel as burdened about you as if it were my own soul, not yours, that was in trouble.” Ask the Lord to help you when you have left that person—after speaking with much prayer and many tears, go home so grieved that you cannot sleep and keep on crying to God in secret about that soul. Then, when you get up in the morning with no burden concerning your own soul, because God has saved you, still feel that you have to carry the burden of this poor soul who does not know the Lord and, at last, you get to feel as if you could not live if that soul did not also live! If it will not repent, you seem to feel the burden of its guilt. If it will not believe in Christ, you wish you could believe for it. Of course you cannot repent and believe for it, but you *can* believe *about* it and you can, by faith and prayer, bring it to Jesus’ feet and lay it there! The Holy Spirit often draws sinners to the Savior by means of the love of Christians. We can love them to Christ and if we love them as the Apostle Paul did when he travailed in birth for them until Christ was formed in them, it will not be long before we shall see them converted. I am sure that it is so—and that one great secret of soul-winning lies in the bearing of the burdens of the unconverted.  
But we must take special care, dear Friends, that we do this in the case of backsliders because the text, in its context, alludes to them most particularly—“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear you one another’s burdens.” If that backslider has been awakened to a sense of his true condition, he will feel very unhappy—so be very sympathetic towards him. He may be afraid to come back into membership with the church—if so, go after him and encourage him to return. If he says, “I have brought disgrace upon the name of Christ,” try to bear part of the shame that he feels. If he says, “I cannot face So-and-So,” say to him, “I will stand between you. Or I will go and plead for you.” Take to yourself, as far as you can, the shame and the disgrace which belong to the backslider. Try to get right into his place. I am sure that there is no other way of setting broken bones that is equal to this. There is no way of bringing back the wandering sheep like that which the good shepherd took when he lifted the poor creature right up on his own shoulders. It was too worn and weak, and weary for him to lead it back, or drive it back, so he carried it all the way! And, Brothers and Sisters, let us carry the backsliders on our own shoulders in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. As far as it is possible, let us compel them to come in once more that God’s House may be filled—and let us take the burden of their grief and of their shame, upon ourselves. Thus shall we carry out the injunction of the text—“Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”  
Next, the text seems to me to mean, “Be very patient with the infirmities of your brethren.” “Oh, but, So-and-So is very quick tempered!” I hope that it is a burden to him to be quick tempered and if so, that is an additional reason why you should bear with him. “But So-and-So is really very bitter in spirit.” Yes, alas, there are still some people of that sort, but you are to bear with them. I hope it is a burden to them if they have even a tinge of bitterness in their nature, so bear with it. “I do not see why I should,” says one. Well, then, open your eyes and read the text! “And so fulfill the law of Christ.” If the Lord Jesus Christ can put up with *you*, you ought to be able to put up with *anybody*! “Oh, but some people are so exacting!” Yes, some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting. When I am suffering very greatly from gout, if anybody walks heavily and noisily across the room, it gives me pain. Well, then, what do you think happens? Why, they go across the room on tiptoe—they do not say to one another, “We cannot help it that he is ill and that our noise gives him pain. We shall walk just as we always do—we have a right to walk like that.” No, no, they do not need even to be asked to move about quietly, but they say, “Poor man, he is so ill that we must be as gentle as we can with him.” Could not you look in that kind of spirit upon Brothers and Sisters who are not quite all that you would like them to be, and say, “They are not well spiritually,” and deal very gently with them, “and so fulfill the law of Christ”? We who are Christians are to live together in Heaven forever, so do not let us fall out by the way. Come, my Brother, I have to bear a great deal from you and you have to bear a great deal from me, so let it be give and take all the way through. “Bear you one another’s burdens,” not I bear yours without you bearing mine, but I bear yours and you bear mine—you put up with me, and I put up with you. And in that way we shall both “fulfill the law of Christ.”  
Does not the text also mean that we are to bear one another’s burdens by having a deep sympathy with one another in times of sorrow? Oh, for a sympathetic heart! Seek after it, beloved Christians! Seek to have large hearts and tender hearts, for the world is full of sorrow and one of the sweetest balms to sorrow is the sympathy of Christ flowing through the hearts of His own redeemed ones. Be tender, be full of pity, be full of compassion.  
But this sympathy must show itself by actual assistance, rendered wherever it is possible. “Bear you one another’s burdens.” Let the burden of poverty be borne by those of you who have no poverty of your own. Succor your brethren in their times of need. Light their candle when their house grows dark. Blessed are those men and women who addict themselves to the ministry of the saints and who seek, wherever they can, to lighten the burdens of life for their fellow-Christians, lending their shoulders whenever they can give support to the weak.  
Brothers and Sisters, we should also bear one another’s *spiritual* burdens by helping one another in our soul-struggles. I am afraid that in some places of worship Christian men and women come up to the House of Prayer and go home again without ever speaking to one another! I do not think that is the case, here, but it is the case in many places, especially in very respectable places of worship. There they go in and out as if they were all self-contained and could not speak to one another, especially if they happen to be half-sovereign people and a half-crown person is anywhere near—they cannot speak to him at all. This is all contrary to the mind of Christ. In our Church fellowship, there should be*real* fellowship and we should converse with one another. In the olden times, “They that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another,” and Christian people should do the same today—and you who are elders in the church might often say a word that would help a poor young friend who is struggling to do right. You who are joyous might often lend some of your sunbeams to those who are in the dark. And you ought to do so—it would be to your own profit as well as to the profit of others. Trade produces wealth and the inter-trading of Christians, exchanging their good things, one with the other, would tend to the spiritual enrichment of the entire body. God help you to do so by fellowship with one another!  
“Bear you one another’s burdens” also by much prayer for the other. When you have prayed for yourself, do not end your supplication. Keep a little list of people to be prayed for and try to put down, on your list, certain things which you know trouble them and which also trouble you— and bring them before the Lord. In some way or other, bear you those burdens which God lays upon your brethren!  
**II.**The time flies so quickly that I can only speak very briefly upon the second point, that is, IMMUNITY. “For every man shall bear his own burden.”  
Let us always, for our comfort, remember that there is a point beyond which we cannot go in bearing one another’s burdens. After you have prayed for anyone and conversed with him—and he still continues in sin, you are ready to break your heart about him. Yes, it is right to feel like that, but *do not be so unwise as to take his sin actually to yourself*. If you have warned, prayed, instructed and set a godly example—and men will still sin—their sin is their own and their blood will be upon their own head.

And, next, *do not take the shame of other people’s sins upon yourself beyond a certain point*. I have known a good man ashamed to come to the House of God because his son had disgraced himself. Well, his sin does dishonor his father, but, still, as you did not commit the sin and you did not do anything to contribute to it, do not feel ashamed as that! I have known some Christian people very seriously injured by the shame which they have felt because some distant relative or some near relative has misbehaved himself. Go to God with it, but recollect that it is not your sin and it is not your shame, either. Bear it so as to sympathize and pray about it, but not so as to be, yourself, ashamed and depressed because of it!

Remember, also, that *we cannot take other people’s responsibilities upon ourselves*. I am responsible for faithfully preaching the Gospel, but I am not responsible for your reception of it. If I preach the Truth of God and there is not a soul saved by it, I am not responsible for that. And if you, dear teacher in the Sunday school or if any of you Christian workers have labored in vain, if you have been faithful to God, I do not think that will happen—but if it does and it may happen in some measure—do not seem to bear that responsibility, for the text says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” I find it difficult to make young Brothers, when they begin to preach, feel sufficiently the burden of souls. But every now and then, I have met with a Brother who has felt the burden of souls so much that he has scarcely been able to preach at all! That is a pity, because, after all, the salvation of souls lies not with *us*, but with God. And if we have faithfully declared the whole counsel of God and can call God to witness that we have not kept back anything of His Truth that we knew, or failed in faithfulness or earnestness, we must leave the matter there and fall back upon the eternal purpose of God and throw the responsibility of the result upon our unbelieving hearers.

**III.**I have not time to speak as I would like upon the last point. That is, PERSONALITY. “Every man shall bear his own burden.”  
That is to say, *every man, if he has any religion at all, must have personal religion*. You cannot get to Heaven by your mother’s godliness, or by your father’s graciousness—there must be a work of Grace in your own souls. No man can be a sponsor for another in spiritual things. There is no more gigantic lie than that one person should promise that another shall do this and that, which he cannot even do himself! No, “every man shall bear his own burden.” Everyone must come, with his own sin, to his own Savior and, by his own act of faith, must find peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. Do not trust to any national religion, for it is utterly worthless. It is only *personal* religion that can save you. If the blood of saints is flowing in your veins, it brings you nothing except greater responsibility, for salvation is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God, and of God alone.  
And every man should bear his own burden*by personal selfexamination*. I would never think of asking another man to give me his opinion of me and I hope you will not do so. Search your own souls, “examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith.” “Oh, I do not like selfexamination!” says one. So the bankrupt said—he did not like casting up his accounts. But when a man in business does not cast his accounts up, his accounts will soon cast him up—and when a man does not like to examine his own heart, depend upon it, the time will come when Another will examine him and he will be found lacking and be cast away as worthless!  
Next, this text means that *there must be personal service.*“Every man shall bear his own burden.” That is, if you and I are saved, we must, each one, have a work of his own and we must set to work and do it personally. The Lord has put each one of us into a position where there is something we can do which nobody else can do—and we are bound to do it and not to begin thinking of how little others do, or how much others do, but to say to our Lord, “What will You have me do?” Let each Christian Levite bow his shoulder and carry some burden for the Lord’s House.  
And every man should *make a personal effort to bear his own burden*. We have a certain number of persons about who seem as if they never can do anything for themselves—they have to be carried wherever they go. I think I have told you of a set of portraits that I have at home—they represent my two sons, taken on their birthdays while they were quite little boys, and then taken every birthday till they had grown to be young men. Well, at first, they are in a baby carriage and it is very interesting to see how they have grown every year. But there are some of you who have been in baby carriages ever since I knew you—and you are still in baby carriages—and I have to keep wheeling you about! Oh, I wish you would grow up! We are all pleased to have dear little children and we do not mind how little they are at first. But if, after they were fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or 20 years old, our boys were the same size as they were when they were a year old, we should feel that we were the parents of poor little dwarfs and it would be a great trial to us. And it is a great trial to us spiritual parents when we are the fathers of dwarfs! Oh, that you would grow up, Brothers and Sisters! God help you to grow out of yourselves, your inactivity and your listlessness, that every man and woman shall say, “I am big enough to bear my own burden. By the goodness of God, I will get so much Grace and so much help that I will do some work for the Lord, and do it thoroughly. I will bear my own burden—not sit on the top of it and fret and cry, and ask somebody else to bear it for me— but I will bear my own burden.”  
I will finish by saying that the text indicates that *everybody has own burden*. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” You look at somebody else and you say, “Ah, I wish I had his load to carry!” I do not think that I ever met with more than one person in the world with whom, upon mature consideration, I would change places in all respects. I have thought, once or twice, that I might do so, but soon there has been a hitch somewhere, and I have said, “No, I will go back into my own shell, after all.” I think, sometimes, that I would not mind changing places with George Muller for time and for eternity, but I do not know anybody else of whom I would say as much as that. But I daresay that even he has his own burden, though he has not told me about it when I have talked with him.  
And that good woman who always looks so smiling, God bless her! She has a skeleton at home in the closet. And that good Brother who is always so bright and cheery—yes, he has a burden, too. There is a cross for everyone and I want you to feel that it is so, because it would take away all thought of envy whenever you meet with another who seems so much happier than yourself! That Bother has the sense to turn the smooth side of his coat outside—he wears the rough side of it inwards—a very sensible thing to do. Do not, therefore, begin to say, “Oh, but I am so much worse off than he is!” You do not know what he has to endure, “for every man shall bear his own burden.” Let us end the whole matter by not envying others, or caring or wishing to be other people, but just saying, “What can I do to help somebody else? What I can do to help *anybody*? I will do it by the Grace of God.”  
But what can some of you do in carrying burdens for other people? Why, even while I have been talking, you have said, “I do not care to do that. What have I to do with other people?” You are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity while you talk like that! Any man who is selfish is an unsaved man, for the chief point in salvation is to save us from ourselves. As long as you live simply within your own ribs, you live in a dungeon. You will never come into the palace where the many mansions are—the liberty of our great Father’s House—until you can say, “I love others more than I love myself. Above all, I love the great BurdenBearer who took my burden of sin upon His shoulders and carried it up to the Cross and away from the Cross and now, through love to Him, the love of self is gone and I will live to glorify His name forever and forever.”  
God bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*GALATIANS 5:13-26; 6:1, 2.***

**Galatians 5:13.***For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love, serve one another.*Do not turn your liberty into license. The Apostle, in this Epistle, had began urging the Christians of Galatia to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and never to be, again, entangled with the yoke of legal bondage. He warned them against that error into which many have fallen. But you know that it is often our tendency, if we escape from one error, to rush into another. So the Apostle guards these Christian against that Antinomian spirit which teaches us that freedom from the law allows indulgence in sin—“Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love, serve one another.”

**14.***For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this—You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*Oh, if that “one word” were so engraved on our hearts as to influence all our lives, what blessed lives of love to God and love to men we should lead!

**15.***But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.*When dogs and wolves bite one another, it is according to their nature, but it is indeed bad when sheep take to biting one another. If I must be bitten at all, let me be bitten by a dog rather than by a sheep. That is to say, the wounds inflicted by the godly are far more painful to bear and last much longer than those caused by wicked men. Besides, we can say with the Psalmist, “It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it.” It is natural that the serpent’s seed should nibble at our heel and seek to do us injury, but when the bite comes from a Brother—from a child of God—then it is peculiarly painful. Well might the Apostle write, “If you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.” I have lived long enough to see churches absolutely destroyed, not by any external attacks, but by internal contention.

**16.***This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*If your life is guided by the Spirit of God—if you are spiritual men and women, and your actions are worked in the power of the Spirit, “you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

**17.***For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.* They will never agree—these two powers are always contrary, one to the other. If you think that you can help God by getting angry, you make a great mistake. You cannot fight God’s battles with the devil’s weapons. It is not possible that the power of the flesh should help the power of the Spirit!

**17, 18.***And these are contrary, the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* The Law of God is always to you the blessed rule by which you judge your conduct, but it is not a law of condemnation to you— neither are you seeking salvation by it.

**19-21.***Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these— Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like.*The list is always too long to be completed! We are obliged to sum up with a kind of *et cetera—*“and such like.”

**21.***Of which I tell you beforehand, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* A very solemn, searching, sweeping declaration! Let each man judge himself by this test! “The *fruit* of the Spirit” is equally manifest, as the Apostle goes on to say.

**22, 23.***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* Neither human nor Divine! Good men make no law against these things, nor does God, for He approves of them. What a wonderful cluster of the grapes of Eshcol we have here! “The fruit of the Spirit”—as if all this were but one, after all—many luscious berries forming one great cluster. Oh, that all these things may be in us and abound, that we may be neither barren nor unfruitful!

**24.***And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* It is not yet dead, but it is crucified. It hangs up on the cross, straining to break away from the iron hold, but it cannot, for it is doomed to die. Happy, indeed, shall that day be when it shall be wholly dead.

**25, 26.***If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*Do Christian people need to be talked to like this? Yes, they do, for the best of men are but men at their best—and the godliest saint is liable to fall into the foulest sin unless the Grace of God prevents it. Oh, that we could expel from the Church of Christ all vain-glorying, all provoking of one another and all envying of one another! How often, if one Christian Brother does a little more than his fellow workers, they begin to find fault with him! And if one is blessed with greater success than others are, how frequently that success is disparaged and spoken of slightingly! This spirit of envy is, more or less, in all of us, and though, perhaps, we are not exhibiting it just now, it only needs a suitable opportunity for its display and it would be manifested. No man here has any idea of how bad he really is. You do not know how good the Grace of God can make you, nor how bad you are by nature, nor how bad you might become if that nature were left to itself!

**Galatians 6:1.***Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault.* If he travels so slowly that his faults catch up with him and knock him down. “If a man is overtaken in a fault.”

**1.***You who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.*Set his bones for him if they have been broken. Put him in his proper place again.

**1.***Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.*What would you wish others to do to you if you were in the position of this fallen one? The Apostle does not say, “Considering yourself lest you *also be overtaken* in a fault.” No, but, “lest you also be *tempted*”—as much as to say, “It only needs the temptation to come to you and you will yield to it.”

**2.***Bear you one another’s burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ.*  
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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3355 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LIFE’S INEVITABLE BURDEN  
NO. 3355

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1913.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 16, 1867.~~***

***~~“For every man shall bear his own burden.”  
Galatians 6:6.~~***

IN pondering Scripture Truth, we must not strain metaphors, nor use figures of speech as though they were literal statements. You have an instance of the truth of this remark in this Chapter. In one verse the Apostle says, “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ,” while in the verse of our text, he says, “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Still, he is not contradicting himself. He would be if he were speaking literally of burdens, but he is speaking metaphorically and, consequently, he uses the figure first in one way and then in another. It may be useful to us, Brothers, to learn never to draw arguments and doctrines from metaphors. Many do and there are many supposed doctrines which really have no better ground-work than mere metaphors. I remember hearing one contending against the chastening of God’s people and he urged that the Church was the bride of Christ and that it was impossible that Christ, as the Husband of the Church, should in any way chasten or strike His own spouse, which would be a very reasonable thing to say of a man. If the metaphor ran on four legs, the argument might have been correct, but as no metaphor is intended so to do, and is only to be understood in the sense intended by the person employing it, the argument is fallacious and valueless! I have heard others say that true Christians are citizens of Heaven and, consequently, we ought not to exercise our votes in political matters! This is another piece of utterly illogical reasoning because we might as well say to Christians that they ought not to eat animal food as they form the Lord’s flock, and sheep must not, and cannot, eat animal food! The fact is, the reasoning from metaphor is always risky and sometimes proves quite absurd!

I mention this because I am quite sure that very much of it does prevail in the Christian world and that people use the language of Scripture in a manner in which they would not use the same language if found in other books. The Word of God is, however, not to be treated with less, but *more* veneration in our reading and study of it, and yet in the same simple, common-sense fashion as that in which we would treat any other book. The truth is there are burdens which may be shared and which should be shared. The burden of grief, the burden of pecuniary need, the burden of heart trouble may sometimes be borne, but on the other hand, there are burdens which no man can share with his fellow, nor ought he even to *think* of sharing, but where each man must stand apart and alone before God—and no one can assist him.

Of these burdens we shall speak tonight, and they shall be our first point. Then, lest we should become burdensome to you, we shall offer a few considerations which may tend to take out the weight of the burdens which we must unavoidably carry, each one for himself. And then we shall close by endeavoring to find something practical to be done tonight as the result of the text. First, then, we have to speak of—

**I.**CERTAIN BURDENS WHICH EACH MAN WILL BE QUITE CERTAIN TO HAVE TO BEAR FOR HIMSELF.  
In speaking of the first three burdens which I shall have to mention, I shall address myself to you all, whether saints or sinners, for there are some Truths of God which are common to all men as men. And such is the first burden—the *burden of original sin.*The burden of our natural depravity, the burden of our fallen nature, the burden of our constitution which is perverted by evil—these we shall, each one of us, have to carry for himself. It may be said that this is not our burden, but Adam’s—but the burden of the father, if he brings the whole household into poverty— becomes the burden of the family and each individual member of it. If the head should ache, it is no use for the hand to say, “It is no business of mine.” There is, too, so vital and intimate a connection between the whole body of humanity, between Adam the head, and all the members of the body corporate, that Adam’s Fall becomes ours, Adam’s ruin our ruin and the taint in the blood is to be found in us all. Some of you are “dead in trespasses and sins” and, therefore, this burden is no more a burden to you than the heavy clods of the churchyard are to the bodies that lie beneath them. But if ever you are quickened by Divine Grace, you will soon find that “the body of this death,” as Paul calls *indwelling sin*, is a very heavy burden to battle with and you will have to personally fight out the conflict within your own soul. You will have to call in the aid of Divine Power, or you will never get the victory, but—mark you—in the conquest of your own corruption, in the overcoming of your own besetting sins and of those evils which are more powerful in you than they are in others because you are constitutionally inclined to them—in that battle you will have to fight for yourselves! You may get some assistance from other people’s experience, but still, the struggle and the conflict must be with you.  
Young people, never imagine that all the training in the world can rid you of your evil without an earnest struggle on your own part! Don’t conceive that a mother’s prayers will give you tenderness of conscience unless you also learn of Christ for yourselves. Do not conceive that the rebukes of a father can conquer that evil temper unless you struggle against it. And if you habitually have a tendency to pride, do not conceive that the preacher’s homilies against pride can overcome pride in you! No, in the name of God you must go to the armory and ask for the sword of the Spirit, that you may personally, girded with Divine Strength, which you may obtain by earnest prayer, overcome in your own soul your besetting sins! In this respect, then, you will have to bear your own burden. I know I have to bear mine and I do not know that any of you could help me. And I believe that each one of you, quickened by Divine Grace, must feel there is something peculiar about your case—some sin, perhaps, which you would not like to whisper into another’s ear—perhaps only a sin of thought, but still it is a burden. I hope it will become more and more a burden to you, for the more burdensome it becomes, the more likely are you to conquer it! But you will have to bear it yourself and in the strength of the Holy Spirit you will have to conquer it, too, and get rid of it. You will have to pluck out the right eye and tear off the right arm. It were better for you, remember, to enter into life crippled and maimed than to keep these and be cast into eternal Hell! It is for you, in God’s name, personally to do battle with your personal depravity!  
Each man must, each man alone can bear his own burden here. Again, each man must also bear *his own burden of personal sin*unless, (here comes in the grand and gracious proviso), unless the sin is blotted out or is utterly removed! Every man who has sin to carry must bear his own burden. There is no shifting the sin from you to a sponsor. No fellow creature can stand for you and take your offenses. The Lord Jesus Christ did take His people’s sins, as He was their Covenant Head, Surety and Representative—and they who are in Christ are free from sin—their sin being utterly removed and having ceased to be, having been cast by the tremendous power of Christ into the depths of the sea, so that if they are sought for, they shall never be found against the Lord’s people any more forever! But do remember, dear Hearer, that if you are not a pardoned soul, you have got a burden to carry and you will have to bear it. You will have to bear it now, for “he that believes not is condemned already.” You will have to bear it when you come to die and you will have enough to do to die having this burden of sin pressing upon your heart. Worst of all, you will have to bear it when your spirit is disembodied and your naked soul is called before your Maker. Ah, it will be a dreadful thing to go there with the blackness and defilement of sin about you! And you will have to bear it, too, in the day of the Resurrection and in the solemn article of judgment! And then, last of all, you will have to bear your own burden in the eternal future—and there it will sink you, sink you, sink you beyond all hope of rescue or escape!  
Now, while there is life there is hope. “All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven unto men. If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” but unless the sin is removed, it must remain our own burden forever and forever! You will not get rid of it by joining a church. You cannot be rid of it by passing through rites and ceremonies. It will be no help to you to have been a citizen of a Christian nation, socalled, and to have worshipped in a Christian assembly. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” We came through the gates of life into this world alone—we shall go back through the iron gates of death, each man alone. And the judgment, though crowds will be gathered, will be the judgment of so many individuals, each weighed in the scale, alone, either to hear the verdict that they are “accepted in the Beloved,” or else to hear it said, “Tekel”*—*“You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.” How I wish that all my hearers would lay this to heart! Do not try to hide away in the crowd, for God will search and bring you out individually and you shall be tested and tried apart from others! If you take ever so many sovereigns to the bank, it is not very likely you will pass one bad one, for they would very soon discover it. That might be done, however, on earth, but it could not be done in Heaven! “Every man shall bear his own burden,” and if the burden of sin is upon him, it shall crush him beyond all hope!  
Once again, while thus speaking to both saints and sinners, “Every man shall bear his own burden” *of the Law.* By sin we do not escape from the Law. The Law of God is binding upon every man of woman born, unless, by being dead to the Law through Christ, he escapes from under its yoke and bondage. Now, the Believer is not under Law. Do not misunderstand me. I mean that he is not under Law in the sense in which the sinner is under it. He is not under its condemning power! He is not under Law, but he is under Grace! The principle of Law does not bind him— it is the principle of love which rules and governs his spirit. Now, every man who is under the Law is bound to keep it, and to keep it personally. Look, my dear Friends—you who have never fled to Christ—look where you are. The Law of God is such a Law that Adam failed to keep it, though innocent. How, then, shall you keep it while imperfect? It is a spiritual Law, a Law touching not only your actions, but your words and your thoughts—how can you keep it? And yet, if you keep it not, it brandishes its great whip with the thongs and brings it down upon the conscience with terrible effect. If you keep not the Law, remember the sentence, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.” Happy is the man who has escaped from the territories of the Law of God and come into the dominions of Divine Grace! But so long as we are under the Law, its burden is ours and here comes in this grimly solemn Truth of God that it is a burden which each man must carry on his own shoulders, but carry it he cannot and, therefore, it will crush us and the curse of God must come upon us through the Law!  
And now we shall leave those three points which are common to all men and simply speak to Believers of the burdens which they have to carry and which they ought joyfully to shoulder, each man for himself!  
And first, my Brothers and Sisters, when we have been quickened and awakened, we shall find daily necessity for *the confession of sin*and here, “every man shall bear his own burden.” A general confession may be very proper in the congregation, but it is only acceptable to God as it becomes an individual and particular confession in the case of each one using the words. Repentance is peculiarly a private and personal Grace. Lamentation for sin is a thing for one’s own chamber—the husband apart, and the wife apart—the daughter apart and the mother apart. Into confession in its fullness, no two can enter. As far as the sin has been common they may confess together, but in so far as the guilt in each case is personal and particular, so must confession be. My dear Friends, let us not hesitate, whatever it may be that is upon our minds, tonight, to come and acknowledge it before our Father, who is in Heaven. We do not confess now like condemned criminals who confess before execution because they must—we confess like the returned prodigal, with our heads on our dear Father’s bosom, conscious that we are forgiven, quite sure that His love is set upon us and that we shall not be driven from Him on account of sin, but hating sin all the more because of this love—and weeping bitterly because of that wondrous Grace which has had such compassion upon us! Let us be very marked in our acknowledgment of sin in private. I believe the Lord often withholds from His people a sweet sense of perfect acceptance until their confession shall be more precise—until they learn to “call a spade a spade,” as we say, and so make a clean breast of the matter before the Most High.  
Further, my Brothers and Sisters, there is another burden we have to carry and which we must cheerfully shoulder, and that is *the yoke of Christ.*Jesus says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.” And then He adds, “for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” We are bound to obey Christ. He is the Captain—we are His soldiers. There should be maintained in the Church a sacred military discipline—we should obey spontaneously the commands of our great Leader! He is our Shepherd, we must keep close to Him—walking in His footprints and delighting in His company. He is the Physician—we must follow His prescription, not hesitating, even though the draught He gives is very bitter. Perfect obedience is what Jesus Christ has a right to claim from us! Oh, that He would give us Grace that He might receive according to His rights! Is there any duty, my Brothers and Sisters, which you have not yet fulfilled and which presses upon your conscience? Or is there some other duty on which your conscience is but partially enlightened? Ask for a quickened conscience and when you obtain it, never tamper with it! Oh, to have a conscience quick as the apple of the eye, tender and delicate, that will not even bear the slightest dust of sin! Oh, to walk before God as Caleb did, of whom the Lord said, “My servant Caleb has followed Me fully.” There were some of whom it was said, “They walked before the Lord, but not with all their heart, as did David.” May we have the wholeheartedness of the most consecrated towards the Savior and whatever form the yoke of Christ may take, may we count it our highest joy to bear it! Since He carried our sorrow, let us be willing to carry out His commands to their utmost letter, desiring that not so much as a jot or a tittle shall be left unheeded of the Master’s will!  
Further, Brothers and Sisters, I think we ought, each one of us, to feel that we have a *burden of prayer* to carry to the Mercy Seat. “Every man shall bear his own burden” in this respect. I wish we did this in our assemblies. I am afraid that you often let me pray, but some of you do not pray yourselves. I am afraid, too, that private prayer is neglected by a very large number of Christians—not that the form of it is absolutely renounced, but the vigor of it is not maintained. I wish I could say this without a blush concerning myself, but I do feel that very many of us do grievously fail here. We give the Lord some scanty five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, whereas our Puritan forefathers prayed sometimes for hours! But it would matter little about the time if we did but give the spirit. It is poor work, sometimes, our praying! Oh, that we wrestled with the Angel and prevailed! My Brothers and Sisters, we have, everyone of us, something to take before God in prayer—and we rob the Church of our contributions to her treasury of intercession if we do not put our share into it!  
Some of you ought to pray for the Sunday school more than you do. Some of you should bear in prayer the burden of the young of the congregation. The preacher has his burden of prayer—a heavy one. My Brothers and Sisters, the deacons and elders should be—I trust they are—peculiarly men of prayer! They have a burden to carry—a burden of prayer for the Church. And you aged fathers in our Israel and you, my dear Sisters who are matrons in our midst, it often seems to me to be peculiarly your office to be intercessors for the Church. It may be possible that many of you could not preach and could not be very serviceable in many active labors, but you can be the very strength and sinews of war for the Church militant by your prayers! No, no—it is not the whole Church praying that you are to think of just now, but you, yourself— praying—each man and woman taking his own share of the great common burden which we have to take before the Mercy Seat and leave there!  
So, too, must each of us take our own burden of *witnessing for Christ.* All saints cannot witness to all Truth since nobody knows all the Truth of God but God! Some of our hyper-Calvinistic friends also know it all, according to their own understanding—but at any rate we think that nobody else does! Finite minds can only grasp part of the Truth. The Infinite alone can lay hold of the whole of Truth. If we were altogether Infallible in our knowledge of Doctrine, we should be God, for only God can know all things and know all things thoroughly—know all things without admixture of error. But wherein we do know, each man is called to bear testimony to the Truth he does know. There are many things that I do not know—why should I, then, pretend to be a witness to them? But there are some two or three things I do know. I am quite sure about them—and if I do not speak positively upon them, I shall fail to bear my burden before the Lord. And there is some one Truth of God, perhaps, my Brother, about which you have a little Light of God, a little more Light than your neighbors. Do not hide the Light of God! God does not ever light a lamp to put it under a bushel. If you have received, either by experience or research, any special Light which is peculiar to you—spread it that it may be, as it should be, the common property of the Church of God, to the Glory of God! I wish that Christians in these days thought more of bearing their witness. The Scottish

people in years gone by attached great importance to the bearing of witness—testifying—standing out at all costs to give evidence to the Truth of God. But nowadays Truth is cast into the street as though it were worthless! And Christians will honor a Truth and hold it, and yet will put their finger to their lips and say, “For peace’s sake, such a Truth is to be unspoken.” No! Peace is precious, but it has its price, and is not to be purchased at any price! Truth first! “First pure, then peaceable.” First, the Truth of God and then the peace of God. May we have both, but let us take care that we bear our own burden in witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Again, dear Brothers and Sisters, we have, each one of us, our own burden *in the matter of caring for souls.* You are placed, some of you, as working men amidst working men—your burden is manifestly your own class. Others of you move in other spheres. Do not forget that each sphere has its particular claim. You have ability? You have, then, a burden peculiar to a man of ability. You have wealth? There is a burden there. On the other hand, you live in obscurity. Your utmost sphere is your little children and your one or two rooms. Still remember that circles are prized not in proportion to their *size*, but in proportion to their *roundness*—and so we shall be honored and rewarded by Divine Grace— not according to the largeness of our sphere, but according to the way in which we have filled it for Christ! We must each bear the burden of our own sphere. Mother, no one else can be a mother to your children and do for them what you should do. Minister, if you are truly sent of God, no one can be a sponsor for you in your ministry—you must take that burden which God has put upon you, upon yourself! And you trader, merchant, working man—there is something which you, each of you, must do and however earnest all the rest of Christians may be, they cannot, by the surplus of their zeal, if there is any, by any possibility make up for a deficiency in your case! The timber may be very strong in one part of the vessel, but the strength of the timber there is no recompense for a rotten portion in another part of the keel—it must be strong all over. We are all set, as it were, to forge a chain—and if the link that you shall forge is thoroughly strong and well welded, yet if I make a mess of my portion of the work, the chain will be injured all through! Let us remember this and discharge our own work in the strength of God, by the power of His Spirit, and we shall joy in ourselves by the Holy Spirit!  
I might thus enlarge upon these burdens, but they all come to the same effect. There is one more word, however, which will be addressed, perhaps, to half a dozen here—probably not so many. Sometimes, upon some men, God casts a burden which He never puts on others. The Prophet speaks of “the burden of the Lord.” Probably we have all carried it at some time, but at any one particular time there will not be many who are bearing it. That burden may be something very extraordinary to others, though you have become so familiar with it that it seems ordinary to you. Perhaps tonight something is saying in your soul, “Go and speak to such an one.” Do not violate that monition! Believe me, there is more in spiritual impulses than some people think! You have all read the old story of the Quaker who felt moved to ride into a certain town, some 10 or 12 miles off at the dead of night—and to go to a certain house. He did so. He found the house and knocked at the door. No one came to the door. He knocked again and when, at last, a man came downstairs and opened the door and asked him what he wanted. The Quaker said, “Perhaps you can tell me, for I do not know. The Lord has sent me to you, but what for I know not.” Then the man produced a rope and said that just when the knock came to the door he was in the top room, planning to hang himself. God had evidently sent the Quaker just at that time to prevent him. If you and I were more obedient to these “burdens of the Lord” when they came, we might often do more good than we do. We must not be fanatical—there is a line to be drawn—but at the same time I am afraid we often check sacred impulses, which, if followed, might be fraught with the most blessed consequences! Do you feel called at this time, my dear Friend, to a work which you never undertook before? Consult not with flesh and blood! Do not be particular about asking help and assistance. “Every man shall bear his own burden.” Go in the strength of God! If, like Gideon, you need a sign, take it, and when you have it and your heart has become like Gideon’s fleece, wet clean through, even though it is with sorrow, so that you could wring it out, then go in this, your might, for if God has sent you, He will go with you. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” This may be a word to somebody—I know not to whom—but it was a burden on me to say it—and there I leave it. Now we turn to the second Truth of this theme! And with much greater brevity—  
**II.**SOME THINGS WHICH LIFT THE WEIGHT OF THESE PRESSING BURDENS.  
“Every man shall bear his own burden.” It is not pleasant to be talked to all this long time about your being a burden-bearer, but perhaps these things will make it more pleasant. The first thing of which to remind ourselves is this—that it is quite consistent with the Truth of God declared in our text, to remind you that Jesus Christ is *the great Burden-Bearer for all His saints—*that though, on the one hand, you will have to bear your own burdens, yet on the other hand Christ will bear all your burdens for you! Your burden of sin was laid upon Him as the scapegoat for your soul. That you know, and now your sin is put away! And now, tonight, whatever your burden is, come with it to your best Friend, the “Friend that sticks closer than a brother.” Tell Him the cause of your complaint. The disciples of John, when their master’s head was taken off, took up the body and “went and told Jesus.” Come and tell Jesus what it is that vexes you tonight! It is said of one sick child, “They brought him to Jesus.” Is your trouble a sick child, or is it you who is sick? Or what is it? Bring it to Jesus! All griefs either fly at His approach or else they change to joys! Or if they remain griefs, they minister to us an abundance of spiritual wealth—  
***“Come, make your needs, your burdens known— He will present them at the Throne!  
And angel bands are waiting there,  
His messages of love to bear.”***  
You must remember that your burden is easy to bear when Christ is with you. When Jesus Christ has strengthened you with all strength in your inner man and put into you His own Omnipotence to be your succor, then shall the burden cease to be a burden to you any longer!  
This also may tend to lighten the pressure, *that as every man has to bear his own burden, so every man has his own hope.*I would be afraid to change with anybody else. I have sometimes thought, when I have been much desponding, that I wished I had half as good a hope as some of my Brothers and Sisters, but when I come to think it over—I do not know—I do not know—I would be as happy as the least in the Lord’s family if I knew that I was really one of His, but I really should not like to change with any of the little ones, or the great ones, either, on the chance of their being His. No! I know my own hope and I will keep it!  
And, blessed be God, as we have our own burden, *so we have our own joy.* The most miserable and unhappy Christian in the world, when you come to get into his secrets, will tell you—he will let it out somehow— that he has a secret spring of joy which others have not. In fact, it is to be remarked that those who have deep griefs have generally proportionately deep joys! The man of superficial sorrow generally has superficial mirth—but the man whose heart has been bored through and through has a stream of joy springing up as from an artesian well that cannot be equaled for freshness by the mere land springs of superficial piety! Brothers and Sisters, we would not part with our joys nor with our hope. Though we have our sorrows to ourselves, yet we have our joys to ourselves, too! And, thank God, they cannot be taken away from us!  
So, too, the Christian has Christ all to himself. I have sometimes tried to think of that. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, able to save ten thousand times ten thousand sinners—and yet He is all mine! All Christ is mine! Here He is feeding the millions of His saints, and yet there is not a single crumb upon His table but what is mine! Nor a grain of corn in the granary of my Brother Joseph but what belongs to me! All Christ belongs to each one of God’s people! You have got a burden to yourself, but you have also got God to yourself—think of that! Have you ever remembered that if you were the only creature in the world—the only creature in the universe—if there were no angels and no other men—have you ever thought of what an inspection God would have of you and how He would see you through and through? Well, at this present moment and at all times, you are as much an object of His inspection as if that were the case! For multitudes of objects do not divide the exercise of Omniscience upon each one. The Infinite Mind of God is such that the Infinite Care of God belongs to every individual throughout the entire universe! Yes, you have a God to yourself! Oh, what infinite supplies you have, Christian! Talk of your expenses! Look at your income! Speak of your poverty! Look at your wealth! You talk of your weakness—now estimate your strength! You can cast the plumb line to the bottom of your sorrows and measure the Atlantic waves of your grief, but you cannot measure Heaven above, nor the earth beneath, nor the depths of Hell! If you could measure these, God is greater than them all! Oh, why, then, do you despond because of the big burden, when you have peculiar help, peculiar joy, peculiar hope and peculiar strength? Rest in God and be joyful!  
Once again, it is true that we, all of us, have a burden to carry, but *then we have not to carry that burden long.*You do not much pity a man who has to carry a load only during the twinkling of an eye. Well, the whole of life is not any more than that! Just think, my dear Friends, of eternity—and what is life? Imagine ourselves sitting down in Heaven in the midst of eternal blessedness, and what a moment life will seem! We shall know, then, what Paul meant when he said, “These light afflictions which are but for a moment.” But for a moment! Oh, pluck up courage, Brothers and Sisters! You are nearer Home than you thought you were and every moment you are getting nearer! We find our horses quicken their speed when we turn their heads homeward and they drag their loads with speed. Now, your head is homeward, Christian, you— ***“Nightly pitch your moving tent,  
A day’s march nearer home.”***  
Therefore, be of good comfort and let not the burden gall your shoulders.  
Once more. If you have a burden to yourself, remember that *you will have your own place in Heaven which nobody else will have.*You have your own sorrows, but you will have your own joys there! I think there is a note in the heavenly song for each one of us to take. I do not suppose that Mary Magdalene sings precisely the same note as the dying thief. There will be her lofty voice taking some of the treble notes and we shall have him, it may be, taking the deeper bass. I believe that if one of us should be absent, the choir of Heaven would not be complete. In the noblest orchestra all the instruments and voices are needed for the completeness of the chorus, and so will it be in the orchestra of Heaven! Paul says that the saints that are gone before into Heaven are not perfect without us—that “they without us would not be made perfect.” That is to say the company would not be complete, but gaps appear. So long as there is one soldier in a squad who has not arrived, the battalion is not completely formed. So we must each get there to perfect, to complete the number of the saints in Heaven! Well, then, Beloved, as we are, each one, to have a place and portion in Heaven, each a mansion to himself or herself, we may well be content to bear our burdens here alone. And now to close. What is—  
**III.**THE PRACTICAL INFERENCE AND RESULT?  
I do not know what it may be, but oh, may God the Holy Spirit burn my text into your hearts! I do not want you to remember so much anything I have said—it does not matter about that—you can forgot it all! But I do want you to recollect this one Truth of God—especially you Christians—that “every man shall bear his own burden.” *There is something for each one of you to do for Christ.*Oh, that notion that the minister can do it, that the united action of the Church can do it—it has ruined the Christian Church to a large extent! A personal, individual sense of responsibility is what we need—each Christian judging himself daily and hourly as to his capabilities, obligations and indebtedness to his Lord! Brother minister, you have got your burden to bear. Is there any new work you can undertake for Christ, or any old work that needs strengthening, into which you can throw yourself with greater zeal? Then I pray you do it! My Sister in the Lord, you have not done, perhaps, what you might do. Now say in your heart, before you leave the pew, “By God’s Grace, I will do whatever I can.” I can look round, round upon you here and see some who are really doing more than I could for a moment ask you to do, for you are “in labors more abundant.”  
I thank God that there are such in this Church, but then I think of others. Oh, if all were like some, what a Church we would be! If all the vines in our vineyard bore such clusters as some of the vines do, oh, how the wine presses would burst with new wine! In the matter of liberality, the preacher must never judge—that is a matter for each man. “How much should you give unto your Lord?” In the matter of service, it is not for us to allot you your work, but what can you do? Now, what will you do tonight” “Oh, give me till the morning,” says one. No! No! We have not an hour that we can afford to waste! Let us serve God today—we will leave tomorrow to care for itself. Now is the accepted time for service, as well as salvation! Serve Him now! Do something to forward His Kingdom and honor His name now! The only way to serve Christ in the future is to serve Him in the present, for the future never comes, or, if it does, it ceases to be future and is the living present.  
Now I ask you, you who are now washed in His cleansing blood, you who now bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus, you who have lain on His bosom, you who have been kissed with the kisses of His mouth, you who have been brought from under the apple tree and know how sweet His fruit is and how delightful His shadow is, you who are now one with Him, of His flesh and of His bones, you who expect soon to see Him, you who are longing to be with Him and hope to be caught up to dwell with Him, to see Him as He is, and to be like He is—I charge you by the roes and the hinds of the fields, by the lily beds wherein you had fellowship with your Lord, and by the garden of nuts wherein He has revealed Himself to you—I charge you, by His everlasting love, by the love you bear to Him, and by that sweet song you sang just now— ***“For He is mine, and I am His—  
The God whom I adore!  
My Father, Savior, Comforter,  
Now and forevermore,”***  
serve Him now! Serve Him forevermore and may the Lord bless you and make you blessed, and a great blessing to others, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #3109 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SOWING AND REAPING  
NO. 3109

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1908.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 16, 1874.~~***

***~~“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”  
Galatians 6:7.~~***

I FIND, on reference to Luther’s Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and to Calvin’s Commentary on this passage, that both those learned expositors consider that this refers to the treatment of ministers by their people in the matter of their financial support. They very properly point out the connection between the 6th verse and the 7th—“Let him who is taught in the Word share with him who teaches in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” I suppose that there was a need for such an injunction in Paul’s day—and there is a need for it now. There were some hearers of the Gospel, then, who contributed generously towards the maintenance of the preacher and the Apostle says that what they gave would be like sowing good seed in return for which God would give to them an abundant harvest. But there were others who gave sparingly and who would, therefore, have a proportionately small return.

But I feel sure that the Apostle had a wider range than that and that these words express a general principle—“Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” So I begin my discourse by reminding you that our present lives are of the utmost possible importance, for on these winged hours hang eternal issues. Our present actions are not trifles, for they will decide our everlasting destiny. Everything we do is, to some extent, a sowing of which eternity will be the reaping.

**I.**So I pray you to notice, first, that our text tells as that GOD IS NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

Some trifle with God by holding, practically, if not theoretically, that *there will not be rewards for virtue, nor punishment for sin—*that one end will come alike to all—that whatever the dignity or the degradation of character may be, we shall all go to the same place and sleep there in oblivion. Or that if there *is* any future life, it will be common to us all and that, in fact, the whole question concerning the hereafter is a matter so utterly unimportant that we can afford to regard it with complete indifference!

But, dear Friends, it is not so. There is an Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God—and He is the moral Governor of the universe. He will not see His laws broken with impunity, His name deferred, His Gospel despised, His Son rejected. He is intensely sensitive to the actions of mankind. He is not a god of granite or of steel. He takes note of the acts, words and even of the *thoughts* of those whom He has created! And if they are finally impenitent, sooner or later He will say, as He did in Isaiah’s day, “I will ease Me of My adversaries and avenge Me of My enemies.”

Others seem to suppose that, even if there is a future, an eternity of rewards and punishments—the reaping of which this life is the sowing— *a bare profession will suffice to save them.* They appear to imagine that if they only compliment their Maker with an occasional “Thank God!” and utter a few words of mere formal prayer, and are not grossly licentious, but live tolerably decent lives, that will satisfy God’s requirements. Nothing can be more mistaken than such an idea as that! God in the highest heavens is Himself perfectly pure—His perfect Law is like Himself—and it is not for Him to accommodate His righteous Law to the wills of fallen man! Do not fancy that He will accept the mere external homage of your being. He must have your heart, soul, mind, and strength, or He will not be content. It is vain for anyone to attempt to mock God by supposing that anything will do for Him in place of that heart-surrender and heart-service that He demands.

There are others who seem to suppose that *if they make a profession of religion,*that will suffice. They think that if they attend the parish church or the dissenting chapel and subscribe regularly to religious and philanthropic societies, that is all that is required of them. *That is how they mock God—*that same God who came to the top of Sinai and there, amidst thunder and lightning—gave the Ten Commandments! But He is not to be satisfied by a bare profession of religion. To confess what we do not really feel is but to increase our sin—a hypocritical profession is a further aggravation of our sin. Does God accept your heartless sacrifices, your meaningless words and empty phrases? No! He is not to be mocked by mere outward religious forms and ceremonies.

Others imagine that God can be imposed upon *by a formal compliment when they are near death.*A man is dying and immediately the cry is, “Send for a minister!” They often send for a dissenting minister, though they have never attended his ministry! And they appear to imagine that by some sort of magic we can work wonders even for the poor creature who is probably unconscious before we get to him! And if he has not trusted in Christ before that time, no one can enable him to do it then. Yet his friends call us up in the middle of the night, thinking that we can do something for him. I am not now speaking of you who regularly hear the Gospel and who are, therefore, likely to know better—yet this opinion is very generally held. But I loathe the idea of having anything of priestly power imputed to me. I have not an atom more power than any of you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ! I am only a preacher of the Gospel and I would gladly hear the Gospel message from any one of you! It is blasphemous to pretend that sacred unction can be imparted by a mortal man. You must yourselves repent and turn to God—I cannot do this for you. It is your own sowing, in this respect, that must bring you a blessed reaping—not anything that you can get a so-called “priest” or even a minister of the Gospel to sow for you! [See Sermon #1250, Volume 21—THE PRIEST

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**II.**Now, secondly, I want to remind you that GOD’S MORAL LAWS, AS WELL AS GOD, HIMSELF, ARE NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH “Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

First, *it is so in nature.*If it were possible for God *not* to observe what man does, yet what man does is, of itself, full of a power which will be to him what the harvest is to the soil. And just what he sows, he will be sure to reap one of these days, or in eternity if not in time. If a man were to sow his field with garlic and expect to reap barley, he would be bitterly disappointed. If he were to sow tares, he might pray as long as he pleased for a crop of wheat, but he would not get it. God never so changes His Laws as to make tares come up wheat and He never will! The sowing always is, and always will be, the father of the reaping.

*It is also so in Providence.*A man is idle and neglects his business—he sleeps in the morning when he ought to be at work. He is dilatory and careless about his affairs and so, as the inevitable consequence, he goes from bad to worse and soon is a bankrupt. As he sows, so he reaps. Another indulges in the sins of the flesh. So, when you see him with a broken constitution and his whole being the very incarnation of misery, you are not surprised. Another gambles and wastes all his substance and, sooner or later, he comes to beggary. As he sows, so he reaps. If a man is a drunkard, the poison he swallows will take effect sooner or later, however strong a constitution he may have.

As it is in nature, and in Providence, *so it is in the general moral government of God.*Does not a man’s own conscience tell him to expect that what he does will come home to him? And though a man strives to lull his conscience to sleep, yet now and then it wakes up and shakes him with its thunders and causes him to be ill at ease. How is it that graceless men cannot bear to be alone? It is because conscience shakes them and makes them think of the future and dread still grater misery than they at present endure! Just suppose, for a moment, that this Law of God could be reversed and that I could now say to you, “You may sin as you like, and no evil consequences will follow.” Could you imagine any proclamation which would spread such alarm and terror? Why, the very fabric of society would be shattered in such a state of things! Suppose that I had to say, “There is nothing better in being generous and noble than there is in meanness and vice.” Why, it would be enough to put out the least spark of virtue that might be in existence anywhere! But we have not to talk in that immoral fashion. There is a God who judges actions, words and even thoughts—and “he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” God’s Word, which is our ultimate Court of Appeal, tells us that in the great reaping time that is coming, Christ will “gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” The Book of Revelation, foretelling the future, says that “the books were opened...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” O you gay, light-hearted and frivolous ones, it is not we who say this, but it is the declaration of the Spirit of God that, after death, comes the judgment! And that, at that Judgment Seat you shall all appear! And for the acts committed in your lives you shall all be tried! And as your lives have been, so shall your eternal destiny be fixed!

**III.**This leads me to my third remark, which is that EVIL SOWING WILL BRING EVIL REAPING. “Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”

*This is seen in the present result of certain sins.*“He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” By “the flesh” is meant our corrupt human nature in such sins as are mentioned in the 19th verse of the 5th Chapter of this Epistle, where we read, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” These are “the works of the flesh.”

I am not going to expound this passage [Mr. Spurgeon’s expositions of the whole  
passage, Galatians 5:13-26 will be found in Sermons #2632, Volume 45 and #2831, Volume 49— Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] fully, but I

want briefly to show you that there are four classes of sins mentioned here. First, Paul mentions sins of lust—*adultery*, which violates the most sacred ties—*fornication*, which defiles the body. *Uncleanness*, which is secret, not known to others, but which is fully known to God. Fleshly thoughts, fleshly words and fleshly acts—*lasciviousness*, the outward uncleanness which “society” condemns, yet often practices. He who is doing any of these things is sowing to his flesh and he will, most surely, “of the flesh reap corruption.” You who are true Christians, of course, hate all these things, as Jude says, “hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” But mind that you also hate all books in which these things are worked up into attractive narratives, for you cannot even casually glance at such books, much less read them, without polluting your whole being! But as for those who practice these sins, which the Apostle here enumerates, let them not dream that they can be saved while they continue to love that which God hates with a perfect hatred!

The next sins in the Apostle’s black catalog are idolatry and witchcraft. Idolatry, which is forbidden by the Second Commandment—“You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me: and strewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My Commandments.” To bow in worship before a so-called “altar,” or a cross, or an image or picture of a saint, or before a real or supposed “holy” relic, or anything of the kind, is nothing but sheer idolatry! Yet multitudes are committing this great sin under the notion that they are doing God service! There is a form of idolatry which is not so gross as this, yet it is also sinful—the idolatry of loving ourselves, or our wife, or husband, or child, or father, or mother, or sister, or brother more than we love the Lord.

Then the Apostle mentions witchcraft, by which is intended all real or pretended communion with evil spirits or with the dead. Necromancy, spiritualism and everything of the kind are absolutely forbidden to all who desire to “inherit the Kingdom of God.” Then follows a third set of evils which may be classed under the head of *sins of temper—*“hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders”—all kinds of acts and forms of feeling which are not in harmony with Christian love. If you really *want* to sow to the flesh, you have only to make these things your own—if you give way to a contentious spirit, foster disagreements, are filled with hatred and envy so that you cannot bear to know that others prosper more than you, and desire to drag them down to your level—if you give way to bursts of passion, or indulge in backbiting, for that is strife—you are sowing to the flesh. I grieve to say that these evil things abound all around us but, O men and women of God, keep clear of all these things!

Then, lastly, Paul mentions sins of appetite—“drunkenness, reveling and such like,” for you must include gluttony with drunkenness. All who commit any of the sins in this long black catalog are sowing to the flesh and not to the Spirit! And when a man sows to the flesh what will the harvest be? “He shall of the flesh reap corruption”—putridity, rottenness, death! The sin that the sinner thought was sweet as honey turns bitter as gall to him. There are many men and women in this world who have lived in sin till it has become its own punishment. But if it is not so in this world, it will be so in the world to come!

What a dreadful thing sin is when it comes to the full! If there were no fire that shall never be quenched and no worm that shall never die, you need not need any worse Hell than that of wicked men by themselves, with nobody to control them, no public opinion to hold then in check! You need not even turn the devil in with them—just leave them to themselves, with no restraint upon their wickedness—and I can hardly imagine that Hell itself can be worse than those sinners would soon become!

Ah, my Friend, if you go on living in sin, you will wake up, one day, surrounded by the fruition of your own guilt in all its awful enormity. On every hand the harvest of your sowing to the flesh will stare you in the face—and God will place in your hand a sharp sickle and will say to you, “Reap here! Reap there!” You will say, “I cannot do it.” But you sowed it, so you must reap it! What terrible misery there will be for you there! Yet it will only be your own sin in its ripeness, your own transgression fully developed—and that awful harvesting will be infinitely more than you will be able to bear. “Whatever a man sows, *that* shall he also reap.” The man who gripped the widow’s throat, the other day, and took away her few sticks of furniture, will look upon her tearful face to all eternity! The man who led a fellow creature to sin will see her pale sorrow-stricken face before him forever and ever! He may try to escape from it, but he will not be able to do so. Does that description fit anyone here? And does he complain that I am very personal in my remarks? That is what I am and what I mean to be, in the hope that he may repent of his great transgressions and, looking to Jesus upon the Cross, may receive forgiveness of his sins before it is too late!

**IV.**But now, lastly, I have something better to say, and that is that GOOD SOWING WILL BRING GOOD REAPING.  
I hear someone object, “But is not that salvation by works? Do you not preach that salvation is all of Grace through faith in Jesus?” Yes, of course I do, but it is still true that good sowing will bring good reaping. But what sort of sowing do I mean? Why, the sowing that is mentioned in the verse following our text—“He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” When a man sows to the flesh, he deceives himself, for the flesh is his old fallen nature, and such sowing is nothing but evil! But to sow well is to sow under the influence of another Power and to sow in another manner! In fact it is, as the Apostle says, to “sow to the Spirit.”  
First, *we must sow under the influence of another Power.*Sowing to the Spirit lifts our sowing altogether above the idea of human merit. He who sows to the Spirit is led and guided by the Spirit of God—led to repent of sin, led to believe in Jesus, led to a new life, led to holiness, led to sanctification and, therefore, he does not take any credit to himself for anything in him that is good, for he knows that it was all implanted there by the Holy Spirit! Ah, my dear Hearers, if we would have a good harvest, we must give up sowing to ourselves and must sow to the Spirit. And the Spirit is freely given to all who seek His aid at the foot of Christ’s Cross. Jesus said to His disciples, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” May the Spirit of God come upon you and prompt you so to pray that you may truly sow to the Spirit as to be regenerated in heart and renewed in life, for then you shall most assuredly “reap life everlasting.”  
*We are also to sow in another manner.* When the Jews, at Capernaum, asked Jesus, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” He answered, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” That is the first thing for you to do if you wish to sow to the Spirit—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” When you have rested upon the great atoning work which Christ forever finished on the Cross of Calvary, you will begin to walk in newness of life and you will seek in all things to be conformed to God’s will. So you “shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”  
In verses 22 and 23 of the 5th Chapter of this Epistle, the Apostle tells what “the fruit of the Spirit” is. Firstly, “love.” You are not really saved if you have not a loving spirit. Secondly, “joy.” Christians ought to exhibit a joyful cheerfulness, so that all around might see how happy they are. Thirdly, “peace”—the opposite of variance. Fourthly, “long-suffering”— patience under provocation. Fifthly, “gentleness”—consideration for others, readiness to help them in any way that we can. Sixthly, “goodness”—not any holiness of which you boast, but such “goodness” as other people can see and admire. Seventhly, “faith”—reliability, keeping good faith with others, so that they know that your word is as good as your bond. Eighthly, “meekness”—that does not push itself to the front and does not easily get provoked. Ninthly, “temperance”—which keeps every passion under control, not only with respect to meats and drinks, but with regard to everything else.  
Now, if you thus sow to the Spirit, you will “reap life everlasting.” The Apostle does not say that you will reap everlasting existence, but *everlasting life,*which is quite another thing. “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” That is the perfection of love and joy—you shall have that, and you shall ascend to successive stages of holiness and virtue through the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus and the sanctification of the Spirit—and one of these days you shall throw out the last trace of the slough of sin! And then your disembodied spirit shall dance before the flaming eyes of Him who is purer than the sun and, by-and-by, “the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout,” and your redeemed body shall rise, purified like the body of your own dear Lord and Savior, which could not see corruption because it contained no trace of sin—and then your perfected body and soul and spirit shall triumph and reign with Jesus here below in His millennial Glory! And after that you shall have the fullness of “life everlasting” in the Glory yet to be revealed. All this honor will be given to you, not because you have deserved it, but of the free, Sovereign Grace of God. It is only given to those in whom there is the Spirit of God and who, therefore, in their lives manifest that holiness of character, “without which no man shall see the Lord.”  
May the Lord graciously give to all of us His Holy Spirit and may we all meet in Heaven to part no more forever, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*PSALM 80; MATTHEW 9:36-38; 10.***

**Psalm 80:1-3.***Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You that lead Joseph like a flock; You that dwell between the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Your strength and come and save us. Turn us again, O God, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.*To whom could Israel go, in times of distress, but unto her God? It was well that her Psalmists should teach her thus to pray. Notice the form of this prayer—“Come and save us. Turn us again, O God.” We cannot be saved except by being turned from the ways of sin into the path of holiness. But who shall turn us? What power can reverse the current of the human soul? As well might Niagara begin to ascend of its own accord as for man to turn to God except as God turns him!

**4-7.***O LORD God of Hosts, how long will You be angry against the prayer of Your people? You feed them with the bread of tears, and give them tears to drink in great measure. You make us a strife unto our neighbors and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of Hosts, and cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.*Israel was evidently in very deep distress, yet still God’s own. It is no evidence of our having ceased to be God’s people that we are made to drink deep draughts of tears. We are not to imagine that God has cast us off because He chastens us. No, rather are we to argue the other way, “for whom the Lord loves, He chastens.”

**8-15.***You have brought a vine out of Egypt: You have cast out the heathen, and planted it. You prepared room before it, and did cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why have You then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood does waste it, and the wild beast of the field does devour it. Return, we beseech You, O God of Hosts: look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, and the branch that You made strong for Yourself.*Notice how a soul, in deep distress, usually gets to God. Under some aspect or other, by some way or another, the heart gropes its way till it finds Him out. If poor Israel is as a vineyard given up to the wild boar of the woods, there is still hope through that “righteous Branch” of whom the Lord said to Jeremiah, “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.”

**16, 17.***It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Your Countenance. Let Your hands be upon the Man of Your right hand, upon the Son of Man whom You made strong for Yourself.*“If You will not hear us, yet hear Him. If You will put no honor upon us, we will ask You to put the highest honors upon Him. Save us for His sake. Deliver Your vineyard from the wild boar and restore the hedges that have been broken down, for is not this the vineyard of red wine which all belongs to Him?”

**18, 19.***So will not we go back from You: quicken us, and we will call upon Your name. Turn us again, O LORD God of Hosts, cause Your face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

**Matthew 9:36.***But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*The sight that Christ saw, deeply affected His heart—“He was moved with compassion for them.” The expression is a very strong one indicating that His whole being was stirred with an emotion which put every faculty into forceful movement.

**37, 38.***Then said He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray you therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.*Pretenders were many, but real “laborers” were few. God only can thrust out or “send forth laborers.” Man-made ministers are useless, yet they abound all around us—but where are the instructive soul-winning ministries? Let us plead with the Lord of the harvest to care for His own harvest and to thrust out His own harvestmen.

**Matthew 10:1.** *And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.* They were first Christ’s disciples and then He sent them forth as His Apostles, clothed with power and authority very similar to His own.

**2-4.***Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.* The 12 Apostles linked the spiritual Israel with the 12 tribes of the literal Israel which had typified it. They are mentioned in pairs, but this last couple is not a pair, for Simon the Zealot had little in common with the cool, cunning, calculating Judas Iscariot. There were only 12 Apostles, yet one of them was a traitor! Among the leaders of the nominal Christian Church today, is it possible that there is one traitor in every twelve?

**5, 6.***These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter you not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* This was “a mission to the Jews” only—meant for the general awakening of the chosen nation. It was a mission from Israel to Israel—not to the Gentiles, and not even to the people who were most like the Jews—“Into any city of the Samaritans enter you not.” After our Lord’s Resurrection, He gave the wider commission, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

**7, 8.***And as you go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely give.*They were to be medical missionaries—preaching the Gospel and healing the sick—and it was all to be done “freely.”

**9, 10.***Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*The people at that time were favorably disposed to our Lord and thus His Apostles might expect treatment of a more generous kind than can be looked for in these times. Certain of these regulations were altered on a subsequent mission, when the people were less favorably disposed.

**11-15.***And into whatever city or town you shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go thence. And when you come into an house, salute it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.* Disclaim all fellowship with those who will not have fellowship with your Lord. Let them know that you leave them because they refuse to receive your Master’s message. If they continue to reject the Savior, their doom will be even more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**16.***Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.*“Behold, I send you forth.” What power there is in the word of the King of kings! “‘I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.’ You are like sheep, helpless and defenseless; yet ‘I send you forth,’ and therefore it is right for you to go even into ‘the midst of wolves.’” We might have imagined that the wolves would have devoured the sheep, yet, at the present time, there are a great many more sheep in the world than there are wolves. Sheep have always been weak and helpless, yet they have multiplied! Wolves have always been strong and savage, yet they have diminished until there is not one of them left in this land. And in many other countries the same thing has happened. So, the weak, the helpless who come under the care of “our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep,” shall be preserved from all the wolves that would devour them, and even from the devil, who, “as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.”

**16.***Be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*“Be you harmless because you are like sheep, but be you wise as serpents because you have to dwell with wolves.” You, too, Beloved, ought to be very wise because of the wisdom which has been imparted to you by the Master who has sent you forth. And you ought to use your best wits in His service, yet never use that wisdom with any ill intent, for the Christ who sends you does no harm to men, but only good.

**17, 18.***But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.* “Do not try to live on popular applause, ‘but beware of men.’ Expect ill treatment from them. If they can persecute you with the scourge, they will do so, but if that is out of their power, they will persecute you with their tongues. You will be misunderstood, misrepresented, maligned—expect such treatment for I, your Lord and Master, have had it before you.”

**19, 20.***But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speaks, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you.* It is very remarkable what wise answers many of the martyrs often gave. Illiterate men, when confronted by the learned ones of the earth, completely baffled them! And weak women nonplused their assailants and judges. A notable instance of that is recorded in the history of the brave Anne Askew. After they had tortured her upon the rack and her poor body was full of pain, she sat upon the cold slab of her prison and put such questions to the popish bishops and inquisitors as utterly confounded them! And Christ, still by His Holy Spirit, enables His faithful followers to triumph over all the craft and malice of men.

**21, 22.***And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.* When we give ourselves to Christ, we must do it without any reserve and be prepared to follow Him even to the bitter end if necessary. If all men should forsake us—if death should be our portion because of our allegiance to Christ—we dare not draw back! To do that would lead to our destruction—but to endure unto the end—this is eternal salvation!

**23.***But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another: for verily I say unto you, you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man has come.*I suppose Christ here alludes to that wondrous coming of His in the destruction of Jerusalem. They had but a short time in which to evangelize that land, so they had to be quick in gathering out the Lord’s elect before He came in that terrible judgment. This same Truth of God ought to quicken the action of every servant of Christ today. Be quick about your work, for your Master is on the road and will soon be here. You may almost hear the rattling of His chariot wheels, for long ago He said, “Surely I come quickly.” The trumpets are beginning to sound and you will scarcely have gone over all the cities of the world before the Son of Man shall come unless you hasten with the great task which He has entrusted to you.

**24, 25.***The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he is as his master, and the servant as his lord. They that have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* I do not know what worse names they might give to us than they gave to our Master, but, no doubt, they might do so, for as the servants are worse and less than their master, the world might, if it acted upon the rule of proportion, apply much worse names to us than it has ever done to our blessed Lord and Master. Are we to be esteemed and reverenced in a world that persecuted and crucified Christ, our Lord and Savior? Be not so foolish as to think so! And when you receive scorn and contumely, accept it as being the lot of a follower of Christ.

**26.***Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known.*When men slander you, they cannot take away your good name before God. There will be a resurrection of reputations as well as a resurrection of bodies. And good men, though their good names lie deeply buried, will certainly have a resurrection. There is Wycliffe—how little, comparatively, has ever been said about probably the greatest man singe the time of the Apostle Paul! But his name and fame will yet arise and all history will ring with the praise of it. Depend upon it, no man who has faithfully served his Savior, shall miss the honor which he has truly deserved. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father”—so be content to wait.

**27.***What I tell you in darkness, that speak you in light: and what you hear in the ear, that preach you upon the housetops.* There must first be that quiet lonely hearing—that calm sitting at the Master’s feet to learn the lesson. And then afterwards must come the brave telling of it out— speaking out though kings should hear and never being silenced because of sinful shame.

**28-31.***And fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear you not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows.*Do you not see the force of this argument? These little creatures that are of so little account among men are watched over by your Heavenly Father! They cannot die—no, they cannot even light upon the ground without your Father noting it! Can He then forget you who are worth so much more than many sparrows? Will He not deal very gently, and tenderly, and considerately with you?

**32, 33.***Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father who is in Heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven.*You acknowledge Christ here and Christ will acknowledge you there. Dare to bear reproach for Him and you shall be glorified together with Him, by-and-by. But if the tenor of your life is that you do not claim Christ—if you practically live as if there were no Savior, ignoring Him, depriving Him of the trust which He deserves and the honor which He has earned—then, when He comes in the Glory of the Father, He will say, “you never knew Me, and I never knew you. Depart!”

**34.***Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*That is to say, the first consequence of Christ’s coming will not be that we shall lead easy and comfortable lives, but, on the contrary, He comes to enlist us in His army and to make soldiers of us—and soldiers have to endure many hardships.

**35, 36.***For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.* Many of the children of God have found this to be true, greatly to their sorrow. No foes can wound us so sorely as those of our own household. They get at our hearts and cut us to the very quick, while others can only give us flesh wounds. Well, it must be so. Wherever light comes, darkness will be opposed to it. Truth will always find error ready to devour it if it can. Expect this, and half the bitterness of it will be gone when it comes because you expected it. “To be forewarned” here “is to be forearmed.”

**37-42.***He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it. He that receives you receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me. He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet’s reward, and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever shall give unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*God’s great reward for little service are given, not of debt, but of Grace, “according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection,* Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 **PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**Sermon #1383 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CAUSE AND CURE OF WEARINESS IN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS  
NO. 1383

***~~DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 8, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,~~***

***~~[AT A CONVENTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.]~~***

***~~“Let us not be weary in doing good: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”  
Galatians 6:9.~~***

THIS verse occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians, which so plainly sets forth the grand doctrine of Justification by Faith and teaches us most plainly that salvation is not of works, but of Grace. As if to confuse forever those who say that the doctrine of Free Grace is unpractical, the Apostle, before he closes his Epistle, exhorts Believers to labor. And in the verse before us gives us a sentence worthy to be printed in letters of gold and hung up forever before the eyes of all Christian workers, “Be not weary in doing good.” It is true, my Brothers and Sisters, that you are not to save yourselves by doing good. Your motive is not selfish, but because you are saved *already*, you desire to manifest the power of *gratitude* and to prove to all the world that those who receive a free salvation are the very men who most cheerfully labor to please God and to bring glory to His name. O you who are debtors to infinite mercy, “Be not weary in doing good.”

The Apostle, at the time he wrote our text, had in his mind’s eye the doing good which, by its alms, does good unto all men and, also, that kindness which leads hearers of the Gospel to communicate in all good things unto him that teaches. Truly it is easy to be weary in these matters. Giving alms is certainly disheartening work. One is so continually being deceived that giving to the poor becomes a weary business. Impostors abound on all sides! This city of London swarms with impostors who would deceive Solomon himself. I do not wonder that men are driven to organize their charity—but which frequently means bringing it to an end!

The tendency is to excuse themselves because at some time or other they have been victimized. A cruel hardness is abroad which talks philosophy and renounces giving alms for fear of disturbing our delightful social economy. Alms giving, if we are to believe some men, has become a *crime* and the truly good man is he who never interferes with the work of the poor. To these people it seems odd that our Lord should have commended anything so inconsistent with political economy as giving to the poor! According to the modern school, we may expect those to be blessed who see people hungry and give them no meat, thirsty and give them no drink, sick and in prison and never visit them because hungry people should go to the parish and thirsty people to the pump!

I trust, however, that the Christian spirit which is pitiful to the poor will never die out among us and that, notwithstanding all the difficulties under which we may have to labor, we may not be weary in doing good,

for despite all deceits and impositions, in due season we shall reap if we faint not. I am sure I shall not be wrong in taking the text from its immediate connection and applying it to the work of Sunday schools, for, first of all, I am sure, Brothers and Sisters, that your work is well described in the text—it is doing good.

Secondly, I am equally clear that you are liable to the evils mentioned here, which are common to all Christian service—weariness and faintness. And it is equally clear that the consolation and encouragement of the text may truthfully be enjoyed by you. “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

**I.**First, then, I know you will all agree with me that YOUR WORK IS WELL DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT. It may be set forth in so many words as doing good. You entered upon it because you felt it to be so and you continue in it for the same reason. Another description of Christian work is implied in the promise of reaping—your work is sowing. Take the two ideas of doing good and sowing and they will both be found to be exceedingly well embodied in holy labor among the young. Sunday school work is doing good. How can it be otherwise, for it is an act of obedience! I trust you have entered upon it because you call Jesus your Master and Lord and you wish to fulfill the great command, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

You find children to be creatures—fallen creatures—but still lovable little things, full of vigor, life and glee. You see them to be a component part of the race and you conclude at once that your Master’s command applies to them. You are not like the disciples who would put them back, for you have learned from their mistake and you remember the words of their Master and yours, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.” You know, too, that “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He has ordained strength because of the adversary,” so that you are sure that He included the little ones in the general commission when He said, “Preach the Gospel to every creature.”

You are doubly sure that you are obeying His will because you have certain special precepts which relate to the little ones, such as, “Feed My lambs” and, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he shall not depart from it.” You know that it is our duty to preserve a testimony in the world and, therefore, you are anxious to teach the Word of God to your children that they may teach it to their children, that so, from generation to generation, the Word of the Lord may be made known. Be the task pleasant or irksome to you, it is not yours to hesitate, but to obey. The love which has redeemed you, also constrains you. You feel the touch of the sacred hand upon your shoulder, the hand which once was pierced, and you hear your Redeemer say, “As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you.”

And, because of that sending, you go forth to the little ones in obedience to His will. He who obeys is doing good and in this sense your service among the little ones is doing good. Doing good it is, again, because it brings glory to God. We must always continue to*receive* from God, who is the great Fountain of goodness and blessing, but yet, in infinite condescension, He permits us to give Him some return. As the dewdrop reflects the beam with which the great sun adorns it, so may we, in our measure, make the light of our great Father to sparkle before the eyes of men. Our lives may be as the rivers which run into the sea from where they originally came. Whenever we attempt that which will clearly promote the Divine Glory, we are doing good.

When we make known Jehovah’s Grace. When we work in accordance with His purposes of love. When we speak forth the Truth of God which honors His beloved Son. Whenever, indeed, the Holy Spirit, through us, bears witness to the eternal Truths of the Gospel, there is doing good towards God. We cannot increase His intrinsic Glory, but through His Spirit we can make His Glory to be more widely seen—and among the choicest ways of doing this we give a high place to the teaching of children the fear of the Lord in order that they may be a seed to serve Him and to rejoice in His salvation. And who shall doubt that Sunday school work is doing good towards man? The highest form of charity is to teach our fellow man the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

You may give bread to your fellow, but when he has eaten it, is gone. If you give him the Bread of Life, it abides with him forever. You may give him bread in plenty, but in due time he will die as his fathers have done before him. But if you give him the Bread of Heaven and he eats thereof, he shall live forever! God has enabled you to hand out to him immortal food, even Jesus, who is “that Bread from Heaven.” What a blessing it is to a man if you are the instrument of changing his heart and so of emancipating him from vice and making him free unto holiness! To lead a soul to Christ is to lead it to Heaven!

It is assuredly a noble part of benevolence to deliver the Gospel to the sons of men and, if possible, this benevolence is of a still higher kind when you deliver the Truth of God to children, for as prevention is better than a cure, so is it better to *prevent* a life of vice than to *rescue* from it. And as the earlier a soul has light, the shorter is its night of darkness, so the earlier in life salvation comes to the heart, the better and greater is the benediction. To receive the dew of Grace while we are yet in the dew of youth is a double blessing! Brethren, your work is one of doing good of the most thorough and radical kind, for you strike at the very root of sin in the child by seeking his regeneration. You desire, by the Grace of God, to win the heart for Christ at the beginning of life and this is the best of blessings!

I hope you are not among those who only *hope* to see your children converted when they are grown up and feel satisfied to let them remain in their sins while they are children. I hope that you pray for the conversion of children as children and are working to that end by the Spirit’s gracious aid. If you are doing so, I know of no service more fit to engage the angels of Heaven if they could be permitted to undertake it! Surely, if they could teach the Gospel to mankind and had their choice of learners, they might well pass those by who are already hardened in sin and who can only give their tottering age to Christ—and gather for Him the young whose day is but dawning! We may not set one work against another, but at any rate we may count ourselves happy if our sphere is among the young.

Let us gather the rosebuds for Jesus! Let us bring to Him the virgin in her earliest beauty and the young man in his first vigor before sin and age have spoiled them of their charms! Let us find for Him those who can give Him a whole life and honor Him from dawn till its eve! Oh, it is glorious to have such work for Jesus! Go to your youthful charges rejoicing in your work, for it is doing good! It is by no means difficult to see that Sunday school work is sowing. Upon this I will not speak much, for the emblem is easy to be understood. Your schools are the field, the Gospel is the seed and you are the sowers. Suffer me only to say that yours is a work in which there are great outgoings and apparent losses. Even as the sower casts his seed into the earth, buries it and it is lost to him, so do you spend your strength, your thought, your love, your talent, your time and, at first, see no return.

You are sacrificing your leisure and much of the religious privileges of your fellow Christians. You are, as some say, burying yourselves in the school—surrendering ease and repose for unremunerated work. I speak after the manner of men. You engage in these self-denials because you believe that the Truth of God, like a seed, ought to be sown and that it is your duty to sow it. It is frequently said that “truth is mighty and will prevail” but this must be qualified by the reflection that Truth does nothing by way of conquest till it is spoken out by earnest men. I doubt not that there are hundreds of great Truths of God, in the shape of social reforms, now lying on the shelf and having little or no power because they have not yet found a brave and earnest tongue to proclaim them. When the man shall come who is ordained to be their spokesman they will ring out like a clarion and hosts will gather to their standard, but meanwhile they lie like sleeping giants whose might sleeps with them.

There is power in the Truth of God, as there is life in seed, but it will be hidden till, like seed, it is sown in favorable soil! It needs a sower and feeling that the Truth ought to be sown, you consecrate yourselves to that work. You have, moreover, looked at the children and you have felt that the soil of their minds *ought* to be sown. You hope to find good soil, at least, in some cases, and it strikes you that to delay to sow will be culpable neglect. You are sure that if you do not sow, the devil will, and that weeds will spring up if wheat is not sown. And you wish, if you can, to get the start of some, at least, of the devil’s servants and drop in the seeds of Divine Truth before the grosser vices have come to maturity.

You know that abundant seed of noxious plants lies hidden in that plot of ground, by nature, as the result of the Fall, but still, before they have grown into rank luxuriance, you desire to choke the weeds with the rapid growth of Heaven’s own corn. Your present occupation is to sow the children’s minds. You are delighted when you see the seed spring up immediately, but where it tries your patience you still sow. When I had a little garden of my own and put in mustard and cress, I went the next morning to see if it was sprouting and was not satisfied to wait for the due season.

I turned over the dirt and I dare say I prevented the growth of the seed by my haste. It is quite possible for teachers to commit the same folly by an unbelieving hurry—expecting to reap tomorrow what they have sown today. Immediate fruit may come, for God works marvelously, but whether it does or not, your plain duty is to *sow*. Reap you shall, but meanwhile you must be satisfied to go on sowing, sowing, sowing, even to the end. Reaping is your*reward*, but sowing is your work. Sowing, sowing, ever sowing till the hand is palsied in death and the seed basket is carried on another arm! Doing good by sowing the seed is your work.

**II.**Now, secondly, it appears from the text that in your service YOU WILL MEET WITH EVILS common to Christian workers of all descriptions. You will especially be liable to weariness and faintness. Take the first word as it stands in our version—you will be tempted to grow weary. Hard work, this teaching children! Some good souls seem born to it—they do it splendidly and enjoy it. To others it is a stern labor. Some are by constitution exceedingly inept at it, but I do not think that they should excuse themselves by that fact, but should educate themselves into loving the work—many people around us are very inept at anything which would cause them to sweat—but we call them lazy and goad them on.

It is no new thing for men to attempt to escape the army by pretending to be in bad health, but we must have none of this cowardly malingering in Christ’s army—we must be ready for anything and everything! We must compel ourselves to duty when it goes against the grain. When it is a clear duty, obedience must master our aversion. I have no doubt, whatever, that teaching is, to some, very toilsome work, but then it has to be done, all the same. I delight to hear you speak, dear Brothers and Sisters, with holy enthusiasm for the privilege of teaching children and I fully believe in it! But I know, also, that it requires no small degree of self-denial on your part, self-denial for which the Church does not always give you due credit. To continue from Sunday to Sunday drilling some little Biblical knowledge into those noisy boys and trying to sober down those giddy girls is no light amusement or pretty pastime! It must be a toil and, therefore, it is not difficult to become weary.

Teachers may the more readily tire because the work lasts on year after year. If you are all Sunday school teachers I am very happy to perceive so many gray and bald heads among you. It looks well. I admire the veterans of your army! There ought to be an “Old Guard” as well as new regiments. Why leave this work to young beginners? Did not David say, “Come, you children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord,” when he was in the prime of life? Why, then, do so many cease to teach when they are best qualified to do so? Have not many aged persons a gentleness and an impressiveness which peculiarly qualify them to arrest the attention of the young? As they know more by experience than most of us, should they not be all the readier to impart instruction?

It was always my delight to sit at my grandfather’s feet when he told of his experiences of the Grace of God. When he was 80 years old or more, his witness to the faithfulness of God was worth going many miles to hear! There are scores of aged men and women whose life story ought to be often told among children. With their loving ways and cheerful manners they would be an acquisition to any school for the children’s sake—while to the teachers their weight and wisdom would be an incalculable benefit! Die in harness, my Brothers and Sisters, if your mental and physical vigor will permit! Still, the long round of many years’ labor must tend to make the worker weary—and the more so if the work is allowed to become monotonous—as it certainly is in some schools.

You go to the same dingy room and sit on the same chair before the same class of boys. It is true the boys are not the same boys, for though the proverb says, “Boys will be boys,” I find that they will *not* be boys, but that they will be *men*—but still, one boy is so much like another boy that the class seems to be always the same. The lessons vary but the Truth is the same and the work of teaching is like the sowing of seed—very much the same thing over and over again. Lovers of change will hardly find, in regular Sunday school work, a field for their fickleness. The text says, “Be not weary.” Come, Brother, are you tired out? How long have you been teaching? A thousand years? You smile and I smile, too, and say—do not be weary with any period of service short of that!

Our Lord deserves a whole eternity to be spent in His praise and we hope so to spend it! And, therefore, let us not be weary with the few years which constitute the ordinary life of man. I find the Greek word contains the idea of being “disheartened.” “Let us not lose heart.” This is a soulweariness against which we must resolutely fight. It comes to many good workers and shows itself in different ways. Some think the work less important than they did at first. Others fear that their part of it will prove an utter failure. This is heart-weariness. When a Sunday school is going down—when there are not so many children as in former years, or, what is equally bad—when there are not enough teachers, the poor superintendent falls into great anxiety and the teachers at the teachers’ meetings are not in the best of spirits.

By the way, I am not sure that you teachers always edify one another at those meetings, or that you always have the Spirit of God among you. I have heard otherwise, sometimes, and yet I cannot blame you, for I have heard of Church meetings, too, which have not been “like a little Heaven below,” nor would I say of them, “I have been there and still would go.” When the condition of the school is disorder and decline, the best of teachers become discouraged and weary. At such times, good teachers hardly know how to go to their work at all, for there is not that loving spirit in the school which renders it a happy family—neither is there that power in prayer which secures the great Father’s Presence and, therefore, many become distressed and tire of the service.

Now comes in my text, “Be not weary in doing good.” Pluck up courage! Do not be a coward! Hope on, hope always! Work on, even though the task becomes more and more trying to you. Do not despise your vocation, nor stay your hand, be not weary in doing good! Our text next speaks of our fainting. The original word has at its base the idea of being loosened. There is a girding up of the loins which means work and there is a loosening, not merely of garments, but of sinews, which means that the man will do no more. Some Sunday school teachers get, as the saying is, upon the loose. They display an utter lack of energy—they are unstrung. They do not teach their classes with all their heart, soul and strength—they get through in a “slipshod” fashion—like a man trudging along with loosened sandals.

They teach, but put no honest work into it—their heart is no longer bound to the altar. The school work is performed in routine fashion and it might almost as well have been left alone. I have seen a man at work in such a sleepy style that I have been ready to cry out, “Dear me! Dear me! I cannot endure to see such crawling and creeping! Stand away! Give me your tools and let me have a turn at it!” And even so might one feel the same about certain teachers. A chapter is read and remarks made upon it which cost neither thought nor reading. Hymns are sung without the slightest sign of life and prayer offered without heart. A living Sunday school teacher standing by has been ready to weep to see how the children become indifferent because the teacher is trifling.

There must be life, force, fire, heart, energy and intensity put into your service or it will be valueless! Dear Friends, do not fall into a loose state! You shall bind your sheaves, soon, if you do not become loose in your own minds. You shall reap if you do not become languid and lethargic. How is it that we ever fall into that state? What are the excuses that we make for ourselves when we faint? At times we are tempted to give it all up. We feel that there is no good being done and, therefore, we cannot hold on any longer. What makes us talk so? Is it not the old Adam—our carnal nature? Should we not mortify him and say, “Now, old Adam, you want me to give up the Sunday school and I shall refuse to do so for that very reason”?

My idle flesh is saying to me, “Take things a little more leisurely. Do not take extra work upon yourself.” Ah, Flesh, proud Flesh! If I bow to you I shall reap corruption! What a horrible thing it is, that reaping of corruption! The very word seems to swarm with living and moving abominations—its meaning is intensely abhorrent to the pure mind. We must at once reply, “No, Flesh, I cannot bow to you and reap corruption and, therefore, you must be denied. I shall mortify you and continue with my class at the school. I had thought of giving it up, but I will not indulge you so much. By God’s Grace I will persevere.”

Do you not think that, at times, our getting lax in Christian work arises from our being very low in Grace? As a rule, you cannot get out of a man that which is not in him. You cannot go forth, yourself, to your class and do your work vigorously if you have lost inward vigor. You cannot minister before the Lord with the unction of the Holy One if that unction is not upon you. If you are not living near to God and in the power of God, then the power of God will not go forth through you to the children in your care! Therefore I think we should judge, when we become discontented and down-hearted, that we are out of sorts spiritually. Let us say to ourselves, “Come, my Soul! What ails you? This faint heart is a sign that you are out of health. Go to the Great Physician and obtain from Him a tonic which shall brace you! Come, play the man! Have none of these whims! Away with your idleness! The reaping time will come, therefore thrust in the plow.”

Is not another reason why we become down-hearted to be found in the coldness and indifference of our fellow Christians? We see others doing the Lord’s work carelessly and when we are all on fire, ourselves, we find them to be cold as ice. We get among people in the Church who do not seem to *care* whether the souls of the children are saved or not and thus we are apt to be discouraged. The idleness of others should be an argument for our being more diligent ourselves. If our Master’s work is suffering at the hands of our fellow servants, should we not try to do twice as much, ourselves, to make up for their deficiencies? Ought not the laggards to be warnings to us lest we, also, come into the same lukewarm

condition? To argue that I ought to be a sluggard because others loiter is poor logic.

Sometimes, too—I am ashamed to mention it—I have heard of teachers becoming weary from lack of being appreciated. Their work has not been sufficiently noticed by the pastor and praised by the superintendent. Sufficient notice has not been taken of them and their class by their fellow teachers. I will not say much about this cause of faintness because it is so small an affair that it is quite below a Christian. Appreciation! Do we *expect* it in *this* world? The Jewish nation despised and rejected their King and even if we were as holy as the Lord Jesus we might still fail to be rightly judged and properly esteemed. What does it matter? If *God* accepts us, we need not be dismayed though all should pass us by.

Perhaps, however, the work itself may suggest to us a little more excuse for being weary. It is hard work to sow on the highway and amidst the thorns—hard work to be casting good seed upon the rock, year after year. Well, if I had done so for many years and was enabled by the Holy Spirit, I would say to myself, “I shall not give up my work because I have not yet received a recompense in it. I perceive that in the Lord’s parable three sowings did not succeed and yet the one piece of good ground paid for all! Perhaps I have gone through my three unsuccessful sowings and now is my time to enjoy my fourth, in which the seed will fall upon good ground.”

It is a pity, dear Brother, when you have had some years of rough work, to give it all up. Why, now you are going to enjoy the sweets of your former labor! It would be a pity, my dear Sister, just when you have mastered your class and prepared the way for a blessing, for you to run away from it! There is so much less difficulty for you to overcome now that you already overcome so much! He who has passed so many miles of a rough voyage will not have to go over those miles again—do not let him think of going back! To go back, indeed, in this pilgrimage would be shameful— and as we have no armor for our backs—it would be dangerous. Putting our hand to this plow and looking back will prove that we were unworthy of the kingdom!

If there are a hundred reasons for giving up your work of faith, there are 50,000 for going on with it! Though there are many arguments for fainting, there are far more arguments for persevering. Though we might be weary and do sometimes feel so, let us wait upon the Lord and renew our strength and we shall mount up with wings as eagles, forget our weariness and be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

**III.**That observation brings me to the last part of my subject which is that WE HAVE ABUNDANT ENCOURAGEMENT in the prospect of reward which is afforded in the text, “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” The first remark upon that promise shall be that reaping time *will* come. Our chief business is to glorify God by teaching His Truth whether souls are saved or not. But still, I object to the statement that we may go on preaching the Gospel for years and years and even all our lifetime and yet no result may follow. They say, “Paul may preach and Apollos may water, but God gives the increase.” I should like them to find that passage in the Bible. In my English Bible it runs thus— “I, (Paul), *have* planted, Apollos watered, but God *gave* the increase.” There is not the slightest intent to teach us that when Paul planted and Apollos watered God would arbitrarily refuse the increase!

All the Glory is claimed for the Lord, but honest labor is not despised. I do not say that there is the same relation between teaching the Truth of God and conversion as there is between cause and effect so that they are invariably connected. But I will maintain that it is the rule of the kingdom that they should be connected through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some causes will not produce effects because certain obstacles intervene to prevent. A person may teach the Gospel in a bad spirit—that would spoil it. A person may teach only part of the Gospel and He may put that the wrong way upwards. God may bless it somewhat, but yet the good man may greatly retard the blessing by the mistaken manner in which he delivers the Truth.

Take it as a rule that the Truth of God prayed over, spoken in the fear of the Lord and with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the man who speaks it, will produce the effect which is natural to it. As the rain climbs not up to the skies and the snow flakes never take to themselves wings to rise to Heaven, so neither shall the Word of God return unto Him void but it shall accomplish that which He pleases. We have not spent our strength in vain. Not a verse taught to a little girl, nor a text dropped into the ear of a careless boy, nor an earnest warning given to an obdurate young sinner, nor a loving farewell to one of the senior girls shall be without some result or other to the Glory of God! And, taking it all together as a whole, though this handful of seed may be eaten of the birds and that other seed may die on the hard rock, yet, as a whole, the seed shall spring up in sufficient abundance to plentifully reward the sower and the giver of the seed!

We know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord! I do not come into this pulpit with any fear that I shall preach in vain. It does not occur to me that such a thing can happen! I thought so once, when I thought more of *myself* than now—but now I am assured that if I speak out God’s message in the best way I can—and with much prayer leave it all with God, He will take care of it! I expect to see people converted—not because there is any good in them, but because the Lord works as He pleases and will call whom He pleases and will give to His own Truth victory and honor. Go to your classes with this persuasion, “I shall not labor in vain, or spend my strength for nothing.” “According to your faith, so is it unto you.” Take a little measure and you shall have it filled with the manna of success, but take a great omer and in its fullness you shall have abundance! Believe in the power of the Truth you preach! Believe in the power of Christ about whom you speak! Believe in the Omnipotence of the Holy Spirit whose help you have invoked in earnest prayer! Go to your sowing and count upon reaping!

I want to call your particular attention to a word in the text which is very full of encouragement. “Let us not be weary, for we shall reap.” We shall reap. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we shall reap. It is not, “We shall do the work and our successors shall reap after we are gone.” We ought to be very pleased, even with that, and no doubt such is often the case. But we shall reap, too. Yes, I shall have my sheaves and you will have yours. The plot which I have toiled and wept over shall yield me my sheaves of harvest and I shall personally gather them. I shall reap. “I never thought much of myself as a teacher,” says one, “I always fear that I am hardly

competent and I notice that the superintendent has only trusted me with the little children. But I am so glad to hear that I shall reap. I shall reap! I shall have a dear little one, saved in the Lord, to be my portion!”

I pray you, dear Friends, if you have never reaped yet, begin to hope. You teachers who are always punctual, I mean—of course, if you do not come on time, you do not care whether you reap or not. But I speak to punctual teachers. I speak, also, to earnest teachers—for if you are not earnest you will never reap. You punctual, earnest, prayerful teachers shall reap! Some teachers do not go in for reaping and they will not enjoy it. But I am speaking now to real, hard-working, earnest Sunday school teachers who give their hearts to it and yet have seen no results. According to the text, you shall reap! Come, my persevering comrades, let us not be discouraged—“In due season we shall reap,” even we! You shall have your share with others. Though you feel as though you must give it up, you shall yet reap! After sowing all this while, do not cease from labor when reaping time is so near!

It I were a farmer, if I gave up my farm, it should be *before* I sowed my wheat. If I had done all the plowing and the sowing, I should not say to my landlord, “There are six weeks and then comes harvest, but I desire to let another tenant come in.” No, no! I would want to stop and see the harvest gathered and the wheat taken to market! I would want to have my reward. So, dear Brothers and Sisters, wait for your recompense, specially you that have been discouraged— “In due time we shall reap, if we faint not.” We who have thought least of our service and, perhaps, have exercised least faith and endured most searchings of heart and most groaning and crying before the Lord, we, also, “in due season, shall reap if we faint not.”

This harvest will come “in due season.” There is even among men a due season for a reward. They say, “He is a bad paymaster who pays beforehand.” So he is. You must always keep a little in hand for Saturday night, or you may miss your man before the week is ended. Sometimes our Lord keeps back His people’s reward that they may have something cheerful on before them, something, also, to try their mettle and to bring out all their powers. I like to see a brave man driven into a corner, baffled and defeated—and yet resolved to overcome—then his true heroism comes out. Hear him say, “I have been working that ragged school for months, but I make no impression upon the young roughs. There is a disturbance and disorder almost every night. I do not know what to do. I am at my wit’s end—but there is one thing I know—if it is to be done it shall be done. In the name of God I will continue at work till a change is effected.”

There you see the man strengthened by the Holy Spirit to labor! That is the man who will find out how to tame the Arabs! He the man who will draw teachers round him and build up a noble school. Our true manhood often lies deep and needs to be pursued into its den and stirred into action. When once it is thoroughly awakened, it is grand to see it leap forth in passionate earnestness to achieve its purpose. I love to hear a man say, “This is impossible to men, but God will enable me.” This is the triumph of faith and blessed is he that believes, for the due season of reaping is near for him! The due season is often when you are in a right state—when your faith has been tried, when your resolve has become fixed, when you are down on your face before God in prayer—when you are emptied out and have no strength of your own but go to God and cry to Him, alone, for help, then your due season will come! The due season for harvest is not the day after sowing the seed, but we must wait awhile and not be weary. The harvest will come as the Lord appoints. As all fruits are the sweeter for being in season, so is the reward of Christian service when it comes in God’s time.

Now, lastly, when this reward comes, it will abundantly repay us. What is the reward of Sunday school teachers? Taking you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, on a broad scale, I would say that your reward lies chiefly in seeing the conversion of your children. There are a great many very excellent manuals upon the management of Sunday schools and I hope you will read them all and dwell with special attention upon the prize essays until your school is order, itself. Still I have heard of beautifully managed schools from which there are very few conversions. Order may be Heaven’s first law, but it is not Heaven’s first objective. Order is very desirable in a garden, but *fruit* is the main purpose.

I know a school which is generally in a muddle, but yet children are saved in it continually. I wish it were more orderly, but yet I do not fret much about it so long as the grand result is gained. You may form so many rules and orders that you may rule your hearts out of your work— mind you, do not fall into that error! Your great business is to have those children *saved*—systematically if you can—but *saved*. You must have those children convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit and led to Christ. You must not be satisfied to trim off your Sunday school in the neatest style unless there is real fruit unto the Lord. And what shall I say? What reward can equal the conversion of these young immortals? Is it not the highest joy that we can enjoy on earth, next to communion with our Lord, to see these little ones saved?

Taking the Sunday school, however, on a broad scale, I think your reward partly lies in rearing up a generation of worship-loving people. We cannot get at the great masses of London, do what we may. We shall open this house next Sunday night to all comers, but who will come? The great mass of them will be persons who have always gone to the house of prayer, but only a few of the outsiders will enter. Go into what evangelistic assembly you may, you will soon detect, from the manner of the singing, that the bulk of the people have been accustomed to sacred song. We do not know how to get at the great tens of thousands—but you do. You reach them while they are little and you send them home to sing their hymns to their fathers who will not come and sing them here.

They go and tell their mothers all about Jesus so that the children of London are the missionaries of our city! They are Christ’s heralds to the families where ministers would be totally shut out! You are training them up and if you do this work well, (and I charge you to look well to the connecting link between your senior classes and the Church), if you do this work well we shall require more places of worship and more earnest ministers, for the people of London will take to coming to the house of prayer! When that day arrives there will be a grand time for the preachers of the Word. In some villages of England and especially in Scotland, you will scarcely find a single person absent when the House of God is open!

They all go to the Kirk, or to the meeting house!

Alas, it is not so in London! We have hundreds of thousands who forget the Sabbath. We have, I fear, more than a million of our fellow citizens who go so seldom to a place of worship that they may be said to be habitually absent. It will be a grand thing if you can change all this and give us Church-going millions! And then, I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that to you there will be another reward, namely, that of saturating the whole population with religious Truths of God. All children are now to be taught to read. Shall they read so as to grow up highwaymen and thieves, or shall they read so as to become servants of the living God? Very much of that must depend upon you. You will, in due subordination to all other objectives, take care to introduce your children to interesting but sound literature. Your boys must read and if *you* are the teacher of a boy who reads “Jack Sheppard,” you will be sadly to blame if he continues to delight in such an abomination!

I trust that your leaven will leaven the whole lump of our country—that you will be the means of improving the moral tone of society—and as generation follows generation I trust we shall see a nation bright with religious knowledge, devout with religious thought and in all things exalted by justice and the Truth of God. What an army you are here tonight! May your Captain come into the midst of you and, as He reviews you, may He cast a look of love into the heart of every one of you and cheer you and send you away invigorated!

I am delighted to have had the opportunity of speaking this word to you, feeble though it is, for God may make it powerful by His Spirit. Go, Beloved, and train the children well! You have undertaken the work—be faithful in the discharge of it. It is worth doing well, for so much depends upon it. If you do it badly, the results will accuse you throughout eternity! Go and teach with all your heart, soul and might. Be not weary! Be not slack! Your reaping time is coming. The next generation will, even more than the present, show what you have been doing! And the next and the next will each more fully declare it till this blessed island, first gem of the sea, shall shine as a very priceless jewel in the diadem of Christ!

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Sermon #1447 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THREE CROSSES  
NO. 1447

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
*“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.*

WHENEVER we rebuke other people we should be prepared to clear ourselves of their offense. The Apostle had been rebuking those who wished to glory in the flesh. In denouncing false teachers and upbraiding their weak-minded followers, he used sharp language while he appealed to plain facts and maintained his ground with strong arguments. And this he did without fear of being met by a flank movement and being charged with doing the same things himself. Very fitly, therefore, does he contrast his own determined purpose with their plausible falseness. They were for making a fair show in the flesh, but he shrunk not from the deepest shame of the Christian profession. So far from shrinking, he even counted it honor to be scorned for Christ’s sake, exclaiming, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Galatians and all others to whom his name was familiar, well knew how truly he spoke, for the manner of his life as well as the matter of his teaching had supplied evidence of this assertion, which none of his enemies could deny. There had not been in all his ministry any doctrine that he extolled more highly than that of “Christ crucified.” Nor any experience that he touched on more tenderly than this “fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.” Nor any rule of conduct that he counted more safe than following in the footsteps of Him who “endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.” His example accorded with his precept. God grant, of His Grace, that there may always be with us the same transparent consistency.

Sometimes when we notice an evil and protest as boldly and conscientiously as we can against it, we feel that our protest is too obscure to have much influence. It will then be our very best resource to resolutely abstain from the evil, ourselves, and so, at least in one person, to overthrow its power. If you cannot convert a man from his error by an argument, you can at least prove the sincerity of your reasoning by your own behavior. And thus, if no fortress is captured, you will at least “hold the fort” and you may do more—your faithfulness may win more than your zeal could have! Vow faithfully within your own heart and say frankly to your neighbor, “You may do what you will, but as for me, God forbid that I should remove the old landmarks, or seek out new paths, however inviting, or turn aside from that which I know to be the good old way.”

A determined resolution of that sort, fully adhered to, will often carry more weight and exert more influence on the mind of an individual, especially of a waverer, than a host of arguments. Your actions will speak more loudly than your words. The Apostle in the present case warms with

emotion at the thought of anybody presuming to set a carnal ordinance in front of the Cross by wishing to glory in circumcision or any other outward institution. The idea of a *ceremony* claiming to be made more of than *faith in Jesus* provoked him till his heart presently grew hot with indignation and he thundered forth the words, “God forbid!” He never used the sacred name with lightness, but when the fire was hot within him, he called God to witness that he *did not* and *could not* glory in anything but the Cross.

Indeed, there is, to every true-hearted Believer, something shocking and revolting in the putting of anything before Jesus Christ, be it what it may, whether it is an idol of superstition or a toy of skepticism—whether it is the fruit of tradition or the flower of philosophy! Do you need *new* Scriptures to supplement the true sayings of God? Do you need a new Savior who can surpass Him whom the Father has sent? Do you need a new sacrifice that can save you from sins which His atoning blood could not expiate? Do you need a modern song to supersede the new song of, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain”? “O foolish Galatians!” said Paul.

O silly Protestants, I am inclined to say! We might go on, in these times, to speak warmly to many of the parties around us—the doting Ritualists, the puffed-up Rationalists and the self-exalting school of modern thought. I marvel not at Paul’s warmth. I only wish that some who think so little of doctrinal discrepancies, as they call them, could but sympathize a little with his holy indignation when he saw the first symptoms of departure from godly simplicity and sincerity. Do you not notice that a little dissembling of a dear Brother made him withstand him to his face? When a whole company turned the cold shoulder to the Cross of Christ it made him burn with indignation! He could not stand it. The Cross was the center of his hopes—around it his affections curled—there he had found peace for his troubled conscience.

God forbid that he should allow it to be trampled on! Besides, it was the theme of his ministry. “Christ crucified” had already proven the power of God to salvation to every soul who had believed the life-giving message as he proclaimed it in every city. Would any of you, he asks, cast a slur on the Cross—you who have been converted—you before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you? How his eyes flash! How his lips quiver! How his heart grows hot within him! With what vehemence he protests—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He spreads his eagle wings and rises into eloquence at once, while still his keen eyes look fiercely upon every enemy of the Cross whom he leaves far beneath.

Oftentimes in his Epistles you observe this. He burns, he glows, he mounts, he soars, he is carried clean away as soon as his thoughts are in fellowship with his Lord Jesus, that meek and patient Sufferer who offered Himself a Sacrifice for our sins. When his tongue begins to speak of the glorious work which the Christ of God has done for the sons of men, it finds a sudden liberty and he becomes as “a hind let loose; he gives good words.” May we have something of that glow within our breasts, tonight, and whenever we think of our Lord. God forbid that we should be coldhearted when we come near to Jesus! God forbid that we should ever view with heartless eyes and a lethargic soul the sweet wonders of that Cross on which our Savior loved and died!

Let us, then, in that spirit, approach our text—and we notice, at once, three crucifixions. These are the summary of the text. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, *Christ* crucified. “By whom,” or, “by which,” (read it whichever way you like), “the world is crucified unto me.” That is, a crucified *world*. “And I unto the world.” That is, Paul, himself, or the *Believer*, crucified with Christ. I see, again, Calvary before me with its three crosses—Christ in the center and on either side of Him a crucified person—one who dies to feel the second death and the other who dies to be with Him in Paradise! At these three crosses let us proceed to look.

**I.**First, then, the main part of our subject lies in CHRIST CRUCIFIED, in whom Paul gloried. I call your attention to the language—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross.” Some popular authors and public speakers, when they have to state a Truth of God, count it necessary to clothe it in very delicate language. They, perhaps, do not quite intend to conceal its point and edge but, at any rate, they do not want the projecting angles and bare surfaces of the Truth to be too observable and, therefore, they cast a cloak around it—they are careful to scabbard the Sword of the Spirit.

The Apostle Paul might have done so, here, if he had chosen, but he disdains the artifice. He presents the Truth of God “in the worst possible form,” as his opponents say—“in all its naked hideousness,” as the Jew would have it—for he does not say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the death of Christ,” but in the Cross. You do not realize, I think—we cannot do so in these days—how the use of that word, “cross,” would grate on ears refined in Galatia and elsewhere. In those days it meant the felon’s tree, the hangman’s gallows—and the Apostle, therefore, does not hesitate to put it just so—“Save in that gallows on which my Master died.” We have become so accustomed to associate the name of, “the Cross,” with other sentiments that it does not convey to us that sense of disgrace which it would inflict upon those who heard Paul speak.

A family sensitively shrinks if one of its members has been hanged and much the same would be the natural feeling of one who was told that his leader was crucified. Paul puts it thus baldly; he lets it jar thus harshly though it may prove to some a stumbling block and to others foolishness. But he will not cloak it. He glories in “the Cross!” On the other hand, I earnestly entreat you to observe how he seems to contrast the Glory of the Person with the shame of the suffering, for it is not simply the death of Christ, nor of Jesus, nor of Jesus Christ, nor of the Lord Jesus Christ, but of, “*our* Lord Jesus Christ.” Every word tends to set forth the excellence of His Person, the majesty of His Character and the interest which all the saints have in Him. It was a cross, but it was the Cross of our Lord—let us worship Him!

It was the Cross of our Lord Jesus, the Savior—let us love Him! It was the Cross of our Jesus Christ the anointed Messiah—let us reverence Him! Let us sit at His feet and learn of Him! Each one may say, “It was the Cross of *my* Lord Jesus Christ,” but it sweetens the whole matter and gives a largeness to it when we say, “It was the Cross of *our* Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh yes, we delight to think of the contrast between the precious Christ and the painful Cross—the Son of God and the shameful gallows! He was Immanuel, God With Us—yet did He die the felon’s death upon the accursed tree! Paul brings out the shame with great sharpness and the glory with great plainness. He does not hesitate in either case, whether he would declare the sufferings of Christ or the glory which should follow.

What did he mean, however, by the Cross? Of course he cared nothing for the particular piece of wood to which those blessed hands and feet were nailed, for that was mere materialism and has perished out of mind. He means the glorious *doctrine* of Justification—*free* justification— through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ! This is what he means by the Cross—the expiation for sin which our Lord Jesus Christ made by His death—and the gift of eternal life freely bestowed on all those who, by Grace, are led to trust in Him. To Paul the Cross meant just what the bronze serpent meant to Moses. As the bronze serpent in the wilderness was the hope of the sin-bitten and all that Moses had to do was to bid them look and live—so today the Cross of Christ—the Atonement of Jesus Christ, is the hope of mankind and our mission is continually to cry, “Look and live! Look and live!”

It is this doctrine, this Gospel of Christ crucified, at which the present age, with all its vaunted culture and all its vain philosophies, sneers so broadly—it is this doctrine wherein we glory! We are not ashamed to put it very definitely—we glory in Substitution, in the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus in our place. He was “made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.”

We believe in the imputation of sin to the innocent Person of our covenant Head and Representative, in the bearing of the penalty by that substituted One and the clearing by faith of those for whom He bore the punishment of sin. Now we glory in this! We glory in it, not as men sometimes boast in a creed which they have received by tradition from their forefathers, for we have learned this Truth of God, each one for himself, by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit and therefore it is very dear to us. We glory in it with no empty boast, but to the inward satisfaction of our own hearts we prove that satisfaction by the devout consecration of our lives to make it known.

We have trusted our souls to its truth. If it is a fable, our hopes are forever shipwrecked because our *all* is embarked in that venture. We are quite prepared to run that risk, content to perish if this salvation should fail us. We live upon this faith. It is our meat and our drink. Take this away and there is nothing left us in the Bible worth having. It has become to us the head and front of our confidence, our hope, our rest, our joy. Instead of being ashamed to preach it, we wish that we could stand somewhere where all the inhabitants of the earth could hear us and we would thunder it out day and night! So far from being ashamed of acknowledging it, we count it to be our highest honor and our greatest delight to proclaim it, as we have opportunity, among the sons of men!

But why do we *rejoice* in it? Why do we *glory* in it? The answer is so large that I cannot do more than glance at its manifold claims on our gratitude. We glory in it for a thousand reasons! We fail to see anything in the doctrine of Atonement that we should *not* glory in. We have heard a great many dogs bark against it, but dogs will bay the moon in her brightness and, therefore, we mind not their howling. Their noise has sometimes disturbed, though never yet has it frightened us. We have not yet heard a quibble against our Lord or an argument against His atoning blood which has affected our faith the turn of a hair. The Scriptures affirm it, the Holy Spirit bears witness to it and its effect upon our inner life assures us of it.

The analogy between Jewish fasts and festivals and our Christian faith endorses it. There is a chasm that no man yet has been able to bridge without it. It lightens our conscience, gladdens our hearts, inspires our devotion and elevates our aspirations. We are wed to it and daily glory in it. In the Cross of Christ we glory because we regard it as a matchless exhibition of the attributes of God. We see there the love of God desiring a way by which He might save mankind, aided by His wisdom, so that a plan is perfected by which the deed can be done without violation of truth and justice. In the Cross we see a strange conjunction of what once appeared to be two opposite qualities—justice and mercy. We see how God is supremely just—as just as if He had no mercy—and yet infinitely merciful in the gift of His Son.

Mercy and justice, in fact, become counsel upon the same side and irresistibly plead for the acquittal of the believing sinner. We can never tell which of the attributes of God shines most glorious in the Sacrifice of Christ—they each one find a glorious high throne in the Person and work of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world! Since it has become, as it were, the mirror which reflects the Character and perfections of God, it is meet that we should glory in the Cross of Christ and none shall stop us of our boasting! We glory in it, next, as the manifestation of the love of Jesus. He was loving inasmuch as He came to earth at all—loving in feeding the hungry, in healing the sick, in raising the dead. He was loving in His whole life—He was embodied charity, the Prince of philanthropists, the King of kindly souls!

But oh, His death!—His cruel and shameful death-bearing, as we believe He did bear the wrath due to sin, subjecting Himself to the curse, though in Him was no sin—this shows the love of Christ at its highest altitude and, therefore, do we glory in it and will never be ashamed to do so! We glory in the Cross, moreover, because it is the putting away of sin. There was no other way of making an end of sin and making reconciliation for iniquity. To forgive the transgressions without exacting the penalty

would have been contrary to all the threats of God! It would not have appeased the claims of justice, nor satisfied the conscience of the sinner.

No peace of mind can be enjoyed without pardon and conscience declares that no pardon can be obtained without an atonement. We would have distracted ourselves with the fear that it was only a reprieve and not a remission even if the most comforting promises had been given unsealed with the atoning blood. The instincts of Nature have convinced men of this truth, for all the world over *religion* has been associated with *sacrifice*. Almost every kind of worship that has ever sprung up among the sons of men has had sacrifice for its most prominent feature—crime must be avenged, evil and sin cry from the ground—and a victim is sought to avert the vengeance. The heart craves for something that can calm the conscience—that craving is a relic of the ancient Truth of God learned by man in primeval ages.

Now, Christ made His soul an offering for sin when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. With His expiring breath He said, “It is finished!” Oh, wondrous Grace! Pardon is now freely published among the sons of men, pardon of which we see the justice and validity! As far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our transgressions from us by the death of Christ! This, and this, only, will put away sin! Therefore in this Cross of Christ we glory! Yes, and in it, alone, will we glory evermore! It has put away our sins, blessed be God, so that this load and burden no more weigh us down!

We do not speak at random, now. It has breathed hope and peace and joy into our spirits. I am sure that no one knows how to glory in the Cross unless He has had an experimental acquaintance with its peace-breathing power. I speak what I know and testify what I have felt. The burden of my sin laid so heavy upon me that I would sooner have died than have lived. Many a day and many a night I felt the flames of Hell in the anguish of my heart because I knew my guilt and saw no way of righteous forgiveness. Yet in a *moment* the load went from me and I felt overflowing love to my Savior! I fell at His feet awe-stricken that He should have taken away my sin and made an end of it. That matchless deed of love won my heart to Jesus! He changed my nature and renewed my soul in that same hour.

And oh, the joy I had! Those who have sunk to the very depths of despair and risen, in a moment, to the heights of peace and unspeakable joy, can tell you that they *must* glory in the Cross and its power to save. Why, Sirs, we must believe according to our own conscience! We cannot belie that inward witness. We only wish that others had been as deeply convinced of sin and as truly led to the Cross to feel their burden roll from off their shoulders as we have been! And then they, too, would glory in the Cross of Christ. Since then we have gone with this remedy in our hands to souls that have been near despair and we have never found the medicine fail. Many and many a time have I spoken to people so depressed in spirit that they seemed not far from the madhouse, so heavy was their sense of sin! Yet I have never known the matchless music of Jesus’ name in any case fail to charm the soul out of its despondency.

“They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” Men who, because they thought there was no hope for them, would have desperately continued in sin, have read that word, “hope,” written in crimson lines upon the Savior’s dying body and they have sprung up into confidence, have entered into peace and from that moment have begun to lead a new life! We glory in the Cross because of the peace it brings to every troubled conscience which receives it by faith—our own case has proved to our own souls its efficacy—and what we have seen in others has confirmed our confidence.

Yet we would not glory so much in the Cross were we not convinced that it is the greatest moral power in all the world. We glory in the Cross because it gets at men’s hearts when nothing else can reach them. The story of the dying Savior’s love has often impressed those whom all the moral lectures in the world could never have moved. Judged and condemned by the unanswerable reasoning of their own consciences, they have not had enough control over their passions to shake off the captivity in which they were held by the temptations that assailed them at every turn till they have drawn near to the Cross of Jesus! Then from pardon they have gathered hope and from hope have gained strength to master sin! When they have seen their sin laid on Jesus, they have loved Him and hated the sin that made Him to suffer so grievously as their Substitute.

Then the Holy Spirit has come upon them and they have resolved, with Divine strength, to drive out the sin for which the Savior died. They have begun a new life, yes, and they have continued in it, sustained by that same sacred power which first constrained them—and now they look forward to be perfected by it through the power of God! Where are the triumphs of infidelity in rescuing men from sin? Where are the trophies of philosophy in conquering human pride? Will you bring us harlots that have been made chaste; thieves that have been reclaimed; angry men of bear-like temper who have become harmless as lambs through scientific lectures? Let our amateur philanthropists who suggest so much and do so little, produce some instances of the moral transformations that have been worked by their sophistries!

No, they curl their lips and leave the lower orders to the City Missionary and the Bible Woman! It is the Cross that humbles the haughty, lifts up the fallen, refines the polluted and gives a fresh start to those who are forlorn and desperate! Nothing else can do it! The world sinks lower and lower into the bog of its own selfishness and sin. Only this wondrous lever of the Atonement, symbolized by the Cross of Christ, can lift our abject race to the place of virtue and honor which it ought to occupy! We glory in the Cross for so many reasons that I cannot hope to enumerate them all. While it ennobles our life, it invigorates us with hope in our death.

Death is now deprived of its terrors to us, for Christ has died. We, like He, can say, “Father, into Your hands we commend our spirit.” His burial has perfumed the grave! His Resurrection has paved the road to immortality! He rose and left a lamp behind which shows an outlet from the gloom of the sepulcher. The Paradise He immediately predicted for Himself and for the penitent who hung by His side has shown us how quick the transition is from mortal pains to immortal joys! “Absent from

the body, present with the Lord,” is the cheering prospect! Glory be to Christ forever and forever that we have this doctrine of “Christ crucified” to preach!

**II.**The second cross exhibits THE WORLD CRUCIFIED. The Apostle says that the world was crucified to him. What does he mean by this? He regarded the world as nailed up like a felon and hanged upon a cross to die. Well, I suppose he means that its character was condemned. He looked out upon the world which thought so much of itself and said, “I do not think much of you, poor World! You are like a doomed malefactor.” He knew that the world had crucified its Savior—crucified its God! It had gone to such a length of sin that it had hounded perfect Innocence through the streets. Infinite Benevolence it had scoffed at and maligned. Eternal Truth it had rejected and preferred a lie—and the Son of God, who was Love incarnate, it had put to the death on the Cross.

“Now,” says Paul, “I know your character, O World! I know you! And I hold you in no more esteem than the wretch abhorred for his crimes who is condemned to hang upon the gallows and so end his detested life.” This led Paul, since he condemned its character, utterly to despise its judgment. The world said, “This Paul is a fool! His Gospel is foolishness and he, himself is a mere babbler.” “Yes,” thought Paul, “a deal you know of it!” In this we unite with him. What is your judgment worth? You did not know the Son of God, poor blind World! We are sure that He was perfect and yet you hunted Him to death! Your judgment is a poor thing, O World! You are crucified to us.

Now, there are a great many people who could hardly endure to live if they should happen to be misjudged by the world or what is called “society.” Oh yes, we must be respectable! We must have every man’s good word, or we are ready to faint! Paul was of another mind. What cared he for anything the world might say? How could he wish to please a world so abominable that it had put his Lord to death? He would sooner have its bad opinion than its good. It were better to be frowned at than to be smiled upon by a world that crucified Christ! Certainly, its condemnation is more worth having than its approbation, if it can put Christ to death! So Paul utterly despised its judgment and it was crucified to him.

Now, we are told to think a great deal about “public opinion,” “popular belief,” “the growing feeling of the age,” “the sentiment of the period” and “the spirit of the age.” I should like Paul to read some of our religious newspapers! And yet I could not wish the good man so distasteful a task, for I dare say he would sooner pine in the Mammertine prison than do so. But, still, I should like to see how he would look after he had read some of those expressions about the necessity of keeping ourselves abreast with the sentiment of the period. “What?” he would exclaim, “the sentiment of the world! It is crucified to me! What can it matter what its opinion is? We are of God, little children, and the whole world lies in the Wicked One! Would you heed what the world, that is lying in the Wicked One, thinks of you or of the Truth of your Lord? Are you going to smooth your tongue and soften your speech to please the world that lies in the Wicked One?”

Paul would be indignant with such a proposition. He said, “the world is crucified to me.” Hence he looked upon all the world’s pleasures as so much rottenness, a carcass nailed to a cross. Can you fancy Paul being taken to the Coliseum at Rome? I try to imagine him made to sit on one of those benches to watch a combat of gladiators. There is the emperor— there are all the great peers of Rome and the senators. And there are those cruel eyes all gazing down upon men who shed each others’ blood! Can you picture how Paul would have felt if he had been forced to occupy a seat at that spectacle? It would have been martyrdom to him! He would have closed his eyes and ears against the sight of what Rome thought to be the choicest pleasure of the day!

They thronged the imperial city—they poured in mighty streams into the theater each day to see poor beasts tortured, or men murdering one another—that was the world of Paul’s day and he rightly judged it to be a crucified felon. If he was compelled to see the popular pleasures of today, upon which I will say but little, would he not be well-near as sick of them as he would have been of the amusements of the amphitheatre at Rome? To Paul, too, all the honors of the age must have been crucified in the same manner. Suppose that Paul settled his mind to think of the wretches who were reigning as emperors in his day! I use the word advisedly, for I would not speak evil of dignitaries, but really, I speak too well of them when I call them wretches! They seem to have been inhuman monsters— “tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of Nature and decency,” to whom every kind of lust was a daily habit and who even sought out new inventions of sensuality, calling them new pleasures.

As Paul thought of the iniquities of Napoli and all the great towns to which the Romans went on their holidays—Pompeii and the like—oh, how he loathed them! And I doubt not that if the Apostle were to come here now, if he knew how often rank and title are apt to sink all true dignity in shameful dissipation and what flagrant profligacy is to be found in high quarters, he might as justly consider all the pomp and dignity and honor of the world that now is, to be as little worth as a putrid carcass hanging on a tree and rotting in the sun. He says, “The world is crucified to me—it is hanging on the gallows, I think so little of its pleasures and of its pomp.” Alike contemptuously did Paul judge of all the *treasures* of the world.

Paul never spent as much time as it would take to wink his eye in thinking of how much money he was worth. Having food and raiment, he was content. Sometimes he had scarcely that. He casually thanks the Philippians for ministering to his necessities, but he never sought to hoard up anything, nor did he live with even half a thought of aggrandizing himself with gold and silver. “No,” he said, “this will all perish with the using,” and so he treated the world as a thing crucified to him. Now, Christian, can you say as much as this—that the world, in its mercantile aspect as well as in its motley vices and its manifold frivolities, is a crucified thing to you? Hear what the world says. “Make money, young Man, make money! Honestly, if you can, but by all means make money! Look about you, for if you are not sharp, you will not succeed. Keep your own counsel and rather play the double than be the dupe.

Your character will rise with the credit you get.”

Now, suppose that you get the money, what is the result? The net result, as I often find it, is a paragraph in one of the newspapers to say that Esquire So-and-So’s will was proved in the Probate Court under so many thousands. Then follows a grand squabble among all his relatives which shall eat him up. That is the consummation of a life of toil and care and scheming. He has lived for lucre and he has to leave it behind! That is the end of that folly. I have sometimes thought of the contrast between the poor man’s funeral and the rich man’s funeral. When the poor man dies, there are his sons and daughters weeping with real distress, for the death of the father brings sadness and sympathy into that house. The poor man is to be buried, but it can only be managed by the united self-denials of all his sons and daughters.

There is Mary at the service. She, perhaps, contributes more than the others towards the funeral, for she has no family of her own. The elder son and the younger brothers all pinch themselves to pay a little and the tears that are shed that evening when they come home from the grave are very genuine. They suffer and they prove their sorrow by rivaling one another in the respect they pay to their parent. Now you shall see the rich man die. Of course everybody laments the sad loss—it is the proper thing. Empty carriages swell the procession to the grave by way of empty compliment. The mourners return and there is the reading of that blessed document, the will. When that is read, the time for tears is over in almost every case.

Few are pleased. The one whom fortune favors is the envy of all the rest. Sad thoughts and sullen looks float on the surface, not in respect to the man’s departure, but concerning the means he has left and the mode in which he has disposed of them. Oh, it is a poor thing to live for—the making of money and the hoarding of it! But still, the genius of rightly getting money can be consecrated to the glory of God. You *can* use the wealth of this world in the service of the Master. To gain is not wrong. It is only wrong when grasping becomes the main object of life and grudging grows into covetousness which is idolatry! To every Christian, that and every other form of worldliness ought to be crucified so that we can say, “For me to live is not myself, but it is Christ! I live that I may honor and glorify Him.”

When the Apostle said that the world was crucified to him, He meant just this—“I am not enslaved by any of its pursuits. I care nothing for its maxims. I am not governed by its spirit. I do not court its smiles. I do not fear its threats. It is not my master, nor am I its slave. By God’s Grace the whole world cannot force me to lie, or to sin and I will tell the world the Truth of God, come what may.” You remember the words of Palissy, the potter, when the king of France said to him that if he did not change his religion and cease to be a Huguenot, he was afraid that he should have to deliver him up to his enemies? “Sire,” said the potter, “I am sorry to hear you say, ‘I am afraid,’ for all the men in the world could not make Palissy talk like that. I am afraid of nobody and I must do nothing but what is right.”

Oh, yes, the man that fears God and loves the Cross has a moral backbone which enables him to stand and snap his fingers at the world. “Dead felon!” he says. “Dead felon! Crucifier of Christ! Cosmos you call yourself. By comely names you wish to be greeted. Paul is nothing in your esteem, but Paul is a match for you, for he thinks as much of you as you do of him, and no more.” Hear him as he cries, “The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” To live to serve men is one thing, to live to bless them is another, and this we will do, God helping us, making sacrifices for their good. But to fear men, to ask their leave to think—to ask their instructions as to what we shall speak and how we shall say it— that is a baseness we cannot tolerate! By the Grace of God, we have not so degraded ourselves and never shall. “The world is crucified to me,” says the Apostle, “by the Cross of Christ.”

**III.**Then he finishes up with the third crucifixion, which is, I AM CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD. We shall soon see the evidence of this crucifixion if we notice how they poured contempt upon him. Once Saul was a great rabbi, a man profoundly versed in Hebrew lore, a Pharisee of the Pharisees and much admired. He was also a classic scholar and a philosophic thinker, a man of great mental powers and fit to take the lead in learned circles. But when Paul began to preach Christ crucified—“Bah,” they said, “he is an utter fool! Don’t listen to him!” Or else they said, “Down with him! He is an apostate!”

They cursed him. His name brought wrath into the face of all Jews that mentioned it and all intelligent Greeks likewise. “Paul? He is nobody!” He was *everybody* when he thought*their* way—he is *nobody* now that he thinks in God’s way. And then they put him to open shame by suspecting all his motives and by misrepresenting all his actions. It did not matter what Paul did, they were quite certain that he was self-seeking—that he was endeavoring to make a fine thing of it for himself. When he acted so that they were forced to admit that he was right, they put it in such a light that they made it out to be wrong. There were some who denied his Apostleship and said that he was never sent of God. Others questioned his ability to preach the Gospel.

So they crucified poor Paul one way and another to the fullest. They went further, still. They despised and they shunned him. His old friends forsook him. Some got out of the way, others pointed the finger of scorn at him in the streets. His persecutors showed their rancor against him, now stoning him illegally, other times, with a semblance of legality, dragging him before the magistrates. Paul was crucified to them. As for his teaching, they decried him as a babbler—a setter-forth of strange gods. I dare say they often sneered at the Cross of Christ which he preached as a nine-days’ wonder, an almost exploded doctrine, and said, “If you do but shut the mouths of such men as Paul, it will soon be forgotten.” I have heard them say in modern times to lesser men, “Your old-fashioned Puritanism is nearly dead! Before long it will be utterly extinct!” But we preach Christ crucified—the same old doctrine as the Apostles preached

and for this, by the contempt of the worldly wise, *we* are crucified!

Now, dear Christian Friends, if you keep to the Cross of Christ, you must expect to have this for your portion. The world will be crucified to you and you will be crucified to the world. You will get the cold shoulder. Old friends will become open foes. They will begin to hate you more than they loved you before. At home your foes will be the men and women of your own household. You will hardly be able to do anything right. When you joined in their revels you were a fine fellow—when you would drink and sing a lascivious song, you were a jolly good fellow—but now they rate you as a fool! They tell all you are a hypocrite and they slanderously blacken your character. Let their dislike be a badge of your discipleship and say, “Now, also, the world is crucified to me and I unto the world. Whatever the world says against me for Christ’s sake is the maundering of a doomed malefactor and what do I care for that? And, on the other hand, if I am rejected and despised, I am only taking what I always expected— my crucifixion—in my poor, humble way, after the manner of Christ Himself, who was despised and rejected of men.”

The moral and the lesson of it all is this—whatever comes of it, still glory in Christ! Go in for this, dear Friends, that whether you are in honor or in dishonor, in good report or in evil report—whether God multiplies your substance and makes you rich, or diminishes it and makes you poor—you will still glory in the Cross of Christ! If you have health and strength and vigor to work for Him, or if you have to lie upon a bed of languishing and bear in patience all your heavenly Father’s will, resolve that you will still glory in the Cross! Let this be the point of your glorying throughout your lives! Go down the steeps of Jordan and go through Jordan, itself, still glorying in the Cross, for in the Heaven of Glory you will find that the blood-bought hosts celebrate the Cross as the trophy of their redemption!

Are you trusting in the Cross? Are you resting in Jesus? If not, may the Lord teach you this blessed privilege! There is no joy like it! There is no strength like it! There is no life like it! There is no peace like it! At the Cross we find our Heaven! While upon the Cross we gaze all heavenly and holy things abound within our hearts! If you have never been there, may the Lord lead you there at this very hour—and so shall you be pardoned, accepted and blest forever! The Lord grant that you all may be partakers of this Grace for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE CROSS OUR GLORY

NO. 1859

***~~A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.~~***

***~~“But God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.~~***

ALMOST all men have something in which to glory. Every bird has its own note of song. It is a poor heart that never rejoices. It is a dull packhorse that is altogether without bells. Men usually rejoice in something or other and many men so rejoice in that which they choose that they become boastful and full of vainglory. It is very sad that men should be ruined by their glory and yet, many are. Many glory in their shame and more glory in that which is mere emptiness. Some glory in their physical strength, in which an ox excels them, or in their gold, which is but thick clay, or in their gifts, which are but talents with which they are entrusted. The pounds entrusted to their stewardship are thought, by men, to belong to themselves and, therefore, they rob God of the glory of them. O my Hearers, hear the voice of Wisdom, which cries, “He that glories, let him glory only in the Lord.” To live for personal glory is to be dead while we live! Be not so foolish as to perish for a bubble! Many a man has thrown his soul away for a little honor, or for the transient satisfaction of success in trifles. O men, your tendency is to glory in something—your wisdom will be to find a glory worthy of an immortal mind!

The Apostle Paul had a rich choice of things in which he could have gloried. If it had been his mind to have remained among his own people, he might have been one of their most honored rabbis. He says, in his Epistle to the Philippians, in the third chapter, “If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.” He says that he profited in the Jews’ religion above many of his equals in his own nation and he stood high in the esteem of his fellow professors. But when he was converted to the faith of the Lord Jesus, he said, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” As soon as he was converted, he forsook all boasting in his former religion and zeal, and cried, “God forbid that I should glory in my birth, my education, my proficiency in Scripture, or my regard to orthodox ritual. God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul might also, if he had chosen, have gloried in his sufferings for the Cross of Christ, for he had been a living martyr, a perpetual self-sacrifice to the cause of the Crucified. He says, “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool). I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times received I 40 stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” He was once driven to give a summary of these sufferings to establish his Apostleship, but before he did so, he wrote, “Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly.” In his heart he was saying, all the while, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The great Apostle had yet another reason for glorying, if he had chosen to do so, for he could speak of visions and revelations of the Lord. He says, “I knew a man in Christ above 14 years ago. . . caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man. . .how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” He was in danger of being exalted above measure by reason of the abundance of these revelations and, therefore, he was humbled by a painful thorn in the flesh. Paul, when hard driven by the necessity to maintain his position in the Corinthian Church, was forced to mention these things—but he liked not such glorying—he was most at ease when he said, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Brothers and Sisters, notice that Paul does not here say that he gloried in *Christ*, though he did so with all his heart—he declares that he gloried most in “the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which, in the eyes of men, was the very lowest and most inglorious part of the history of the Lord Jesus! He could have gloried in the Incarnation—angels sang of it, wise men came from the far East to behold it. Did not the new-born King awake the song from Heaven of, “Glory to God in the highest”? He might have gloried in the life of Christ—was there ever such another, so benevolent and blameless? He might have gloried in the Resurrection of Christ—it is the world’s great hope concerning those that are asleep. He might have gloried in our Lord’s Ascension, for He “led captivity captive” and all His followers glory in His victory. He might have gloried in His Second Advent and, I doubt not, that he did, for the Lord shall soon descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, to be admired in all them that believe.

Yet the Apostle selected beyond all these, that center of the Christian system, that point which is most assailed by its foes, that focus of the world’s derision—the Cross—and, putting all else somewhat into the shade, he exclaims, “God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Learn, then, that the highest glory of our holy religion is the Cross! The history of Grace begins earlier and goes on later, but in its middle point stands the Cross. Of two eternities this is the hinge—of past decrees and future glories this is the pivot. Let us come to the Cross, this morning, and think of it till each one of us, in the power of the Spirit of God, shall say, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**I.**First, as the Lord shall help me, (for who shall describe the Cross without the help of Him that hung upon it), WHAT DID PAUL MEAN BY THE CROSS? Did he not include, under this term, first, the *fact* of the Cross? Secondly, the *Doctrine* of the Cross? And thirdly, the Cross of the Doctrine?

I think he meant, first of all, *the fact of the Cross*. Our Lord Jesus Christ did really die, upon a gallows, the death of a felon. He was literally put to death upon a tree, accursed in the esteem of men. I beg you to notice how the Apostle puts it—“the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In his Epistles, he sometimes says, “Christ.” At another time, “Jesus,” frequently, “Lord,” oftentimes, “our Lord”—but here he says, “our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is a sort of pomp of words in this full description, as if in contrast to the shame of the Cross. The terms are intended, in some small measure, to express the dignity of Him who was put to so ignominious a death. He is Christ, the Anointed, and Jesus, the Savior. He is the Lord, the Lord of All, and He is, “our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is not a Lord without subjects, for He is, “our Lord.” Nor is He a Savior without saved ones, for He is, “our Lord Jesus.” Nor has He the anointing for Himself, only, for all of us have a share in Him as, “our Christ.” In all, He is ours, and was so upon the Cross.

When they bury a great nobleman, a herald stands at the head of the grave and proclaims his titles. “Here lies the body of William, Duke of this, and Earl of that, and Count of the other, knight of this order and commander of the other.” Even thus, in deep solemnity, with brevity and fullness, Paul proclaims, beneath the bitter tree, the names and titles of the Savior of men and styles Him, “our Lord Jesus Christ.” There are enough words here to give a four-square description of the honor, dignity and majesty of Him who has both Godhead and Manhood and “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Be it forever had in reverent remembrance that He who died upon the Cross between two thieves counted it not robbery to be equal with God! By nature He is such that the creed well describes Him as, “Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.” Yet He “made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant. . .and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” I declare this fact to you in words, but I think them poor, dumb things. I wish I could speak this matchless truth in fire-flakes! The announcement that the Son of God died upon the Cross to save men deserves the accompaniment of angelic trumpets and of the harps of the redeemed!

But next, I said that Paul gloried in *the Doctrine of the Cros*s, and it was so. What is that Doctrine of the Cross, of which it is written that it is “to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God”? In one word, it is the Doctrine of the Atonement, the Doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for us, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many and that God has set Him forth to be the Propitiation for our sins. Paul says, “When we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.” And again, “Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” The Doctrine of the Cross is that of sacrifice for sin— Jesus is “the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Doctrine is that of a full atonement made and the utmost ransom paid. “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” In Christ upon the Cross, we see the Just dying for the unjust that He might bring us to God—the Innocent bearing the crimes of the guilty that they might be forgiven and accepted. That is the Doctrine of the Cross, of which Paul was never ashamed.

This, also, is a necessary part of the Doctrine—that whoever believes in Him is justified from all sin. That whoever trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ is, in that moment, forgiven, justified and accepted in the Beloved. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Paul’s Doctrine was, “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” And it was his constant teaching that salvation is not of works, nor of ceremonies, but simply and only by believing in Jesus! We are to accept, by an act of trust, that righteousness which is already finished and completed by the death of our blessed Lord upon the Cross. He who does not preach Atonement by the blood of Jesus does not preach the Cross! And he who does not declare justification by faith in Christ Jesus has missed the mark, altogether! This is the very heart of the Christian system. If our ministry shall be without blood, it is without life, for, “the blood is the life thereof.” He that preaches not justification by faith knows not the Doctrine of Grace, for the Scripture says, “Therefore it is of faith that it might be by Grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” Paul gloried both in the fact of the Cross and in the Doctrine of the Cross.

But the Apostle also gloried in *the Cross of the Doctrin*e, for the death of the Son of God upon the Cross is the *crux*of Christianity. Here is the difficulty, the stumbling block and rock of offense. The Jew could not endure a crucified Messiah—he looked for pomp and power! Multitudinous ceremonies and different washings and sacrifices—were these all to be put away and nothing left but a bleeding Savior? At the mention of the Cross, the philosophic Greek thought himself insulted and vilified the preacher as a fool. In effect, he said, “You are not a man of thought and intellect; you are not abreast of the times, but are sticking in the mire of antiquated prophecies. Why not advance with the discoveries of modern thought?” The Apostle, teaching a simple fact which a child might comprehend, found in it the wisdom of God! Christ upon the Cross, working out the salvation of men was more to him than all the sayings of the sages. As for the Roman, he would give no heed to any glorying in a dead Jew, a *crucified* Jew! Crushing the world beneath his iron heel, he declared that such romancing would never win him from the gods of his fathers.

Paul did not budge before the sharp and practical reply of the conquerors of the world! He did not tremble before Nero in his palace. Whether to Greek or Jew, Roman or barbarian, bond or free, he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but gloried in the Cross. Though the testimony that the one all-sufficient Atonement was provided on the Cross stirs the enmity of man and provokes opposition, yet Paul was so far from attempting to mitigate that opposition that he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified! His motto was, “We preach Christ crucified.” He had the Cross for his philosophy, the Cross for his tradition, the Cross for his Gospel, the Cross for his glory and nothing else!

**II.**But, secondly, WHY DID PAUL GLORY IN THE CROSS? He did not do so because he was in need of a theme, for, as I have shown you, he had a wide field for boasting if he had chosen to occupy it. He gloried in the Cross from solemn and deliberate choice. He had counted the cost, he had surveyed the whole range of subjects with an eagle eye and he knew*what* he did and *why* he did it. He was master of the art of thinking. As a metaphysician, none could excel him. As a logical thinker, none could have gone beyond him. He stands almost alone in the early Christian Church as a master mind. Others may have been more poetic, or more simple, but none were more thoughtful or argumentative than he. With decision and firmness, Paul sets aside everything else and definitely declares, throughout his whole life, “I glory in the Cross.” He does this exclusively, saying, “God forbid that I should glory except in the Cross.” There are many other precious things, but he puts them all upon the shelf in comparison with the Cross.

He will not even make his chief point any of the great Scriptural Doctrines, nor even an instructive and godly ordinance. No, the Cross is to the front. This constellation is chief in Paul’s sky. The choice of the Cross he makes devoutly, for although the expression used in our English version may not stand, yet I do not doubt that Paul would have used it, and would have called upon God to witness that he abjured all other ground of glorying save the atoning Sacrifice—

***“Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ, my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.”***

He would have called God to witness that he knew no ambition save that of bringing glory to the Cross of Christ. As I think of this, I am ready to say, “Amen,” to Paul and bid you sing that stirring verse—

***“It is the old Cross still,  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Its triumphs let us tell,  
Hallelujah! hallelujah!  
The Grace of God here shone  
Through Christ, the blessed Son,  
Who did for sin atone.  
Hallelujah for the Cross!”***

Why did Paul thus glory in the Cross? You may well desire to know, for there are many, nowadays, who do *not* glory in it, but forsake it! Alas that it should be so, but there are *ministers* who ignore the Atonement! They conceal the Cross, or say but little about it. You may go through service after service and scarcely hear a mention of the atoning blood—but Paul was always bringing forward the expiation for sin—Paul never tried to explain it away. Oh the number of books that have been written to prove that the Cross means an example of self-sacrifice, as if *every* martyrdom did not mean that! They cannot endure a real *substitutionary* Sacrifice for human guilt and an effectual purifying of sin by the death of the great Substitute. Yet the Cross means that or nothing!

Paul was very bold. Although he knew this would make him many enemies, you never find him refining and spiritualizing—the Cross and the Atonement for sin are plain matters of fact to him. Neither does he attempt to decorate it by adding philosophical theories. No, to him it is the bare, naked Cross all blood-stained and despised! In this he glories and in none of the wisdom of words with which others vexed him. He will have the Cross—the Cross and nothing but the Cross! He pronounces an anathema on all who propose a rival theme—“But though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

I take it that this was so, first, because Paul saw in the Cross *a vindication of Divine Justice*. Where else can the Justice of God be seen so clearly as in the death of God, Himself, in the Person of His dear Son? If the Lord Himself suffers on account of broken Law, then is the majesty of the Law honored to the fullest! Some time ago, a judge in America was called upon to try a prisoner who had been his companion in his early youth. It was a crime for which the penalty was a fine, more or less heavy. The judge did not diminish the fine. The case was clearly a bad one and he fined the prisoner the maximum fine. Some who knew his former relation to the offender thought him somewhat unkind to thus carry out the law, while others admired his impartiality. All were surprised when the judge quitted the bench and paid, himself, every farthing of the penalty! He had shown both his respect for the law and his goodwill to the man who had broken it. He exacted the penalty, but he paid it himself.

So God has done in the Person of His dear Son. He has not remitted the punishment, but He has, Himself, endured it. His own Son, who is none other than God, Himself—for there is an essential union between them— has paid the debt which was incurred by human sin. I love to think of the vindication of Divine Justice upon the Cross. I am never weary of it! Some cannot bear the thought, but to me it seems inevitable that sin must be punished, or else the foundations of society would be removed. If sin becomes a trifle, virtue will be a toy! Society cannot stand if laws are left without penal sanction, or if that sanction is to be a mere empty threat. Men in their own governments, every now and then, cry out for greater severity. When a certain offense abounds and ordinary means fail, they demand exemplary punishment—and it is but natural that they should do so, for deep in the conscience of every man there is the conviction that sin must be punished to secure the general good. Justice must reign, even benevolence demands it! If there could have been salvation without an Atonement, it would have been a calamity—righteous men, and even benevolent men, might deprecate the setting aside of law in order to save the guilty from the natural result of their crimes.

For my own part, I value a just salvation. An unjust salvation would never have satisfied the apprehensions and demands of my conscience. No, let God be just even if the heavens fall! Let God carry out the sentence of His Law, or the universe will suspect that it was not righteous—and when such a suspicion rules the general mind, all respect for God will be gone! The Lord carries out the decree of His Justice even to the bitter end, abating not a jot of its requirements. Brothers and Sisters, there was an infinite efficacy in the death of such a One as our Lord Jesus Christ to vindicate the Law. Though He is Man, yet is He also God and, in His passion and death, He offered to the Justice of God a vindication not at all inferior to the punishment of Hell! God is just, indeed, when Jesus dies upon the Cross rather than that God’s Law should be dishonored. When our august Lord, Himself, bore the wrath that was due for human sin, it was made evident to all that law is not to be trifled with. We glory in the Cross, for there the debt was paid, our sins on Jesus laid.

But we glory because on the Cross we have an unexampled *display of God’s love*. “God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Oh to think of it, that He who was offended takes the nature of the offender and then bears the penalty due for wanton transgression! He who is Infinite, thrice holy, all glorious, forever to be worshipped, yet stoops to be numbered with the transgressors and to bear the sin of many! The mythology of the gods of high Olympus contains nothing worthy to be mentioned in the same day with this wondrous deed of supreme condescension and Infinite Love! The ancient Shasters and Vedas have nothing of the kind! The death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross cannot be an invention of men—none of the ages have produced anything like it in the poetic dreams of any nation! If we did not hear of it so often and think of it so little, we would be charmed with it beyond expression! If we now heard of it for the first time and seriously believed it, I know not what we would not do in our glad surprise! Certainly we would fall down and worship the Lord Jesus and continue to worship Him forever and ever!

I believe again, thirdly, that Paul delighted to preach the Cross of Christ as *the removal of all guilt*. He believed that the Lord Jesus on the Cross finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. He that believes in Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Since sin was laid on Jesus, God’s justice cannot lay it upon the believing sinner. The Lord will never punish the same offense twice. If He accepts a Substitute for me, how can He call me to His bar and punish me for that transgression for which my Substitute endured the chastisement? Many a troubled conscience has caught at this and found deliverance from despair. Wonder not that Paul gloried in Christ, since it is written, “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” This is the method of salvation which completely and eternally absolves the sinner and makes the blackest offender white as snow! Transgression visited upon Christ has ceased to be, so far as the Believer is concerned. Does not Faith cry, “You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea”? O Sirs, there is something to glory in in this and those who know the sin-removing power of the Cross will not be hindered in this glorying by all the powers of earth or Hell!

Paul glories in it, again, as *a marvel of wisdom*. It seemed to him the sum of perfect wisdom and skill. He cried, “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” The plan of salvation by vicarious suffering is simple, but sublime. It would have been impossible for human or angelic wisdom to have invented it! Men already so hate it and fight against it that they never would have devised it! God, alone, out of the treasury of His Infinite Wisdom brought forth this matchless project of salvation for the guilty through the Substitution of the Innocent. The more we study it, the more we shall perceive that it is full of teaching. It is only the superficial thinker who regards the Cross as a subject soon to be comprehended and exhausted! The most lofty intellects will here find ample room and space enough. The most profound minds might lose themselves in considering the splendid diversities of light which compose the pure white light of the Cross! Everything of sin and justice, of misery and mercy, of folly and wisdom, of force and tenderness, of rage and pity on the part of man and God may be seen here. In the Cross may be seen the concentration of Eternal Thought, the focus of Infinite Purpose, the outcome of Illimitable Wisdom. Of God and the Cross we may say—

***“Here I behold His inmost heart,  
Where Grace and vengeance strangely join; Piercing His Son with sharpest smart  
To make the purchased pleasures mine.”***

I believe that Paul gloried in the Cross, again, because it is *the door of hope*even to the vilest of the vile. The world was very filthy in Paul’s time. Roman civilization was of the most brutal and debased kind and the masses of the people were sunken in vices that are altogether unmentionable. Paul felt that he could go into the darkest places with light in his hand when he spoke of the Cross. To tell of pardon bought with the blood of the Son of God is to carry an Omnipotent message! The Cross lifts up the fallen and delivers the despairing. Today, my Brothers and Sisters, the world’s one and only remedy is the Cross. Go, you thinkers, and get up a mission to the fallen in London, leaving out the Cross! Go, now, you wise men, reclaim the harlots and win to virtue the degraded by your perfumed philosophies! See what you can do in the slums and alleys without the Cross of Christ! Go talk to your titled reprobates and win them from their abominations by displays of art! You will fail, the most cultivated of you, even to win the rich and educated to anything like purity, unless your themes are drawn from Calvary and the Love which there poured out its heart’s blood!

This hammer breaks rocky hearts, but no other will do it. Pity, itself, stands silent. Compassion bites her lip and inwardly groans she has nothing to say till she has learned the story of the Cross. But, with that on her tongue, she waxes eloquent! With tears she entreats, persuades, prevails! She may but stammer in her speech—like Moses, she may be slow of utterance—but the Cross is in her hand as the rod of the Prophet. With this she conquers the Pharaoh of tyrannical sin! With this she divides the Red Sea of guilt! With this she leads the host of God out of the house of bondage into the land of promise which flows with milk and honey! The Cross is the standard of victorious Grace! It is the lighthouse whose cheering ray gleams across the dark waters of despair and cheers the dense midnight of our fallen race, saving from eternal shipwreck and piloting into everlasting peace.

Again, Paul, I believe, gloried in the Cross, as I often do, because it was *the source of rest* to him and to his Brethren. I make this confession and I make it very boldly, that I never knew what rest of heart truly meant till I understood the Doctrine of the Substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, when I see my Lord bearing away my sins as my Scapegoat, or dying for them as my Sin Offering, I feel a profound peace of heart and satisfaction of spirit. The Cross is all I ever need for security and joy. Truly, this bed is long enough for a man to stretch himself on. The Cross is a chariot of salvation where we traverse the high road of life without fear! The pillow of Atonement heals the head that aches with anguish. Beneath the shadow of the Cross, I sit down with great delight, and its fruit is sweet to my taste. I have no impatience even to hasten to Heaven while resting beneath the Cross, for our hymn truly says—

***“Here it is I find my Heaven,  
While upon the Cross I gaze.”***

Here is perfect cleansing and, therefore, a Divine security guarded by the Justice of God. And, therefore, a “peace of God, which passes all understanding.” To try to entice me away from the God’s Truth of Substitution is labor in vain! Seduce me to preach the pretty nothings of modern thought? This child knows much better than to leave the substance for the shadow, the truth for the fancy! I see nothing that can give to my heart a fair exchange for the rest, peace and unutterable joy which the old-fashioned Doctrine of the Cross now yields me. Will a man leave bread for husks and quit the home of his love to dwell in a desolate wilderness? I dare not renounce the Truth of God in order to be thought cultured! I am no more a fool than the most of my contemporaries and if I could see anything better than the Cross, I would willingly grasp it as they—for it is a flattering thing to be thought a man of light and leading! But where shall I go if I quit the Rock of the atoning Sacrifice? I cannot go beyond my simple faith that Jesus stood in my place and bore my sin and took it away. This I must preach! I know nothing else! God help me, I will never go an inch beyond the Cross, for to me all else is vanity and vexation of spirit! Return unto your rest, O my Soul! Where else is there a glimpse of hope for you but in Him who loved you and gave Himself for you?

I am sure Paul gloried in the Cross yet, again, because he saw it to be *the creator of enthusiasm*. Christianity finds its chief force in the enthusiasm which the Holy Spirit produces—and this comes from the Cross. The preaching of the Cross is the great weapon of the crusade against evil. In the old times, vast crowds came together in desert places, among the hills, or on the moors, at peril of their lives, to hear preaching. Did they come together to hear *philosophy*? Did they meet at the dead of night, when the hounds of persecution were hunting them, to listen to pretty moral *essays*? I think not! They came to hear of the Grace of God manifest in the Sacrifice of Jesus to believing hearts! Would your modern Gospel create the spirit of the martyrs? Is there anything in it for which a man might go to prison and to death? The modern speculations are not worth a cat’s dying for them, much less a man!

A something lies within the Truth of the Cross which sets the soul aglow! It touches the preacher’s lips as with a live coal and fires the hearer’s hearts as with flame from the Altar of God. We can live on this Gospel—and for this Gospel die. Atonement by blood, full deliverance from sin, perfect safety in Christ given to the Believer call a man to joy, to gratitude, to consecration, to decision, to patience, to holy living, to allconsuming zeal! Therefore, in the Doctrine of the Cross we glory, neither will we be slow to speak it out with all our might!

**III.**My time has gone, or else I had intended to have enlarged upon the third head, of which I must now give you the mere outline. One of Paul’s great reasons for glorying in the Cross was its action upon himself. WHAT WAS ITS EFFECT UPON HIM?

The Cross is never without influence. Come where it may, it works for life or for death. Wherever there is Christ’s Cross, there are also two other crosses. On either side there is one and Jesus is in the middle. Two thieves are crucified with Christ and Paul tells us their names in *his* case—“The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” Self and the world are both crucified when Christ’s Cross appears and is believed in! Beloved, what does Paul mean? Does he not mean just this—that ever since he had seen Christ, he looked upon the world as a crucified, hung up thing which had no more power over Paul than a criminal hanged upon a cross? What power has a corpse on a gallows? Such power had the world over Paul. The world despised him and he could not go after the world if he would—and would not go after it if he could! He was dead to it and it was dead to him and, therefore, there was a double separation!

How does the Cross do this? To be under the dominion of this present evil world is horrible—how does the Cross help us to escape? Why, Brothers and Sisters, he that has ever seen the Cross looks upon the world’s pomp and glory as a vain show! The pride of heraldry and the glitter of honor fade into meanness before the Crucified One. O you great ones, what are your silks, your furs, your jewelry, your gold, your stars and your garters to one who has learned to glory in Christ Crucified! The old clothes which belong to the hangman are quite as precious. The world’s light is darkness when the Sun of Righteousness shines from the Cross! What do we care for all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof when once we see the thorn-crowned Lord? There is more glory about one nail of the Cross than about all the scepters of all kings! Let the knights of the Golden Fleece meet in chapter and all the Knights of the Garter stand in their stalls, but what is all their splendor? Their glories wither before the inevitable hour of doom, while the glory of the Cross is eternal! Everything of earth grows dull and dim when seen by the light of the Cross!

So was it with the world’s *approval*. Paul would not ask the world to be pleased with him, since it knew not his Lord, or only knew Him to crucify Him. Can a Christian be ambitious to be written down as one of the world’s foremost men when that world cast out His Lord? They crucified our Master! Shall His servants court their love? Such approval would be all stained with blood. They crucified my Master, the Lord of Glory—do I want them to *smile* on me and say to me, “Reverend Sir,” or, “Learned Doctor”? No! The friendship of the world is enmity with God and, therefore, to be dreaded! Mouths that spit on Jesus shall give me no kisses! Those who hate the Doctrine of the Atonement hate my life and soul—and I desire not their esteem.

Paul also saw that the world’s *wisdom* was absurd. That age talked of being wise and philosophical! Yes, and its philosophy brought it to crucify the Lord of Glory! It did not know perfection, nor perceive the beauty of pure unselfishness. To slay the Messiah was the outcome of the culture of the Pharisee. To put to death the greatest Teacher of all time was the ripe fruit of Sadducean thought. The serious thoughts of the present age have performed no greater feat than to deny the Doctrine of satisfaction for sin! They have crucified our Lord afresh by their criticisms and their new theologies—and this is all the world’s wisdom ever does. Its wisdom lies in scattering doubt, quenching hope and denying certainty—and, therefore, the wisdom of the world to us is sheer folly! This century’s philosophy will one day be spoken of as an evidence that softening of the brain was very usual among its scientific men! We count the thought of the present moment to be methodical madness, Bedlam out of doors and those who are furthest gone in it are credulous beyond imagination! God has poured contempt upon the wise men of this world! Their foolish heart is blinded, they grope at noonday.

So, too, the Apostle saw the world’s *religion* to be nothing. It was the world’s religion that crucified Christ. The priests were at the bottom of it, the Pharisees urged it on. The church of the nation, the church of many ceremonies, the church which loved the traditions of the elders, the church of phylacteries and broad-bordered garments—it was this church, which, acting by its officers, crucified the Lord! Paul, therefore, looked with pity upon priests and altars and upon all the attempts of a Christless world to make up, by finery of worship, for the absence of the Spirit of God. Once see Christ on the Cross and architecture and fine display become gaudy, cheap things. The Cross calls for worship in spirit and in truth—and the world knows nothing of this.

And so it was with the world’s pursuits. Some ran after honor, some toiled after learning, others labored for riches. But to Paul, these were all trifles since he had seen Christ on the Cross. He that has seen Jesus die will never go into the toy business—he puts away childish things. A child, a pipe, a little soap and many pretty bubbles—such is the world. The Cross, alone, can wean us from such play.

And so it was with the world’s *pleasures* and with the world’s *power*. The world, and everything that belonged to the world, had become as a corpse to Paul and he was as a corpse to it. See where the corpse swings in chains on the gallows. What a foul, rotten thing! We cannot endure it! Do not let it hang longer above ground to fill the air with pestilence. Let the dead be buried out of sight. The Christ that died upon the Cross now lives in our hearts. The Christ that took human guilt has taken possession of our souls and, therefore, we live only in Him, for Him, by Him. He has engrossed our affections. All our ardors burn for Him. God make it to be so with us, that we may glorify God and bless our age!

Paul concludes this Epistle by saying, “From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” He was a slave, branded with His Master’s name. That stamp could never be erased, for it was burned into his heart. Even thus, I trust the Doctrine of the Atonement is our settled belief and faith in it is part of our life. We are rooted and grounded in the unchanging Truths of God! Do not try to convert me to your new views—I am past it. Forget about me! You waste your breath. It is done—on this point the wax takes no farther impress. I have taken up my standing and will never quit it. A crucified Christ has taken such possession of my entire nature, spirit, soul and body, that I am henceforth beyond the reach of opposing arguments!

Brothers and Sisters, will you enlist under the conquering banner of the Cross? Once rolled in the dust and stained in blood, it now leads on the armies of the Lord to victory! Oh that all ministers would preach the true Doctrine of the Cross! Oh that all Christian people would live under the influence of it and we should then see brighter days than these! Unto the Crucified be glory forever and ever! Amen.

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GRAND GLORYING  
NO. 3451

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1915.

***~~DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 5, 1868.~~***

***~~“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Galatians 6:14.~~***

WITH that, “God forbid,” Paul makes a clean sweep of every other ground of boasting and casts himself upon the one only chosen object of his soul’s glorying. And yet, if you will think of it, Paul had, after the fashion of other men, many things in which he might have gloried. If it had so pleased him, he might have boasted of his pedigree, for he was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He could trace his genealogy, as the pure Hebrews could, up to that great fountain of nobility—Abraham himself! If he had pleased, he might have boasted in the precision of the former ritual which he had practiced, for he could say that as touching the Law of God, he had been a Pharisee—a man observant of the minutest points of the very letter of the Law, careful for its doctrinal tittles, not allowing even the gnat to escape him, but straining after it with care. And yet the Apostle did not care to boast, either of his pedigree or of his ritualism. He casts them both aside and though he had once gloried in them, he now counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in Him! Surely, if the Apostle had wished it, he might have gloried in his martyr life. He did once give a list of what he had suffered, and he added, “I have become a fool in glorying; you have compelled me.” Had he not been beaten with rods, shipwrecked, subject to perils from robbers, perils from false brethren, imprisonment and stones? And yet you never hear him glory in that wonderful martyr life of his! Among the Apostles, he was no less than the chief in that which he suffered, and yet he says, “God forbid that I should glory in it.” He might have gloried in the Revelation which he received. Who among us has ever seen or heard what Paul was made to see and hear when he was caught up into the third heavens to hear things which it is not lawful for a man to utter? He might, if he had chosen to boast, have boasted in this Revelation, but he did not do so. “God forbid,” said he, “that I should glory,” and that, “God forbid,” includes even that Revelation! Among scholars Paul might have taken an eminent position. He was well qualified to speak in the Areopagus, for even there, in that profound assembly, was probably not one with greater knowledge and of more subtle mind than he, who was once called, “Saul of Tarsus.” Read the Epistles, Brothers and Sisters! Why, the Apostle has the instinct of Bacon and the insight of Sir Isaac Newton! The man seems to have looked through a question, where others would have looked round about it and have seen nothing. Yet, though he must have felt a human delight in the talents which God had given him—and must have known that he possessed them—he still says concerning them, “God forbid that I should glory.” He seems to take all that he had, all that he did, and all that he was, and put it all away—and come forward with no other theme upon his lips, and no greater love in his heart, except this—Jesus Crucified for the sons of men. Jesus to be great among the nations. Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, to be made unto men their life from the dead, their salvation from going down into the Pit. “God forbid,” he says—that memorable speech, that eloquent declaration, that glorious self-denying, yet exalting resolve—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!” We shall be brief upon each point at this time, but the first enquiry must naturally be—

**I.**WHAT IS THIS CROSS IN WHICH PAUL RESOLVED TO GLORY? You need not to be told, my Brothers and Sisters, that Paul set no store by the material cross, or by the “sign of the cross.” You know that the making of the sign of the cross, and the paying of religious reverence to that, is as great a superstition as the belief in witches and, perhaps, as men come to be enlightened, they will wonder how it is that some men could have thought that there could be more sanctity about a cross than about a circle or the parallelogram, for really there is no holiness in the sign of the cross, and I sometimes wish that some Christians would not countenance that emblem, since it seems to imply a superstitious reverence to that kind of thing. Paul meant no such thing. He would have abandoned in contempt any superstitious use of the cross or the crucifix, and he would do so now if he were here and I hope the result would be that, as at Ephesus they burned their conjuring hosts, so now men would put their chasubles, their albs and all their fripperies and upholstery together and burn them in one glorious pile as the result of the preaching of the true Cross of Christ!  
What did the Apostle mean, then? He meant, in a single word, the great Doctrine of the Atonement offered for sin by the Son of God upon Mount Calvary. “The Cross” is the short term for “substitutionary suffering,” for “vicarious Sacrifice,” for the offering up of the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The Apostle was never cloudy about this matter. Wherever he went, he preached that God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. His declarations were always clear. “Him has God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins, only, but for the sins of the whole world.” He was always saying that Jesus Christ took our sins and bore them in His own body on the tree—that He was punished instead of us, that the claims of Divine Justice were met by the death of the Redeemer, that He was made a curse for us that we might be enriched and blessed of God in Him—that He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Paul’s great master-point was that Jesus actually suffered to vindicate the Divine Justice by enduring, instead of us, the punishment due to our sins!  
And he also meant by it that Gospel which springs out of the Cross, and which is contained in these few words, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Paul told the people that the Son of God was made Man and suffered in human form to take away human guilt, and that whoever, the wide world over, would come and rest in what Christ had done, would be saved. This was the Gospel which he proclaimed in every place. For barbarian and Scythian, this was the Gospel! For the Greek and the Jew, the same! For the illiterate, for the learned, for the king and for the peasant, it was always his one theme—a bleeding Savior and a sinner looking to Him—a living Christ dying, that a dying world might live! This is that Gospel which we preach from Sabbath to Sabbath, which will save your souls, and which you delight to sing of in words like these—  
***“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins!  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.”***  
This was “the Cross” which Paul resolved to glory in!  
**II.**WHAT WAS THERE IN THIS PARTICULAR DOCTRINE OR FACT FOR THE APOSTLE TO GLORY IN AT ALL?  
The answer is, first, that *there is glory in the fact, itself*. It is a fact entirely by itself, unique, unparalleled. The mythology of the heathens had invented many, many strange things, but among them all there is nothing so beautiful, even if it were not true, nothing so perfect in its imagery, as this—that God, the offended One, should give up His Only Begotten in order that Justice might not be injured. At the same time, His mercy might have full sweep, that the Only Begotten should die that the offending ones might live! There is nothing like this in the whole range of human poetry! Men had fine poetic imaginings before, and there were Prophetic declarations of the coming of Christ, and they prophesied some wonderful things, but of all the poets of all the nations, it may be said that they never conceived anything like this—the offended One dies so that the offenders might live! “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God first loved us.” “Beloved, behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us.” That one fact that God descended from the royalties of Heaven, that He might take upon Himself the servitude of earth in the form of Man and offer Himself a Sacrifice for sin, reveals the Infinite Wisdom, together with the Infinite Love of God, besides casting a brilliant light upon all His other attributes. It stands a marvel of marvels, a wonder of wonders, in which the Believer may glory, glory as much as he will! You know we do not doubt about this fact. We hold it, no, we are sure of it, and it is a very great reality to us. I was passing, some years ago, a Socinian chapel in this great London of ours, and I saw an announcement of the subjects upon which sermons were to be delivered. If I remember rightly, there was to be a sermon on the morning of one Sunday upon some political subject—and in the evening there was to be a sermon upon the crucifixion, but the word was spelt “cruci*fiction*.” And I thought, “Ah, just so, and though you may not mean it, it is just that with you—it is nothing more to you than a mere fiction, but to us it is real.” We believe that the blood of Jesus really takes away sin. We believe that He really laid down His life to redeem us from our iniquity—and to us the most real, sublime, grand, soul-moving thing beneath Heaven, and even *in* Heaven is this—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and died that He might save them! The Apostle, then, gloried in the fact as a fact.  
And next, the Apostle gloried in the fact *viewing the simplicity of it*— the simplicity of the Doctrine which grew out of the fact. It is frequently said, “Oh, these evangelical preachers, these men that preach up Christ, these popular preachers—they are very shallow-brained men! They talk mere platitudes. They do not read the German philosophers, they do not go to the bottom of the thing and stir the mud—they are content with just telling the people really such plain and common things that you cannot expect enlightened people in this 19th Century to care to go and hear them.” It is a very odd thing that they are the only people who do go to hear them! That only shows, I suppose, that there are plenty of people who are shallow, too. But we boast, if in anything, in the sheer simplicity of this Truth of God that we preach. If the Cross of Christ were a marvelous riddle, the answer to which none could guess but a philosopher trained for 50 years, if we understood it so, we should feel as if it were scarcely worthwhile for us to tell it, since there would be so few that could be benefited by it! But we thank God that we have a simple Gospel to preach to you, because there are so many in this world who need saving quite as much as the wisest, but who could not be saved if the Gospel were not simple. I thank God that when Christ is preached in the Union House, He is believed there, and when Christ is preached to the most benighted nation, He is received there! And He is just as sweet and precious to those who cannot read as to those who are the best educated. No, we do not, and never will, blush because the Gospel is simply, “Believe and live.” We think that every statement of great truth, before it can do good to the heart, must be simple. It seems to us that its simplicity is a part of its grandeur—that it is more God-like, to give us a Gospel which can be spoken in few words by simple men, than to give us something involved and intertwisted—the meaning of which we would never be able to guess! We thank God, dear Hearer, that it does not need many minutes to tell you what you must do to be saved! Believe in Jesus, that is, *trust* Him—trust Him with all your heart! Cast yourself flat upon Him— you cannot fall any lower when you are down there! Cast yourself on His arms, rely upon His merits, and you are saved! God forbid that we should glory save in this very simplicity, which some persons so fiercely decry!  
Paul gloried, and we glory, in the next place,*in the freeness and suitability of the Gospel*. The Apostle never found himself in a place where the Gospel was not suitable. Sometimes some of you young men who are here tonight may have to go out to supply pulpits, and you may be apt to ask yourselves and ask one another, “Well, what subject shall I take?” I answer you—wherever you go, preach Jesus Christ—and that will suit every congregation! And if it does not, the congregation that is unsuited by it will not be suited at all—and they ought to have twice as much of it till they *are* suited with it! Preach up Jesus Christ! No matter how noble the audience, or how poor, still preach the Atonement. Preach up the dying Savior, instead of men, and it never can be out of season. Those men who, for the sake of variety and freshness, run away from their Bibles, are like men who, for the sake of wealth, run away from a substantial business which brings them in their thousands in order to speculate where bankruptcy must be their only gain. Close to the Cross! There is no such variety as in that one theme! It is like a diamond with a thousand facets, each one reflecting its own sweet light. You shall preach Jesus Christ to the angels in Heaven throughout eternity and make known to them the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus—and you will never exhaust the theme! What a blessing, though, that this Cross of Christ should be so suitable to every person we meet with! If you take the Cross of Jesus Christ into the condemned cell, there is nothing else that is so likely to awaken that slumbering soul! If you take it to our criminals—alas, that there are so many—it is the only balm of Gilead to them! Go with it to the lodging houses, and the back slums, and the street corners of St. Giles’s, or where you will, and this story of the Man, Christ Jesus, who loved and died, touches all hearts!  
You have heard of the Greenlanders. The missionaries thought they ought, first, to instruct them in the Doctrine of the Trinity, so they preached away to them of the Godhead, but the Greenlander did not care about it. But one of them, while interpreting, I think, the third chapter of John, came across that blessed passage, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life,” and the Greenlanders stopped him and said, Why did you not tell us that before?” “Oh, I thought I had better begin by telling you of some of the other Truths of God.” “But we knew all those, or could have guessed them—why didn’t you tell us this before?”From that moment the good Moravians lifted up Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and the eyes and hearts of the Greenlanders began to look to Him—and Jesus Christ was the Glory of that land! We may say of this Doctrine of the Cross, as David did of Goliath’s sword, “There is none like it.” It is suitable in all places, wherever we may be found.  
Truly, Brothers and Sisters, Paul might well glory in the Cross if you will kindly remember *the great results which are sure to come from its constant and faithful preaching.* There is no land where the Cross has been lifted up, but is the better for it. Even those countries in which we have been compelled to regard missions as a failure, have still received much blessing as the result. If the people have not been converted, yet still the bringing of the Light of God into contact with their thick darkness has done something, though not all that we could wish. See yonder South Sea Islands, where the savage is clothed and in his right mind. Go tonight, if you can, on the wings of imagination, to the Bechuana villages, where Mr. Moffat labored among the Bushmen, about the existence of whose souls even there was once some doubt, and see what has been done there! Yes, and even in this land, with all our sins, how different are we from our savage forefathers, and how can Edinburgh, and London, and Glasgow tell you how the putting down of a district church or chapel has turned the heathen population of these days into a Christian community! This is the great lever to uplift the masses. Where Jesus is preached, signs and effects follow in which we may well rejoice. How many a home that was once filthy and miserable has been cheered and comforted, now that father is a Christian! How many a man who used to reel in and out of the gin shops or the public houses, now delights to sing another song, and to drink of other wines on the lees, well refined! What changes Divine Grace is making among us! How some of us could tell of them as long as we live, we, ourselves, being changed! We will then say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
You know, as I was last night turning over this text in my mind, I shut my eyes and saw—for you see a great deal more with your eyes shut than with them open sometimes—as I looked I thought I saw a Cross before me and it began to grow. I saw it as I had never seen it before. It grew upon me—grew every moment. I saw it go downward into the earth, and as its foot descended, graves began to open—for resurrection comes from the Cross—and Hell, itself, began to tremble, for nothing shakes the infernal kingdom like the Cross! Then I looked up, and the Cross had been growing till it reached up to Heaven, bearing with it tens of thousands of redeemed souls, and I thought of that verse—  
***“In the Cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o’er the wrecks of time!  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.”***  
I turned my eyes lower and I saw its transverse beams, and these began to stretch to the east and to the west, and they took away the sins of all God’s people and carried them into the place of forgetfulness, where they never shall be found, while a shadow, broad as the universe, seemed to fall upon creatures off all kinds! And wherever it fell, the shadow dropped with the benedictions of Heaven. Oh, that Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus— how deep, how high, how broad! The imagination cannot conceive it, but the soul delights in it!  
And then, as I seemed to look with eyes closed, I thought I saw in my vision a flock of doves, fluttered and afraid, and well they might be, for there were archers after them and the sharp arrows all but pierced their breasts. No, some fell sorely wounded. And they flitted to the groves and they flew to the far-off sea, and to the wilderness, but the sharp shafts pursued them everywhere, and the doves found no rest for the soles of their feet. At last one day they lighted on the Cross, and they marked that every shaft fell short—and some that were shot at them with double force were splintered and broken—and fell upon the ground! Not a single dove was hurt, but all found shelter there. Lord, make me one of those doves! And may my soul escape the arrows of my spiritual foes. Let me find shelter on my Savior’s precious Cross, for there is shelter there, and there, alone!  
And then the picture changed and I saw before me the whole earth, as it now looks, without rain, and it was all parched and browned, and seemed ready to be burned. The plants hung down their heads and the flowers seemed to be pining for the tears of the angels to drop down upon them from Heaven, but nothing came. Yet I noticed that all along, wherever the shadow of the Cross fell, it was all verdant as in spring, and every flower seemed as if it did drink in the dew and opened its cup towards the light that streamed from the Cross. ‘Twas all fertile there where the shadow of the Cross fell, but all barren elsewhere. And is it not so? Wherever there is the influence of the atoning blood, wherever the Cross is fully preached and received, every soul is blessed, happy and fruitful—but where it is not so, there is an arid waste on which the dew of Heaven falls not.  
And while I thought I saw before me a caravan, and there were camels, and hundreds of men, the drivers of the camels, and they were all hot, and panting, and fainting. They went to the well and rolled away the stone, but they found no water there. So they went onward, ready to drop at every step. Before them they thought they saw a cooling stream, but it was a mirage, and they were mocked. But I thought I saw them suddenly halt at the foot of the Cross, and just at the bottom of it there sprang up a clear and crystal spring, and each one drank, and went on his way refreshed. And what are the sons of men, but a great caravan on the way to realms unknown? And where is there water for so much as one of them, except at the foot of the Cross? If they drink there, they live! If they drink not there, there is nothing for them.  
Many other things passed before me, but I cannot detail them now, for we have spent too much time upon this second point and must pass to the third. The third point, very briefly discussed, is this—  
**III.**IF WE DO GLORY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST, HOW SHALL WE PROVE IT?  
We must prove it*by trusting in the Cross*. The Atonement must have our only confidence, or else it were vain to say that we glory in it.  
We must prove it, next, *by holding fast the Doctrine when others challenge it*. We must be confident about this vicarious Sacrifice of Christ, let others say what they may.

We must prove it *by our zeal in propagating it according to the best of our ability*. We must endeavor, as much as lies in us, to tell the good news to others, that whoever believes has everlasting life.

But there are some here who are called to the ministry and, therefore, to them let me say that we must prove that we glory in it most *by being prepared to suffer for it*. Any man who is called to the ministry may, if he will, take an example from yonder dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral. There you see the Cross above the globe. You must put from this point on, the Cross above the world in all your calculations! To preach Jesus and to win souls—not to gain money or human applause—must be the way in which you prove that you glory in the Cross!

But the principal way is *by constantly preaching about it*. What shall I say to young men who are about to enter the ministry that shall be more useful to them than this? Keep to the Cross! Keep to the Cross! Always preach up Jesus Christ! Always preach up Jesus Christ! I think no sermon should be without the Doctrine of Salvation by faith in it. I would not close a single discourse without at least something about believing in Jesus and living. Oh, that our tongues would speak of nothing but Jesus! Oh, that we were something like Rutherford, who is said to have had a squeaking voice on every other subject, but when he began to speak of Christ, the little man would grow tall and his voice become full, so that the Duke, who was one of his hearers, shouted, “Now, Man, you’re on the right string!” Oh, surely, this is a theme that might inspire the very dumb and make the dead to rise, to tell of Jesus Christ’s most wondrous love!

I have thus, as well in the short time I had allowed, shown how we may glory in the Cross. But if we do so, according to the text, *we are not to expect to go to Heaven in silver slippers*, for the Apostle adds, *“By which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*.” There are two crosses in that saying—there is the world crucified, there, and there is Paul crucified, here. What means he by this? Why, he means that ever since he fell in love with Jesus Christ, he lost all love for the world! It seemed to him to be a poor, crucified, dying thing, and he turned away from it just as you would from a criminal whom you might see hanging in chains—and would desire to go anywhere rather than see the poor being. So Paul seemed to see the world on gallows—hung up there. “There,” he said, “that is what I think of you and all your pomp, and all your power, and all your wealth, and all your fame! You are on the gallows, a malefactor, nailed up, crucified! I would not give a fig for you! I would not turn on my heels to speak to you—all that you could give me would no more suit my taste than as if husks were given to me. Give them to your own swine and let them fatten thereon!”

You know the world is not crucified to “the successors of the Apostle,” and all others who preach merely as a profession. They get their living out of it—they are endowed by the world—the State or the church pays them! The world is not crucified to them. That is the change that has come over the times, but to the first Apostle, the world was crucified. And now observe the other Cross. There is Paul on that. The world thinks as little of Paul as Paul does of the world. The world says, “Oh, that harebrained Paul! He was once sensible, but he has gone mad upon that stubborn notion about the Crucified One! The man is a fool.” So the world crucifies him. It was something like the case of Luther, when he said, “There is no love lost between me and the Pope of Rome. He hates me and I also hate him with all my heart, and soul, and strength.” So is it with the world and the genuine Christian. If he glories in Christ, he must expect to be misunderstood, misrepresented and attacked. And, on the other hand, he will say that he would sooner have the world’s scorn than its honor! He would sooner have its hate than its love, for the love of the world is enmity against God. Blessed are you when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s. Set your account, you Christians, upon rough weather and get seaworthy vessels that will stand a gale or two! Ask the Lord to give you Grace enough to suffer and endure for that precious Savior who will give you reward enough when you see Him face to face, for one hour with Him will make up for it all! Therefore, be faithful, and may the Lord help you thus to glory in the Cross of Christ. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *GALATIANS 4:12-31; 5:1-4, 19-26; 6:1-11.***

***GALATIANS 4:12-31.*  
Verse 12.***Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as you are: you have not injured me at all.* He had told them the Gospel, and other teachers had come in and alienated their affections. He says, “Now I am just the same to you as ever I was. I wish you would have the same love to me.”

**13, 14.***You know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.* He dwells upon that. They had been so enthusiastic about his teaching when he first taught them, that he feels grieved that now they have gone aside to other teaching—not because it injured him, but because it injured them.

**15.***Where is then the blessedness you spoke of?*When you said that you were happy to live in Paul’s days, glad to listen to so simple and plain a teacher?

**15, 16.***For I bear you record that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Have I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* Ah, there are many who have incurred enmity through speaking the Gospel very plainly, for the natural tendency of man is towards ceremony, towards some form of legal righteousness—he must have something aesthetic, something that delights his sensuous nature, something that he can see and hear, to mix up that with the simplicity of faith—and Paul was as clear as noonday against everything of that kind, and so the Galatians, at last, were angry with him. Well, he could not help that, but it did grieve him.

**17.***They zealously court you, but not for good; yes, they would exclude you, that you might be zealous for them.*They would, if they could, turn you out of our love that you might run after them. These false teachers would shut us out of your hearts that your hearts might go after them.

**18-21.***But it is always good to be zealous in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, you that desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law?* Will you not listen to what the Law, itself, teaches? Here is a little bit from one of its first books, the book of Genesis.

**22, 23.***For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh.*In the strength of Abraham.

**23.***But he of the freewoman was by promise.*In the power of God, born after both father and mother had ceased to be capable of becoming parents, born in the power of God!

**24.***Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants: the one from the Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Hagar.* Those that are under the Law are the children, therefore, of the bondwoman—they are born slaves.

**25.***For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* It is old Judaism coming from Sinai, “This do, and you shall live,” and all the children that are born under it are children of nature—they are not the children of promise.

**26.***But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* This is Sarah, and they that believe are the Isaac-children, the children of holy laughter, born according to the power of God.

**27-29.***For it is written, Rejoice, you barren that bears not: break forth and cry, you that travails not: for the desolate has many more children than she which has an husband, Now we*, *brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* The child of Hagar could not stand the child of Sarah, and they that seek salvation by the works of the Law, and by outward ceremonies, cannot endure the children of faith.

**30, 31.***Nevertheless what says the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

***GALATIANS 5.***

**Verses 1-4.***Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law. Christ is become of no effect unto you whoever of you are justified by the Law; you are fallen from Grace.* If you mean to have anything to do with salvation by works, get you gone—you are the children of the bondwoman!

**Verses 19-21.***Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like—*A black catalog, but sin is very prolific. We must take care that we avoid each one of these works of the flesh, or else we shall give no proof that we are led by the Spirit of God and possess the Grace of God.

**21.***Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Read over the list. Put the question to conscience, “Am I guilty of such things?” If so, do not suppose that the holding of orthodox Doctrine will save you, or that any kind of religious ceremony will save you! You must be delivered from these lusts of the flesh—these deeds of the flesh—or you cannot inherit the Kingdom of God!

**22, 23.***But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*. Surely, neither human nor Divine! These are things which are commended on all hands. But if we do not have them—if they are not found in us—then we have not the Spirit, for if we had the Spirit, we would bear the fruit of the Spirit!

**24-26.***And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory,* A very common sin—wishing to shine. Whether we deserve to be honored or not, still wanting to be the lead horse in the team, and to take the leading place. “Let us not be desirous of vainglory.”

**26.***Provoking one another, envying one another.*If each would strive to do the greatest deeds of love and each were willing to take the lowest place, then this evil would never again be known!

***GALATIANS 6.*  
Verse 1.***Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.* When Christians fall into a fault, it is on account of their traveling slowly on the road to Heaven. Hence the expression, “If he is *overtaken* with a fault.” He would not have been overtaken if he had been traveling faster! If his heart had been quick in the ways of the Lord, he would have outstripped the temptation. Now, when a Brother falls into sin, it is too often the habit to push him down—to cast him out and forget him. But spiritually-minded persons must not do so. We must seek the restoration of the Brother or Sister. Is there not more joy over the sheep that was lost than over those that went not astray? Have we not the best reason to deal tenderly with wanderers, since we cannot tell that we may not need the same generous offices for ourselves? “Considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” He seems to take it for granted that we probably would, if we were tempted as the other Brother was.

**2.***Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*Help each other. If you have a light load, take a part of somebody else’s.  
**3.***For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* Mainly deceives himself. Other people generally find it out. It is no use estimating your fortune at so many millions, for it will not make it so! And it is of no use estimating yourself at a very high price, because it does not make it so. “He deceives himself.”  
**4-5.***But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.* There are burdens of care and sorrow which we can help others to bear, but the burdens of responsibility each man must carry for himself. The load of service for the Master must be carried personally. And let us be glad to shoulder it, since Christ has done so much for us. And how else can we express gratitude but by serving Him?  
**6.***Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things.*If he gives you spirituals, do not suffer him to lack for temporals.  
**7, 8.***Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap—*What the flesh always comes to, by-and-by—  
**8.***Corruption. But he that sows to the Spirit—* By faith in Christ—by being led by the Spirit—  
**8-10.***Shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, it we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*They have a first claim upon us. They are nearest of kin. They are our Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Let them have a Benjamin’s portion!  
**11.***You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.* Paul did not often write his own Epistles. It is thought that he had a defect of the eyes. He generally employed a secretary. When he did write, he wrote generally in great capitals. I suppose that is what he meant. “You see how emphatic my writing is—what great characters I have made in writing to you.” Or he may have meant that for a letter, written by him, this was a lengthy one.